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# Monemvasia, Seventh–Fifteenth Centuries

Haris Kalligas

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## *The City and Its Territory*

The city of Monemvasia, the “god-guarded fortress,”<sup>1</sup> was founded and grew on the limestone rock (1.5 km long, maximum width 600 m) that juts out from the eastern coast of the Peloponnese 20 miles north of Cape Malea. Above the narrow strip of land, by the sea, the cliffs rise vertically, forming a large sloping platform at the top, its higher point slightly exceeding 200 m. Monemvasia consisted of an arched bridge, the only connection with the mainland, which gave the city its name (“single entrance”); the port, on the rock, on both sides of the bridge; the fortress on the highest point and the upper city on the platform at the top; and the lower city, or *proasteion*, on the south side by the sea (Figs. 1, 2).

The port, arranged as a double port on both sides of the bridge, had its main basin

<sup>1</sup> Sp. Lambros, “Ταβουλλαρικόν γράμμα τοῦ ΙΔ’ αἰῶνος,” Δελτίον τῆς Ἱστορικῆς καὶ Ἐθνολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας 5 (1900): 160. The study that follows is based primarily on H. A. Kalligas, *Byzantine Monemvasia: The Sources* (Monemvasia, 1990). The urban and architectural history presented here is based on the author’s research on the urban evolution of Monemvasia, which is still unpublished. The main sources used are the following: Sp. Lambros, “Δύο Ἀναφοραὶ μητροπολίτου Μονεμβασίας πρὸς τὸν Πατριάρχη,” Νέος Ἑλλ. 12 (1915): 257–318; “Diplomata et acta ecclesiae et civitatis Monembasiensis,” MM, 5:154–78; St. Binon, “L’histoire et la légende de deux chrysobulles d’Andronic II en faveur de Monembasie: Macaire ou Phrantzès?” EO 37 (1938): 274–331; H. Belia, “Στατιστικά στοιχεία τῆς Ἐπαρχίας Ἐπιδάουρου Λιμηρᾶς κατὰ τὸ 1828,” Λακ.Σπ. 5 (1980): 60–117; *PLP*; P. Schreiner, “Ein Prostagma Andronikos’ III. für die Monembasioten in Pegai (1328) und das gefälschte Chrysobull Andronikos’ II. für die Monembasioten im byzantinischen Reich,” JÖB 27 (1978): 203–28. The following studies are important: A. Bon, *Le Péloponnèse byzantin jusqu’ en 1204* (Paris, 1971); N. Drandakis, S. Kalopissi, and M. Panayotidi, “Ἐρευνα στὴν Ἐπίδαυρο Λιμηρά,” Πρακτ. Ἀρχ. Ἐτ. (1982): 349–466, and *ibid.* (1983): 209–63; Society for Studies in the Environment, N. Πελοπόννησος: Μελέτη Ἀναπτύξεως Προβληματικῶν Περιοχῶν, vol. 1 (Athens, 1974) (hereafter Πελοπόννησος); A. G. Kalligas and H. A. Kalligas, *Monemvasia* (Athens, 1986); H. A. Kalligas, “Ἡ ἐκκλησιαστικὴ ἀρχιτεκτονικὴ στὴ Μονεμβασία κατὰ τὴν Β’ Ἐνετοκρατία καὶ τὸ καθολικὸ παρεκκλήσι τῆς Ἁγίας Ἄννας,” in Ἐκκλησίες στὴν Ἑλλάδα μετὰ τὴν Ἄλωση, ed. Ch. Bouras (Athens, 1979), 245–56; A. Laiou-Thomadakis, “Ἐμποροὶ καὶ ναυτικοὶ τῆς Μονεμβασίας στὸ 13ο–14ο αἰῶνα,” lectures by Monemvasiotikos Homilos, Monemvasia, July 1979; A. Laiou-Thomadakis, “The Byzantine Economy in the Mediterranean Trade System: Thirteenth–Fifteenth Centuries” *DOP* 34/35 (1980–81): 177–222; H. Xanalatou-Dergalin and A. Kouloglou-Pervolaraki, *Μονεμβασία* (Athens, 1974); D. Zakythinis, *Le despotat grec de Morée*, vol. 2, *Vie et institutions*, rev. Ch. Maltezos (London, 1975).

to the north, where the bottom is even, fairly deep, and suitable for ships to anchor. The quays were most probably wooden. On both sides of the port there are still traces of old construction, but for the time being there are no other records to show how the port installations were organized. In addition to the main port, several other auxiliary points on the rock were in use when the weather permitted, without permanent quays and with the help of boats.<sup>2</sup> A lighthouse to aid ships functioned at least since the thirteenth century. The natural defenses offered by the precipitous rock were not sufficient, so the city's fortification had to be completed with construction works. The combination of natural and artificial fortification ensured conditions of security almost to the present day.<sup>3</sup> On the north side, a road that started from the bridge and the port led toward the acropolis and the upper city, and a second approach led through the *proasteion*.

The urban structure of the upper city during the late Byzantine period can be discerned only in parts; the same is true for the street network. There are, however, good indications that the earlier constructions were parallel to each other, considering, among other things, the position of the many early vaulted cisterns that still exist. In addition to the Hodegetria, an important twelfth-century church, ruins of only three churches have been located, scattered in the area of the upper city. The traces of the many others that must have existed disappeared gradually during the Turkish occupation. As in the lower city, churches were most probably used for burials. At the intersection of two main thoroughfares on the southwestern side, the remains of a building, the largest of the upper city, still survive; it was at least 25 × 25 m and probably had more than two floors. The double water cistern (10 × 17 m) is still intact. There was also, overlooking the sea at the front of the building, a vaulted chamber with arches that formed a sort of gallery. There can be no doubt that this was a public building, most probably the seat of the administration.<sup>4</sup> There are no signs of other public buildings, and there does not seem to have been any commercial activity in the upper city.

There are indications that houses were, at least in the Palaiologan period, of the same type as a number of those that still exist in ruined condition in the upper city.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> To determine the exact site of the Byzantine port, research was carried out in 1993 by the archaeologist Elias Spondylis and the geologist Helen Hahami, both from the Ephoreia of Underwater Archaeology of the Ministry of Culture. The information presented here draws on their report. I would like to thank both of them. On the bottom of the sea there are remains of Byzantine as well as earlier shipwrecks. A port may have been in existence in the same place during earlier times.

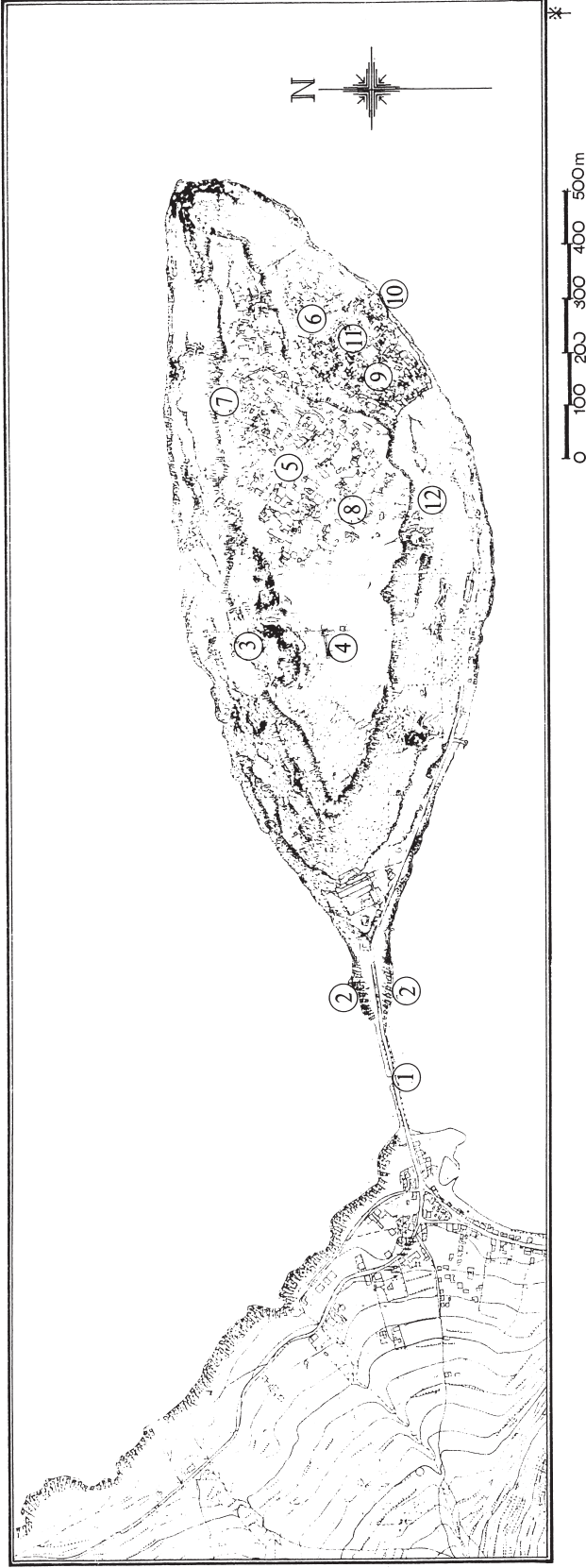
<sup>3</sup> Without the security offered by the walls, the lower city could not have resisted Arab attacks from the 7th to the 10th century or the Norman attack in the 12th century. Even as late as the German occupation during World War II and the civil war that followed, the rock and its fortifications offered sufficient security.

<sup>4</sup> The building was not in use during the first Turkish occupation. It is noted in the earliest known picture of Monemvasia, a woodcut of 1541, as "Palazzo," a strong indication that it must have been the seat of the administration. In Venice the equivalent administrative building, in which the archives of the city were also situated, was the Palazzo Ducale.

<sup>5</sup> Peter Ian Kuniholm of Cornell University dated one of the houses, with the help of dendrochronology, to the first years of the Turkish occupation, that is, the middle of the 16th century. In certain buildings of this type there are clear remains of older periods.



1. The territory of Monemvasia with the principal towns and other points of importance



2. The rock of Monemvasia: 1. bridge, "single-entrance"; 2. double port; 3. north road leading to the upper city and the fortress; 4. fortress; 5. upper city; 6. lower city or *proasteion*; 7. Hodegetria; 8. ruins of the large building with the double cistern; 9. Foros or Agora; 10. sea gate; 11. Christ Elkomenos; 12. extension of the lower city

Like all the buildings there, they were built with limestone from the rock itself, combined with poros stone for all special construction, and had vaults in the lower level. The house was the dominant element in a group of buildings, which in most cases was surrounded by a stone fence, often fortified. The inhabited area of the upper city seems to have been organized in the same way.

The position of the *proasteion* on the wide part of the strip of land near the sea, invisible from the mainland, can be defined by that of the early Christian church of Elkomenos and the fortified ascent to the upper city. The U-shaped walls must have existed since the beginning of the Arab raids, most probably from the foundation of the city. The urban structure and the older street network can be located in various places.<sup>6</sup> The main axis, continuing the road from the port, was the main commercial street, the Foros or Agora, which traversed the entire length of the lower city.<sup>7</sup> Another axis, which crossed the first, was probably not entirely rectilinear; it connected the sea gate with the ascent to the upper city. This, too, seems to have been a commercial area, especially in the part nearer the sea gate. Building density in the lower city was very high, in contrast with the upper city, where the buildings were more spread out.

The large metropolitan church of Christ Elkomenos was at the intersection of the two main axes. The position of the other churches helps define the street network since most of them have phases that date from the Byzantine period. The city included at least one large monastic complex, and the caves of the rock and the nearby mainland sheltered various hermitages and small monasteries. There are no indications of any other buildings of special use, apart from warehouses and shops or workshops. Their structure was probably the same as those that have survived through tradition: simple, usually vaulted, with perhaps a cistern or a service area and often with a dwelling above. The houses in the lower city were of good construction but were much smaller than those of the upper city. They had more than two floors, with a timber roof and vaults on the lower levels, where we find water cisterns, as well as spaces for storing special products. The lower levels were particularly important for the aging of wine. Often there was a terrace, which was needed for spreading, drying, or processing various products. There seem to have been no stables, and most likely animals were not permitted in the city.

Originally the area outside the walls, between the port and the lower city, was sparsely occupied, taking part in the activities of both the port and the commercial areas of the city. This became more intense after the middle of the tenth century, which was the start of a period of prosperity. Gradually the *proasteion* spread out from the walls toward the port, but also toward the rest of the strip of land near the sea, to the east and north. This dynamic growth, especially after the eleventh century, seems to

<sup>6</sup> These elements are being localized with the help of the detailed surveys that have been carried out since 1966 by the author in collaboration with A. G. Kalligas for the restoration of houses in the lower city.

<sup>7</sup> It is mentioned as "Foros" in the population censuses of 1699–1700. See, e.g., K. N. Dokos, "Ἡ ἐν Πελοποννήσῳ ἐκκλησιαστικὴ περιουσία κατὰ τὴν περίοδον τῆς Β' Ἐνετοκρατίας," *BNJ* 21 (1971–74): 137–39.

have led to a merging of land use zones, which existed since the earlier centuries but had originally been completely distinct.

The territory of Monemvasia covered the region of Mount Parnon, as well as its peninsula. Most of the area is mountainous or semi-mountainous, particularly steep in the northeastern part, with some sheltered gulfs or bays. The western and southern shores are smoother, with wide, sandy bays.<sup>8</sup> The position of the city on the rock of the eastern coast was vital for communications in the Aegean and the Mediterranean, especially with Constantinople and Italy; it was mainly by sea that the city and its region communicated with the empire and the rest of the world. However, a well-organized road system existed within the territory, which connected settlements, ports, and other points between them; road and sea communications were systematically combined.

During the Palaiologan period, the territory of Monemvasia included many settlements of various sizes. Thirteen of them, probably the most important, are mentioned in the “silver bull” issued in 1391–92 by Despot Theodore I for Monemvasia.<sup>9</sup> By combining information from sources of various periods one can conclude that there existed in the territory more than fifty settlements and that most of them had some sort of fortification.<sup>10</sup> The “city,” that is, Monemvasia, the central settlement, controlled a smaller area of its own, a long strip of land that started in the north from Yerakas and ended south at Agios Phokas. It comprised some important settlements and several smaller ones, as well as a series of ports and smaller harbors and apparently the best viticultural land in the territory. The secondary settlements depended on the city and in turn controlled their own individual areas, which were large and in many cases had a specialized production and function.<sup>11</sup> Around the secondary settlements there was a network of smaller ones and other installations. Most of the settlements of the territory were inland, but could be serviced from the sea by a port or a smaller harbor or pier.<sup>12</sup> Some of the coastal settlements, such as Yerakas, remained in use from ancient times.

### *Population*

The growth of the city during the Byzantine period is indicated by the density of building remains that cover the whole area of the rock. The number of buildings, their

<sup>8</sup> Πελοπόννησος, 46–48.

<sup>9</sup> The following settlements are mentioned: Apideai, Esopos, Agios Leonidas, Helos, Hierakion, Kastanitza, Prastos, Rheon, Seraphon, Tzaconia, Tzitzina, Vatica: MM 5:24–29.

<sup>10</sup> The numbers result from the combined information of various sources, mostly Byzantine, Venetian, and more recent censuses. Of great help are the contents of the report compiled in 1828 for John Kapodistrias, the governor of Greece. It is reliable and detailed and often refers to earlier periods: Belia, “1828,” 60–117. For the fortifications of Molai and Seraphon, see A. Bon, *La Morée franque* (Paris, 1969), 511, 661, and pls. 158, 1 a–b, 159, 1 a–b.

<sup>11</sup> For example, the area around Molai specialized in the production of kermes.

<sup>12</sup> Two inland settlements, Lyra and Koulendia, still retain their towers on the western shore, erected to ensure security and communications by sea. There are indications that there was a network of towers near the shore.

density and use, and consequently the population fluctuated in various periods. During the seventh century the population of the city seems to have increased. This was due to the greater importance of the port and to the fact that it attracted inhabitants from other settlements, threatened by attacks or gradually deserted for various reasons, such as the difficulty of communications by land.<sup>13</sup> However, with the Arab raids, particularly after the Arab settlement in Crete, Monemvasia went through a period of economic decline, even though more inhabitants must have poured into the city from areas exposed to the raids. The decline is reflected, among other things, by the lowering of the rank of the ecclesiastical see of Monemvasia from a metropolis to that of a simple bishopric at the beginning of the tenth century.

The relative security at sea and other favorable conditions that prevailed after the middle of the tenth century contributed again to the growth of the city, a trend that continued until the middle of the thirteenth century, when Monemvasia was conquered by the Franks. Built-up areas grew outside the walls of the lower city and covered every space available on the rock, to the west toward the port, which was united with the lower city, toward the east, even on the steep and exposed north side. In the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the promotion of Monemvasia from an episcopal to a metropolitan see again reflects these changes.<sup>14</sup>

The presence of the Latins in the Peloponnese beginning in 1204 does not seem to have upset the situation. On the contrary, it is certain that the population grew, since the city and much of its territory, having remained free for half a century, functioned as a shelter for a considerable number of refugees from the possessions of the Latins. Besides, contact had been established with the emperor in Nicaea, commerce had not been interrupted, and some of the archons of the city were on friendly terms with the Latins.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, the capture of the city by William II Villehardouin, around the middle of the thirteenth century after a long siege, was disastrous. There was a severe decline in population with the mass migration of the active inhabitants to Asia Minor, the town of Pegai in particular. Those who remained in Monemvasia were the less dynamic element, described by the sources as “exhausted and needy.” This sudden loss contributed to the abandonment of large areas, particularly outside the walls.<sup>16</sup>

The return of a considerable part of the inhabitants with their ships after 1262, when

<sup>13</sup> The settlement in the plain of Molai (possibly Leukai) seems to have been deserted in the 6th century. See R. Etzéoglou, “Quelques aspects des agglomérations paléochrétiennes au sud-est de la Laconie,” in *Géographie du monde méditerranéen* (Paris, 1988), 102. Other settlements, such as Epidauros Limera, seem also to have been abandoned.

<sup>14</sup> The development of the city must have been helped by the installation on the rock of groups from other areas of the empire, for example, that of Corinthians after the sack of Corinth by the Normans in 1147. Apparently this was due to the initiative of the bishop of Monemvasia. Kalligas, *Sources*, 67–68, 210.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. the large number of churches in the area with paintings from the 13th century: Drandakis, Kalopissi, and Panayotidi, “*Ἐρευνα*,” (1982), 349–466 and *ibid.* (1983), 209–63.

<sup>16</sup> Lambros, “*Ἀναφορά*,” 289. The deserted areas do not seem to have been inhabited since that time. An example is the “*Terra Vecchia*,” between the west wall and the bridge, depicted in the woodcut of 1541.



Monemvasia again came under the rule of Byzantium, revived the city to a large degree. However, although the growth was once more intense, it does not seem to have approached the levels of the period before the Frankish conquest. Moreover, an important number of Monemvasiots had by then settled in other areas: in Pegai, Constantinople, Anaia, Crete, Thrace, and the Black Sea region. In Monemvasia itself there were a number of foreign merchants.<sup>17</sup> Another crisis around 1390 led, despite the efforts of Despot Theodore I, to a further shrinking of the city, with the lower city covering approximately the same area as today.

As was mentioned, the fluctuations in the inhabited area on the rock reflect the approximate changes in population. Based on the density of the buildings, one could deduce that during the periods when the lower city was confined within the walls but there was important activity around the port—that is, during the seventh century, after the middle of the tenth, and before the end of the fourteenth century—there may have been approximately 1,800 houses on the rock. If we assume an average of four persons per family, we reach a total of 7,200 inhabitants.<sup>18</sup> However, at the times of its greatest growth, Monemvasia must have been more heavily populated. From the ruins one can calculate an approximate number of 5,000 buildings for the period when all of the rock was built up, which means 20,000 inhabitants. It would have been extremely difficult to surpass this number. Concerning the population of the territory of Monemvasia, it is likely that it was approximately ten times the number of inhabitants of the city, that is, 65,000–70,000 during the seventh, tenth, and fourteenth centuries.<sup>19</sup>

### *Institutions and Privileges*

The monk Isidore, residing and writing in Monemvasia in the 1430s, refers to the older institutions for the administration of the city, which had survived since the Roman period until at least the middle of the thirteenth century. He mentions that the inhabitants of Lakedaimon—a *civitas foederata* of the Roman Empire enjoying the privilege of ἀτέλεια εισαγωγίμου, as is well known<sup>20</sup>—when they abandoned Sparta and became founders of Monemvasia in the sixth century, retained the status of ὑπόσπονδοι of the Byzantine emperor. Their ruler had the title of *rex*, and they were “loyal allies of the Roman emperor” and had preserved their “well-known, customary, and ancient Dorian freedom.”<sup>21</sup> Although, apart from this specific reference by Isidore, only hints

<sup>17</sup> Morgan, “Venetian Claims,” 428, no. 34 (Bernardus of Monemvasia) and 431, no. 133 (Gulielmo of Monemvasia); they were probably Genoese. See F. Thiriet, *Régestes des délibérations du Sénat de Venise concernant la Romanie*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1958–61), 2: nos. 1756, 1798, 1831; 3: nos. 2048, 2706, 2763. A Venetian consul is mentioned in Monemvasia. See Ch. Maltezos, Ὁ θεσμός τοῦ ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει Βενετοῦ Βαΐλου, 1268–1453 (Athens, 1970), 230.

<sup>18</sup> These numbers are supported by the facts mentioned in the report of 1828, from which we can deduce that Monemvasia during the late Byzantine period had more than ten times the population of the 19th century (659 inhabitants), that is, more than 6,500 people.

<sup>19</sup> The proportion is calculated with reference to the data for 1828.

<sup>20</sup> Kalligas, *Sources*, 35–39, 97–98, 101–33, 263–68; S. J. Laet, *Portorium: Etude sur l'organisation douanière chez les Romains, surtout à l'époque du haut-empire* (Bruges, 1949), 353; P. Cartledge and A. Spawforth, *Hellenistic and Roman Sparta: A Tale of Two Cities* (London, 1989), 151.

<sup>21</sup> Lambros, “Ἀναφορά,” 289.

on the continuity of institutions can be found in other sources, the references seem to argue for such a continuity. For example, the territory of Monemvasia had not been included in the *Partitio Romaniaae*, which, in 1203, took account only of imperial lands, which means that it had some sort of self-government. Also, in the middle of the thirteenth century, William II Villehardouin confirmed the privilege of immunity, which indicates that the privilege already existed. After the recovery of Monemvasia from the Franks, the first source to mention explicitly the return to an older status of special “conditions” is the chrysobull issued by Michael VIII Palaiologos: “under the Romans . . . and their suzerainty they have been placed, with the same conditions as before.” The chrysobull also confirms the reintroduction of *exkousseia* and *eleutheria* and the exemption from the obligation to pay the *kommerkion* within the city of Monemvasia. The first two are the old privilege of immunity, while the equivalent of the latter—the exemption from paying the *kommerkion* to the central administration—is the older ἀτέλεια εισαγωγίμου. This particular privilege, which favored the development of commerce and the accumulation of wealth, offered important funds to the administration of the city. The privileges were confirmed by Andronikos II, Andronikos III, and Despot Theodore I, and documents of the despots Theodore II and Demetrius inform us about the use to which the city administration put the *kommerkion*.<sup>22</sup>

Consequences of the possibilities offered to the Monemvasiots by the special privileges and exemptions were the financial comfort, abundance of goods, and accumulation of wealth to which the chrysobull of Andronikos II of 1301 refers. The wealth of the city is also attested by the large number of remains of carefully constructed buildings and water cisterns. Testimonies from saints’ lives about contacts with distant places and important ports reinforce, for the early centuries, the same impression of wealth. The city and its ecclesiastical see had the means to settle and assist an important number of refugees after the sack of Corinth in 1147. One of the most important architectural monuments of the twelfth century, the octagonal church of the Virgin Hodegetria, was built in the upper city, and other remarkable monuments existed in its territory. Around the end of the twelfth century, works of art in Monemvasia made even the emperor envious. Art flourished also after 1204, when groups of artists from occupied areas gathered in free Monemvasia.

The exemption from the *kommerkion*, which was reintroduced by the chrysobull of Michael VIII in his effort to invigorate the city after the short interval of Frankish occupation, and the confirmation of this exemption by Andronikos II, restored the wealth of the city to its earlier levels. The city was so rich that, when Roger de Lluria in 1292 launched his piratical attack, taking the inhabitants by surprise, he was able to seize such a spectacular amount of loot that “it could satisfy five fleets equivalent to his own.”<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Kalligas, *Sources*, 38–39, 71–79, 92.

<sup>23</sup> Muntaner, *Chroniques étrangères relatives aux expéditions françaises pendant le XIIIe siècle*, ed. J. A. C. Buchon (Paris, 1841), 330: “et alla en Romanie et courut les îles de Metelin, Stalimene, les Formans, Tino, Andros, Miconi, puis l’île de Chio où se fait le mastic, et prit la ville de Malvoisie, et revint avec un butin si considérable qu’il y avait de quoi satisfaire cinq flottes semblables à la sienne.” It is probable that the loot included that from the other islands.

Andronikos II granted even greater privileges to the Monemvasiots, exempting them totally from the *kommerkion* in most cities of the empire and lowering it in Constantinople and the ports of Thrace. These grants gave Monemvasia the opportunity to develop into one of the most dynamic and wealthiest cities of Byzantium. Its difference from the other cities is best depicted by the list of 1324, containing the contributions of the metropolitan sees of the empire for the support of the patriarchate of Constantinople. The contributions, 3,108 hyperpera, were defined in proportion to the financial means of each city. The smallest amount is 16 hyperpera, offered by one see, and the largest is 800, offered by the metropolis of Monemvasia, four times the contribution of Thessalonike and more than one-fourth of the total.

The chrysobull granted by Andronikos III in 1336 exempts from any obligation to pay the *kommerkion* not only the Monemvasiots but also all who had any transactions with them. Furthermore, these exemptions also covered their descendants in perpetuity. This was the greatest extent of privileges that Monemvasia ever enjoyed. The gradual settlement of groups of Monemvasiots in the capital and other areas, and especially the civil disputes that followed the death of Despot Manuel Kantakouzenos in 1380 and its brief surrender to the Turks, were terrible blows for Monemvasia, from which the city does not seem to have been able to recover. There is, however, an area in which the old wealth is still reflected in the fifteenth century—intellectual activities and education. Foreign languages were taught, and books were written. The existence of a rich library of legal works in fifteenth-century Monemvasia, at a time when these were difficult to find even in the capital, is impressive.<sup>24</sup>

There is no specific information as to how the administration of the city was organized. A βουλή, or rather an assembly of the inhabitants, is only mentioned in 1460, on the occasion of the surrender to Pope Pius II. However, this may not have been the usual practice.<sup>25</sup> In the late fifteenth century, when Monemvasia was under Venetian rule, there are mentions of the “*proti di questa terra*,” who were prominent citizens. They may have formed the body that elected the archon and made important decisions.<sup>26</sup> The same documents also mention the “*Zitadin principal di questa terra*.” Could this official have been a holdover from the institution of the archon elected by the Monemvasiots, who used to rule jointly with the *kephale*, appointed by the central administration? Is it possible that the old practice continued through the period of Venetian rule?

There are no special references to archons in Monemvasia before the thirteenth century. The first to be mentioned is Chamaretos, who allied himself with Villehardouin in 1204. His son Leo followed him, and two decades later Ioannis Chamaretos bore the title of despot and was governor of Monemvasia until 1222. In the middle of

<sup>24</sup> H. Papagianni and S. Troianos, *Μία νομική βιβλιοθήκη στη Μονεμβασία τόν 15ο αιώνα* (Athens, 1990), 14–15.

<sup>25</sup> Kalligas, *Sources*, 191–93.

<sup>26</sup> Unpublished documents: Archivio di Stato di Venezia (ASV), Avogaria di Comun, Miscellanea Penale, B. 170, P. 7, fols. 1–2.

the same century a *rex* is mentioned (whose name is not preserved), who led the inhabitants to Asia Minor after the surrender to the Franks. With the return of Byzantine rule, a Kantakouzenos is mentioned as *kephale* of Monemvasia. Another archon in Monemvasia might have been Despot John Kantakouzenos, the rebel son of Matthew Kantakouzenos. Originating from Monemvasia, but also related to the imperial family and also a rebel, was another archon of the city, the *mezas dux* Palaiologos-Mamonas. His father, too, had been archon of Monemvasia.

There are mentions in the sources of two *tavoullarioi*: Leo, in 898, and Demetrios Manikaitis, public notary and *tavoullarios*, in 1426. Certain official functions that had survived are mentioned in the late fifteenth century. Possibly they were only honorific, like the “principal prote di questa terra,” in this case a certain *miser* Micali, who was also *magno cartofilaca*. Other functions are also mentioned: the *sachellari*, the *cartofilaca*, the *castrofilaca*, the *protostratora*, the *gran conestabel*, the *conestabel a la Porta di Malvasia*, and the *castelan al Ponte*. There is no information on the organization of finances, the management of taxes, the structure of defense, or the administration of the territory of the city.

Monemvasiot family names are not found before the late twelfth century.<sup>27</sup> The earliest known are the Mavrozomis. Theodore was active before 1169; John is mentioned in 1185 and a Mavrosimi di Monembasia in 1319. Around the end of the twelfth century, George Pachis from Monemvasia became the governor of Kythera. In 1333 there was a Constantine Pachis involved in maritime commercial enterprises between Crete and Monemvasia. In addition to the members of the Chamaretos family mentioned earlier, there is reference in 1222 of Michael, uncle of Despot John Chamaretos.

The first appearance of the Monemvasiot family of Daimonoianis or Eudaimonoianis is noted in Kythera between 1180 and 1190, when the administration of Kythera was offered to one of its members. The island remained in their hands until 1238. Around 1222 George Daimonoianis, *protopansebastohypertatos*, and his daughter are found in Monemvasia. Another Daimonoianis is one of the three archons (Daimonoianis, Mamonas, and Sophianos) who gave Monemvasia to Villehardouin. From that time until the end of the Venetian occupation, many members of the family are found in Monemvasia, Constantinople, Crete, Anaia, the Black Sea region, Italy, and elsewhere, as merchants, shipowners, sailors, pirates, and priests. They also participated in the administration and were connected with the imperial family.

<sup>27</sup> The data on the families, apart from the studies already mentioned, derive from the following sources: *Il libro dei conti di Giacomo Badoer* ed. U. Dorini and T. Bertelè (Rome, 1956); C. Gasparis, “Η ναυτιλιακή κίνηση από την Κρήτη προς την Πελοπόννησο κατά τό 14ο αιώνα,” *Τά Ἱστορικά* 9.12 (1988): 293–304; A. Laiou-Thomadakis, “The Greek Merchant of the Palaeologan Period: A Collective Portrait,” *Πρακτικά τῆς Ἀκαδημίας Ἀθηνῶν* 57 (1982): 96–132; P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel Komnenos, 1143–1180* (Cambridge, 1993), 257; Ch. Maltezos, *Βενετική Παρουσία στά Κύθηρα* (Athens, 1991), VIII, XII, XIII; K.-P. Matschke, “The Notaras Family and Its Italian Connections,” *DOP* 49 (1995): 59–72; A. Meliarakis, *Οικογένεια Μαμωνᾶ* (Athens, 1902); N. Oikonomides, *Hommes d'affaires grecs et latins à Constantinople, XIIIe–XVe siècles* (Montreal, 1979); *Παλαιοιολόγια καί Πελοποννησιακά* 4: ζ'; R. Predelli, *I libri commemoriali della republica di Venezia regesti, 1293–1787*, vol. 1 (Venice, 1876); S. Fasoulakis, “Η οικογένεια Καβάκη,” *Λακ.Σπ.* 5 (1980): 39–48.

The Mamonas family included, as its first known member, one of the three archons who were responsible for the surrender of Monemvasia to Villehardouin. Since then the family's history parallels that of the Daimonoianis, with its members in Monemvasia and other places engaged in all sorts of activities, as pirates, sailors, merchants, and also officials with close ties to the imperial family, as was the case with the *mezas dux* and master of Monemvasia Palaiologos-Mamonas. In the fifteenth century, members of the family are mentioned with the double surname Mamonas-Gregoras. The priest Niketas Mamonas and Theodore Komes were sent to offer Monemvasia to Pope Pius II.<sup>28</sup>

The third archon among those who surrendered Monemvasia to the Franks belonged to the Sophianos family. The presence of this family in Monemvasia, Constantinople, and elsewhere is also noteworthy until after the fifteenth century, although it is not as important as the other two. The Notaras family was connected with Monemvasia from at least the thirteenth century. Paul Notaras, *sebastos*, became archon of Kythera in 1270. Members of the family are found in various places, but after the fifteenth century there are practically no mentions of any of them in Monemvasia. Paul Komes was a member of another important family. In the middle of the fourteenth century, he was a merchant active between Crete and Monemvasia. Andreas Komes is mentioned in 1432 and Theodore in 1460; the latter was a member of the delegation that delivered Monemvasia to Pope Pius II, possibly the same person as the recipient of a silver bull of Constantine Palaiologos. Other members of the family are found in the late fifteenth century.

Many more well known Monemvasiot families, engaged in various activities, are found in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, including the families of Kavakis, Kontoleos, Korinthios, Sarandinos, and Sviros. We know other, less prominent, surnames, mainly of merchants and sailors, such as Daras, Alexandrinos, Katiditis, and Kiniotis. For other families, such as the Cheilas and Prinkips, it is possible, but not certain, that they came from Monemvasia. Others bear the designation "Monemvasiot" or "from Monemvasia" in place of a surname. They are often eminent individuals with surnames so well known that there was no reason to mention them.

#### *Production and Commerce*

A large part of the products in which the Monemvasiots traded came from the primary production of its territory. The area is mostly mountainous, but the land lends itself to cultivation, mainly without irrigation. In some places irrigation was possible with surface or underground water, and there were some important plains such as those of Helos, Asopos, Molaoi, Apidia, Belies, and Vatica. The territory was also good for raising livestock and exploiting forest products. A well-documented report, which was compiled for the governor Kapodistriasis in 1828, provides information on the productive possibilities in the area of Monemvasia and is useful for interpreting the sources

<sup>28</sup> It should be noted that the copy of the document in the Vatican archives transmits the name Nourona or Mourona, which is, I believe, a faulty reading of the name of Mamonas by the scribe. Kalligas, *Sources*, 191.

of the Byzantine period.<sup>29</sup> The land suitable for cultivation in 1828 was 340 km<sup>2</sup>. This area represents 24.13% of the total of the territory of Monemvasia at that time, which was 1,326 km<sup>2</sup>. The land was suitable mainly for olives and grapevines; more than 100,000 olive trees are recorded, including a number of wild olives, and 59 oil presses. In Byzantine documents there are no direct mentions of oil production; it is, however, implied in other sources.

References to vineyards, wine, and their respective taxes are found in many Byzantine documents and sources concerning Monemvasia. The chrysobull of 1301 for the possessions of the metropolis mentions many vineyards that were dispersed among other landholdings, while the chrysobull of 1336 exempts the Monemvasiots from taxes on wine, listing all the relevant taxes. In the silver bull of Theodore I of 1390–91, wine is mentioned as one of the three main categories of products that the Monemvasiots traded in.<sup>30</sup> One may assume that viticulture was considerable. A letter of the monk Isidore, addressed to Despot Theodore II in Mistra, mentions that the inhabitants of the Chora of Elikovounon had viticulture as their exclusive occupation.

By 1828 the vineyards had almost entirely disappeared, covering only 1.65 km<sup>2</sup>, which represented only 0.12% of the total and 0.51% of land suitable for cultivation. The report mentions that the best part of viticultural land was situated near Monemvasia, in its particular territory, a long strip of land that started to the north from Yerakas and ended south in Agios Phokas.<sup>31</sup> The author of the report notes that “before the conquest [by the Turks] . . . all the land was covered with vineyards, and until now the terraces can be seen, where there were vineyards. . . . They say that . . . [in] a register from the time of the Venetians . . . it was recorded that from the vineyards of this province the tenth part . . . of what was gathered in one year was 32,000 barrels.” According to the information of this register, which so far has not been located, yearly production around the end of the fifteenth century must have been about 16,000,000 liters. This production corresponded approximately to ca. 640 km<sup>2</sup> of vineyards, or 48.26% of the total territory.<sup>32</sup> It is not possible to confirm this information, but in favor of this large percentage in the area that used to be the territory of Monemvasia are, on the one hand, the large number of place names related to viticulture and, on the other, the area occupied by old terraces.<sup>33</sup> It is interesting to note that the register

<sup>29</sup> Belia, “1828,” 60–117. The territory examined in 1828 is slightly smaller than that of Byzantine Monemvasia and had as a limit to the north Kyparissi and not Astros. The comparison of the report with the Byzantine sources is justified because the interventions in the territory did not substantially change the older conditions, apart from the severe shrinking of population and its consequences.

<sup>30</sup> MM 5:164, 166, 172.

<sup>31</sup> The area is called Top Alti or Proasteia. Belia, “1828,” 66, 104.

<sup>32</sup> I take the Cretan-Venetian barrel to be 500 liters, which is an intermediate value between the 600.936 liters of Herakleion and the 450.702 liters of Crete. E. Schilbach, *Byzantinische Metrologie* (Munich, 1970), 144, 275. The output is calculated as 250 liters of wine per 1,000 m<sup>2</sup>, on a total surface equal to that of 1828.

<sup>33</sup> E.g., in the village of Agios Nikolaos of Monemvasia, where olive cultivation is dominant today, all the place names of the fields are associated with vineyards, e.g., Upper Vineyard. In addition, winepresses can still be seen in most fields.

was composed in a period of commercial decline, when part of the territory was already in Turkish hands and a large part of viticultural and farming land had been destroyed by grazing flocks.

Specialized research is necessary to interpret with certainty the information concerning the origin, production, diffusion, and dissemination of “Monemvasios” wine, or “Dorian wine from Monemvasia of the Peloponnese” or “malvasia,” which is described as “*manna alla boca e balsamo al cervello.*” It had the color of amber and underwent condensation through boiling. The fermentation, which was interrupted, resumed during transport by sea. A similar method of producing wine in Laconia is mentioned in the *Geoponica*: “The Lakedaimonians leave their wine in the fire until one-fifth evaporates, and after four years they use it.”<sup>34</sup>

Until the twelfth century, wine was one of the so-called *κεκωλυμένα προϊόντα*, products whose circulation was prohibited outside the limits of the Byzantine Empire. A first hint concerning the marketing of Monemvasiot wine is found at the beginning of the thirteenth century. The production of malvasia in Crete began in the fourteenth century; an effort was made to transport the vines (“*urtibus de Maloisie*,” “*plantatum urtibus monovasiae*”) from their place of origin and transplant them in Crete.<sup>35</sup> The fact that later sources always call it “monovasia wine” or “monovasia” points very strongly toward the origin being from Monemvasia and not from Crete or elsewhere. Another important fact is that the rock of Monemvasia contains an abundance of vaults, in which the conditions for fermenting and aging the wine are excellent.<sup>36</sup> In Italian sources, apart from the name *malvasia*, which in later times was used almost exclusively, a series of variations of names for the wine were common, including *vinum Malvasie*, *vinum Monemvasie*, *vino Marvasie*, *vino malvatico*, *vinum de Monovasia*, *vino de Malvagia*.<sup>37</sup>

Other products reported in 1828 are wheat and cotton in limited quantities and a considerable production of onions and garlic. We can deduce from Byzantine sources that wheat and barley were produced, as well as flax, which is not mentioned in 1828. The same report mentions fifty-five water mills and various trees including mulberry, almond, lemon, orange, bitter-orange, quince, pomegranate, pear, walnut, and chestnut. Water mills as well as a variety of trees, the same as those mentioned in 1828, must

<sup>34</sup> Kalligas, *Sources*, 79, 133; B. D. Krimbas, “Ο οἶνος καί αἱ ποικιλίαι ἀμπέλου Μαλβαζία,” in Ἐπιστημονική Τριακονταπεντηρίς καθηγητοῦ Ν.Α. Κρητικοῦ (Athens, 1944), 112–44, with many uncertainties as to the origin of the wine. See, in particular, p. 113, and cf. also p. 125.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. B. Imhaus, “Enchères des fiefs et vignobles de la république vénitienne en Crète au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle,” *ΕΕΒΣ* 41 (1974): 203, 207.

<sup>36</sup> H. Bourazeli, “Ἡ Μονοβάσια (-ιά) καί ἡ μονοβάσια (-ιά),” *Πλάτων* 5 (1953): 255–78. The effort to present malvasia as a wine whose origin was the Cretan district of Malevizi cannot be seriously supported. See Zakythinis, *Despotat*, 2:173, 249–50; P. Topping, “Viticulture in Venetian Crete, XIIIth c.,” in Πεπραγμένα τοῦ Δ’ Διεθνoῦς Κρητολογικοῦ Συνεδρίου (Athens, 1981), 2:509.

<sup>37</sup> Theotokis, *Misti*, 1:113 (1326); F. Thiriet, *Délibérations des assemblées vénitienes concernant la Roumanie*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1966–71), 2: no. 1353 (1436); N. Iorga, *Notes et extraits pour servir à l’histoire des croisades au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1899–1916), 1:64 (1325); 2:9 (1438); Theotokis, *Misti*, 2:226 (1381); Iorga, *Notes et extraits*, 4: no. 44.

have existed during the Byzantine period. The chrysobull of 1301 for the property of the metropolitan see, for example, mentions orchards, trees, and four water mills, and a legal document of 1432 mentions mulberry trees as the boundary of a field.<sup>38</sup>

It is noted in 1828 that the area was very well suited for raising livestock. However, the 65,000 sheep and goats and the 167 folds that are inventoried did not correspond to the potential of the territory. Apparently in the fourteenth century this potential was put to better use. According to the chrysobull of 1336 the Monemvasiots traded in “livestock or agricultural products or other commodities”; also mentioned are “quadrupeds, salted meat, skins or hides, and felt.” There are indications that horses were bred. Despite the lack of specific mentions, the production of high-quality honey and wax must be considered certain.<sup>39</sup>

Forests of firs and cypresses made possible the production of timber. In 1828 there was only one such forest, in Kyparissi, but it is reported that in earlier times there were two others, in Yerakas and Valanidia. The chrysobull of 1301 mentions one of these forests without further specifications.<sup>40</sup> Large oaks, which used to be found in various parts of the territory, have survived in certain places to this day, for example in the area of Charakas. There were also other varieties of oak, some bushy, growing in the wild, which provided various products, for example, those used for dyeing textiles, kermes in particular. The chrysobull of 1301 refers to the collection of kermes in Ganganneas, near Molaoi, and in Seraphon, more to the north, on Mount Parnon. It also mentions the production of acorns, which must have been considerable in the area of Prinikos.<sup>41</sup>

The extent of the seashore, its morphology, and the many ports and harbors made possible all sorts of activities connected with the sea, especially fishing. The silver bull of Theodore I, of 1390–91, mentions fish as one of three main categories of products in which the Monemvasiots traded: “meat,” “wine or fish.”<sup>42</sup>

It is not possible to know if the imperial mentions of “lavishness of crafts” refer to any craft other than the production of silk and textiles. Silk is mentioned at the beginning of the fourteenth century along with products for dyeing, but its production, as well as that of other textiles, must have been much older. Repeated references in the imperial documents reveal the traffic in other kinds of textiles, some of which must have been manufactured in Monemvasia. Among the crafts were the treatment of skins and hides.

The iron deposits in Vatica and other areas were known since antiquity. They must have been exploited during the early centuries of the city, but certainly not during the

<sup>38</sup> MM 5:164, 166; Fasoulakis, “Η οικογένεια Καβάκη,” 47.

<sup>39</sup> MM 5:164, 166, 172. For the horses, cf. C. Sathas, *Documents inédits relatifs à l'histoire de la Grèce au moyen âge*, 9 vols. (Paris, 1880–90), 6:94.

<sup>40</sup> Belia, “1828,” 105; MM 5:164.

<sup>41</sup> Kalligas, *Sources*, 224, 226.

<sup>42</sup> MM 5:172. Another activity connected with the sea, the fishing of the murex (the porphyry shell), by special fishermen of the Lakonike peninsula, for the production of the precious dye, may have survived from earlier times. Zakythinios, *Despotat*, 2:251.



period of the Palaiologoi, when iron was imported from Crete. Lead, copper, and other ores are known to exist in the area of Molaoi and elsewhere, as well as the “krokeatis” stone, a sort of green porphyry. It is not known if it had been quarried during the Byzantine period.

Architecture developed greatly during the Byzantine period, and the craftsmen from Monemvasia had a very good reputation. The material mostly used during all periods, especially for the building of vaults, was poros stone. For centuries it was quarried systematically in many parts of the peninsula of Lakonike.<sup>43</sup> Bricks, on the contrary, were not much used, and almost never for the construction of vaults. There are two place names that suggest the production of ceramic products, which, among others, were necessary for the fabrication of special waterproof mortars or for the manufacture of utensils.<sup>44</sup>

Before the thirteenth century, we can only assume from indirect evidence that the commercial activities of the Monemvasiots were equally important.<sup>45</sup> For the period after the Frankish occupation, the text that offers the greatest amount of information is the chrysobull of 1336. It deserves to be examined in comparison with other sources. The privileges of the chrysobull are bestowed upon groups of Monemvasiots who were dispersed in various places, Monemvasia, Constantinople, where they had moved recently from Pegai, and elsewhere, “wherever they might find themselves.” They moved around a very wide area, about which an idea is given by other more specific references: places near and around Constantinople, ports of Macedonia and Thrace, Bulgaria, the Peloponnese, the Aegean, the Black Sea, and elsewhere. They also frequented fairs, more especially those in the Peloponnese.<sup>46</sup>

This information is confirmed by various additional sources. Monemvasiot merchants are mentioned as being active in many places: Monemvasia and Constantinople, the region of the Black Sea, Crete. Mavrozomis was a merchant in Monemvasia around 1316, Nicholas in Constantinople in the middle of the fourteenth century, John Daimoniannis was active in Bulgaria and the Black Sea on a ship owned by the Byzantine emperor.<sup>47</sup> They do not seem, however, to have extended their enterprises into parts of the Aegean such as Chios or into the Ionian Sea.

<sup>43</sup> The poros quarries situated nearest Monemvasia are the following: in Tigani, 3 km to the north; in Pratazia, today Hagia Paraskevi, 4 km to the south. The quarries in Hagios Phokas were also important in supplying Monemvasia. All three are situated near sea level and had a small harbor. Another quarry can be seen almost at sea level in the ancient and medieval settlement of Yerakas. An important quarry in the area of Vatica has retained the place name Latomeio, which is also the name of the village nearby. Another quarry with the same name is mentioned in the 1828 report near the sea opposite Elaphonesos.

<sup>44</sup> One place is near Monemvasia (Tsikalaria); another is at a distance of 11 km (Keramoti).

<sup>45</sup> Sp. Lambros, *Μιχαήλ Ἀκομινάτου τοῦ Χωνιάτου τὰ σωζόμενα* (Athens, 1880), 2:136–37; Kalligas, *Sources*, 66–70. Cf. also Magdalino, *Manuel*, 149.

<sup>46</sup> There is absolutely no mention of a fair in Monemvasia. Cf. A. I. Lambropoulou, “Οἱ Πανηγύρεις στὴν Πελοπόννησο κατὰ τὴ Μεσαιωνικὴ ἐποχὴ,” in *Ἡ Καθημερινὴ Ζωὴ στὸ Βυζάντιο* (Athens, 1989), 298–300.

<sup>47</sup> The document issued in 1328 by Andronikos III for the Monemvasiots of Pegai shows similar activity. Schreiner, “Prostagma,” 207–13.

The chrysobull of 1336 specifies several of the products of Monemvasiot trade: livestock, agricultural products, especially wheat and wine, as well as salted meat, skins and hides, textiles, linseed, and felt. The document enumerates twenty-six special taxes from which the Monemvasiots were exempted, a list that hints at the production of some other products, such as olive oil, that are not mentioned.<sup>48</sup>

Wheat was not produced in Monemvasia. There is, however, frequent mention in the sources of wheat trading carried out by Monemvasiots. Just one example worth mentioning is that of John Daimonoianis, who was able to supply Kaffa with wheat during the siege of 1386. The traffic in wine by Monemvasiots is also well documented. Large quantities of wine must have been exported from the port of Yerakas, which in the portulans is mentioned as Porto delle Botte or Porto Botte. In the fifteenth century there were Venetian merchants in Monemvasia exporting wine. On the other hand, the wine traded in Crete by Andrea and Dimitri da Malvasia in collaboration with Vannino Fecini, in 1336–37, does not seem to have been from Monemvasia.<sup>49</sup>

Nicholas de Malvasia traded in fish in the Black Sea in 1289–90.<sup>50</sup> Imports of olive oil to Constantinople from Monemvasia in the middle of the fourteenth century are reported in detail. Andrea and Dimitri da Malvasia, apart from wine, also exported cheese from Crete with Vannino Fecini.<sup>51</sup> The export of raw silk and kermes from Monemvasia is reported in a Florentine commercial manual of the fourteenth century.<sup>52</sup> During the fourteenth century, iron was imported into Monemvasia from Crete by Monemvasiots, and in the fifteenth century Bessarion knew of the existence of mines in the territory of Monemvasia only from rumor.<sup>53</sup> Even planks were imported from Crete in the fifteenth century, as becomes evident from the permission given to Nicholas Eudaimonoianis in 1419.

### *Maritime Activities*

The morphology of the city and its territory, its position in relation to sea routes, and the special conditions that prevailed since the seventh century favored maritime enterprises. A number of good ports of various sizes are found on the shore at distances that allowed easy connections between them, by sea and by land.<sup>54</sup> On the eastern

<sup>48</sup> Schreiner, "Prostagma," 219–21.

<sup>49</sup> Thiriet, *Délibérations du Sénat*, 2: nos. 1756, 1798, 1831, 2048; 3: nos. 2706, 2763; R. Morozzo della Rocca, *Lettere di mercanti a Pignol Zucchello, 1336–1350* (Venice, 1957), 7, 8, 10, 14, 15.

<sup>50</sup> M. Balard, *Gênes et l'outre-mer*, vol. 1, *Les actes de Caffa du notaire Lamberto de Sambuceto, 1289–1290* (Paris, 1973), no. 438.

<sup>51</sup> Morozzo della Rocca, *Pignol Zucchello*, 7, 8, 10, 14, 15.

<sup>52</sup> D. Jacoby, "Silk Production in the Frankish Peloponnese: The Evidence of Fourteenth-Century Surveys and Reports," in *Travellers and Officials in the Peloponnese: Descriptions, Reports, Statistics. In Honour of Sir Steven Runciman* (Monemvasia, 1994), 46.

<sup>53</sup> Gasparis, "Η ναυτιλιακή κίνηση," 308; Zakythinos, *Despotat*, 2:250.

<sup>54</sup> The ports are shown fairly accurately in the most important portulans and maps of the 16th century, e.g., those by Giovanni Andrea Vavassore: British Library, maps 15.c.26(43); or by Gian Battista Agnese: Bon, *Morée franque*, pl. 9. They are also enumerated in detail in the 1828 report. Archaeological finds suggest the use of certain other ports as well.

shore, Kyparissi was a port important for the export of timber from the forests of Mount Parnon, which was necessary for the construction of ships. To the south, Yerakas was the most important port in the area and functioned as an arsenal for the Byzantine fleet. Most probably this was the place where shipyards were installed. The port of Palia Monovasia as well as other smaller harbors in the area, such as San Polo, Psifias, and Hagios Phokas, must have operated in combination with the port installations on the rock of Monemvasia. There were other good ports further south, in the area of Vatica, as well as two important ones on the west coast, Archangelos and Plytra or Xyli, a port "suitable to shelter a whole fleet." The Italians called it Porto Grana because of the export of kermes. Other smaller harbors, such as Elia and Kokkinia to the northwest, or Prophetis Elias and Hagia Marina near Cape Malea, were in use for local or seasonal needs.

Mount Parnon provided timber for shipbuilding, but so far there is no concrete information regarding this. However, the organized departure of the inhabitants to settle in Asia Minor, after the surrender of the city to the Franks, in the middle of the thirteenth century, would presuppose a large number of ships constructed locally. This departure, however, most probably put an end to the function of the Monemvasiot shipyards.

In the prooimion of the chrysobull of 1301, the emperor praises the activities of Monemvasiots as both sailors and merchants.<sup>55</sup> The text makes no special reference to the military aspect that characterized their maritime activities in earlier times and is emphasized in other Byzantine texts. In the mid-fourteenth century, the Monemvasiots are described as men who, in the past, had engaged in land and sea battles, whereas their interest in commerce was relatively recent. In the fifteenth century, Monemvasia is described as "having had the supremacy in all the seas that start from the pillars of Hercules . . . having crushed and sunk many and important forces and numerous fleets of Sicilians, Italians, Spaniards, many times."<sup>56</sup> Their repulsion of the attack of the Norman fleet against the city in 1147, one in a series of attacks against large cities of the Byzantine Empire, and the only one that was successfully repulsed, gives an idea of the efficiency of the Monemvasiots in naval military activities at that time. However, it is the activities of the Mavrozomis family, which was distinguished in campaigns mentioned by twelfth-century sources, that allow one to detect the presence and performance of people from Monemvasia in military operations in a large part of the Aegean and the Mediterranean.<sup>57</sup> For the thirteenth century, it is most likely that a large percentage of the skilled crews that Emperor John III Vatatzes attracted for the fleet organized in Asia Minor against the Latins was composed of Monemvasiots. There are, however, many indications that commercial activities coexisted with military ones before that time, and there is direct reference to Monemvasiot merchant ships in the twelfth century.

<sup>55</sup> Binon, "Macaire ou Phrantzès?" 306.

<sup>56</sup> Lambros, "Ἀναφοραί," 288.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Magdalino, *Manuel*, 257–58.

The Frankish conquest brought a dramatic decrease in the naval activities of the city, perhaps a total abandonment of them by the inhabitants who remained home, "exhausted and without resources." After the return of Monemvasia to Byzantine sovereignty, a large part of the active population returned, encouraged by the central administration, and naval activities were revived. The vessels mentioned by the sources as being used by the Monemvasiots after the thirteenth century were, however, small and most probably constructed elsewhere. Most references are to *barche*, sometimes to the larger *ligna*. In the fourteenth century, the Monemvasiots are said to trade with *barche*, *ligna*, and *griparie*. In 1462 they traded in foodstuffs from nearby areas with their *fuste*, encountering many difficulties because of pirates.<sup>58</sup>

The Monemvasiots themselves, however, had not only been merchants but pirates as well. They usually operated in the southwestern Aegean, between Euboa and Crete. Sometimes they attacked ships in Cretan ports or in more distant places. Their targets were small ships that served local commerce between the islands of the Aegean. The loot could be considerable. The list of Monemvasiot pirates contains the names of various members of important families of Monemvasia, for example, the Mamonas or Daimonoianis. Among the rest, some were Italians, such as Petro Caravella or Guglielmo from Monemvasia. A certain Saladdin is mentioned, but this was most probably a nickname. This sort of activity was considerably reinforced when the crews were unemployed after the disbanding of the imperial fleet in 1285; a considerable number of experienced Monemvasiot sailors had settled in Constantinople after its recapture in 1261 and had served in the imperial fleet.

Another kind of piracy practiced by the Monemvasiots until the end of the thirteenth century was a special type of collaboration with the emperor, since the documents often call its practitioners *homines domini Imperatoris*. Using Monemvasia and other places as a base, they attacked Venetian ships, preventing their provisioning or hindering their trading, thus supporting the imperial fleet while enjoying the benefit of considerable loot for their own profit.

After 1325 no information exists on Monemvasiot pirates. Possibly they channeled their efforts more systematically toward trade, or they moved to larger centers, or their ships were destroyed during the great crisis in Monemvasia around 1390. Gradually other groups of pirates took their place in the Aegean; it was now the turn of the Monemvasiots to suffer from their attacks. Isidore, no longer a monk but a cardinal, donated from his deathbed a *galiota* to the city for which he had cared since his youth; he wanted to protect it from the fierce pirates, who at this point were no longer Monemvasiots but Turks or Catalans. This piece of information is found in documents of 1462, along with the negotiations for the surrender of the city to the Venetians. At this point "the state which was once mistress of Greece, which had invaded Asia and the East with powerful fleets and subdued a large part of the world, . . . could not stand unless it sought lords from the West, . . . those . . . whose . . . power it had once de-

<sup>58</sup> ASV, Senato Secreta, XXI, fols. 103–104r, 12-VII-1462.

spised.” Pope Pius II “was so moved” by these thoughts “that he wept as he reflected on the uncertainty of earthly things.”<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*; Aeneas Silvio Piccolomini, “The Commentaries of Pius II: Books IV and V,” ed. W. D. Gray and H. V. Faulkner, trans. F. Gregg, *Smith College Studies in History* 30 (1946): 321.

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