

BYZANZ  
UND DAS ABENDLAND VII.  
Studia  
Byzantino-Occidentalia



BYZANZ UND DAS ABENDLAND VII.  
STUDIA BYZANTINO-OCCIDENTALIA

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# **Byzanz und das Abendland VII. Studia Byzantino-Occidentalia**

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Márton Rózsa

## A Long Dispute about a Little Orchard The Social Aspects of a Case from the Chartulary of the Monastery of Saint Paul on Mount Latros

Numerous questions have been raised about provincial life in the Byzantine Empire, thus this wide subject has attracted the attention of scholars for decades. Here, I first refer to Judith Herrin, who analysed the political and administrative conditions of provincial government through the example of Hellas and Peloponnese in the late twelfth century in an article.<sup>1</sup> Michael Angold also wrote an important study about the political conditions in the provincial towns.<sup>2</sup> Paul Magdalino dedicates a chapter to the relations between Constantinople and the rest of the empire in his monograph about the reign of Manuel I.<sup>3</sup> One may also mention Leonora Neville's invaluable study on Byzantine provincial society, which deals with the connections between local potentates and the different authorities of the imperial government, as well as the regulation of society in the provinces.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, I recently studied provincial affairs in my doctoral dissertation, which dealt with the Byzantine second-tier elite in the Komnenian period.<sup>5</sup> Naming all the studies that tackle the provincial conditions of the authorities, institutions, and their agents would require a lot more pages. Nevertheless, the great interest in the administrative circumstances of the Byzantine provinces means that many aspects of this topic have already been revealed. However, several questions concerning the

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<sup>1</sup> HERRIN, J., Realities of Byzantine Provincial Government: Hellas and Peloponnesos, 1180–1205. *DOP* 29 (1975) 253–284.

<sup>2</sup> ANGOLD, M., Archons and Dynasts: Local Aristocracies and the Cities of the Later Byzantine Empire. In: ANGOLD, M. (ed.), *The Byzantine Aristocracy, IX to XIII Centuries*. Oxford 1984, 236–253.

<sup>3</sup> MAGDALINO, P., *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180*. Cambridge 1993, 109–179.

<sup>4</sup> NEVILLE, L., *Authority in Byzantine Provincial Society, 950–1100*. Cambridge 2004.

<sup>5</sup> RÓZSA, M., *Byzantine Second-Tier Elite in the Long Twelfth Century*. D.Phil. Thesis. Eötvös Loránd University 2019, especially 129–160.

political and social conditions of Byzantine provinces still attract attention. In this paper, I narrow the scope of observation to the late decades of the Komnenian period.

In the last decades of the period, there was a dispute about an estate, which provides us with a picture of the circumstances of powerful landowners. The debate arose between the Monastery of Saint Paul on Mount Latros and a family from the local elite, the Karantenoí. The affair is recorded by five documents, which remained in a version of the chartulary of the aforementioned monastic community that was copied in the fifteenth century.<sup>6</sup> The documents were first published by Miklosich and Müller.<sup>7</sup> The latter edition needed re-consideration, and also includes some lacunae that have now been corrected with the new methods used by Gastgeber and Kresten.<sup>8</sup> The source material shows us a considerably unbalanced narrative about the dispute that offers little evidence about the action of the opposing side, the Karantenos family. The increasing defamation of the family by the monastery in its documents definitely does not lead to a clearer picture of the situation. Using the records of the chartulary, this paper deals with the political methods with which different individuals attempted to control the events of this affair. The analysis focuses on the action of the family of Karantenoí and those of a sole figure from the other side, Michael Angelos Doukas Komnenos, one of the local governors who was involved.

## The affair

The participants and the stages of the affair explain the length of the dispute. In theory, the simple situation of two opposing sides characterises the debate. The dispute arose when a certain John Karantenos appropriated the estate called Mesingouma (before this time – sometime before 1175 – he only rented it from the imperial monastery on Latros).<sup>9</sup> The first recorded petition of the monastic community was probably sent to Emperor Andronikos I (1183–1185),

<sup>6</sup> GASTGEBER, CH. – KRESTEN, O., *Das Chartular des Paulos-Klosters am Berge Latros*. Vienna 2015, 13–30. The five documents are 11a, 11b, 12, 13a, and 13b. The petitions of the monastery and the imperial responses to them are numbered together. The references to the documents include the page(s), the number(s) of the document(s) and the line(s).

<sup>7</sup> MIKLOSICH, F. – MÜLLER, J., *Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi. Sacra et profana*. I–VI. Vienna 1860–90; IV. 4, 320–329, nos. 13–15.

<sup>8</sup> GASTGEBER – KRESTEN (n. 6) 42.

<sup>9</sup> GASTGEBER – KRESTEN (n. 6) 190–192, 11a,15–24; 213, 12,82–86; 226–28, 13a,4–18.

who ordered the restitution of the petitioner's rights regarding the aforementioned land.<sup>10</sup> The documents attest that the family obtained official confirmation from a *praktikon* of the local governor, Basil Batatzes *sebastos*, *doux*, and *anagrapheus* of Mylasa and Melanoudion. The monks, who had been deprived of their possession, requested that the following administrator of the same districts, Michael Angelos Doukas Komnenos, confirm their right concerning Mesingouma. Michael Doukas, who usually referred to himself in this way, allowed the appeal of the monastery, and issued a decree about his decision.<sup>11</sup> Since the Karantenoï did not return the estate to the monastic community, the latter party delivered a petition to Alexios III (1195–1203).<sup>12</sup> The emperor agreed to the request in his *lysis* and ordered the local governors to restore the jurisdiction of Latros over Mesingouma.<sup>13</sup> The government then failed to enforce its judgement regarding the Karantenoï, and John's son bequeathed the land to another monastery. The monks of Latros had to appeal to Alexios IV (1203–1204) during the time of the fourth crusade. The new emperor also confirmed the decision of Michael Doukas, but this is the last moment in our records of the affair, with no clue to its conclusion.<sup>14</sup> This very brief overview may demonstrate the complexity of the affair, which resulted in a lasting debate about an estate with an olive orchard. It also indicates that this lack of completion arose from the stratagem of the Karantenoï and the incompetence of the government.

### The Karantenoï and their machinations

The Karantenoï had declined from the apogee of their old prestige and authority long before the dispute arose. They belonged to the old and illustrious families of the elite, and several members of this house occupied key positions in the

<sup>10</sup> GASTGEBER – KRESTEN (n. 6) 212, 12,87–88. In truth, referring alone to this document, the decree of Michael Doukas does not specify which appeal and imperial *lysis* is mentioned here. About the identification of these charters, see GASTGEBER–KRESTEN (n. 6), 202, n. 10.

<sup>11</sup> The actual document: GASTGEBER – KRESTEN (n. 6) 204–218, 12. References to Doukas' decision in other documents: *idem*, 192, 11a,25–33; 194, 11b,58–64; 228, 13a,19–24; 230, 13b,44–48. Michael Doukas' decree is not dated, its issue is determined between August 1189 and April 1195 according to the dates of other related documents, GASTGEBER–KRESTEN (n. 6) 198, n. 1.

<sup>12</sup> GASTGEBER – KRESTEN (n. 6) 190–194, 11a.

<sup>13</sup> GASTGEBER – KRESTEN (n. 6) 194–196, 11b.

<sup>14</sup> GASTGEBER – KRESTEN (n. 6) 226–230, 13a–b. It is worth noting that the last document also supports Latros, but considering the political circumstances of the imperial decision, the brief and chaotic reign of Alexios IV and Isaac II, the government was probably not able to vindicate the rights of an imperial monastery.

empire before the reign of the Komnenian dynasty. In the late tenth century, the family belonged to the local elite in the theme of Anatolikon.<sup>15</sup> The most distinguished representative of this house was Constantine Karatenos, the brother-in-law of Romanos III (1028–1034).<sup>16</sup> The Komnenian period seemingly witnessed the decline of the family, and the lack of kinship with the ruling dynasty certainly had a negative effect on their reputation.<sup>17</sup> The seals of the Karatenoi issued in the “long” twelfth century provide little information about the position of the family, and this evidence confirms their fall.<sup>18</sup> The case and its sources offer a number of clues about the circumstances of this family through the portrayal of its two representatives.

John Karatenos *primikerios* is an important figure in our analysis of the conditions of his family. He played a crucial role in the debate as the aggressor and the initiator of the struggle for Mesingouma. In line with his influence on the affair, John is mentioned by all the documents issued by Latros and the administration regarding the solution of the problem. The most important information about him is that he took charge of *primikerios*, and his residence was located in Mylasa.<sup>19</sup> It is also worth noting that John’s life came to an end before any of the preserved documents were dispatched, as the earliest charter, the decree of Michael Doukas, implies.<sup>20</sup> His function and official authority are uncertain, since the dignity of *primikerios* was associated with numerous positions and charges in the Byzantine Empire.<sup>21</sup> However, the fact that he lived permanently in Mylasa, a bishopric see, decreased his access to potential offices. Thus, it is probable that John Karatenos was the *primikerios* of the

<sup>15</sup> CHEYNET, J.-C., *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963–1204)*. Paris 1990, 223.

<sup>16</sup> THURN, H. (ed.), *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis historiarum*. Berlin – New York 1973, 377,16.

<sup>17</sup> CHEYNET (n. 15) 457. n. 159.

<sup>18</sup> Obv.: Ἡ σφραγὶς ἡδ[ε] τὸν Θεόδωρον γράφει, rev.: τὸν Τ(ή)νου τοῦτον τὸν Καρατηνὸν λέγω, WASSILIOU-SEIBT, A.-K., *Corpus der byzantinischen Siegel mit metrischen Legenden*. I–II. Vienna 2011–2016, I. 386, no. 854; JORDANOV, I., *Corpus of Byzantine Seals from Bulgaria*. I–III. Sofia 2003–2009, II. 185. There is no iconography on this seal. The bulla testifies the entrance of the family into the higher clergy. Rev.: Καρατηνὸν με Μιχαῖλ, μάκαρ, σκέποις, WASSILIOU-SEIBT (n. 18) I. 482–483, no. 1088. The obverse depicts the standing figure of Saint Nicholas. Rev.: Καρατηνοῦ Μιχαῖλ σφράγισ[μ]α πέλω, WASSILIOU-SEIBT (n. 18) I. 483, no. 1090. The obverse depicts the bust of Michael the Archangel. The two homonymous Karatenoi are suggested to be separate individuals.

<sup>19</sup> GASTGEBER – KRESTEN (n. 6) 190, 11a,16–17.

<sup>20</sup> GASTGEBER – KRESTEN (n. 6) 190, 11a,15; 204, 12,3–9, 226–28, 13a,16–18.

<sup>21</sup> GUILLAND, R., *Recherches sur les institutions byzantines*. I–II. Berlin–Amsterdam 1967, I. 300–312.

notaries in the aforementioned diocese. This position was not imbued with an official power that the monastery of Saint Paul would have been afraid of, in theory. Nonetheless, this charge could have been accompanied by ties and connections that were dangerous to the monastic community.

The situation concerning John's son, Leo Karatenos, appears even more uncertain. He continued the debate with the monks on Mesingouma, but the potential sources of his power and ability to maintain his ownership over the estate remain obscure. The decree of Michael Doukas refers to the transmission of the land into the hands of a son of John Karatenos through inheritance, albeit without mention of the heir's name.<sup>22</sup> The petition of the Monastery of Saint Paul to Alexios IV offers the successor's name, Leo, noting that the latter kept the estate until his early death.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, none of the documents indicates John's office or rank, obscuring the authority of his family and its position in the local elite. We do not know the exact date of his death, but it definitely happened between 1195 and 1204. The petition of the Monastery of Saint Paul in 1195 does not refer to Leo himself, but to the family, using the general term *μέρος* (part, side). The later appeal of the monks in 1204 calls him by name in a highly negative context, however. This implies that Leo's role became important in the dispute after the first petition, and there was a serious debate between him and the monastic community on a local basis for years. Therefore, it is implied that Leo's death occurred closer to 1204. It is a question, nonetheless, how he was able to avoid acquiescing to the imperial instructions issued by Alexios III on behalf of the monastery after its "first" appeal.

The *praktikon* of Basil Batatzes plays an interesting role in the affair. This decree of Batatzes, a governor of Mylasa and Melanoudion, belonged to those documents that were issued during the debate between the Monastery of Saint Paul and the Karatenoi – more specifically, in around 1189.<sup>24</sup> The former

<sup>22</sup> GASTGEBER – KRESTEN (n. 6) 214, 12,114–15.

<sup>23</sup> GASTGEBER – KRESTEN (n. 6) 228, 13a,25–29.

<sup>24</sup> This governor was probably identical with Basil Batatzes, the *domestikos* of the east and *doux* of Thrakesion, later the *domestikos* of the west who was killed in a campaign against the rebellious Bulgarians in around 1193, VAN DIETEN, J. L., *Nicetae Choniatae historia*. I–II. Berlin 1975, I. 400,74–77; 435,61–436,67; 446,63–69; POLEMIS, D. I., *The Doukai: A Contribution to Byzantine Prosopography*. London 1968, 107. Niketas Choniates states that Basil had a humble origin: Choniates (n. 24) I. 400,74–75, despite the close relation between the imperial houses and some Batatzai. Cheynet doubts the trustworthiness of Byzantine accounts concerning the ancestry of elite members: CHEYNET (n. 15) 256. Polemis considers Basil as the father of John III Doukas (Batatzes) of Nicaea, but the historian also refers to the historical problems with this idea: POLEMIS (n. 24) 107, n. 5.

evidently issued instructions about Mesingouma in favour of the latter party. According to Michael Doukas and his document, Batatzes recorded the estate as a part of the patrimony possessed by the Karantenoi in his *praktikon*.<sup>25</sup> It is also mentioned that Batatzes provided the family with an extract from the cadastre that enumerated the taxes applicable to Mesingouma.<sup>26</sup> This latter action was also beneficial for the Karantenoi in relation to fiscal agents, since Mesingouma was definitely granted exemptions from several burdens. Thus, Batatzes was considerably generous to the family in regard to the circumstances. The debate arose years before Batatzes issued his *praktikon* – he consequently must have learnt about the affair in time. It seems implausible that such generosity occurred without the existence of good connections between Basil Batatzes and John Karatenos. However, our sources pay too little attention to this specific episode to permit a more detailed analysis and elaborate conclusions.<sup>27</sup> Nonetheless, Batatzes' activity had a significant effect on the following development of the dispute.

The Monastery of Saint Paul also applied rhetorical tools in its documents. More precisely, the rhetoric changed in the two surviving petitions of this monastic community. This development was made manifest in a different manner, as the monks refer to the Karantenoi in their two documents. The petition in 1195 mentions John Karatenos and his family in a nearly neutral way by simply avoiding issuing judgment on them in the narration of their activities.<sup>28</sup> The tone of the later appeal in 1204 clearly differs in terms of the description of the Karantenoi and related scandals. This document in one place calls John “rapacious” (ἄρπαξ δὲ ὤν), while his son, Leo, is described as a man “doubling his father in greed and rapacity” (διπλασιάσας τῷ πλεονεκτικῷ καὶ ἀρπακτικῷ

<sup>25</sup> GASTGEBER – KRESTEN (n. 6) 212, 12,89–93.

<sup>26</sup> GASTGEBER – KRESTEN (n. 6) 212, 12,93–94.

<sup>27</sup> It is worth noting that Batatzes also issued another extract from the cadastre for the opposite party, the Monastery of Saint Paul, in order to confirm its possessions: GASTGEBER – KRESTEN (n. 6) 178–80, 10. The document originally recorded the estates under the jurisdiction of the monastic community, yet, unfortunately, Chortasmenos, the copyist of our only known version of the chartulary, neglected to transcribe the names of the separate lands. Therefore, there is no evidence that Mesingouma is ignored in that document. However, the other aforementioned sources indicate this action. The absence of Mesingouma from the confirmation of the landed property of the monastery could also strengthen the position of the Karantenoi. We know of a seal type of Batatzes that was identical with the one applied for the confirmation: Ταῖς τοῦ σεβαστοῦ Βατάτζη Βασιλείου γραφαῖς τὸ κύρος, παντάνασσα, σὺ δίδου, ZACOS, G. – VEGLERY, A., *Byzantine Lead Seals*. I. Basel 1972, 1549–50, no. 2740 (the document quotes the inscription too: GASTGEBER – KRESTEN [n. 6] 180, 10,41–42).

<sup>28</sup> GASTGEBER – KRESTEN (n. 6) 190–192, 11a,15–17, 34–36.

τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ). The portrayal of the two Karantenoi is accompanied by reference to divine intervention and its role in their death.<sup>29</sup> The difference is evident between the two narratives, but the reasons for this change remains to be clarified. The former document applies a pure legalistic style, while the later petition includes more emotional accounts at some points. There are several potential explanations for this. First, it may simply be that different monks were responsible for the creation of the two petitions. Second, the long dispute and the perpetual failure of the Monastery of Saint Paul may also have induced the members of the community to become more immoderate. Third, the change of style could have been generated by the expansion of the dispute between the monks at Latros and the Karantenoi to include another monastery, which obtained Mesingouma in the later years of the debate. The more emotional manner and the appearance of religious elements in the narrative suggest the last hypothesis.

In this late stage of the debate, another monastic community also played an important role. Leo Karatenos bequeathed Mesingouma to a monastery that was obviously not identical with the monastic community of Saint Paul. The date of this action is unknown, but Leo probably included the grant in his will, and the favoured monastery would have inherited the estate after the former's death. Therefore, the monks of Latros were required to oppose another community in later years. Nonetheless, it is a question what Leo's intention was with the donation. In general, monasteries played an important role in both the spiritual and secular matters of the Byzantine elite. Beside commemorating several members of a family, the foundation or patronage of a monastery represented the social position of an elite house. Furthermore, a founder or patron could show their connection to a region by their support for a local monastic community.<sup>30</sup> It is uncertain which of these aims Leo Karatenos personally pursued. However, his own desire for commemoration and that of closer kin definitely inspired him. Despite this, the circumstances of the donation raise some questions. We have little information about Leo's family after his death. Since he died relatively young, as mentioned above, it is probable that he remained childless until his death. The act of the donation of his estate also indicates a lack of offspring.<sup>31</sup> However, we do not know what the fate was of Leo's complete landed property, since the only evidence is given by a third party interested only in that specific

<sup>29</sup> GASTGEBER – KRESTEN (n. 6) 226–238, 13a,14–18, 25–29.

<sup>30</sup> MORRIS, R., *The Byzantine Aristocracy and the Monasteries*. In: *ANGOLD* (n. 2) 117–123.

<sup>31</sup> See RÓZSA (n. 5) 151–158.

orchard. Nevertheless, the second known petition of the Monastery of Saint Paul suggests that Leo had siblings.<sup>32</sup> This leads to the hypothesis that Leo intended to keep the estate close to his family by bestowing the land on a monastery that was related to them.<sup>33</sup> Although the connection between this monastery and the Karantenoi is obscure, the donation of Mesingouma alone would have been able to build such valuable ties.

### The reaction of Michael Doukas

The involvement of the Batatzes apparently influenced the decree of his successor, Michael Doukas.<sup>34</sup> On the one hand, the document of the latter governor includes a highly detailed and long argument supporting the claims of the monastery of Saint Paul. On the other, it absolutely exceeded in quality the style of the other documents, decrees, and petitions related to the affair. The introduction of Doukas' decree is based on biblical quotations; notably, one from Psalm 37: "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. / Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found."<sup>35</sup> In Doukas' decree, the citation is not correct, since it replaces the phrase "the wicked" (τὸν ἄσεβῆ) with "man" (ἄνδρα) to make a more obvious reference to Karatenos.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, Doukas provides a fine rhetorical composition in the final part of his document. It refers to his master and kinsman, Isaac II's (1185–1195, 1203–1204) attempt to rebuild the old status of the monastery, and compares the reigning emperor to Leo VI the Wise (886–912), who founded this monastic community.<sup>37</sup> These pieces surpassed the requirements of a conventional document,

<sup>32</sup> The document states that John Karatenos bequeathed Mesingouma to his children, not only to a single son, GASTGEBER – KRESTEN (n. 6) 226, 13a,15–16.

<sup>33</sup> It is worth noting that this donation resulted in an issue of another document, which provided the monastery, the estate, and the Karantenoi with additional guarantees. Both the second petition of the monastery of Saint Paul and the imperial *hysis* responding to it demonstrate that the administration had to deal with the authority of the donation: GASTGEBER – KRESTEN (n. 6) 228, 13a,30–38; 230, 13b,51–57.

<sup>34</sup> Michael Doukas, son of John Doukas, was a great-grandson of Alexios I and a cousin of Isaac II and Alexios III. After the Fourth Crusade, he established the separate state in Epirus, POLEMIS (n. 24) 91–92. He was a representative of the Angeloi, despite his chosen family name.

<sup>35</sup> Ps. 37, 35–36 (Ps. 36, 35–36 according to the Septuaginta).

<sup>36</sup> GASTGEBER – KRESTEN (n. 6) 204, 12,3–6.

<sup>37</sup> GASTGEBER – KRESTEN (n. 6) 216, 12,131–144. Beside these solutions, returning to the detailed argument the decree frequently applies diplomatic tools by referring to numerous documents



even by the standards of the imperial court. The refined narrative suggests that Doukas was trying to invoke a rhetorical competition with the instructions of his predecessor in the seat of *doux*. However, Batatzes' influence is manifest in another part of Doukas' argument.

Doukas' decree includes an interesting account about one stage of his investigation. He personally visited Larymos in the vicinity of Mesingouma to make inquiries about the situation of alienation. The narrative of this activity contains some interesting elements:

Since the assessment of Batatzes furnishes Karantenos with a reasonable inheritance, of necessity, we have come for interrogation and, from the interrogation, to hear what one would say. Because there was no one who did not recount violation and plunder at home with the grief of heart. Some people reported the violation and plunder of houses, vineyards, inner and outer gardens and trees, others those of agricultural places, *proasteia*, ploughlands and other sorts of property, which there is no way to describe. At the same time, each of them hurled the rights about these [possessions] in front of my feet. The following was the most pleasant sight to me. The church bawled, the monastery sounded like a trumpet, when it proclaimed the tyrannies of the man. Orphans, widows and a further band and group of people sang altogether, what they had suffered beforehand. All of them exalted and, so to speak, rejoiced that obtained the previously seized property.<sup>38</sup>

At the beginning, there is clear reference to the influence of Batatzes' *praktikon* on the events. Furthermore, this demonstrates that the Karantenoi caused

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that were related to Mesingouma. The most important piece among these references was the apparently complete quotation of Michael Xeros' decree, which re-established the rights of the monastery of Saint Paul after the Seljuk invasion, without doubt: GASTGEBER – KRESTEN (n. 6) 208–212, 12,41–78.

<sup>38</sup> Ὅτι δὲ ἡ ἀπογραφὴ τοῦ Βατάτζη κληρον τινα εὐλογον ἐχορήγει τῷ Καραντηνῷ, ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἤκομεν καὶ εἰς ἐρωτήσεις καὶ, τί ἂν εἶπη τις, ἀκοῦσαι ἐξ ἐρωτήσεως. οὐδὲ γὰρ ἦν ὁ μὴ οἰκείαν βίαν καὶ ἀρπαγὴν ἐξ ὀδύνης καρδιακῆς ἐκφωνῶν· ἄλλοι μὲν γὰρ οἰκημάτων καὶ ἀμπελώνων καὶ ἔσω περιβόλων καὶ δένδρων βίαν καὶ ἀρπαγὴν ὑπεδείκνυον, ἕτεροι χωρφακίων ἐντοπίων, προαστείων, ζευγηλατείων καὶ ἄλλων, ὧν γράψαι οὐκ ἔστιν ὁδός· πρὸ ποδῶν ἡμῶν ἕκαστος αὐτῶν καὶ τὰ περὶ τούτων ἐπιρριπτοντες δικαίωματα. καὶ μοι θέαμα ἥδιστον, αἱ ἐκκλησίαι κατεβόων, τὰ μοναστήρια δίκην σάλπιγγος κατήχουν ἐκφωνοῦσαι τὰς τοῦ ἀνδρὸς τυραννίδας, ὄρφανοὶ δὲ καὶ χῆραι καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν τῶν ἀνθρώπων σύστημα τε καὶ σύνταγμα ἐθρήνη μὲν ὀλοσχερῶς, ἃ προπέπονθεν, ἠγάλλετο δὲ καὶ ἔχαιρεν ὥσπερ εἰπεῖν ἕκαστος αὐτῶν τὸ προαρπαγὲν κληρωσάμενος, GASTGEBER – KRESTEN (n. 6) 214, 12,104–115.

significantly more serious problems in the region. Still, the most interesting characteristic of this account is its representative purpose. The narrative of the personal investigation is placed into a frame built using the words of the same root, κληρον, and κληροσάμενος. The account proceeds from the inheritance of the Karantenoï to the restoration of the alienated lands. The narrative explicitly expresses in the following part of the document that Doukas re-established the possessions of the local inhabitants.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, the text implies here that the positive development occurred as a result of his visitation and investigation. The account represents Doukas as a competent and effective governor who is a good servant of the emperor, protector of the law, and a corrector of a former error of the administration. Still, it remains a question why Doukas was so desperate to issue a charter with such an elaborate representation.

We must observe Michael Doukas' action in the light of his political and social milieu. As has been mentioned, Doukas was a member of the imperial dynasty when he was the governor of Mylasa and Melanoudion, and thus belonged to the highest echelons of the Byzantine elite. From the reign of Alexios I, or Manuel I at the latest, the extended imperial family monopolised the key positions of the administration, although the government of Isaac II was characterised by its slight distance from Komnenian political culture.<sup>40</sup> The leading elite of twelfth-century Byzantium spent most of its time in Constantinople, and Michael Doukas was probably not an exception to this rule, even during his appointment to Mylasa and Melanoudion.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, Doukas was more involved in the politics of the imperial court than in the power games of his province. The *doux* was definitely considering both Constantinopolitan and provincial aspects when he issued his decree. He could thereby simultaneously show his authority to the local elite of Mylasa and Melanoudion, and represent his competence to the imperial court with this document. Nevertheless, the refined style of the document better served as a means of communicating within the intellectually more sophisticated milieu of the capital. Michael Doukas had to pay more attention to his political interests in Constantinople, since the politics of the empire became more turbulent in last two decades of the twelfth century.

<sup>39</sup> GASTGEBER-KRESTEN (n. 6) 214, 12,116–121.

<sup>40</sup> MAGDALINO (n. 3) 180–227; MAGDALINO, P., *The Empire of the Komnenoi (1118–1204)*. In: SHEPARD, J. (ed.), *The Cambridge history of the Byzantine Empire c. 500–1492*. Cambridge 2008, 627–663.

<sup>41</sup> The absence of governors from their provincial districts was a general phenomenon in the period: HERRIN (n. 1) 266.

\* \* \*

The dispute concerning the orchard shows the complexity of Byzantine society in relation to provincial politics. John Karantenos and his family were residents of a provincial town in Asia Minor, Mylasa. They were seemingly focused on maintaining and increasing their authority in local society. However, their early success during the dispute over the estate needed good connections with the political centre of the empire. The picture provided by the sources about the Karantenoι during the affair is very similar to that about the local landlords in the tenth and eleventh centuries described by Leonora Neville. Connections, communication, and authority were the main elements of the involvement of Michael Doukas too. However, it is interesting how clearly a decree shows that the political interests of a governor essentially extended beyond the confines of his province.

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