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characterized by a high level of expertise, reflected both in the methodology employed and in the extensive list of sources and literature used. It is enhanced by the rich design with fifty-two carefully selected high-quality illustrations. In the light of all this, it can be confidently said that the monograph on

Saints Hermylos and Stratonikos deserves a prominent place in the libraries both of experts in the history of the cult of Christian saints and of interested readers, who now have the opportunity to acquaint themselves with a truly fascinating and relevant subject in an accessible and comprehensive manner.

ROUMEN AVRAMOV, ALEKSANDAR FOTIĆ,

ELIAS KOLOVOS & PHOKION P. KOTZAGEORGIS, EDS., *MONASTIC ECONOMY ACROSS TIME. WEALTH MANAGEMENT, PATTERNS, AND TRENDS*. SOFIA: CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STUDY, 2021, 316 P.

*Reviewed by Ognjen Krešić\**

Studies of the monastic economy established themselves as an integral aspect of economic history, especially of the medieval and modern periods. Furthermore, this area attracted the attention of many specialists in the field of Ottoman studies, owing both to the specificities of the functioning of Orthodox Christian monasteries in the Ottoman political and social framework and to the richness of their archives. It is not surprising therefore that three of the four editors of the volume *Monastic Economy Across Time. Wealth Management, Patterns, and Trends* are experts in the field of Ottoman studies: Aleksandar Fotić, Elias Kolovos and Phokion P. Kotzageorgis.<sup>1</sup> The fourth editor, Roumen Avramov, is an economist who organized the *Research Network Dedicated to the History of the Monastic Economy* at the

Centre for Advanced Study in Sofia. The present volume is a result of several consecutive workshops held as part of that project.

This edited volume deals with the questions that span the period from the fourteenth century to contemporary times. In the context of Roman Catholic monasticism, monasteries had to adapt to several challenges in that period, from the reformist movement to secularization. Medieval Christian Orthodox monasteries in the Balkans found themselves in a different political, cultural, and economic system after the establishment of Ottoman rule over the region. Unlike their western counterparts, from the fourteenth to the nineteenth century, they functioned in a state whose ruling elite did not share their religion. The studies presented in this volume thus cover several centuries and a vast territory, but they revolve around a group of fundamental issues clearly set by the editors. The first is the question of rationality as an aspect of monastic economy management. Further, the question of relations between states and monasteries is scrutinized. Connected with it is the issue of the participation of monks in economic networks, and local and regional markets, as well as their agency in economic endeavours. Lastly, the authors

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tried to analyse and describe various modes of management of monastic property and intrinsic and extrinsic trends that shaped them.

The volume is organized into five sections, each containing both perspectives – the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox. The first section, “Wealth Management: Real Estate”, encompasses studies dealing with the ways in which monasteries acquired landed property and how they managed it. Dimitrios Kalpakis’ paper “Beyond the Borders: The Vital Space of Byzantine Athos: A Geographical Overview of the Athonite Estates up to the Ottoman Conquest” (pp. 27–42) gives a general overview of several fundamental problems concerning monastic property. The author enumerates different types of monastic estates, ranging from smaller plots of land, orchards, olive groves and vineyards to whole villages. Donated by Byzantine emperors, and later by Serbian and Wallachian rulers or other notables, at first they were in the vicinity of Mount Athos. Later on they could be found in areas far away from the monastic community: in the central Balkans and north of the Danube. Tentative statistical research shows that larger estates were more numerous than smaller ones, and the author has been able to ascertain that some of them contributed to a monastery’s economy mostly as a source of money through taxes, while smaller ones provided foodstuffs and other material.

The economic role of monastic estates is further analysed by Styliani N. Lepida in the chapter on “Transactional Activity of Kykkos Monastery (Cyprus) in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: Real Estate Contracts” (pp. 43–54). The author confirms that land remained the main focus of the monastery’s economic activity in the period under study. In the decades following the establishment of Ottoman rule, the monks and their coreligionists strived to recover the properties confiscated by the state on the pretext that they were not held in compliance with the sharia law, but in the

seventeenth century they could start enlarging their estates. Monks purchased and sold property, defended their rights in court against the encroachment of local officials, and received donations from the faithful.

Preston Perluss’s “Urban Catholic Monasteries and Urban Growth in Eighteenth-Century European Cities” (pp. 55–79) treats an important question of the role of Catholic monasticism in the development of the urban economy. The focus is predominantly on early modern Paris, where different types of monastic communities came into possession of urban real estate that was rented out. Monasteries preferred properties that guaranteed long-term yields that could be used as continual sources of revenue. The results obtained in researching Parisian monasteries are compared with the situation in Lyon and Bordeaux. It is shown that urban monasteries had a prominent role in the real estate market in the period under study, and that rentals were significant sources of their income.

The second section, “Flow of Funds and Governance”, consists of four chapters treating financial management of the landed property of several Orthodox monasteries. In the chapter “How to Run a Big Monastic *Çiftlik*: The Case of Hilandar’s *Bulgar Metochion* in Karviya (Kalamaria), Sixteenth–Seventeenth Centuries” (pp. 83–97), Aleksandar Fotić explains what the term *çiftlik* denotes in the context of the monastic economy. The complex history of the largest of Hilandar’s estates is presented in detail by analysing Ottoman documents produced from the second half of the sixteenth century until the eighteenth century. It clearly shows that studying the management of monastic lands can provide useful information about multiple issues: the legal framework of land ownership, and the relations between monks and the Ottoman central bureaucracy and local *masters of the land*; the ways in which land could be acquired and cultivated and the types of products; and everyday problems of land cultivation and the

ties between monks and local non-Muslim and Muslim population necessitated by them.

Athonite monasteries are also the focus of the next chapter, "Crisis and Survival of the Athonite Monasteries during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries. Preliminary Findings and Thoughts" (pp. 98–111), by Phokion P. Kotzageorgis. The main question posed by the author is whether there is a contradiction between two trends attested in Athonite sources. On the one hand, it has been generally accepted in historiography that the period from the last decades of the sixteenth century to the eighteenth century was a time of great financial problems for the monastic community of Mount Athos and that its monasteries had to seek help of their coreligionists to repay debts. On the other hand, there is ample evidence that most of the Athonite monasteries kept on acquiring new landed property throughout the same period. Using a sample of 443 cases, the author analyses the different modes of acquisition of property and the circumstances that caused its loss. It is shown that Athonite monks undertook complex financial practices to manage their estates: at the same time, they could borrow money to buy new property and mortgage their estates to their creditors. Furthermore, it is important to stress that the indebtedness of a monastery did not mean that its monks were personally indebted; some of them succeeded in acquiring personal wealth and helped their brotherhoods to overcome financial plight.

Gheorge Lazăr is the author of the next chapter in this section, "Between Piety and Economics: Nucet Monastery (Wallachia) and its Register of Revenue and Expenses (1731–1739)" (pp. 112–129). The source used for his research is of special interest as it is a manuscript that contains financial information about 60 monasteries in the Principality of Wallachia during the 1730s. The author points out that Nucet monastery's main source of revenue was the trade in alcoholic beverages, especially wine. Further

income came from the trade in cattle and in animal products. Additional revenues were generated from leasing out land, the commercialization of agricultural produce, and through princely awards of tax collection rights. Apart from the various sources of revenue, the ledger book provides researchers with information about the monastery's expenses: dues, taxes and gifts for the ruler, wages for workers, the costs of maintenance of buildings. Careful analysis of this type of sources can provide insight into the development of the monetary economy in the eighteenth century and monasteries' role in it.

The last chapter in this section, written by Konstantinos Giakoumis, is titled "Monastic Financial Management in the Provinces of the Patriarchate of Constantinople (1867–1873): The Case of the Metropolis of Drynopolis and Gjirokastra" (pp. 130–152). The author chose three monasteries as case studies, one with sound finances, one facing economic challenges and one in a dire financial situation. The register of monastic assets with annual balance sheets in the territory of the Metropolitanate of Drynopolis and Gjirokastra is used as the main source. It is shown that the strict control of the central ecclesiastical authority over the economic activities of its monastic dependencies was not enough to provide sound financial management, and that an important prerequisite for that was the existence of a capable local manager (usually a monastery's abbot). The monasteries provided support to the locals that needed it, and at the same time applied some rational economic decisions (like short-cycle investments, and the allocation, reallocation and auditing of services and duties), thus managing to keep a balance between their principal religious function and diverse economic activities.

In the volume's third section, "Dealing with Finance", several examples of banking activities of monasteries are presented. Lidia Cotovanu's chapter "Orthodox Monasteries as Banks: A Comparison with Catholic Mounts of Piety" (pp. 155–180) takes a

comparative perspective on the under-researched issue of the banking role of Eastern Orthodox monasteries. It is stressed that this aspect of church institutions has a long tradition dating back to the first centuries of Christianity and that it attained new qualities in the fifteenth century when the Franciscans introduced *mounts of piety* as a kind of public banks that offered low interest-rate loans in an urban context. On the other hand, Orthodox monasteries functioned as banks in a predominantly agrarian context. The author also treats an important question of dependencies of Greek monasteries in the Danubian Principalities, and their role in the local economy, emphasizing the importance of the rise of new monastic patrons among the wealthy merchants who introduced new economic practices through their contacts with Italian banks.

The next chapter, Andreas Bouroutis' "Assets, Interest and National Preferences: The Athonite Monasteries and the Greek Banks in the Early Twentieth Century" (pp. 181–196), shows that in the modern period, as in the previous centuries, the Athonite monks possessed economic skills and managed monastic assets successfully. Preference for the National Bank of Greece expressed by monasteries attests to the fact that issues of national identity played a role in financial dealings. Sources confirm that the monasteries used banks to make deposits, to invest, and to make minor transactions, but they did not borrow money. The author also presents intricate ways in which banks developed relations with the Athonite community, culminating in the opening of the first branch office of a bank on the peninsula itself.

The chapter that deals with the similar period but in the Catholic context is Brian Heffernan's "Nuns' Funds: The 1874 and 1925 Accounts of the Carmel of 's-Hertogenbosch, The Netherlands" (pp. 197–214). The author chose to focus on the financial basis of the convent of Discalced Carmelite nuns in the city of 's-Hertogenbosch by

analysing two years: 1874 – an early phase of the convent's existence, and 1925 – the time of its greatest financial prosperity. Strict rules of confinement of nuns necessitated that this type of convents rely predominantly on donations and on investment of capital. In the early years of the convent's existence, the income was coming mostly from donations and dowries brought by sisters, and the network of benefactors was crucial for its survival. As the annual account from 1925 testifies, the nuns succeeded in amassing important financial resources by investing in bonds. The research shows continued financial support of the faithful to contemplative life in convents – a practice that was not governed by economic rationality but was based upon personal, political and cultural reasons.

The fourth section, "Vis-à-Vis the Secular Power", brings together four chapters that problematize the question of influence of the state structures on monastic life and economy. In the chapter "Monasteries, Economy, and Politics in the Orthodox World from Medieval to Modern Times" (pp. 217–228), Elias Kolovos provides important insights into the development of Orthodox Christian monasteries' economic undertakings in the Balkans in order to explain their uninterrupted continuity from the medieval period until today. The author mainly uses the examples of Athonite monasteries, and shows that investment in land was one of the pillars of that continuity, as the enlargement of landholdings was the central aspect of the monastic economy. Another of the factors that guaranteed the survival and development of monasteries was their proactive relations with political powers, ambiguous as they were in the centuries of Ottoman rule. Lastly, monks' relations with their coreligionists and establishment of wide networks of donors were of crucial importance for the maintaining of sound finances. Those relations had to adapt to changes brought about by different political and cultural trends, from the

advent of the ideas of the Enlightenment to the establishment of modern national states and integration into the capitalist economic system that ensued.

A broad perspective on Catholic convents and their relations with their patrons is taken by Antoine Rouillet in the chapter titled "The Economics of Patronage in Western Catholic Nunneries (Sixteenth–Eighteenth Century)" (pp. 229–243). The author uses urban nunneries in Spain, France and Mexico as examples for his research, because the lack of vast landed properties compelled them to rely heavily on patronage, especially in the first few years of their existence. It must be stressed that mendicant convents were based upon the ideas of poverty and, thus, although finances were given due care, it would have contradicted their fundamentals to strive for economic self-sufficiency. Patrons often exerted influence on the recruitment of new nuns, and female members of aristocratic families, who brought rich dowries upon becoming nuns, were often chosen to lead convents. Thus, the convents and their patrons were engaged in constant negotiation over the influence on financial and internal organization.

Michalis N. Michael returns our attention again to the religious situation in Cyprus in the chapter "The Church of Cyprus and the Transition from Ottoman Rule to British Modernity: Church Property in its Political Context" (pp. 244–260). It is shown that the imposition of British rule had a deep impact on the position of church prelates in Cypriot society. Previously, under Ottoman rule, being incorporated into the administrative system and successfully increasing the financial stability of church institutions, they exerted great social and economic influence. For example, the previously mentioned Kykkos monastery was one of the richest Orthodox monasteries in general. After 1878, however, British colonial rule curtailed the influence of the Church in favour of lay persons, and the Archbishop of Cyprus and other prelates

engaged in the struggle to keep their privileges and to impede reforms of ecclesiastical taxes and estates. In the next decades, religious issues were combined with national ones as the leaders of the Church of Cyprus strived to regain their political influence and base it upon new foundations.

A different case of adaption to the new political system after the withdrawal of the Ottoman administration is analysed in the chapter "The Monastic Economy of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church between the Two World Wars" (pp. 261–277) by Daniela Kalkandjieva. As a result of reforms and the establishment of autonomous church organization, the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church became the highest religious authority in the newly-formed Bulgarian Principality. It exercised control over the economy of monasteries under its jurisdiction. The author points out, however, that there were tensions between the Church and the state administration, as the latter sought to impose control over the former's economic activities. The continuous war effort from 1912 to 1918 put pressure on the Church to increase revenues from monastic holdings. Moreover, confronted with the nationalization of a great part of monastic lands after the First World War, the church hierarchy undertook the modernization of the monastic economy and hired experts to analyse the financial situation of monasteries and to propose ways of its improvement. The negotiations with the state were continued and the Holy Synod had to struggle to retain control over the budgets of monasteries. Attention is paid to the differences between economically stronger male monasteries and more numerous female ones.

The last section of the volume, "Contemporary Monasticism", contains two chapters that problematize the position of monasteries in modern-day societies and their adaption to contemporary economic trends. The first one, "Female Orthodox Monasticism, Ecology, and Productivist Capitalism: The Cases of the Monasteries of Ormylia

(Greece) and Solan (France), Late Twentieth–Early Twenty-First Century” (pp. 281–296), is written by Isabelle Depret. Her exploration of the economic practices of the two female Orthodox monasteries is based upon documents and fieldwork. A comparison of these two convents is especially interesting as they are situated in countries with different political and religious traditions but, at the same time, they share an important connection since both are dependencies of the Athonite monastery Simonopetra. The author presents similarities and differences in the monastic economy between the two houses, explaining the ways in which they participated in market activities, and drawing attention to ecological issues.

Similar problems are treated in a more general way, and in the context of Catholic monasticism, in the chapter “Does Monastic Economy Still Matter? The Economy of Catholic Monasteries and the Expectations of Society” (pp. 297–310) written by Isabelle Jonveaux. Inspired by the question as to how the diminishing number of monks in contemporary Europe is correlated with the merits of the monastic economy, the author undertook field research in various monastic communities in several European countries. The modalities of monastic economic activities are presented and analysed, as well as their importance for the perpetuation and development of ties between monks and broader society. It is stressed that there is not one uniform response to economic challenges, and that there are considerable differences between monasteries in different countries. Even so, economic activities are recognized as one of the main factors in the adaptability of monastic life and a guarantor of its continuation.

This edited volume successfully shows not only that the monastic economy mattered in the past and, in a way, still matters in contemporary societies, but also that research into it can contribute to better understand numerous issues that go beyond the subject of monasticism itself.

Monasteries were prominent institutions in both Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christian societies, and their roles were varied. The authors display a multifaceted approach to the questions of the monastic economy and different chapters present the current situation in the field and the results of new research, at the same time opening novel research paths. Even though most of the chapters only deal with one of the two monastic traditions – Eastern or Western – the reader can derive new ideas about the possibilities for and merits of a comparative approach to the study of the monastic economy. Thus, the volume can be of interest to all those wishing to further their knowledge about the history of monasticism in general, as well as about the economic and cultural history of different European societies from the early modern period until today.

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