

POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS IN THE LATE BYZANTINE PERIOD:
THE ZEALOTS AND SAILORS OF THESSALONICA*

The direct and organised manifestation of the people's political expression—which in modern democracies is ensured through the institution of political parties—was incompatible, in theory at least, with the monarchic régime of the Byzantine Empire, in which all authority was vested in the Emperor¹. All the same, the existence of the demes², which were, amongst other things, political bodies with various functions³, demonstrates that in

* The views expressed in this paper are the first conclusions reached on questions arising in the writer's research into the local self-administration and the manifestations of self-determination by the people in the centrally structured Byzantine state. A self-contained section of this on-going research, this paper represents an initial attempt at a comprehensive approach to the phenomena and institutions that governed the Byzantine state and the Empire's public life in general.

1. Concerning the political theory of the Byzantine state, see J. B. Bury, 'The Constitution of the Later Roman Empire', in *Selected Essays*, edited by H. Temperly (Cambridge, 1930), pp. 99-125; W. Ensslin, 'The Emperor and the Imperial Administration', in *Byzantium: An Introduction to East Roman Civilisation*, edited by N. H. Baynes and S. L. B. Moss (Oxford, 1948), pp. 268-307; I. Karayannopoulos, 'Η πολιτική θεωρία των Βυζαντινών' (Thessaloniki, 1988). Concerning the origins of this political theory and practice in the Roman period, see T. Mommsen, *Römisches Staatsrecht*, vol. II, part. 2, third edition (Graz, 1969), pp. 948-88, 881-913; J. Gaudemet, 'Le Régime impérial', in his collection of studies, *Les Gouvernants à Rome: Essais de droit public romain* (Naples, 1985), pp. 109-10.

2. For extensive discussion of the demes, see A. Cameron, *Circus Factions: Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium* (Oxford, 1976); F. Winkelmann, 'Zur politischen Rolle der Bevölkerung Konstantinopels von der nach justinianischen Zeit bis zum Beginn des Bilderstreits', in *Studien zum 7. Jahrhundert in Byzanz: Probleme der Herausbildung des Feudalismus*, edited by H. Köpstein and F. Winkelmann (Berlin, 1976), pp. 101-119. Fundamental is still the study of G. Manojlović, 'Le Peuple de Constantinople', *Byzantion*, 11 (1936), 617-716 (translated by H. Grégoire).

3. The political activity of the demes has been stressed mainly by F. Dvornik, 'The Circus Parties in Byzantium', *Βυζαντινά-Μεταβυζαντινά*, I/1 (1946), 119-133, (pp. 122-5); Manojlović, 'Le Peuple de Constantinople', (pp. 634ff., 673ff., 687ff.); Winkelmann, 'Zur politischen Rolle', 106-8. Cameron, however, in *Circus Factions*, questions the importance of the demes' political role (pp. 44, 309-11). Concerning the demes' military activity, see

practice the people enjoyed a certain amount of political freedom designed to exert a modicum of control over the sovereign's authority.

The demes played a political role until the end of the seventh century⁴, when they were assimilated by the machinery of state⁵ and incorporated into the court protocol⁶. The people were thus deprived of their means of political expression.

As a result of the revolution led by the Zealots in Thessalonica in the fourteenth century, a new form of government was established in the city in the period 1342-9. In both seizing and remaining in power, this régime rested on popular foundations, namely the intervention and the co-ordinated activity of two organised groups—the Zealots and the sailors.

Research into the Zealot uprising⁷ has paid little attention to the question

R. Guiland, 'Les Factions à Byzance', *Ἑπετηρίς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν*, 23 (1953), 6-11. For their administrative duties, see *ibid.*, p. 8.

4. A. Maricq, 'La Durée des parties populaires', Académie royale de Belgique, *Bulletin de la classe des lettres et des sciences morales et politiques*, 35 (1949), 64-74.

5. Bréhier, *Les Institutions de l'empire byzantin*, Paris 1970, p. 164.

6. N. Oikonomidès (editor), Κλητορολόγιο Φιλοθέου: *Les Listes de préséance byzantines des IXe et Xe siècles* (Paris, 1972), pp. 107 cols 20-2, 123 col. 28, 125 col. 7, 177 col. 27, 181 col. 15, 197 col. 11; A. Vogt (editor), *Le Livre des cérémonies* (Paris, 1967), vol. I, pp. 47, 50-53, 54ff.; vol. II, pp. 13-4, 24-5, 29-32, 36, 57-60, 75-78, 166-168. Up until the fourteenth century 'demarchs' are mentioned as occupying a very low rank in the court hierarchy: see Pseudo-Kodinos, *Περὶ τῶν ὀφφικιαλίων*, published by J. Verpeaux (Paris, 1976), p. 196, col. 33.

7. The Zealot revolution has been the object of research of the following (mainly western) scholars: O. Tafrali, *Thessalonique au XIVe siècle* (Paris, 1913), pp. 205-72; I. Ševčenko, 'The Zealot Revolution and the Supposed Genoese Colony in Thessalonica', *Ἑλληνικά* (Supplement 4: Dedicated to S. Kyriakidis) (Thessaloniki, 1953), including bibliography up until 1953; P. Charanis, 'Internal Strife in Byzantium during the 14th Century', *Byzantion*, XV (1940-41), 211-16, 225-7; V. Hrochová, 'La Révolte des Zélotes à Salonique et les communes italiennes', *Byzantinoslavica*, XXII/1 (1961), 1-15; eadem, 'Die Problematik der Zelotenbewegung in Thessalonike 1342-1349', *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther Universität*, Ges. u. Sprachwiss. Reihe 10 (Halle und Wittenberg, 1961), pp. 1447-50; C. Kyrris, 'Gouvernés et gouvernants à Byzance pendant la révolution des Zélotes (1341-1350)', *Recueils de la Société Jean Bodin*, vol. XXIII (Brussels, 1968), pp. 271-330; K. P. Matschke, *Fortschritt und Reaktion in Byzanz im 14. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1971), pp. 175-96; N. Pandazopoulos, *Ρωμαϊκὸν δίκαιον ἐν διαλεκτικῇ συναρτήσει πρὸς τὸ ἑλληνικὸν* (Thessaloniki, 1979), vol. III, pp. 107-14; I. Ševčenko, 'Nicholas Cabasilas' "Anti-Zealot" Discourse: A Reinterpretation', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* (hereafter DOP), 11 (1957), 81-171; idem, 'The Author's Draft on Nicholas Cabasilas' "Anti-Zealot" Discourse in Parisinus Gr. 1276', *DOP*, 14 (1960), 181-201; idem, 'A Postscript on Nicholas Cabasilas' "Anti-Zealot" Discourse', *DOP*, 16 (1963), 403-8; M. Sjujumov, 'K voprosu o karaktere vystuplenija Zilotov v 1342-1349 gg.', *VV*, 28 (1968), 15-37; G. Theodoridis, *Τοπογραφία καὶ*

of the origin, composition, and general character of these unions⁸. An investigation of this sort may be seen to be of importance once its object is considered to reflect the Byzantine people's possibilities of political expression. In the fourteenth century and in the context of the general circumstances of the civil war of 1342-9, despite the absence of relevant agencies⁹ this political expression did in fact manifest itself positively and forcefully and led to the overthrow of authority. The fact of the existence of bodies which came into being and functioned as political organisations under these specific historical circumstances is the subject of the present study¹⁰. This investigation of their essential nature will include an endeavour to show the forms of corporate bodies through which the people were able to participate in public life within the framework of the monarchic régime of fourteenth-century Byzantium, when the machinery of state was in a debilitated condition and the Empire in active decline. At the same time, the quest for their origins (as far as possible) and for the manner in which their activity was outwardly manifested is attended by an effort to evaluate these unofficial political parties from both an institutional and a cultural point of view.

1. THE ZEALOTS

One of the two organised groups, which led the revolution in Thessalonica and in the course of time was to work in association with the sailors, was that of the Zealots.

Commenting on the name 'Zealots'¹¹, Gregoras gives us to understand

πολιτική ιστορία τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης κατὰ τὸν ΙΔ' αἰῶνα (Thessaloniki, 1959), 27 ff.; E. Werner, 'Volkstümliche Häretiker oder sozial-politische Reformer? Probleme der revolutionären Volksbewegung in Thessalonike 1342-1349', *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift, Universität Leipzig*, Bd. VIII (1958-9), 45-83.

8. Only Sjujumov, 'K voprosu', (p. 28), has broached this question. For his views, see note 45 below. Pandazopoulos N. also touches upon the matter from this point of view: *Ρωμαϊκὸν Δίκαιον*, p. 113.

9. The demarchs, through whom, in time-honoured tradition, the regency aspired to 'rouse the rabble' (N. Gregoras, *Ρωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία*,—hereafter Gregoras, *Ἱστορία*—vol. II (Bonn, 1830), p. 608) do not appear to have finally managed to act as leaders of political factions during the civil war of 1342-9.

10. Concerning the significance which the examination of corporate bodies in its historical evolution has for greek law, see N. Pandazopoulos, 'Αἱ ἐλληνικαὶ "κοινωνίαι". Προλεγόμενα εἰς τὸ ἀττικὸν σωματειακὸν δίκαιον', (Athens 1946), repr. in *Ἐπιστημονικὴ Ἐπετηρίδα τῆς Σχολῆς ΝΟΕ*, vol. ΙΘ' fasc. Α' (Thessaloniki, 1986), 205-211.

11. Gregoras, *Ἱστορία*, II, 674-5: 'ὀνόμασι χρηστοῖς τὴν τῆς κακίας ὑπόθεσιν περιπέττοντες'.

that it was not a new name, but had been taken from another body, another group that had existed before the present Zealots. What was this group, one wonders?

In the time of Michael VIII Palaeologus (1259-82), 'Zealots' were the members of a faction which largely comprised monks and members of the lower clerical orders¹². They exerted widespread influence over the Byzantine people, probably on account of the faction's anti-aristocratic orientation, which put it at loggerheads with the 'politicians' faction, largely comprised of intellectuals and clergy¹³. A radical group, the original Zealots were a constant thorn in the side of imperial policy¹⁴, most notably over the question of the union of the churches¹⁵.

Gregoras's comment, therefore, may possibly refer to this party, whose roots lay chiefly in the Church.

When the revolution began in 1342, the Zealots in Thessalonica already had a certain core of supporters with a specific political orientation¹⁶. The group's strength steadily increased, until by 1346 it was considerable. By the time the Zealots were consolidating their dominance, the faction's cadres held important positions in the community bodies, and thus played a direct part in the exercise of revolutionary rule over the city¹⁷.

Could one say that this group, which achieved distinction as a leading political force and managed to establish an autonomous régime¹⁸ in Thessalonica for seven years, constituted a political party in the modern sense

12. D. Nicol, 'The Greeks and the Union of the Churches: The Preliminaries to the Second Council of Lyons, 1261-1274', *Medieval Studies Presented to Aubrey Gwynn* (Dublin, 1961), 454-480, p. 464.

13. H. Evert-Kappesova, 'La Société byzantine et l'Union de Lyon', *Byzantinoslavica*, 10 (1949), 28-41, p. 30-1; Nicol, 'The Greeks and the Union of the Churches', p. 464.

14. G. Rouillard, 'La Politique de Michel VII Paléologue à l'égard des monastères', *Revue des études byzantines*, 1 (1943), 73; Evert-Kappesova, 'La Société byzantine', p. 30.

15. Evert-Kappesova, 'La Société byzantine', pp. 29-30; Nicol, 'The Greeks and the Union of the Churches', p. 465; idem, 'The Byzantine Reaction to the Second Council of Lyons, 1274', *Studies in Church History*, VII, edited by G. J. Cuming and D. Baker (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 123, 139-40.

16. J. Cantacuzene, *Ἱστοριῶν βιβλία Δ'*, —hereafter Cantacuzene, *Ἱστορία* — (Bonn, 1828-1832), II, 233: 'ὕπερ βασιλέως τοῦ Παλαιολόγου'.

17. Cantacuzene, *op. cit.*, II, 569.

18. Cantacuzene, *op. cit.*, III, 104: 'ἐαυτοῖς [i.e. τοῖς Ζηλωταῖς] ἰδίᾳ τὴν Θεσσαλονίκης ἀρχὴν περιποιούντες'; Gregoras, *Ἱστορία*, II, 796: 'καὶ μηδενὶ τῶν ἔξωθεν ὑπεῖξαι κελεύοντες ἡγεμόνων, ἀλλὰ τοῦτ' εἶναι κανόνα καὶ νόμον τοῖς ἄλλοις, ὅπερ ἂν ἐκείνοις δόξειεν'.

of the term¹⁹? Can one talk about the existence of *political* associations at that period? It seems to me that the primary material unearthed in the course of the present investigation allows conclusions to be drawn in this respect.

To be specific, it is true that unions with political aims were not unknown in fourteenth-century Byzantium, as is revealed by a text²⁰ dated to the beginning of the fourteenth century²¹. The valuable data to be extracted from it shed light on the composition and activity of a Byzantine political organisation. Entitled *Psephisma*²², the text is a kind of pamphlet describing the process, verdict, and sentence passed (for reasons which are not made clear) on a certain civil servant (*pincernes*) by a special body of the members of the organisation, who had convened for the purpose.

From the *Psephisma* the following conclusions may be drawn:

1. This was a secret organisation; it met at night²³ and pseudonyms were employed by some of the members²⁴. It was composed of individuals from Constantinople and numerous large Macedonian and Thracian towns²⁵. Its political activity was reported in its own organs. In other words, the organisation was illegal, autonomous²⁶, and had a 'pan-Byzantine' range of activity.
2. From its composition and activity it is possible to infer its political character:

19. 'Political' is used here in its broadest sense with reference to any phenomenon which 'presupposes the state and defines it, together with other factors, as a specific historical stage of social coexistence' (D. Tsatsos, *Συνταγματικό Δίκαιο*, third edition, Athens and Komotini, 1982), 87, as distinct, that is, from those phenomena related to 'domestic economy and private life' (*ibid.*, p. 82).

20. H. Hunger, 'Anonymes Pamphlet gegen eine byzantinische "Mafia"', *Revue des études sud-est européennes*, 7 (1969), 95-107. See also H.-V. Beyer, 'Personale Ermittlungen zu einem spätbyzantinischen Pamphlet', *BYZANTIOS—Festschrift für H. Hunger*, Wien 1984, 13-26.

21. Hunger, 'Anonymes Pamphlet', pp. 100, 102; the year 1333 is given as a terminus ad quem.

22. The text is published in Hunger, 'Anonymes Pamphlet', pp. 96-7, (henceforth, *Psephisma*).

23. *Psephisma*, col. 18 (the leader is referred to as 'Νυκτίβιος συμποσίαρχος') and col. 41 (the meeting takes place at night: 'ὄρθριον'). See also Hunger's observation, 'Anonymes Pamphlet', p. 99.

24. 'Horned Diplobatatzes' ('Διπλοβατάτζης Κερασφόρος'), 'Nocturnal Symposiarch': ('Νυκτίβιος συμποσίαρχος') *Psephisma*, cols 1 and 18 respectively.

25. Xanthe, Drama, Serres, Beroea, Thessalonica: *Psephisma*, cols 21, 23, 26, 31, 32 respectively.

26. Hunger, 'Anonymes Pamphlet', p. 99.

- a) the man accused and found guilty was a certain high-ranking civil servant, mentioned in his official capacity²⁷;
 - b) some members of the organisation were civil servants, as was the case, for instance, of George Cocalas, who bore the title of "great accountant"²⁸ and "great adnumiast"²⁹; which shows that it had even penetrated the machinery of state;
 - c) two members, Andronicus Diplobatatzes and Melik 'of Beroea'³⁰, are mentioned as being 'steadfast in their faith in the King'³¹, an ideological position which coincides with that of the Zealots of Thessalonica³².
3. In addition to the active members who comprised its 'parliament', this political organisation also had supporters amongst the common masses, who played an active part in executing its decisions. The *Psephisma* is a case in point: having been arrested, stripped, trussed up, and paraded through the streets, the *pincernes* is to be beaten up by five 'notoriously vulgar' women, before finally being set free³³.

It is interesting to note that the leaders of the organisation included high-ranking government officials of the Empire³⁴. The same socio-political dif-

27. '*Pincernes*': fourteenth in the court hierarchy, royal butler —Pseudo-Kodinos, *Περὶ τῶν ὀφφικιαλίων*, p. 137, col. 10, p. 207, col. 17. Concerning the judicial, military, and administrative authority that the bearers of this title actually wielded in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century, see R. Guiland, *Recherches sur les institutions byzantines*, vol. I (Berlin, 1967), pp. 246, 249.

28. «μέγας λογαριαστής»: Cantacuzene, *Ἱστορία*, I, p. 232, col. 7. This was a title attached to no actual office or function. Pseudo-Kodinos, *op. cit.*, p. 182, cols 26-7. See also Guiland, *Recherches*, vol. II, p. 279. Concerning the fiscal duties this post once entailed, see E. Stein, *Untersuchungen zur spätbyzantinischen Verfassungs- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (Amsterdam, 1962), p. 33, note 1.

29. «μέγας ἀδνουμιαστής»: F. Miklosich and I. Müller, *Acta et Diplomata graeca medii aevi sacra et profana*, vol. I (Vienna, 1860), p. 177 (hereafter M & M, *Acta*). This was a military office, which first appeared in the thirteenth century. See Kodinos, *op. cit.*, p. 250, cols 13-20; Stein, *Untersuchungen*, p. 53; Guiland, 'Sur quelques grands dignitaires byzantins du XIV^e siècle', *Ἐπιστημονικὴ Ἑπετηρὶς Σχολῆς Νομικῶν καὶ Οἰκονομικῶν Ἐπιστημῶν ΑΠΘ*, 5: Τόμος Κ. Ἀρμενόπουλου (Thessaloniki, 1952), pp. 179-183.

30. Concerning Melik, see Hunger, 'Anonymes Pamphlet', p. 104.

31. *Psephisma*, cols 31-2: 'καὶ μάλιστα τὴν εἰς βασιλέα πίστιν ἀκλόνητοι'.

32. Gregoras, *Ἱστορία*, II, p. 674, cols 22-4: (the Zealots) 'τὴν ἀνάρρησιν τοῦ νόματος τοῦ βασιλέως Ἰωάννου τοῦ Παλαιολόγου μετὰ τῆς μητρὸς ἐπὶ μέσης τε διάρρηθην ὕμνου τῆς πόλεως'.

33. *Psephisma*, cols 13-17.

34. This applies to G. Cocalas, concerning whom, see notes 28 and 29 above and *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit* (Vienna, 1976), Faszikel 6 (Vienna 1983), No 14089.

ferentiation between the active members and the supporters, the leaders and the lower orders, is also encountered amongst the Zealots of Thessalonica³⁵.

People who a short time later were to play a fundamental part in events in Thessalonica as leaders of the Zealot faction were members of this organisation³⁶, a fact which, I believe, establishes a connection between the two groups. The aims of this party with its 'pan-Byzantine' range of activity must have met with a particularly keen response from the population of Thessalonica, where it won a number of supporters, who comprised the initial nucleus of the Zealots before the civil war began in 1342. Consequently, the Zealots of Thessalonica comprised a purely political party, which, regardless of whether or not it had a specific manifesto, was closely connected with a broader political organisation³⁷. The two groups also shared certain common structural and ideological features: the sociopolitical differentiation of the leadership and the lower orders was similar in both cases³⁸; and both groups professed at least verbal allegiance to the imperial house³⁹.

The fact that the members of the 'pan-Byzantine' organisation also included monks⁴⁰ may well reinforce the hypothesis outlined above concerning the religious basis of the Zealot party's name. The religious Zealots may have developed into a political faction⁴¹, which was also joined by the laity; the

35. The Zealots were referred to as 'indigent and dishonourable' ('πενέστατοι καὶ ἄτιμοι'—Cantacuzene, *op. cit.*, II, p. 235), 'destitute' ('ἄποροι'—Cantacuzene, *op. cit.*, III, p. 117), 'paupers very desirous of riches and glory' ('πλούτου καὶ δόξης ἐφιέμενοι πένητες'—Gregoras, *op. cit.*, II, p. 674), and in any case they took no part in the community bodies (Gregoras, *op. cit.*, II, p. 674). Their leader, however, was a member of the royal house of Palaeologus (Cantacuzene, *op. cit.*, II, p. 569).

36. This was the case with George Cocalas. Concerning his activity during the Zealot revolution, see Cantacuzene, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 573-581. Hunger, 'Anonymes Pamphlet', p. 103, accepts that Cocalas was indeed involved in both organizations.

37. In 'Gouvernés et gouvernants', p. 281, Kyrris offers documented proof of the existence of a certain internal cohesion and mutual support between the revolutionary movements in the Empire's various towns and cities: 'Chez les insurgés dans toutes les villes... un service de liaison fonctionnait efficacement...les régimes révolutionnaires parviennent à se consolider'.

38. Concerning how this social gap was manifested in practice during the Zealot revolution, see Cantacuzene, *op. cit.*, II, p. 581.

39. See notes 31 and 32 above.

40. Hilarion, Therapon, Tzamplacon: see *Psephisma*, cols 45, 49, and 44 respectively.

41. G. Weiss, in *Johannes Kantakuzenos—Aristokrat, Staatsman, Kaiser und Mönch in der Gesellschaftsentwicklung von Byzanz im 14 Jahrhundert*, Wiesbaden 1969, p. 103, mentions, with examples, the frequent Byzantine phenomenon whereby 'Gruppen mit ursprünglich religiöser Zielsetzung werden "profenisiert", ja können den Charakter von politischen Parteien annehmen'.

latter may also have taken the most important positions, while the clerics, who had previously been the sole members, now constituted the rank and file. The reason for the party's conversion into a purely political body must be sought in the political, social, and economic impasse the Empire had now reached. The government in Constantinople was unable to offer solutions through the policy it was following, and the Emperor's subjects were working out their opposition through existing commonly accepted forms, thus 'legitimising' their actions. In other words, the originally religious Zealots may have constituted the initial cell and at the same time the basis for the formation of the 'pan-Byzantine', now purely political organisation: a political party, that is, through which a general and dynamic confrontation with the contemporary political establishment was now possible.

II. THE SAILORS

The other group which conducted a co-ordinated intervention and played an active part in the events in Thessalonica was that of the sailors, who on occasion also co-operated with the Zealots as a strike force⁴². Although contemporary writers of the time mention the revolutionaries of Thessalonica without discriminating between them, and although these two groups offered each other both external co-operation and mutual internal support⁴³, the sailors nonetheless comprised an autonomous and separate group from the Zealots⁴⁴.

The prevailing view amongst scholars is that the sailors' group was in the nature of a guild⁴⁵; which is to say that it was organised along the lines of

42. As in 1345-6 (Cantacuzene, *Ἱστορία*, II, 575ff.) and in 1349 (*ibid.*, III, 109).

43. When the Zealot party was left without a leader, the whole of the anti-Cantacuzene faction was led by the sailors' leader, Andrew Palaeologus (*ibid.*, II, 576, and III, 105).

44. Apart from the fact that they had different leaders, in the sources they are presented as different groups (*ibid.*, II, 576), whose leaders sometimes apparently had identical aims (see, e.g., *ibid.*, II, 573).

45. Tafrali, *Thessalonique au XIVe siècle*, pp. 33-4; Kyrris, 'Gouvernés et gouvernants', pp. 293, 279 (indirectly expressed); Charanis, 'Internal Strife', p. 212. A. Christofilopoulos, in *Τὸ Ἐπαρχικὸν Βιβλίον Λέοντος τοῦ Σοφοῦ καὶ αἱ συνεχνίαι ἐν Βυζαντίῳ*, (Athens, 1935), p. 4, note 2, is sceptical. Only Sjuzjumov, in 'K voprosu', p. 28, is of a different opinion, believing that this group must have comprised not only simple sailors, but also shipowners, businessmen, captains, and ships' pilots, forming a corps based on commercial interests. It is my own belief, however, that this hypothesis presupposes a flourishing Byzantine maritime trade, in order to justify the need for the agents involved in it to form a closed organisation; and in the fourteenth century this was not the case. In this context, concerning the city of Thessalonica in particular, where maritime trade was chiefly in Venetian hands, see F. Thiriet's study, 'Les Vénitiens à Thessalonique dans la première moitié du XIVe siècle', *Byzantion*, XXII (1952), 323-32. See also note 58 below.

the financial and professional corporate bodies whose functioning was governed by the stipulations of the Book of the Eparch⁴⁶.

However, in the fourteenth century, for reasons which must be sought in the activity of the Italian merchants⁴⁷ and the Byzantine aristocracy⁴⁸, the central authority had essentially lost all control over the Empire's economic life. Consequently, as a functional institution fundamental to the implementation of an economic policy characterised by the central authority's close guidance and control of professional and commercial activities⁴⁹, the guilds had by now disappeared (as other scholars have already pointed out)⁵⁰.

All the same, the sources attest the existence of professional associations at this time both in Constantinople and in Thessalonica⁵¹. But even if one

46. Concerning the guilds of the Book of the Eparch, see A. Stöckle, *Spätrömische und byzantinische Zünfte* (Aalen, 1963); A. Christofilopoulos, *Τὸ 'Επαρχικὸν Βιβλίον*; G. Zoras, *Le corporazioni bizantine: Studio sull' ΕΠΑΡΧΙΚΟΝ ΒΙΒΛΙΟΝ dell'imperatore Leone VI* (Rome, 1931); C. Macri, *L'organisation de l'économie urbaine dans Byzance sous la dynastie de Macédoine (867-1057)* (Paris, 1925); S. Vryonis, 'Byzantine ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ and the Guilds in the 11th Century', *DOP*, 17 (1963), 289-314.

47. G. Pachymeres, *De Michaelē et Andronico Palaeologis* (hereafter Pachymeres, *De Palaeologis*), Bonn 1835, I, pp. 419-20. See also D. Zakythinos, *Crise monétaire et crise économique à Byzance du XIIIe au XVe siècle* (Athens, 1948), pp. 38-43; N. Oikonomidēs, *Hommes d'affaires grecs et latins à Constantinople (XIIIe-XVe siècle)* (Montreal, 1979), pp. 41-52; J. Chrysostomides, 'Venetian Commercial Privileges under the Palaeologi', *Studi Veneziani*, 12 (1970), 267-356.

48. Concerning the economic power of the great landowners in general, see Zakythinos, *Crise monétaire*, pp. 49ff. (51-7). Concerning their financial activities in the cities, see E. Francès, 'La Féodalité et les villes byzantines au XIIIe et au XVe siècle', *Byzantinoslavica*, 16 (1955), 76-96; M. Angold, 'Archons and Dynasts: Local Aristocracies and the Cities of the Later Byzantine Empire', in *The Byzantine Aristocracy IX to XIII Centuries* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 239-40; A. E. Laiou, 'The Byzantine Aristocracy in the Palaeologan Period: A Study of Arrested Development', *Viator*, 4 (1973), 131-51; P. Charanis, 'Town and Country in the Byzantine Possessions of the Balkan Peninsula during the Later Period of the Empire', in *Aspects of the Balkans: Continuity and Change*, H. Birnbaum-S. Vryonis (editors), (The Hague, 1961), 117-137, p. 136.

49. Christofilopoulos, *Τὸ 'Επαρχικὸν Βιβλίον*, p. 38.

50. E. Francès, 'La Disparition des corporations byzantines', *Actes du XIIe congrès international d'études Byzantines, Ochride 10-16 sept. 1961*, (Belgrade 1964-reimpression 1978), vol. II, pp. 93-101; P. Charanis, 'On the Social Structure and Economic Organization of the Byzantine Empire in the Thirteenth Century and Later', *Byzantinoslavica*, XII (1951), 149-52; idem, 'Economic Factors in the Decline of the Byzantine Empire', *Journal of Economic History*, XIII (1953), 422-3.

51. These were the guilds of the notaries, the perfumers, the masons, the butchers, and the salters: see Oikonomidēs, *Hommes d'affaires*, pp. 109-12, for references to the sources. In 'Συμβολή στην Ιστορία τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης ἐπὶ βενετοκρατίας', *Τόμος 'Αρμενόπουλου* (Thessaloniki, 1952), p. 148, A. Vacalopoulos also posits the existence of a drapers' guild.

accepts that the professions in Byzantium were organised in guilds, modelled not, however, on the stipulations of the Book of the Eparch but on the professional unions of the West⁵², these 'guilds' differed in one vital respect from that of the sailors of Thessalonica: whereas the leaders of the former were at the same time members⁵³, the sailors were headed by a member of the house of Palaeologus, the 'ἐπὶ τῆς τραπέζης', Andrew Palaeologus⁵⁴. This social distinction between leader and members was a characteristic feature of the sailors' group.

Finally, a reference in the sources to a 'special' governing authority 'separate from that of the city' that led the sailors⁵⁵, a) seems to set them apart not as a professional and economic group but as a primarily *political* section of the population of Thessalonica, and as such, b) gives them a special status. This status was probably regulated by and directly dependent on the central government in Constantinople: the fact that the group was headed by a member of the Emperor's close circle points to this conclusion.

So although the sailors of Thessalonica do not, I think, appear to have constituted a professional guild along the lines laid down by the Book of the Eparch, nor, probably, of other contemporary guilds, they were nonetheless directly controlled to a greater or lesser degree by the Constantinople government through the intermediary of a representative it had probably appointed itself as their leader.

But why, one wonders, were they organised in this way? The answer lies in an investigation and a closer definition of the nature of this group: who were these sailors and in what kind of activity were they engaged? That is to say, did they belong to the navy proper or to the mercantile marine?

52. Oikonomidès, *Hommes d'affaires*, pp. 113-14.

53. So, at least, their names indicate—'πρωτομαϊστὼρ', 'πρωτομακελλάριος', 'πρωταλικάριος', 'ἔξαρχος': see Oikonomidès, *Hommes d'affaires*, pp. 109-12. This also applied to the professional guilds of the tenth century: see Stöckle, *Spätrömische Zünfte*, p. 82; Christofilopoulos, *Τὸ Ἐπαρχικὸν Βιβλίον*, p. 47.

54. Cantacuzene, *Ἱστορία*, III, p. 104. The title of 'ἐπὶ τῆς τραπέζης' corresponds to a purely courtly function (Pseudo-Kodinos, *Περὶ τῶν ὀφφικιαλίων*, p. 207; Guiland, *Recherches sur les institutions byzantines*, vol. I, pp. 237-238), but it may also have been applied to a military official (Guiland, *op. cit.*, pp. 395-6; in Pseudo-Kodinos, *ibid.*, pp. 218, 237, and 272, the title 'ἐπὶ τῆς τραπέζης' is mentioned next to the name of the "δομέστικος", a military official). Apart from by Andrew Palaeologus, this title was also held (at an earlier period) by George Choumnos: Cantacuzene, *Ἱστορία*, II, 20.

55. Cantacuzene, *Ἱστορία*, II, 575. This 'special authority' must have been a particular institution even before the civil war: see *ibid.*, cols 12-14: 'ἔχουσι δὲ καὶ ἰδιάζουσιν ἀρχὴν αὐτοὶ παρὰ τὴν τῆς ἄλλης πόλεως ὧν ἐκεῖνος [= Andrew Palaeologus] τὸ τ ε ἤρχε'.

As has already been noted⁵⁶, in Byzantium the professions were organised in guilds not in order to protect their own interests, as would have been the case in a free economy, but basically in order to serve the implementation of a closely directed economy. As components of the machinery of state, the guilds were the agents through which the government ensured both the control and the guidance of economic life⁵⁷. However, after 1264 the Empire's economic situation entered a period of progressive decay brought on by both internal and external factors: the creation of power centres (the great secular and ecclesiastical landowners) that ruptured the unity of the Empire; the devaluation of the Byzantine currency; and the development of foreign merchants' commercial activity, which the Byzantine state safeguarded by awarding them privileges⁵⁸. At this period, then, the Byzantine economy was far from robust, while its economic policy was not autonomous but determined to a great extent by factors beyond state control.

On the other hand, it cannot be said that Byzantine maritime trade was flourishing, to justify either the necessity of controlling and utilising a professional force connected with it or the organisation of this force in a guild with such particular characteristics as the sailors of Thessalonica.

These considerations lead one to consider and investigate the possibility that the sailors of Thessalonica belonged to the imperial navy. An examination and evaluation of the facts relating to Byzantium's navy at this period reveal the following data:

With the re-establishment of the Empire in 1261, Michael VIII Palaeologus turned his attention to maritime operations⁵⁹, which he foresaw were a prerequisite for consolidating the Empire's sovereignty in the Mediterranean⁶⁰. One of the first things he did was to create a navy⁶¹ of some considerable

56. Christofilopoulos, *Τὸ Ἑπαρχικὸν Βιβλίον*, p. 38.

57. *Ibid.*

58. Concerning the entrenchment and development of the great landowners, see G. Ostrogorski, 'Le Grand Domaine dans l'empire byzantin', *Recueils de la société Jean Bodin*, IV (Le Domaine) (Paris, 1983), pp. 35-50, (pp. 40-5); Charanis, 'On the Social Structure', pp. 94-118. Concerning the gradual devaluation of the Byzantine currency, see Zakythinos, *Crise monétaire*, pp. 1-29, (pp. 23-9). Concerning the activity of the Italian merchants as it is outlined in the archive material of their colonies, see M. Balard-A Laiou and G. Otten-Froux, *Les Italiens à Byzance* (Paris, 1987). See also note 47 above.

59. 'Μιχαὴλ Η' Παλαιολόγου, Αὐτοβιογραφία', *Βυζαντινὰ κείμενα* (edited by D. Zakythinos), Βασικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη, 3 (Athens, 1957), p. 271.

60. Pachymeres, *De Palaeologis*, I, pp. 309-10: 'οὐ γὰρ ἦν ἀσφαλῶς κατέχειν τὴν πόλιν τοὺς Ῥωμαίους, ὥς αὐτὸς ἔλεγε, μὴ τὸ πᾶν θαλασσοκρατοῦντας'.

61. Pachymeres, *op. cit.*, I, p. 309; Gregoras, *Ἱστορία*, I, p. 98.

numerical strength⁶². The fleet, which in 1284 numbered eighty triremes⁶³, was disbanded in about that year by Andronicus II shortly after he came to the throne⁶⁴, at the instigation of nobles in his close circle, who were obliged to pay taxes towards the maintenance of the ships⁶⁵. The Empire never had a permanent fleet again: it was re-established⁶⁶ and destroyed⁶⁷ many times thereafter. All the same, it is a fact that Byzantium had an imperial navy at least up until the end of the fourteenth century⁶⁸.

Who, then, comprised the crews that Michael VIII Palaeologus enlisted to man the warships? The following observations may be made in this regard:

A. In the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century sources⁶⁹ a special category of persons is encountered called *prosalentes* ("προσαλέντες"), who lived in

62. Gregoras, *op. cit.*, I, p. 98, mentions that there were more than sixty ships.

63. Pachymeres, *op. cit.*, II, p. 69.

64. Pachymeres, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 69-71; Gregoras, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 174-6.

65. Pachymeres, *op. cit.*, II, p. 70.

66. For evidence of the existence of a fleet in 1340, see Cantacuzene, *Ἱστορία*, I, pp. 539-40. In 1341 a fleet was built, half the work being financed by the state and half by contributions from capitalists of the Empire: see Cantacuzene, *op. cit.*, II, p. 65. During the civil war of 1342-9, the Empire's naval strength amounted to seventy ships (Cantacuzene, *op. cit.*, II, p. 243; according to Gregoras, *op. cit.*, II, p. 659, the fleet consisted of fifty triremes). Finally, during Cantacuzene's reign the fleet was destroyed and rebuilt three times: a) Cantacuzene, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 63, 69-70; b) *op. cit.*, 72; Gregoras, *op. cit.*, II, p. 856; c) Cantacuzene, *op. cit.*, III, p. 81. Concerning the situation of the imperial navy during the years 1340-1355 see Kl.-P. Matschke, 'Johannes Kantakuzenos, Alexios Apokaukos und die byzantinische Flotte in der Bürgerkriegsperiode 1340-1355', *Actes du XI^e Congrès international des études byzantines*, Bucarest 1971 (Bucarest 1975), II, 193-205.

67. In 1329, Byzantium apparently had no fleet, but only 'τὸ τῆς δειλίας τεκμήρια ἀκάτια καὶ ἐφόλκια' (Gregoras, *op. cit.*, I, p. 433). The fleet was destroyed again during Cantacuzene's reign: see note 66 above.

68. This may be deduced from Theodore Potakios's 'Monody to John Palaeologus', C. N. Sathas, *Μεσαιωνική Βιβλιοθήκη* (Venice 1872-reimpr. Athens 1972), I, p. 196, where it is stated that the Emperor built a fleet: 'τρίηρεις πελάγει φοβούσας τοὺς πολεμίους...πρὸ τοῦ καιροῦ καὶ τῆς χρείας ἐξαρτύνειν ἠπείγετο'. It is unknown which John Theodore Potakios had in mind. However, the first John Palaeologus was John V who reigned until 1391. Concerning the existence of a fleet up until the end of the fourteenth century, see also H. Ahrweiler, *Byzance et la mer* (Paris, 1966), pp. 386-7.

69. *Actes de Lavra*, II, Archives de l'Athos, VIII (edited by P. Lemerle, A. Guillou, N. Svoronos, and D. Papachryssanthou) (Paris, 1977), No 73 (year 1284) col. 10, No 74 (year 1284) col. 6, No 77 (year 1284) cols 11-12, No 99 (year 1304) col. 10; *Actes de Lavra*, III, Archives de l'Athos, X (the same editors) (Paris, 1979), No 139 (year 1361) col. 13; *Actes de Xénophon*, Archives de l'Athos, XV (edited by D. Papachryssanthou) (Paris, 1986), No 22 (year 1333) cols 2 and 20-1, No 25 (year 1338) cols 110-11.

coastal areas and owned land⁷⁰. Their land was in a category of its own, separate from public land and private estates (‘προνοιακαὶ γαῖες’)⁷¹. It apparently served military needs, which is to say that it was intended to cover various needs that might arise relating to the Byzantine machinery of war. This, at least, is what one may gather from evidence⁷² that in the *katepanikion* of Psalidophurna in the Sithonia region, land confiscated from *prosalentes* was given to soldiers⁷³.

B. It has been argued⁷⁴ that the *prosalentes* may be identified as the *proselontes* (‘προσελῶντες’) mentioned by Pachymeres. These were a corps of oarsmen whom Michael VIII called up from all the coastal areas of the Empire and put in the service of the fleet’s strike forces: the Tzaconians and the gasmules⁷⁵.

This view⁷⁶ may be accepted for the following reasons:

- a) because ‘*prosalentes*’ rights’ (i.e. land belonging to *prosalentes*) are encountered on Lemnos, Cassandra, and Sithonia (the *katepanikion* of Psalidophurna), which were all near naval bases of the Empire⁷⁷;
- b) because, as has been pointed out⁷⁸, in the fourteenth century, warships were manned, apart from by the Tzaconians and the gasmules, by crews who frequently received gifts of land in compensation for compulsory naval service.

70. Known as the ‘rights of the *prosalentes*’ (‘προσαλεντικά δίκαια’): *Actes de Lavra*, II, No 73 col. 10; *Actes de Xénophon*, No 22 cols 20-1. See also *Actes de Xénophon*, No 25 (year 1338) cols. 110-11.

71. *Actes de Xénophon*, No 22 (year 1333) cols 1-3: ‘προσαλεντῶν, ἐκκλησιαστικῶν, μοναστηριακῶν, χρυσοβουλῶν καὶ λοιπῶν ἀπάντων ... παραδοῦναι ἐκ ἅστω τὸ οἰκεῖον ποσόν...’.

72. *Actes de Xénophon*, No 25 (year 1338) cols 110-11.

73. This fact (from which one may, I think, infer that the reason for the existence and cession of this land was military) should be considered to have been linked with the disbanding of the fleet in 1284, which led to the scattering of the crews (Pachymeres, *De Palaeologis*, II, p. 71; Gregoras, *Ἱστορία*, I, pp. 175-6).

74. *Actes de Lavra*, II, pp. 17-18, comment.

75. Pachymeres, *op. cit.*, I, p. 309.

76. With which N. Oikonomidès agrees: ‘A propos des armées des premiers Paléologues et des compagnies des soldats’, *Travaux et Mémoires*, 8 (1981), 358.

77. Concerning the fact that Thessalonica and Lemnos, both areas in or near which there was land belonging to *prosalentes*, were naval bases of the Empire under Michael VIII Palaeologus, see Ahrweiler, *Byzance et la mer*, p. 360. Concerning Lemnos, see also Gregoras, *op. cit.*, I, 98, cols 15-16.

78. Ahrweiler, *Byzance et la mer*, p. 405.

This information would allow us, I think, to identify the *prosalentes* as the auxiliary hands—that is, the oarsmen of the fleet whom Michael VIII Palaeologus mustered from all the coastal areas of the Empire⁷⁹. This force enlisted from the provinces comprised a body of sailor-farmers, who were permanently available for manning the warships, a practice which was by no means unusual in Byzantium: it was customary both in the army, particularly in the seventh to tenth centuries⁸⁰, and in the navy⁸¹.

B. The second category of crewsmen Michael VIII Palaeologus selected to man his fleet comprised the Tzaconians and the *gasmules*⁸². The latter were the offspring of mixed marriages between Byzantines and Latin⁸³; they were inhabitants of Constantinople⁸⁴ and described by contemporary historians describe them as 'hot-tempered' and 'insolent'⁸⁵, 'youthful men, voracious in their impulses and desires'⁸⁶, 'vulgar and impudent'⁸⁷, and 'utterly daring and

79. Pachymeres, *op. cit.*, I, 309: 'πανταχοῦ τῶν κατ' αἰγιαλοὺς χωρῶν καλοῦς τε καὶ πλείστους ἀπέταξεν'.

80. Select bibliography: G. Stadtmüller, 'Oströmische Bauern und Wehrpolitik', *Neu-jahr für deutsche Wirtschaft*, XIII (1937), 421-38; J. Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription in the Byzantine Army c. 550-950: A Study on the Origins of Stratiotika Ktemata* (Vienna, 1979); G. Ostrogorsky, 'Agrarian Conditions in the Byzantine Empire in the Middle Ages', *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, vol. I (Cambridge, 1966), 203-234, pp. 207-8. The institution of the military estates must be distinguished from the similar institution of the military *pronoia*, which subsequently flourished during the Comnenian period. Concerning this distinction, see P. Charanis, 'On the Social Structure', pp. 130-4. Despite its decline, this institution seems to have survived until the fourteenth century: one of the aims of Emperor John V's domestic policy in 1367 was to give land to soldiers (M & M, *Acta*, I, 507: 'ὁ βασιλεὺς ὁ ἅγιος βούλεται καταστήσῃ στρατιώτας ἐν τοῖς χωρίοις ἔξω τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως μέχρι τῆς Σηλυβρίας οἷς καὶ βούλεται δοῦναι τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς χωράφια καὶ τὴν γῆν πᾶσαν τὴν ἐν αὐτοῖς').

81. Νεαρὰ Κωνσταντίνου Πορφυρογέννητου, Zepos J. and P. (editors), *Jus Graeco-romanum* (second edition, Aalen 1962), (hereafter Zepoi, *J.G.*), I, 223. Concerning the institution of naval land, see Ahrweiler, *Byzance et la mer*, p. 219; P. Lemerle, *The Agrarian History of Byzantium* (Galway, 1979), pp. 234-6; E. Malamut, 'Les Insulaires des 10e-12e siècles: marins ou soldats?', *Akten XVI Internationaler Byzantinistenkongress, Wien, Oktober 1981* (Vienna, 1982), vol. II, pp. 63ff. (pp. 69-70).

82. Pachymeres, *De Palaeologis*, I, p. 309; Gregoras, *Ἱστορία*, I, p. 98. Concerning the Tzaconians, see K. Amandos, Τσακωνία-Sclavonia', *Ἀφιέρωμα εἰς Γ. Ν. Χατζιδάκη* (Athens 1921), pp. 130-4; Stein, *Untersuchungen*, p. 55. Concerning the *gasmules*, see D. Zakythinos, *Le Despotat grec de Morée: Vie et institutions*, second edition (London, 1975), pp. 38-40; Matschke, 'Die byzantinische Flotte...', p. 194-196.

83. 'διγενεῖς' (Pachymeres, *De Palaeologis*, I, p. 309), 'σύμμικτοι' (*ibid.*, 188).

84. See note 95 below.

85. Pachymeres, *op. cit.*, I, 188: 'ὀρμητικοὶ καὶ αὐθάδεις'.

86. *Ibid.*, p. 309: 'ἄνδρες νεανικοί, τὰς ὁρμὰς καὶ τὰς προθυμίας λαφυκτικοί'.

87. Gregoras, *Ἱστορία*, II, p. 736: 'ἀγοραῖοι καὶ ἀσύνητοι'.

shameless⁸⁸. They manned the Byzantine warships until John Cantacuzene came to the throne⁸⁹, whereupon they were dismissed from service, evidently on account of the political role they had played during the civil war of 1341-7 on behalf of the regency's government⁹⁰.

It is very likely that there were gasmules in Thessalonica too⁹¹, for it was not only a commercial port and centre of trade with the West, but also an important naval base of the Empire in Michael VIII's time⁹². It is probable, then, that they too were used to man the warships, given that the crews of the Byzantine fleet were not selected only from the capital, as we have seen from the example of the *prosalentes*, who were enlisted from all the coastal areas of the Empire⁹³.

As Hélène Ahrweiler has observed, Michael VIII Palaeologus was the first emperor, for political and military reasons, to use the indigenous labour force to man his warships, and limit the costly engagement of foreign mercenaries, who had always manned the Byzantine fleet hitherto⁹⁴. The gasmules in particular, inhabitants of the Empire's large cities and towns⁹⁵ and offspring of mixed marriages, as we have seen, between Byzantines and Latins, could not unreservedly be described as natives. In the sources they are described as 'barbarians'⁹⁶, a word the Byzantines used at that time not only of people of

88. *Ibid.*, II, p. 738: 'πάντολμοι καὶ ἀναιδεῖς'.

89. During the second civil war, they manned the ships stationed at Constantinople: *ibid.*, II, p. 736, col. 8.

90. This is the view of Ahrweiler, *Byzance et la mer*, p. 405, and is reinforced by the fact that the fleet built under John Cantacuzene was manned by sailors chosen personally by himself. See Cantacuzene, *Ἱστορία*, III, p. 74, cols 4-5: 'ναύτας τε κατέλεγεν ὁ βασιλεὺς'.

91. In *Thessalonique au XIVe siècle*, pp. 18-19, Tafrali unreservedly accepts the presence of gasmules in the city of Thessalonica; as does Ahrweiler in *Byzance et la mer*, p. 405.

92. Concerning Thessalonica a) as a commercial centre, see F. Thiriet, 'Les Vénitiens à Thessalonique dans la première moitié du XIVe siècle', *Byzantion*, XVII (1952), 323-32, and b) as a naval base, see Ahrweiler, *Byzance et la mer*, pp. 360, 370-1.

93. Pachymeres, *op. cit.*, I, p. 309.

94. Ahrweiler, *Byzance et la mer*, p. 405.

95. In *Le Despotat grec*, p. 39, Zakythinos maintains that the gasmules of the navy were transported, together with the Tzaconiens, from the Peloponnese. According to Pachymeres, however (*op. cit.*, I, p. 309), Michael Palaeologus enlisted on the one hand Tzaconiens, whom (and only whom) 'the sovereign transferred' ('μετέφικεν ὁ κρατὼν') and on the other gasmules 'from the whole city' ('ἀνὰ τὴν πόλιν').

96. Gregoras, *op. cit.*, II, p. 737: 'ἀνδρας...χρωμένους τοῖς ἐξέφεσι ἐν πολλῇ... ὠμότητι καὶ βαρβαρικῇ τῇ θρασυτητί...'. Concerning the meaning that was attached to the term, see H. Ditten, 'Βάρβαροι, Ἕλληνες καὶ Ρωμαῖοι bei den letzten byzantinischen Geschichtsschreibern', *Actes du XIIe congrès international d'études byzantines, Ochride, 1961*, vol. II (Belgrade, 1964), pp. 273-99.

another religion⁹⁷, but also of correligionists⁹⁸, including Roman Catholic Westerners⁹⁹. On the basis of the gasmules' dual origins, the Venetians sought their allegiance¹⁰⁰. Again, after the dissolution of the Byzantine fleet, this dual descent enabled a considerable number of them to go over to the Latins, both as regular sailors¹⁰¹ and as pirates¹⁰².

Consequently, Michael VIII Palaeologus had every reason to seek to assimilate this force of dubious ethnic allegiance¹⁰³ and employ it in the service of the Empire's machinery of war.

He probably pursued this aim by mustering these sailors and placing them, in the towns in which they were enlisted, in a special category, a separate group of professional military men. By means of this group he was able on the one hand to provide its members with professional employment¹⁰⁴ and on the other to assure himself of an experienced force, available and ready to man the Empire's warships. This is one interpretation, at least, of Pachymeres's reference to the 'ἀποτεταγμένον στρατιωτικόν τε καὶ μάχιμον'¹⁰⁵ force which manned the Byzantine warships and found itself out of work¹⁰⁶ when the fleet was disbanded in 1284.

This tactic of appointing in advance and ensuring an available naval force ready for war was by no means unusual in Byzantium, albeit it was implemented under different historico-socio-political circumstances, with different presuppositions, and by different methods. From the eighth to the eleventh century—a period of decentralisation of the military administra-

97. Such as the Turks, for instance (see Gregoras, *op. cit.*, II, p. 649).

98. Such as the Serbs, for instance (*ibid.*, II, pp. 648 and 654).

99. See 'Απόφανση XIV Δ. Χωματιανοῦ, Zepoi *J.G.* VII, 531.

100. See the Chrysobull of 1277 in M & M, *Acta*, III, 89.

101. Gregoras, *op. cit.*, I, p. 175.

102. Pachymeres, *op. cit.*, II, p. 71.

103. The Westerners' description of the gasmules is significant: 'Ils se demonstrent Grecz avecques les Grecz et Latins avec les Latins...' (Zakythinos, *Le Despotat*, p. 40, from which the above quotation is taken).

104. Concerning the wages paid to the sailors, see Pachymeres, *op. cit.*, I, p. 188: '...ρόγας μὲν ἀποτάττων αὐτοῖς [= τοῖς γασμούλοις] ἐκ τοῦ κοινοῦ ταμείου καὶ φιλοτιμίαις αὐξων τὰς προθυμίας, ἀντιλαμβάνων δ' ἐκ τῆς ἐκείνων σπουδῆς καὶ ἐργασίας πλείονα...' and 'Λάκωσι ... ρόγαιας ἐτήσιοις δωρούμενος...'. The sailors of the imperial navy also received wages in 1342-3: 'στρατιῶν ... ναυτικὴν, ἣν ἐκ τῶν δημοσίων τρέφεσθαι ἀνάγκη' (Cantacuzene, *Ἱστορία*, II, p. 365, cols 21-3).

105. Pachymeres, *op. cit.*, II, p. 71, cols 4-5. See H.-G. Liddell - R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford 1968 (repr. of the 8th edition), s.v. 'ἀποτάσσω': set apart, assign specially, appoint.

106. Pachymeres, *op. cit.*, II, p. 71, col. 5: 'παρ' οὐδὲν ἔχοντες'.

tion, when both imperial and thematic fleets existed simultaneously—the crews for the themes' fleets were enlisted locally on the basis of registers of 'specially appointed sailors' ('ἀποτεταγμένοι πλώϊμοι'). These were the local inhabitants who were registered as having been personally commissioned to man the local fleet whenever necessary, and were known as αὐτερέτες¹⁰⁷.

Michael VIII may have chosen this method for another reason too: he gathered together this force, these 'mankillers'¹⁰⁸ and 'eager fighters'¹⁰⁹, these rowdies who 'in almost all disturbances are at the head of the whole rabble, which willingly follows wherever they may lead it'¹¹⁰, in a group that was directly answerable to the centres of power, and appointed his own representative as their leader. In so doing, he assured himself of the control and surveillance of those social forces that were actively threatening to upset the established sociopolitical structures.

Is it feasible to identify the Thessalonica sailors who sided with the Zealots in the period 1342-9 as the sailors under discussion? It seems that it could be for three reasons:

- a) because there is no other explanation for their submission to a 'special' governing authority 'separate from that of the city'¹¹¹, which differentiated them from the rest of the city's population from the point of view of the political status quo;
- b) because, as we have seen¹¹², their leader's title, 'ἐπὶ τῆς τραπέζης', probably indicates that he was *also* invested with military jurisdiction;
- c) because the indisputable authority their leader apparently wielded over men who, after all, carried weapons¹¹³, could only be attributed to the fact that they comprised a military association. One could thus argue that, although the crews were scattered when the fleet was

107. Concerning this method of enlisting the crews of the themes' fleets (a method which is acknowledged as valid in Constantine Porphyrogenetus's *Novel VIII* (= *Zepoi J.G. I, 222*)), see Ahrweiler, *Byzance et la mer*, p. 401.

108. 'ἀνδρόφονοι': Gregoras, *op. cit.*, II, p. 738.

109. 'προμηθεῖς εἰς πολέμους': Pachymeres, *op. cit.*, I, p. 188.

110. 'σχεδὸν ἐν ταῖς στάσεσι πάσαις αὐτοὶ τοῦ παντός πλήθους ἐξηγουῦνται προθύμως ἐπομένου, ἢ ἂν ἄγωσιν αὐτοί': Cantacuzene, *op. cit.*, II, p. 575.

111. See note 55 above.

112. See note 54 above.

113. Cantacuzene, *op. cit.*, II, p. 575: 'διὰ τε οὖν τὸ ἄρχειν καὶ τὴν ἄλλην εὐνοίαν ἦν εἶχον πρὸς αὐτόν, προθύμως ὑπὲρ ἐκείνου ἀνελάμβανον τὰ δπλα καὶ ἀμύνησθαι ἥσαν ἔτοιμοι παντὶ τῷ ἐπιόντι'.

disbanded in 1284¹¹⁴, some sailors must have remained in the towns and cities, unemployed but still attached to the units to which they had belonged as sailors in the imperial navy¹¹⁵. In other words, the professional fighting collective bodies probably lost their original *raison d'être* without, however, changing their fundamental structure nor the fact that they were directly controlled by the state. One wonders whether these corporate bodies facilitated or conducted thereafter to their members' practice of some profession or other gainful occupation, such as piracy¹¹⁶; but it is not possible to give a specific answer.

To sum up:

The sailors' 'guild' which took part in the events in Thessalonica was probably originally not an economic but a military association set up by Michael VIII Palaeologus for military, national, and social reasons. The fact that a *politically* significant professional category was essentially subject to the same régime as that which governed the guilds that were economically vital to the Empire (which made it possible to control and direct them) was no new phenomenon in Byzantium. The case of the notaries' guild¹¹⁷ (whose internal functioning was regulated, furthermore, by the Book of the Eparch itself) was a similar one: in this case, the purpose of state control was to imple-

114. See note 64 above.

115. During the civil war (1341 and afterwards) there were *gasmules* in Constantinople who continued to man the imperial fleet and who, as a corps, were under the leadership of Alexius Apocaucus: Gregoras, *op. cit.*, II, p. 736. Matschke, 'Die byzantinische Flotte...', 196-198.

116. It should be noted that in the thirteenth century it was not only foreigners who engaged in piracy, but also citizens of the Byzantine Empire from Thessalonica, Monembasia, and elsewhere, and also *gasmules*. See P. Charanis, 'Piracy in the Aegean during the Reign of Michael VIII Palaeologus', *Annuaire de l'Institut de philologie et d'histoire orientales et slaves*, X (1950), 127-136, pp. 129-131; D. Zakythinos, *Le Despotat grec de Morée: histoire politique*, second edition (London, 1975), pp. 85f.; Ahrweiler, *Byzance et la mer*, p. 370, 377. (Tafrali, in *Thessalonique au XIVe siècle*, p. 34, and Charanis, in 'Internal Strife', p. 212, both maintain (though without reference to primary sources) that the sailors of Thessalonica did indeed engage in piracy). It may have been against precisely these indigenous pirates, who had *turned against the Empire* ('armarentur in offensionem sive laesionem partis Imperii nostri') that the central government resorted to a mutual confrontation together with the Narbonne merchants in 1340: see the Novel of Andronicos III, Zepoi, *J.G.* I, 588, from which the above quotation is taken.

117. Concerning this guild, see the *Book of the Eparch* (edited by J. Nicole (London, 1970), *Variorum*), chapter I. See also Christofilopoulos, *Τὸ Ἐπαρχικὸν Βιβλίον*, pp. 77-80; Stöckle, *Spätrömische Zünfte*, pp. 17-20; V. Nerandzi-Varmazi, 'Οἱ Βυζαντινοὶ ταβουλάρητοι', *Ἑλληνικά*, 35 (1984), 261-74.

ment an internal policy intended to supervise the way in which the members of this profession implemented the law. In other words, the aim was to control the Empire's *juridical* life and not necessarily to implement a specific economic policy.

The sailors' 'guild' preserved its fundamental character after the fleet was disbanded in 1284, probably by changing the purpose of its existence.

Finally, Philotheus's comment on the origins of the Thessalonica revolutionaries—'not natives but alien barbarians, whom necessity has forced to flee the outermost parts of the Empire and the islands and gather here'¹¹⁸—makes one wonder whether the corps of Thessalonica's sailors was not swelled by the sailor-farmers *prosalentes*, likewise former crewmen of the imperial navy, who, after the fleet was disbanded in 1284 and their land taken back¹¹⁹ sought refuge in Thessalonica and settled there, creating a force of unemployed professionals.

III. CONCLUSIONS

Despite the suppression of civil liberties inherent in Byzantium's monarchical and centralised régime, the people's political expression became organised and was manifested at a time when the machinery of state was in an advanced state of decay. This took place particularly through the following collective groupings:

1. public bodies, whose structure was directly controlled by the state and whose function was primarily to serve the implementation of state policy. Under the appropriate circumstances, however, they were changed into political groups or popular strike forces (the sailors);
2. private associations, which were a phenomenon of the times¹²⁰. In

118. Philotheos Kokkinos, 'Βίος καὶ πολιτεία τοῦ ὁσίου...Σάβα τοῦ νέου', C. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἀνάλεκτα Ἱεροσολυμητικῆς Σταχυολογίας* (reimpression Bruxelles 1963), V, 190-359, p. 194: 'οὐχ ἡμεδαπῶν, ἀλλ' ἐπηλύδων τινῶν βαρβάρων ἐκ τε τῶν ἡμετέρων ἐσχατιῶν καὶ τῶν κύκλωθεν νήσων ὑπ' ἀνάγκης φυγάδων αὐτόθι συνελθόντων'.

119. This confiscation cannot have been universally applied, given that 'rights of *prosalentes*' are also encountered after the fleet was disbanded in 1284. Evidence from 1361 concerning Lemnos is encountered in *Actes de Lavra*, III, No 139.

120. When conditions of political instability and strong socio-political claims are present the formation or the secret activity of comparable political corporate bodies is not a rare phenomenon. The activity of the ὀργεῶνες in 5th century BC Athens constitutes an analogous instance. See Pandazopoulos, 'Αἱ ἑλληνικαὶ «κοινωνίαι»', 251-256, where these collective bodies are examined from a socio-historical point of view.

view of their political aspect, they convened and functioned in secret, and their direct aim was to seize power (the 'pan-Byzantine' organisation and the Zealots). With respect to these unions, the following observations may be made.

- a) Their internal organisation and functioning were governed, at least up until 1342, by a system characteristic of democratically structured political organisations, rather than monocratic and centralised ones, such as was the Byzantine state itself. Their activity, in other words, was determined through collective organs and collective processes¹²¹.
- b) Their function could be characterised only in negative, not positive terms: these political parties represented, without exception, the socio-political classes which were opposed to the central authority and which, irrespective of the further interests each of them pursued, had as their prime and immediate aim the overthrow of the established socio-political order. However, this was also their ultimate aim. Precisely on account of their composition, allied with the fact that political expression had not previously been cultivated in Byzantium, they do not seem to have constituted the sort of bodies through which it would have been possible to promote a unified (i.e. universally acceptable), alternative political solution or to establish and consolidate a political régime unreservedly supported by all their members¹²². The Zealot régime neither had nor was based on any theoretical or contemporary and actual model, such as those of Ancient Greece or the Italian republics respectively¹²³. It was simply the spontaneous manifestation of political expression on the part of the Emperor's subjects, which led to, and ended in, the promotion of new centres of power.
- c) With respect to the specific character of these unions, the following observations may be made. Regardless of the origins of the Zealot party, it is worth noting its attachment to a name that called to mind

121. *Psephisma*, col. 18: 'ἐπεψηφίσαντο πάντες'.

122. The nature of these Byzantine (political) groups, whose aim was the mutual support and co-ordination of their members' activities, and not the imposition of specific alternative solutions, is mentioned by Weiss, in *Johannes Kantakuzenos*, pp. 2-3.

123. Ševčenko, in 'The Zealot Revolution', pp. 616-17, Hrochova, in 'La Révolte des Zélotés', pp. 13-15, and Kyrris, 'Gouvernés et gouvernants', pp. 328-9, offer documented support for this view, unlike Tafrali, *Thessalonique au XIVe siècle*, p. 256, who argues for a connection between the Zealots' revolution and that of Simone Boccanegra a short time earlier.

organisations of a religious nature and with religious activity. But apart from this, their adoption of the Cross as their device¹²⁴ and the rebaptisms they performed in Thessalonica¹²⁵ (whether or not these were a screen for political acts) are evidence of this fact: that religion, which had always been an inseparable part of Byzantine culture, *also* had a political dimension, given that, at least to all outward appearances, it was a *sine qua non*, the common point of reference of any political manifestation or expression. It may be precisely this point, this close relationship between politics and religion, that constitutes the essential characteristic of political practice in Byzantium, as it was manifested on the level not only of the official machinery of state but also of the power of the people.

124. Cantacuzene, *op. cit.*, II, p. 234: 'σταυρόν... ἐχρῶντο ὥσπερ σημαί α καὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ-
τῳ ἔλεγον στρατηγεῖσθαι'.

125. Cantacuzene, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 570-1.