

Monastic Property and the Imperial Taxation System – As Seen in Iviron Documents*

Yasuhiro OTSUKI

Introduction

Athonite Monasteries have preserved various public and private documents created in the Byzantine era¹, such as documents proving that donations were from laity, contracts of sales signed at the time of property acquisition, and *chrysobulli* (documents written by the emperor, impressed with the golden imperial seal) granted to each monastery from the emperor.

Not only are these ancient documents important for proving the existence of bygone monasteries, but they also describe history more eloquently than anything else. Especially reflected by the fact that the Iviron Monastery had the most property on Mount Athos in the eleventh century, the monastery has a vast collection of important early documents related to the formation of Athonite Monasteries. The library contains various significant documents that describe the area's land formation and property management, and its relations with the state.

This paper aims to reconsider the mode and nature of negotiations between the imperial state and its monasteries in the tenth and eleventh centuries by examining the Iviron documents as the main source. Upon examination of the above, the author would also like to extend the analysis to include discussion relating to the imperial taxation system.

Needless to say, the tax system was one of the established policies in the Byzantine society that had been adopted from the late Roman Empire². The emperor managed the entire

* Many people have shaped the ideas explored in this paper through their writings and conversations. Especially I owe a debt of gratitude to Prof. Kin-ichi Watanabe, who has furthered my work for a long period, as well as to Prof. Michel Kaplan, who generously accepted me as a visiting scholar, and inspired me with his insightful advice. This paper was first written in Japanese to introduce the current situation of some important topics on Byzantine Socio-Economic History to Japanese readers and included in Yasuhiro Otsuki, *Empire and Charity: Byzantium* (Tokyo, Sobunsha-Publisher, 2005).

1 *Archives de l'Athos*. Paris, 1937- ; *Actes d'Iviron I-IV*. ed. Jacques Lefort, Nicolas Oikonomidès, Denise Papachryssanthou, Vassiliki Kravari, avec la collaboration de H.Métrévéli. [Archives de l'Athos, XIV, XVI, XVIII, XIX] Paris, 1985, 1990, 1994, 1995

2 Dölger, Franz, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der byzantinischen Finanzverwaltung, besonders des 10. und 11. Jahrhunderts*. Leipzig/ Berlin, 1927. (rep. Darmstadt, 1961.); Ostrogorsky, Georg, *Quelques problèmes d'histoire de la paysannerie byzantine*. (Corpus Bruxellense Historiae Byzantinae, Subsidia, II) Brussels, 1956; Lemerle, Paul, *The Agrarian History on Byzantium from the Origins to the Twelfth Century*. tr.by G. Mac Niocaill. Galway, 1979. (Original issue: id., *Esquisse pour une histoire agraire*

state using the tax system, which was the foundation of the state. Iviron documents illustrate the forms of patronage by which the emperors distributed the “assets of God” through the economic system, which was an open system reflecting the state’s power. Roman emperors assumed all responsibilities for various issues on earth as surrogates of Christ. How then did they manage these “assets of God”? Moreover, how did the Byzantine emperors, who had absolute power over both the appropriation and the redistribution of wealth, undertake to manage their empire’s subjects and landed properties? The documents describe that the emperors dealt with the entire community involving the estates as a whole, as opposed to dealing with each monastery individually. The actual dealings of the agricultural society within the state in the tenth and eleventh centuries in which the Iviron Monastery and the emperor partook have been recorded, and so we can glimpse into the emperor’s way of imperial management.

As may be imagined, the state taxation system was not always strictly implemented. Over time recollections faded of what had happened between individuals involved, neighbors pursued their own self-interest, and peasants moved about. In response to such varying circumstances, local officials were expected to exercise authority at their own discretion in the maintenance of order.

This paper examines the reasons for and the processes of the creation of these documents, which describe real events. Moreover, while investigating why and how the documents were created and preserved, we would like to examine the status of the Iviron Monastery’s property by analyzing the stances taken by Byzantine officials and the parties involved regarding tax collection. Under what circumstances were the documents needed? Why were the documents preserved so carefully in the archiv ? By answering these questions, we believe we can come to a better understanding of the relations between the state, the monasteries and the peasants regarding property management, which was integral to the foundation of the state.

1. Preserved parchments – Documents as facts

Here are three documents created in the middle of the eleventh century, : documents 29, 32 and 33 of the Iviron Monastery³. All of these were administrative documents written by state officials, using serial numbers, and filed by order of date. The 29th document is written in a dignified tone and an impressively clean and neat style, while the 32nd document conjures impressions of how dutifully the imperial administration was implemented. Contrary to this is

de Byzance. *RH* 219(1958) p.32-74, 254-284; 220 (1958) p.43-94); Oikonomidès, Nicolas, *Fiscalité et exemption fiscale à Byzance (IXe-XIe siècles)*. Athènes, 1996; Kaplan, Michel, *Les hommes et la terre à Byzance du VIe au XIe siècle: propriété et exploitation du sol*, Publications de la Sorbonne, Paris, 1992; Beck, Hans-Georg, *Byzantinische Jahrtausend*. München, 1994.

3 For the edited text, see *Actes d’Iviron I et II*. ed. Iviron no. 29 in vol. I, p. 251-261; Iviron nos. 32 and 33 in vol. II, p. 80-87 and 87-91 with the editors’ commentary.

the 33rd document, which has acquired large holes through the course of being handed down from generation to generation along with other such documents.

The 29th document is 208 centimeters in length and consists of three pieces of parchment connected together, each piece being 57 to 65 centimeters in width. The 32nd document has been preserved in good condition. This document was written neatly on high-quality parchment. The 33rd document is riddled with holes. Each of the three documents contains various names, such as affiliated buildings, properties, and real estate, connected with the Iviron. Moreover, the titles of the existing documents, which were issued in different years, as well as the names of the officials involved, were recorded. However, their relationships to other documents are somewhat complex. I tried to analyze these relationships to come to a better understanding of them. As I pursued my research, one aspect of the state taxation business regarding the landowning and agricultural management of monasteries, such as the Iviron, that became clear was that state officials used such documents to confirm the details of a monastery's property rights.

Then, after the inclusion of the confirmed property rights, the documents were issued to the monasteries that were the owners of the said properties. The documents were so-called administrative documents. Text describes the process of the creation of the documents under the order of the emperor, the reconfirmation of special privileges previously granted by the state under the authority of earlier documents, and consideration as to how to ensure that state officials maintain these vested interests.

These three documents are only a few examples from a large number of documents that remain from the actual implementation of state tax duties under the Byzantine taxation system. It is assumed that property records (i.e. tax rolls) were indeed kept by the state. However, due to the fact that no supporting historical remnant of such has yet been found, even a single example thereof could provide clear and important information to instruct us as to the actual details of the system at the time.

The three official documents, created in August 1047, April 1059, and December 1061, feature text written in neat handwriting on bleached parchments. Judging from the choice of high-quality materials, it can be assumed that the documents were important to the monastery. Each was an administrative document issued by local imperial bureaucrats and written in *engraphon* style, which means interpolation. This fact was described in the documents.

The 29th document is relatively long, made by connecting three parchments together as already referred, and in total there are 99 lines⁴. The document was issued by Andronikos (his dignity was *Protospatharios*), who was a justice, *Krites*, and an appraiser, *Anagrafeus*, in

4 The total length of the parchment measures 2080mm (the measurement of the axis). Three parchment, which measures 880mm, 620mm, and 580mm respectively, are jointed. The length on the right edge measures 1960mm, while that on the left edge measures 1930mm. The narrowest part measures 570mm in width (at the top of the parchment), while the widest part measures 655mm in width (at the bottom of the parchment). Written in August 1047 (in the 15th indiction). It includes 99 lines altogether.

Boleron, Strymon, and Thessalonike Catholicates, where documents relating to the properties of the Iviron Monastery were scattered about. The top of the document describes the following: “by order of the emperor, the investigative documents in the dossier of Johannes, who is in charge of these three districts, shall be revised, and then the tax amount imposed on the Iviron shall be decided”.

The name of the emperor was not written on the document, but at the time, the emperor was Constantine IX Monomakos (1042 to 1055). The document has not been maintained in good condition. There are three vertical creases, and many horizontal creases. The sentences are illegible because the parchment has a lot of small holes in it. It has many wrinkles in places and even rust in some parts. It was written in black or dark chestnut brown ink, and some parts are faded or discolored green.

The 32nd document has been preserved in relatively good condition in the monastery library. Like the 29th document, this document was issued by Leon, who was judge, *krites tou belou*, which literally meant “judge of the velum”, in Boleron, Strymon, and Thessalonike Catholicates. He signed his signature along with his other titles, such as *patriarch* and state clerk, *Notarios*, at the end of the document. The text is 41 lines in all and Leon’s signature appears on the 41st and final line. Indicating the government post, the nobleman’s title, and the state certificate was common practice for state officials when signing these kinds of business documents, although this practice was omitted in the 29th document. From this viewpoint, it is assumed that this document is an authentic administrative document.

This greenish document, written in dark chestnut ink, was created to confirm the details of six *chrysobulli* (documents written by the emperor and impressed with the golden imperial seal), which were already in existence at the time of its creation, along with the details of two other administrative documents, which were also in existence at the time of its creation. Thus, the purpose of the 29th document was to consolidate these eight earlier documents, which had once been scattered about the catholicates. The date of issuance was only described as “April in the 12th indiction”. Therefore, the date of the document could be either 1059, 1044, or 1074. However, according to a prosopography study regarding the incumbency of Leon, the year 1059 is the most probable⁵.

The 33rd document has been preserved in poorer condition than the former two. This document has been partly damaged, and there are several holes in it from the 6th to 22nd lines. In total, 24 lines in the text have sustained significant damage. However, “December 15th in the 15th indiction, that is, in 6570” was explicitly written at the end of the 33rd document.

5 Iviron no. 32 was issued after 1041, since it referred to the Chrysobull issued by Michael IV (emperor, 1034-41). The author of the document, Leon, must have been in office as a judge of Boleron, Strymon and Thessalonike districts after 1044 and before 1088/89. His predecessor, John, was in office before 1044 (Iviron no. 29, *Actes d'Iviron* I, p. 255), and his successor, Niketas of Xiphilinos, was in office after 1088/89 (Docheiariou monastery, no. 2, *Actes d'Docheiarinou*, Paris, 1984. ed. N.Oikonomidès. p.59). Therefore Iviron no. 32 must have been written either in 1059 or in 1074. The former date is more plausible if we take the connection between Iviron no. 32 and no. 33 into consideration. *Actes d'Iviron* II., p. 82.

Therefore, the document must have been issued in 1061 A.D.

The document was issued by *dux*, Nicephoros Botaneiates, who was also dignified as *Proedros*, in Thessalonikes. The 33rd document also included the basis on which the interests regarding the property of the Iviron Monastery were decided. Nicephoros Botaneiates later became chief, *strategos*, in Thema Anatolicon. He revolted against Mikael VII Dukas (1071 to 1078) and then became emperor (1078 to 1081). According to this document, “peasants” who had originally belonged to the monastery were at that time under the control of another landowner, and so Botaneiates orchestrated a return from the present situation to the original one. Even in this document we can see reference to another, older document, which existed at that time, to help ascertain the peasants’ rights.

2. Petition regarding property

(1) Monks visiting Thessalonike

Reading through the documents, one is impressed with the 33rd document in particular. At first glance, the condition of this parchment, which has many holes in it, is quite disconcerting. However, the fact that the document has been preserved down to the present day despite its appearance only emphasizes its importance.

Efforts were made to decipher the worm-eaten text by reading through explanations made by modern day editors and highlighting the sections about a visit to Thessalonike made by the archimandrite of the monastery and some accompanying monks, who traveled all the way to the capital city of the state from Athos to petition the *dux*, who was the administrative and financial chief in the state capital. The fact that this group of reclusive monks made such a long journey to visit the chief may be further evidence of the seriousness of the situation. The first and second lines at the start of the document are as follows.

“Theodros, who was a monk and archimandrite of the Iviron Monastery, Michael and Mertatos, who were monks, and Arsenes, called *episkopos*⁶, brought a letter missive issued by the emperor (to Nicephoros Botaneiates) in October 6570. (that is, 1061A. D.) Here, I have supplemented the original text and the Latin with the corresponding dates of the Christian calendar, which I have put within brackets. I have done so for subsequent passages as well.

The four monks appealed to the administrative chief in the district by carrying *graphes*, a letter missive issued by Constantine X Dukas (1042 to 1055). The *graphes*, authorized with a stamp of approval by the emperor, must have contained various types of information, including

⁶ Episkopos literary means the bishop. Being the high ranked secular clergy, the bishop never held a post in monasteries which were independent from the church.

that of the requests of the four monks. The imperial text they were carrying was inserted between line 2 and line 4, and in the text the verdict regarding attribution of the monastery property was described.

“As the monks claimed, the estate, *metochion*, affiliated buildings belonging to the Iviron Monastery located on Mount Athos, and *paroikoi*, had been stolen and were still in the possession of others. The emperor instructed Nicephoros Botaneiates that this case be investigated carefully so that no investigation would run afoul of court judgments or other decisions, and moreover, that the requests from the monks be responded to directly in accordance with the laws.”

This original imperial document, made by Constantine X, is lost at present. The text described in the document refers to preferential treatment given by the emperor regarding a specific property. In the text, the circumstances under which the investigation was carried out by order of the emperor after issuance of the *graphes* was explained, and from this we can glimpse into the tax assessment system in Byzantine society (line 4 to 10).

“The investigation was completed and several documents, called *hypomnemata*, were submitted to Nicephoros Botaneiates. These documents were created by Johannes, who had worked as the former investigator, *apoeidikon*, for Boleron, Strymon, and Thessalonike, state clerk, *askretis*, and state *notarios*, and by Judge, Basileios M, so and so.

These documents state that the monastery was granted 40 *paroikoi* with no tax imposed, called *paroikoi ateleroi*, and 60 tax-exempted households, called *oikoi exkoussatoi*, by *chrysobullos* issued by Basileios II.

The monks did not own these *paroikoi* and tax-exempted households as a whole (when the investigation was being implemented), but two investigators still considered this to be a condition which could be used to exempt various impositions and taxes, and which, therefore, contributed to the creation of the fiscal register / *liste nominale*, called *katonoma*⁷.

7 In general, the *katonoma*, or the fiscal register/*liste nominale*, is regarded as a financial term which means a taxation ledger. Franz Dölger, the authority on the analysis of the Imperial financial policy, proposed the term when he reconstructed the abbreviated word “*kamt*” in Marcian Treatise on Taxation (Cod.Marc. gr.173, f.275v-281r, Biblioteca Marciana, Venice). Dölger, *Beiträge*, p.154. cf. Marcian Treatise, ed. Ashburner. p.122, l.25-35. However, it seems that this term was commonly used as a name list, that is, *kata+onoma*. In Iviron no. 32 and other documents relating to properties, the term was used as “a list in which the names of *paroikoi* were recorded.” In Marcian Treatise on Taxation, on the other hand, the term was used to mean not the *paraikoi* (the peasants who were bound to the properties) but as a list of tax payers. The term indicates the names as well as information on the payment of the obligatory tax payers. (Dölger, *Beiträge*, p.122, l. 29 and 32.) Taking both documents into consideration, it seems reasonable to assume that the identical term represents two different types of lists. Ostrogorsky reconstructed the abbreviated word “*kamt*” as the *kataster* (ledger).

The archimandrite and the monks protested that most of the property was being held by other landholders, *prosopa*. Michael in *Spatharocandidatos* was dispatched to return the *paroikoi* and their families, who turned out to be owned by other landholders, to the monks.”

Basileios II (972 to 1025)⁸, granted the Iviron Monastery a *chrysobullos* that allowed the monastery to hold 40 persons with no tax imposed, *paroikoi ateleroi*, and 60 tax-exempted households, *oikoi exkoussatoi*. Two officials (imperial notary Johannes and judge Basileios so-and-so) investigated and confirmed these facts and submitted the report to Botaneiates, who was the district chief of Thessalonike.

(2) *Paroikoi* as monastic assets

Originally, *paroikoi* was a word created by combining two Greek words, *para*, which means belonging to the house, *oikos*. Since this word first emerged as a financial term in Byzantine society in the latter part of the tenth century, it has been used frequently as a term meaning a peasant belonging to a landowner in property-related documents or tax-business documents. These *parakoi* were not under the control of the Iviron in 1061 when the 33rd document was issued.

Dealing with the claim for “return” of *paroikoi* made by the archimandrite and the monks was the task of state officials. This fact was made clear in the document. Officials investigated the situation, confirmed the details according to the system, and granted the tax benefits. These facts are obvious proof of close relations between the state and the monastery. These facts will be discussed in the next section. In this section, first, we will examine what has already been learned through analysis of historical data regarding the categories of the various kinds of *paroikoi* (peasants belonging to property) that were first described in the document mentioned above.

Historically, it is known that various adjuncts had become attached to the term “*paroikoi*” by the very early eleventh century, and that several kinds of *paroikoi* had by that time been categorized in the financial system.

Paroikoi ateleis, which first appeared in the document above, means a peasant household on borrowed land. According to “*Basilika*”, which was completed in the tenth century and mainly consisted of the Greek translation of *Codex Justinianus*, which had been compiled in the sixth century, the term *ateleis* appeared as a word corresponding to the word *immunis*, which was used at the end of ancient times. The 3rd Ordinance of Chapter 3 in Volume 3 of

8 The work by Schlumberger has still been the most detailed record of Basil II and his accomplishment. Schlumberger, Gustave, *L'épopée byzantine à la fin du dixième siècle*. Paris, 1896. Basil II issued a novel at 988 which seems to have expanded property of monasteries. As for this novel, see John Philip Thomas, A Disputed Novel of Emperor Basil II. *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 23 (1983) p.273-283.

Basilika is the greek translation of CJ 1.3.2 issued in 357. There, the term *ateleis* was used as a Greek word corresponding to the Latin word *immunis*, meaning “duty exemption (peasant)”⁹. In the original Latin law (CJ 1.3.2) and in the Greek translated version of “*Basilika*” this term was used to mean exemption from various financial burdens, including that of land tax.

However, this word also appeared in the laws known as “Macedonian Novels”, which was issued after “*Basilika*” was published. Lemerle, who studied each administrative document containing new laws, said that *paoikoi* in this category could be conceptualized as peasants who met the following conditions¹⁰. In short, (1) they are treated like goods or lands and in the category of donation tax, *dorea*; (2) they are under the complete control, *despoteia*, of their owner, and their place of residence is arbitrarily decided by their owner. (Refer to *sigilion* issued by Simeon, who was *ek prosopou* in 974, which will be described later); (3) they don’t own their own lands; (4) no state burden or labor is imposed on them; and (5) they are not included in any category, such as that of peasants upon whom a tax is imposed, *dēmosiarioi*, soldier-peasants upon whom a tax is imposed, *stratiotes*, or tax exempted households which work as delivery laborer.

From historical data of the same period, the middle of the eleventh century, a relatively clear description of *ateleis* still remains. This was found in the middle sentences of

9 CJ.1,3,2 (357) *Corpus Juris Civilis. T.2: Codex Justinianus*. ed.P.Krüger, Berlin, 1877; In *Basilika* 3,3,3, the term was used as a Greek synonym for *immunis*, a Latin word which means tax exemption for peasants. *Basilicorum Libri LX*. ed. H.J.Sheltema, N.van der Wal, D. Holwerda, 8 vols. Groningen, 1955-1988. *Series A, Vol. I*. Groningen, 1955. p.109.

10 Lemerle, *Agrarian History*. p.156-177. esp. p.175- 177. Lemerle proposes that the types of peasants, including the “*paroikoi*” in the document, could be categorized as follows:

	- exempt on account of the post	} Subject to the state. May hold land in their own right; hold land conditionally, subject to obligations of a fiscal kind.
	- stratiotes - fiscals (demosiaries)	
Paroikoi	- untaxed (<i>ateleis</i>)	} Not subject to the state (as far as the fisc is concerned). Possess no land of their own and hold no state land in conditional possession.
	- <i>doulaparoikoi</i>	

The category of the *doulaparoikoi* is similar but not identical with the *paroikoi ateleis*. *Oikonomidēs* assumes that the *doulaparoikoi* were the slaves who were made to settle there by the monastery. *Oikonomidēs* identifies the *doulaparoikoi* as the people who “did not pay tax anymore,” and “were exiled.” *Oikonomidēs*, Nicolas, *Oi byzantinoi doulaparoikoi*. *Symmeikta* 5 (1983) p. 292-302. Franz Dölger pioneered the analysis of the archives of the Iviron monastery. Dölger, Franz, *Sechs byzantinische Praktika des 14. Jahrhunderts für das Athoskloster Iveron. Mit diplomatischen, sprachlichen, verwaltungs- und sozialgeschichtlichen Bemerkungen*. [Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akad. der Wissenschaften, Phil.-hist. Klasse, N.F. Heft 28, 1949] München, 1949. Six *praktika* of the fourteenth century included several categories of the *paroikoi* peasants: *dizeugaratos* (with four bulls for the *corvée*), *zeugaratos* (with two bulls for the *corvée*), *boيداتos* (with one bull for the *corvée*), *aktemones* (with no bull for the *corvée*), *doulaparoikoi*, and *hypostatikoi*. These terms are also observed in Iviron no. 51, the *praktikon* written and issued in December, 1103, and other documents as well. The categorization according to the means of production as well as its kinds and ranks was adopted in the Imperial fiscal ledger.

chrysobullos issued to Nea Mone, located on Chios Island in the Aegean Sea, by Constantine IX Monomakos (1042 to 1055) in January, 1044. In a description about a village property, called Karotia, the Emperor Monomakos ordered to describe that “Nea Mone would be granted tax exemption, *exkousseia*, for all properties possessed at present and in the future”. He went on to say that, “*paroikoi* on the property owned by Karotia should not incur a tax levy greater than the amount that they had been paying, and that no future tax increase would be permitted.” After this general description about *paroikoi*, Emperor Monomakos described the details of the grant, *exkousseuesthai*, which was given as a tax exemption, *exkousseia*, to 24 households of *pakoikoi ateleis*, and regulated this peasant category in the following manner: “*Ateleis* referred to a condition in which there was no landowning and no obligation of state tax, military service, mail delivery service, or other duties.”¹¹

In addition, according to Lemerle, the term “*douloparoikoi*” should be differentiated from a similar term “*paroikoi ateleis*”, which is a so called “tax exempt *paroikoi*”. The peasant category (“existence that the state treasury did not recognize”, *tōi dēmosiōi anepignostoi*) represented by this term was the people who were not of tax bearing capacity because of poverty and whose existence was not recognized by the state treasury because they were protected by landowners.

(3) Donated tax bearing farmers

However, a peasant household described as “*oikoi exkoussatoi*” literally meant tax-exempt households. According to editors such as Lefort et al., they were considered to be peasant households who owned their own land or lived in a village not belonging to a monastery, and who paid taxes which they were supposed to pay to the state to the Iviron. They were living in a completely different economic situation from that of tax exempt *paroikoi*, *paroikoi ateleis*.¹² A peasant household which owned its own land was originally called a “*dēmosiarioi*”, someone who owed a sort of duty to the state treasury. However, in fact, although their financial positions were confirmed, they were exempted from paying taxes directly to the state treasury at the discretion of the emperor or other state authority.

As seen from the documents above, Paul Lemerle and Michel Kaplan interpreted this

11 Zepos, *Jus Graeconomanorum*, I, Athens, 1930. p.615-618; cf. Dölger, *Regesten*, no.862; Lemerle, *Agrarian History*, p.170-171.

12 Dölger, Franz, *Ein Fall slawischer Einsiedlung im Hinterland von Thessalonike im 10. Jahrhundert*. Sitzungsberichte der Bayer. Akad. der Wissen., Philol.-histor. Klasse, 1952, Heft 1., S.6-9 (hereafter, Dölger, *Ein Fall*); Ostrogorsky, *Paysannerie*, p.19; Lemerle, *Agrarian History*, p.166, 168, 175-6.: Oikonomidès, *Fiscalité*, p.168, 197, 200-1; Kaplan, *Les hommes*, p.264-272; *Actes d'Iviron*, II, p.83-84. The peasants who held their own properties are clearly distinguished from the *ateleis* who lived in the monastic properties, in terms of the place of residence and the usage of the term (Iviron no. 2, l. 18 and l. 26). The difference between these peasants and the *paroikoi ateleis* is depend on whether they held their own properties or not.

as a state tax donation to the monastery made by the emperor or other state authority.¹³ Moreover, from the context in which state tax was transferred to a specific property, “these peasant households were interpreted as *paroikoi dēmosiarioi*, meaning that they had originally incurred a tax duty, but at present they were owned by a specific property.” Therefore, as mentioned below in section five, depending on the terms used, reconsideration of the tax status of the peasant households was possible. Actually, when editing the text of the 32nd document, which will be introduced in a later section, Franz Dölger inserted *par*, which had not been written in the original document, before the word *oikoi*, and adopted this expression.¹⁴ However, according to Lemerle, there was no other text indicating the expression “*paroikoi dēmosiarioi*”, and if anything, the word “*dēmosiarioi*” had been used more often.

The context of “imperial tax donation”, written as “*oikoi exkoussatoi*”, which included peasant households, is very interesting when considering the legal status of monasteries, which gained state power, tax privileges, and peasants who were involved in agriculture. This could be a criticism to the argument, which was a commonly held belief, that once “feudalistic” churches and monastic properties gained tax exemption privileges they then became autonomous and independent key players in the economy. At the same time, the fact that the farmers have been found to be under the direct individual control of the imperial government has led to the reevaluation that the imperial power was indeed still able to demonstrate its existence even in the eleventh century, by which time, it has generally been believed that the imperial power had greatly weakened. This fact provides an important point of reference for discussing the “tax exemption”, *exkousea*, situation in Byzantine society (to be described later).

Both the 33rd and 32nd documents, which will be described later, include various quotations taken from other documents of the tenth century. As expected, both documents contained terms in use in the tenth century as well as newly coined terms to express the farmer category. In other words, the word “*paroikoi*” appears in both documents, and in the last half of the eleventh century “*paroikoi*” clearly had a wider meaning than it did earlier. According to Lefort, who edited the document, the following expressions for land owning farmers who were paying tax to the Iviron while living on their own land or in a village were permitted, including the expression described above. (a) “*oikoi exkoussatoi*”, (b) “*oikoi exkoussuomenoi*”, which means a household with a tax exemption (lines 32 to 33 of the 6th document at the Iviron), (c)

13 Lemerle, *Agrarian History*, p.169, n. 2, p.242; Kaplan, *Les hommes*, p.265. Kaplan illustrates the chrysobull which stated the donation of twelve *paroikoi* to the Patmos monastery by Alexios I Komnenos. It is interesting to find that the document provided the regulation for the peasants who were exempted from tax. The *paroikoi* donated to the monastery were the *paroikoi eleutheroi* who lived in Lipsos Island, and they were defined as follows: “They were free and exempted from tax, without holding their own properties: they were not listed on the fiscal ledger, being free from all taxes and additional taxes imposed by the *telos*.” Miclosich et Muller, *Acta et Diplomata monasteriorum et ecclesiarum orientis*. Wien, 1890. v.6, p.95.

14 Dölger, *Ein Fall*, p.7, l.35.

oikoi in the specific context (line 29 of the 2nd document at the Iviron). Moreover, from the meaning of taxpayer, the same farmer category was called (d) *dēmosiarioi oikoi* (line 16), (e) *paroikoi dedēmosieumenoi* (which means “families with taxes imposed” lines 23, 27, and 39)¹⁵.

The two peasant categories *paroikoi ateleis*, “no tax *paroikoi*”, and *oikoi exkoussatoi*, “tax-exempted households”, were confirmed by the emperor to have once belonged to the Iviron Monastery, but by 1061, when the 33rd document was created, they were owned by “other landholders”. From lines 10 to 13, peasant families’ labor forces are listed. Most of their names are missing, but 13 *paroikoi* names are recognizable (Individual names are omitted).

The monks, along with their superior, went all the way to Thessalonike to petition the catholicate chief about returning the *paroikoi* to the category of monastic assets and securing their monastic rights.

3. Security of the monastic assets and roles of the state power

(1) The fiscal register / liste nominale and reserved state power

The appeal from the archimandrite and the monks did not include just the items mentioned above. The 33rd document repeatedly described that the archimandrite and the monks brought an earlier document proving that other *paroikoi* whose possession was reserved by the Iviron also existed. The lines 13 to 17 are as follows:

The monks also brought a document created by Theodoros Kladon, who was *epi tou maglabiou* and *ekprosopou* in Strymon Catholicate. This document describes a ruling by the emperor, and that Theodoros Kladon had to conduct an investigation in order to move *stratiotes* and “*dēmosiarioi* from the neighborhood (of the monastery) and put them into villages of *stratitiki*”. Furthermore, it explains that Theodoros took action according to this order and returned *paroikoi* to the Kolobou Monastery as “the fiscal register / liste nominale” with his signature and seal indicated. In this list, the following items, in addition to other items, are listed. (Some parts of the document have been lost.)

15 In other words, the term *paroikos* becomes inaccurate to specify peasants thenceforth. The term was used to indicate not only the *paroikoi ateleis*, the peasants who were bound to the property, but also the peasants who held their own properties and had tax obligatory to a third party besides the Imperial fisc. The fact that they had tax obligatory to a third party is observed in Iviron, 46, l. 18, too. However, in Iviron nos. 32 and 33, these *paroikoi* who held their own properties appeared to be as residents of the property of the Iviron monastery. Lefort and other editors assume that the *paroikoi* in this case are identical with tenants, or their properties were presumably integrated into that of the monastery’s. In either case, various statuses in the category of peasants who served the monastery become ambiguous. For example, there were 36 peasants who were donated by Constantine VII to the Leontia monastery (Iviron I, no. 2, l. 21-22, 24, 28-29). The peasants were referred to in Iviron no. 2 as the *oikoi exkoussatoi*, but as the *paroikoi ateleis* in no. 32, l. 6, with unknown reasons.

Theodoros Klandon, who appeared in the text, was an official who created and issued the 2nd Iviron document (this will be explained later) when he was in this post in 975.¹⁶ Therefore, it is assumed that the document that the archimandrite and monks brought in December of 1061 had been created by Klandon around the same time. As is obvious, “the emperor”, who appeared in the text above, is assumed to be Johannes I. Tzimiskes (969 to 976.) The original text of this document has been lost; therefore, the exact dates of its creation and issue are unknown. However, it is notable that it had been preserved as an effective and important document regarding the property of the monastery even after approximately 85 years had passed since its formulation.

The text mentioned above describes that an official, Kladon, confirmed *paroikoi* for the Iviron, which had just been founded by the ruling of Johannes I. *Dēmosiaroi*, as appears here, means “peasants bearing tax burdens for the state treasury”, as previously referred. The text describes how all of these peasants with tax burdens were forced to move from the neighboring area and be incorporated into “villages of *stratitokoi*, or so called “soldier villages”. According to the text, Kladon created a “fiscal register / liste nominale”, *katonoma*, of peasants with tax obligation and confirmed each of the peasant households belonging to the Kolobou Monastery. The Kolobou Monastery in Herissos, one of the Iviron-affiliated monasteries, had existed even before the Iviron was founded in 979/80, and was donated to the Iviron at a later date. (This will be described later.) Corresponding to this text, the names of at least eight *pariokoi* were transcribed, although parts of lines 17 to 19 were unreadable (specific names are abbreviated).

(2) Peasant soldier village and monastery

More explanations may be needed to understand the sentences “*dēmosiaroi* (peasants bearing tax burdens) and *stratitites* (soldiers) are forced to move and be incorporated into villages of *stratitokoi* (soldier villages).”

The term, “villages of *stratitokoi*”, is a financial term used in an agricultural community category which appeared in Byzantine society after the seventh century. As is a well known historical fact, in the beginning of the seventh century, Arab and Islamic forces attacked the area around Syria. (The Syrian area and Armenian (Cilicia) area came under the rule of Arabian power in 636 and around 640, respectively.) This triggered the formation of a *theme* self-defense system to defend each region of Asia Minor as a war preparation. The foundation of this self-defense system was “soldier villages”.¹⁷

Generally known as the “Theme System”, it was formed in Asia Minor as a de facto

16 *Actes d'Iviron*, I, no.2, p.112-113.

17 Inoue, Koichi, *Byzantine Empire*, Iwanami-shoten Publisher, Ltd., 1982. Inoue reviews the vigorous arguments in 1950s and 1960s which was evoked by the theory of Ostrogorsky, and demonstrates the author's own view which is close to the position of Marxism (see p. 59-84). cf. Ostrogorsky, G., *Geschichte der byzantinischen Staates*. 2. Aufl., München, 1952: id., Sur la date et la composition du Livre des Thèmes et sur l'époque de la constitution des premiers themes d'Asie Mineure. *Byzantion* 23 (1953) p.31-66.

defense system due to the necessity for the Byzantine Empire to defend itself on its eastern border regions. However, it is not entirely clear to us today exactly how this system was implemented. In other words, the system was not uniformly introduced as a state system but arranged under each local warlord, *strategos*, responding to the situation in which foreign enemies were approaching. The Theme System was a military land system in which the “peasant soldier” was a basic constituent. In the “soldier village” under this “*Theme System*”, soldiers, *stratiotes*, were given a certain amount of land by the state and they supported themselves with agricultural products grown in these land assets. Needless to say, the “soldiers” were serving the “state” under this system. The Marxist view of history in the Soviet Union traced the birth and development of this “*Themata System*” to the subsequent reduction in the centralized power structure of the state.¹⁸ This view held the emergence of this “system” to be a benchmark of “feudalism” in Byzantine society; however, to jump from recognition of the existence of “soldier villages” to the assumption that this played a key role in the transition to local independence from centralized state power and the subsequent development of “feudalism” is rather hasty. Moreover, as Lemerle keenly observed, the term “soldier holdings”, *stratitotika ktēmata*, which was a basic element of the “villages of *stratitotikoi*”, did not appear until the tenth century, when Macedonian Novels was published.

The Byzantine state continued to refer to its administrative districts as “Themata” even after the ninth century, by which time the Arab and Islamic threats had relatively diminished. Comparison with the actual situation in the seventh century is still an issue to be discussed, but as far as the tenth and eleventh centuries, which we are investigating, are concerned, it has been pointed out that the reality of “soldier villages” was that they were not made up of simply a group of “soldier peasants”. In the period of Macedonian Novels, “military service duty”, *strateia*, and “soldier”, *stratiotes*, were differentiated from one another in the text regarding “soldier villages”. In other words, as Lemerle pointed out for the first time when a “Byzantine feudalism argument” occurred in the 1960s, it is highly probable that “soldiers”, *stratiotes*, were not always people who actually went into military service, which accounted for another expression, *strateumenos*, appearing.¹⁹ In short, “soldiers”, *stratiotes*, who owed “military

18 Pigulefskaya, et al., Watanabe, Kin-ichi, tr., *Cities and Villages in Byzantine Empire*, Sobun-sha Publisher, Ltd., 1968. Yoneda, Haruyasu, *Byzantine Empire*, Kadokawa-shoten Publisher, Ltd., 1977. See section 4, “trends of research on the Byzantine feudalism,” (p. 119-139), and section 5, “the feudalization of Byzantium and some related problems,” (p. 140-152). Following this line mentioned in these sections above, two points were emphasized: first, how far the strategos in each Theme was allowed discretion, being independent from the authority of the Emperor; second, how far the peasant soldiers were financially self-sufficient and held properties, being independent from the authority of the Empire.

19 Lemerle, *Agrarian History*. p.150-156, p.167f; Haldon, John, Military Service, Military Lands and the Status of Soldiers: Current Problems and Interpretations. *Dumbarton Oaks Paper* 47 (1993) p.1-63. Macedonian Novels included quite a few regulations for the stratiotes. The novel issued by Constantine VII (the date of issue is unknown. Zepos, I, p.222f. Dölger, *Regesten*, 673); the Tomos of Romanos II (Zepos, I, p.241f.); the novel of Romanos II issued in March, 962 (Zepos, I, p.243f. Dölger, *Regesten*, 690); the novel of Romanos II (the date of issue is unknown. Zepos, I, p.247f. Dölger, *Regesten*, 720). Watanabe, Kin-ichi, “Social Structure of Byzantine Villages in the tenth century,” *A Study on Socio-*

service duty”, *strateia*, only undertook an obligation to feed and arm those who actually performed military service; thus, it is assumed that the people who actually performed military service were another group of individuals. Probably that was the actual situation, much in the same way that “*paroikoi*” incorporated into “villages of *stratitotikoi*” were considered to refer to peasants who engaged in agriculture under people who were in the military.

In the text mentioned above, it is suggested that peasants who had to live in “villages of *stratitotikoi*” were living on the Iviron property or in its surrounding districts, and because they were living in places different from their original registered places of residence, state officials needed to restore this situation to the original condition. The state made an effort to maintain “soldier villages” and gave patronage to monastic properties. It is understood that state officials were dispatched to organize each district and maintain its sovereignty. On-site inspections made by state officials also provided an important viewpoint when thinking about the taxation system in the Byzantine state. This viewpoint will be investigated in section 4.

(3) Securing the rights of *paroikoi*

Lines 1 to 17 in the text suggest that peasants who were supposed to belong to the Iviron property were not found in the village where they were originally supposed to be living. The purpose of the dispatch was for state officials to confirm the current situation, and if they found the peasants, they were to bring them back to their original places of residence, thereby reinstating the property rights of the Iviron Monastery. In the 33rd document, the following lines 19 to 22 confirm the items regarding the peasant households.

“According to the contents of the existing documents, every person holding a name has to be given various taxes or burdens exemptions by order of *chrysobullos*. If some of them are *dēmosiakois telesmasi*, who may be subject to taxation imposed by state treasury officials in the future, they are forced (to pay the taxes). However, monks can insist on their rights by petitioning the emperor.”

The text gives the impression that a fairly complicated procedure was required. There were categories such as villages belonging to the Iviron, and these villages’ neighboring “soldier villages”. Under this system, the state reserved the right to impose taxes or labor on these villages. However, according to the text mentioned above, the rights were only reserved by the state in principle, but in reality they were exercised by state treasury officials, *dēmosiakoi*. The text describes the possibility of the state treasury officials exercising their authority of these rights in the future. However, in reality, *paroikoi* households connected to the Iviron property whose names were recorded on the “fiscal register / liste nominale” could receive various burdens and tax exemptions. The privileged exemption measure for the Iviron may have

contained both principle and reality theory, and the situation under this system was confirmed by *dux* of Thessalonike. The privileged exemption measure for the Iviron and the situation under this system was confirmed by *dux* of Thessalonike.

The 33rd document contained expressions in closing such as “the above mentioned...the 15th indiction” and “in December of 6570”, as seen in similar kinds of administrative documents, and was completed with the signature of the author, Nicephoros Botaneiates, signed on the last line (line 24).

The facts in the 33rd document should be confirmed again.

- (1) 40 non taxable *paroikoi*, *paroikoi ateleis*, and 60 tax exempted households, *oikoi exkoussatoi*, which were granted by *chrysobullos* issued by Basileios II (972 to 1025) to the Iviron, were not owned by the Iviron in 1061. (Line 4 to line 10)
- (2) Two subordinate officers of Botaneiates, catholicate chief of Thessalonike, confirmed that these peasant households belonging to the Iviron were valid, and created a “fiscal register / liste nominale”, *katonoma*. The peasant households were considered as entities which could receive any burden or tax exemption, and this was stated in the list. (Lines 13 to 17).
- (3) State officials conducted surveys of peasant households belonging to “villages of *stratiotes*” and classified the peasants as belonging to the Iviron. This measure was implemented by a state official, Kladon, in 975, under the rule of Johannes Tzimiskes (969 to 976).
- (4) Part of the peasant households’ list written in the Kladon document was recreated in the 33rd document (lines 17 to 19), and at least some of these peasant households’ descendents were confirmed to still be living on the Iviron property in 1061, which was 85 years after the list was made.
- (5) The Iviron tried to secure financial tax exemption privileges for peasant households recorded in the “fiscal register / liste nominale”, and this privilege was confirmed in this letter by the catholicate chief.

4. Investigation of property by state officials and security of rights by the monastery

(1) Recorded imperial documents

Michel Kaplan wrote a positive prospective about tax concessions given by the state, including *exkouseia*, in the Byzantine state²⁰. According to his writing, a term meaning “tax exemption”, *exkouseia*, as well as the actual system represented by this term, first appeared during Constantine VII’s reign. The actual *chrysobullos* first containing this term has been lost and has not been passed down. However, documents issued later have been used to verify its existence. Constantine VII gave patronage to the St. Andreas Monastery, located in Peristeria, a town about 30 km east of Thessalonike, and the St. Johannes Prodromos Monastery, located in Thessalonike. His son, Romanos II, gave patronage to the Kolobou Monastery, located in

20 Kaplan, *Les Hommes*, p.554-558.

Hierissos. These monasteries were targeted for *exkouseia*.

Just as Kaplan studied the historical facts regarding *exkouseia*, so too did Dölger, Ostrogorsky, and Lemerle. In fact, their heated debate, held in the 1950s and 1960s, played a crucial role in promoting the complete investigation of all related historical data and led to the defining of the main points of contention about Byzantine tax privileges. However, discussion regarding this debate is taken from another angle for the purpose of this paper. In other words, the main points of contention in the debate at that time revolved around the actual existence of a “customary tenant peasantry”, the degree of the development of “feudal property owners”, and in what manner the strength of the control of state power had evolved. Investigating the details of these points of contention is not the purpose of this paper. Here, it should be confirmed that the main targets of *exkouseia*, which became the central focus of the debate, were the monasteries.²¹ As we know, we have to consider the historical condition that there were much historical data left in the churches and monasteries which were allowed to continue to function under the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, it cannot be assumed that influential secular people, *dynatoi*, did not receive patronage just because of this kind of historical data’s existence. However, this kind of historical data, mainly handed down in monasteries, provides an important viewpoint when thinking about Byzantine tax privileges. Moreover, when

21 Dölger, *Beiträge*, p.63; Charanis, Peter, Monastic properties and the state in the Byzantine Empire. *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 4 (1948) p.66f; Oikonomidès, *Fiscalité*, p.172-173. For the intensity of the institutional relation between the Empire and the church, as well as the reason for the intensity, see Otsuki, Yasuhiro, “Social Welfare Performance and Socio-economic Structure of the Early Byzantine Empire --- On the Effectivity of E. Patlagean’s Study,” *The Hitotsubashi Review*, vol. 102, no. 6 (December, 1989), p. 922-942. Oikonomidès remarks that this sort of endowment of privilege was regularly renewed during the second half of the tenth century and eleventh century. He observes that the endowment increased in quantity, and its content was refined. He also points out that the tax exemption endowed to the secular clergy such as bishop and archbishop formed a distinct genre. According to Oikonomidès, although such financial treatment seems to form the institutional privilege for the receivers, it was in fact to constrain the secular clergy. The tax exemption for the secular clergy was supposed to be endowed to the institutional and impersonal organization such as churches and monasteries, but it was in fact given to persons who served them. And therefore, the control of the Empire might have reached the individual secular clergy. Oikonomidès, *ibid.*, p.173; id., Tax Exemptions for the Secular Clergy under Basil II. *Kaqqhghvria*, Essays presented to Joan Hussey. London, 1988, p.317-326. There are many disputes on the content of tax exemption enjoyed by the clergy. However, as Oikonomidès states, it is certain that they were exempted from the munera (the obligatory service for the Empire), which had continued since the late antiquity. Especially the munera *slodida* (the second ranked munera) were surely the subject of exemption. The Imperial law at the beginning of the tenth century (Epanagoge, Basilika) also adopted this regulation of the sixth century, and provided the rule that clergy was exempted from all the *corvée* except from the military emergency and the restoration of city walls (Epanagoge 9,19; Basilika V,1,4; V,1,6; V, 3,6). The *corvée* was replaced by monetary payment (*adaerateio*) in the ninth century, and except from the two cases cited above, the clergy such as the archbishop and bishop was exempted from the *corvée*. As Oikonomidès states, there is not yet a definitive view of relation between the secular clergy and the Imperial fiscal policy. It is another issue to be pursued. Oikonomidès, *Fiscalité*, p.173, n.90. However, the monks and monasteries in this chapter were exempted from any kinds of *corvée*, as was clearly declared in the Iviron archives. It is remarkable that they were completely exempted from military *corvée*, since it marks a distinctive difference between the secular clergy and monks. It might imply the reason of significant growth of numbers of monks and monasteries from the tenth century onwards.

thinking about the role that churches and monasteries played in the Byzantine state system and the sacred image of the emperor, this is a fact that demands more attention.

Reference to the subject of the initial *exkouseia* mentioned above was found in the 33rd Iviron document, which is one of the focal points of this paper. The 32nd document was issued in April of 1059, two years before the 33rd document was issued. This detailed document, while making reference to a total of eight earlier documents, integrates their contents into just one document. The beginning of the document is as follows:

“To secure the properties and *paroikoi* given to the Iviron by each successive emperor on several occasions, the holding of *chrysobullos* (= this document) issued for these purposes is sufficient for the Iviron.”

The first 3 to 20 lines of the 32nd document synopsise a total of eight earlier documents that had been issued regarding the properties of the Iviron and its *paroikoi*.²² In this paper, the synopsis of these eight documents will be introduced according to the 32nd document. Each monastery that appeared in the document is affiliated with the Iviron. The purpose of the document was to confirm that these assets belonged to the Iviron so that the emperor could give patronage. In other words, all of these smaller monasteries were considered to be the properties of the Iviron, and all of the rights accorded to each over the years were reconfirmed by this documentation of their ownership by the Iviron, which held all legal rights and authority over them under the state system. For your information, reference numbers have been added after each synopsis when these documents were referred to in the emperor’s documents edited by Dölger, (Dölger, Franz, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches*, 1. Teil. München, 1924; 2. Teil. Regesten von 1025-1204. Zweite, erweiterte und verbesserte Auflage bearbeitet von Peter Wirth. München, 1995). Parenthetical references were supplemented by the author (as mentioned earlier).

(1) *Chrysobullos* issued in 6454 (that is, 945/6 A.D.) by the late Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos (912 to 959). It was authenticated by the emperor’s signature and golden seal and the special privileges allocated therein were accrued by the Prodromos Monastery, located in Thessalonike. This monastery was founded by the monk Nicholas, who was a brother of Karonas, by the *patriarch*, Agape, who was a niece of Karonas, and by the parents of the emperor. This *chrysobullos* gave tax exemption to the Prodromos Monastery

22 This material was once examined by Franz Dölger in München. Dölger, Franz, *Ein Fall slawischer Einsiedlung im Hinterland von Thessalonike im 10. Jahrhundert*. Sitzungsberichte der Bayer. Akad. der Wissen., Philol.-histor. Klasse, 1952, Heft 1. p.6-9. Dölger’s point is to clarify the actual circumstances of the Slavic settlement in the eastern region of this city as well as Thessalonike, by introducing the development of monasteries which belonged to the Iviron monastery, and citing specific names of peasant households which resided in the monastic properties.

- and its properties as well as to *paroikoi* belonging to its property and enslaved *paroikoi* who were already living on its property (The numbers were not shown). Moreover, by this *chrysobullos*, 36 households of tax exempted *paroikoi* are given to the Prodromos Monastery. These *paroikoi* are not imposed tax or burden. Moreover, they do not have any duty. (Lines 3 to 7) Dölger, *Regesten*, no.652.
- (2) Another *chrysobullos* issued by Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos in 6466 (957/8). This *chrysobullos* contains a signature and a golden seal made by the emperor and refers to tax exemption for properties located in the Kassandraia, Halikai, and Galeai peninsulas, and affiliated properties in Psallis, Dobrodolon, and Dobritza, which were owned by the monastery on Mount Athos (=the Iviron Monastery). Moreover, by authority of this *chrysobullos*, 70 households of tax exempted *paroikoi ateleis* are given to the Iviron. These people do not own their own land and they are not imposed any tax nor burden. (Lines 7 to 10) Dölger, *Regesten*, no.669.
- (3) *Chrysobullos* issued to the Kolobou Monastery by Basileios II and the late Romanos II (959 to 963), who was *Porphyrogenetos* and father of Constantine VIII, in 6468 (that is, 959/960 A.D.). In exchange for lands, *topia*, located in Erissos, 40 households of tax exempted *paroikoi ateleis* were given to the monastery. These lands were transferred to the Kolobou Monastery in the past, but part of the lands were occupied by Bulgarian serf, who had been living on the lands. (Lines 10 to 13) Dölger, *Regesten*, no.687.
- (4) *Chrysobullos* issued by the late Basileios II, who was Porphyrogenetos. This *chrysobullos* was given to Johannes Tornikios, who was a monk and *Syncellos* in 6488 (979/980 A.D.). This document describes that the Leontia Monastery in Thessalonike, the Kolobou Monastery in Erissos, and the Klementos Monastery on Mount Athos, which had been donated to the Prodromos, will be given to Johannes. In exchange for these monasteries, a monastery for Iberians, located in Constantinople, and the St. Phocas, located in Trebizond, were abandoned (by Johannes Tornikios).
- (5) Moreover, a short time ago, by another *chrysobullos*, 60 tax bearing households, *dēmosiarioi oikoi*, were tax-exempted and given to Johannes, a monk and *Syncellos*. A little later, 40 households of tax exempted *paroikoi* were added. (Lines 13 to 17) Dölger, *Regesten* no.765.
- (6) *Chrysobullos* issued to the Iviron on Mount Athos by the late Michael (IV) Paphlagon (1034 to 1041). A monk, the late Georgios, was accused of malpractice, *ptaïisma*, and his assets were forfeited. Later, each monastery and its assets, which had been returned by this emperor, were given to this monastery. These were properties (*oikoproasteria*) in Leontaria and in Erissos, the Genesiou Monastery, a property of Dobrobikeia, a property of Meltzina (Melitziane), undeveloped land of Styliarion, and lands, *topia*, which belonged to several monks. Income gained for several years after Georgios was beheaded was given to this monastery. (Lines 17 to 21) Dölger, *Regesten*, no.839.
- (7)(8) Documents drafted by provincial judges were supposed to be kept safe, and these

instructions were good enough for the monks in the Iviron. In other words, a document, *hypomnema*, was drafted by a judge, *Spatharokandidatos kritos*, Johannes, (created in 1042 to 1044). He created a list of *chrysobullos*, in which he wrote down the details of each donation, and this list was dutifully stored away by the monks in the Iviron. Moreover, a judge, Andronicus in *Protospatharios*, described in his document, *engraphon*, (or, *graphe* line 24) in 1047, that the *chrysobullos* in the Iviron must include the donations of assets taxable *paroikoi*, *paroikoi dedēmosieumenoi*, and non-taxable *paroikoi*, *paroikoi ateleis*, and tax exempted descriptions. Andronicus stipulated that the donation of non-taxable *paroikoi* had to be reflected in the details of *chrysobullos*, and moreover that, in consistency with the details of *chrysobullos*, this donation must be exempted from the imposition of any tax, and he referred to the document *hypomnema*, in which a judge, Johannes *asekretis*, summarized the details of *chrysobullos*. (Lines 21 to 25).

The originals of these documents were scattered and lost. However, even from abstracts of the documents it is possible to know how state officials in catholicates (Bolon, Strymon, and Thessalonike) were involved in the entire assets of the Iviron. Five *chrysobulli* and two documents made by a judge, which had been scattered about in the catholicates, confirmed the landed property belonging to the Iviron. These documents described the address of each property and the preferential treatment of *paroikoi* living in each village. The 33rd document stipulated that the preferential treatment given these *paroikoi* was to be that a specific number of them would be made tax exempt and then donated to the Iviron Monastery, and the procedures for doing so were described therein.

The situation seems to be clarified from the historical texts, but from our point of view, we would like to reconfirm the more important points.

Documents (4) and (5) describe that in 979 and 980 (in 6488 A.M.), Johannes Tornikios, who was a founder of the Iviron, received two *chrysobulli* from Basileios II. This means that in exchange for two monasteries located in Constantinople and Trebizond, Johannes was supposed to receive the Leontia Monastery in Thessalonike, the Kolobou Monastery in Erissos, and the Klementos Monastery on Mount Athos. Moreover, in the document of (5), it describes that by another *chrysobullos* issued a little earlier, Johannes was given tax exemption for 60 tax burdened households, *dēmosiarioi oikoi*, and 40 households of non-taxable *paroikoi*. As will be explained later, both the Leontia and the Kolobou were important monasteries affiliated with the Iviron in the middle of the eleventh century. The asset formation of these monasteries depended on patronage by, particularly, the emperor. Even if we consider that the Iviron was a major monastery representative of the Byzantine state in the latter half of the tenth century, this fact is still very interesting. In the case of the monasteries, the Byzantine large estate system, which has often been discussed from the viewpoint of strength of relative independence of centralized state power, has to be reconsidered. (This is described in the section 5.)

In addition, 60 “tax burdened households”, *dēmosiarioi*, described in (5) belong to

a peasant category which appeared from the tenth century to the middle of the eleventh century. Ostrogorsky adopted the substance concept, such as “state peasants”, to this term.²³ In this paper, there is no space for writing about the great controversy that arose in Byzantine studies during the period after World War II, but I would like to confirm that “tax burdened households”, peasants as mentioned above, were tax payers who directly paid to the state treasury. From this document, it is evident that peasant households, which were supposed to pay tax, had been donated to the Iviron by Johannes Tzimiskes. This type of donation of peasants made by the state will be discussed in the next section.

Special privileges for the Iviron were not really decided at the discretion of the state officials such as the catholicate chief and his subordinates. As is obvious from the *chrysobullos*, they were decided directly by patronage of the emperor. The following part of the 33rd document describes that a special privilege was granted by the emperor after he received the monastery’s request.

“To guarantee the protection and the exemption which the monastery, its properties, and its resident *paroikoi* hold, whether they have to pay tax or not, providing enough documents to support the contents of each *chrysobullos* would be beneficial. However, the archimandrite made an effort to receive maximum protection by following the example of thoughtful commanding officers who had instructed the digging of dual moats around the droog. When the devout archimandrite, who had united the monasteries, learned that the emperor had asked Leon (who was *patrikios*, *antipatos*, and judge of the velum) to investigate the four *Themes*, even though he was very old he accompanied Leon to Thessalonike, carrying with him *chrysobullos* related to the monasteries which had been issued by the emperors mentioned above, as well as some documents written by provincial judges, and presented them to a judge therein. The archimandrite requested that the judge inspect *chrysobullos* and the documents and deduct *paroikoi*, who provide income for the monastery, from the taxable amount. Then, the archimandrite discovered that the actual number of *paroikoi* was less than as listed in the donation. Once the deduction for *paroikoi* was made correctly, he asked the judge to issue a single document to provide a summary of all of these documents.” (Lines 25 to 34).

The text explains that Leon, “judge of the velum” confirmed land attribution and assessed the amount of tax according to the field investigation by order of the emperor (Johannes I. Tzimiskes). As a result, the properties related to the Iviron were investigated and at this

23 Ostrogorsky, *Paysenarie*, passim. The importance of this article, including the objections raised by Lemerle and Karayannopoulos, was closely introduced in Japan. Watanabe, Kin-ichi, “Some Observations on Byzantine Peasants,” *A study on Socio-Economic History of Byzantine Empire* (the eighth article, first published in *Hitotsubashi University Research Series. Economics*, 2, in 1958.)

opportunity the archimandrite at that time went all the way to Thessalonike as soon as the officials returned, even though “he was very old”. The archimandrite asked the judge in charge to confirm the number of *paroikoi* and to deduct the tax reduction that had been gained from the peasant households’ privilege from the total amount of tax payment.

The judge drafted the document in response to the archimandrite’s request and issued it to him. In the last part of the document was written, “The purpose of this document is not to reconfirm the authority of the original documents, but for the prevention of these regulations from being violated (by others)”. By doing this, it was like he was saying, “Even a small chaloupe (steam launch=small properties belonging to affiliated monasteries) could serve as a good role model for a large ship in a storm.” The 32nd document was thus created “so that the monks could show it to people who tried to infringe on their small monasteries”, and “in it are listed the reference numbers and details of earlier *chrysobulli*, including information on the number of non taxable *paroikoi*, taxable *paroikoi*, and other donated *paroikoi*, as well as the promise of compete tax exemption for these *paroikoi*, and thus this document served to save the monks the trouble of having to show each individual *chrysobullos* one by one in order to verify the legal status of its property rights”.

That is how the special privileges under the tax system granted the Iviron through the emperors’ issuance of 5 earlier documents, and the earlier issuance of two administrative documents, were reconfirmed. The 32nd document ended with the signature of its creator, Leon (in *patrikios*, Antipatos, a clerk for the strong and sacred emperor and western inspector), followed by the name of the Iviron superior and the date of issue.²⁴

(2) Asset List of the Iviron and the Actual Situation of Taxation

Among the *chrysobulli* issued by the emperors in the past, in fact, four *chrysobulli* were referred to in other documents in the Iviron. (1) and (3) were referred to in the 2nd document and (5) and (6) were referred to in the 29th document.

The 29th document is the largest among the three documents focused on in this paper.²⁵ The large size of the document has attracted much attention, but the content of the text is relatively simple. In short, Andronicus, who was a state official in title of *protospatharios*, (he was a judge, *kritēs*, and inspector, *anagrapheus*, of Boleron, Strymon, and Thessalonike) described the tax amount imposed on each asset by listing the lands and properties for each monastery affiliated with the Iviron while revising an original assessment record created by Johannes, his predecessor, and issued the resulting book to the archimandrite of the Iviron. Andronicus, who created the document, also made the “memo” (7) mentioned above.

In the document, the specific names of the properties and the tax amounts imposed on them were listed, along with names of the neighboring properties and land classification, and

²⁴ *Actes d’Iviron*, II, p.87. no.32, l.42.

²⁵ *Actes d’Iviron* I, p.251-261.

the total tax amount was written in the last part. Although the writing had faded away and was difficult to read, from the memo written on the back of the list it was confirmed that this asset list was a “copy” of the original land register that existed at that time, which was the same as the tax roll. In other words, this document was the so-called asset list of the Iviron at that time and also a taxation confirmation containing an excerpt from a tax roll (=original land register), which was kept in the office.

The affiliated monasteries that appear in the 32nd and the 33rd documents are included in this document. We will not mention the names of each property, but the outline is as follows:

- (a) As properties of the Kolobou Monastery (in Herissos), 7 lots/estates in Erissos of Thessalonike;
- (b) As properties of the Leontia Monastery (in Thessalonike), 14 lots /estates;
- (c) As properties of the Chabounia Monastery (also known as *Polygyros*) (located in the west of peninsula of Halkidiki), 2 lots/estates;
- (d) As properties of the Ambakoum Monastery (in the Kassandra Peninsula), 12 lots and estates;
- (e) As properties of the Spilaiotou Monastery (its location is uncertain, but it is assumed it was near Herissos), 4 lots and estates.

The total of 39 lots or estates is listed along with each tax amount. The tax amounts were supposed to be calculated according to the area and productivity, but the area was seldom described. The categories of the estates were the agriculture-related estates of each monastery, but there were various categories as indicated in the following. In other words, the categories include “fields”, “pastures”, “vine land”, “property village”, “wetland”, “forts”, “mountain land”, “wasteland”, and “undeveloped land”, and moreover, contain the affiliated monasteries under each monastery, islands (the island of Kaukanades in Bolelon), attached “temple lodgings” and “water mills”. It is known that all of these assets were recognized as the tax unit of the Iviron under the imperial tax system.

In order to know the Byzantine tax system, it is necessary to describe the characteristics of the tax amount, which we can know from this document. First, in the 29th document of Iviron, the area was not taxed equivalently. For example, “fields” and “pastures” that correspond to a crop yield of 90 *modioi* appear in line 8. The amount of tax for this was a quarter of *nomisma*, which calculates into 1 *nomisma* per 360 *modioi* for tax. However, line 39 indicates that the amount of tax for “land” that corresponds to a crop yield of 300 *modioi* is a quarter of *nomisma*, which calculates into 1 *nomisma* per 1200 *modioi* for tax. Moreover, in line 68, the tax for “fields” that correspond to a crop yield of 1000 *modioi* is one twelfth *nomisma*, which calculates into 1 *nomisma* per 12000 *modioi* for tax. It is natural to assume the differences in the tax rates were caused by inequalities in the land assessment values.²⁶

In addition, according to editors such as Lefort et al, these tax ratios were much lower

26 *ibid.*, I, Introduction, p.57.

than the tax ratios in the tenth and the eleventh centuries. For example, in the 48th document of Iviron, created in 982, the tax amount was 1 *nomisma* per 100 *modioi*. In the 44th document, created in 1090, the tax amount was 1 *nomisma* per 72 *modioi*.²⁷ The total tax amount (the total was 43 plus one quarter *nomismata*) was almost the same as the tax amount, more than 46 *nomismata*, imposed on Lavra Monastery²⁸, but because the Iviron properties are assumed to have been larger than those of Lavra, the tax ratio must have been even lower than that of Lavra Monastery. This low ratio cannot be explained unless it is assumed that the Iviron took special advantage of tax free measures.

From a tax paying point of view, it is noteworthy that the tax payer for assets which appeared on lines 90 to 94 was not the Iviron but the Spilaiotou Monastery. However, materials from which to ascertain how actual tax payment was made have not been found among other related documents. Therefore, although it is difficult to determine, the taxpayer in the system assumed in this tax confirmation was definitely the Iviron²⁹. If we are to assume that this record is not wrong, it is considered that the Spilaiotou took over the expression of administrative proceedings before the Spilaiotou became an affiliated monastery or actual tax payment was made by the Spilaiotou Monastery.

In addition, from line 95 to the last line 99 in the last part of this document, the total tax amount and the method of payment were described as follows:

“In total, 43+1/4 *nomismata*. *Dikeraton* 3+29/48 *nomismata*. *Hexafollon* 5/6 *nomisma*. In other words, the total is 47 *nomismata* and 8 *argyra* 6 *folis*. Out of this, 40 *nomismata* should be paid with gold (*charagma*). 7 *nomismata* and 8 *argyra* 6 *folis* should be paid with the *miliaresion*. *Synetheia* tax of *dioiketes* is the same as *elatikon* tax, 4 *nomismata*. *Kaniskion* should be paid with 3 pieces of bread, 3 *modia* of barley, 3 chickens, and 1 metlon of wine.”

Dikeraton, *hexafollon*, *synetheia*, and *elatikon* are additional taxes. These were calculated according to a computation table called the “old calculation chart”, *Palaia Logarike*, until the time of Alexios I Komnenos (in reign from 1081 to 1118). When each tax calculation in this chart is applied, according to Svoronos, who introduced this chart, the result corresponds to a number on this chart³⁰.

What is known from this 29th document are (1) the status of the development of properties belonging to the Iviron in August of 1047 when this document was created; (2) the amount of tax the Iviron was supposed to pay; (3) the tax amounts for the monastery properties were

27 *ibid.*, I, no.4, p.126-128 ; *ibid.*, II, no.44, p.154-155.

28 *Actes de Lavra* I, p.70.

29 *Actes d'Iviron*, I, Introduction, p.26, n.1.

30 Svoronos, Nicholas, Recherches sur le cadastre byzantin et la fiscalité aux XI^e et XII^e siècles: le cadastre de Thèbes. *BCH* 83 (1959) p.81-83.

assessed and calculated for each affiliated monastery and property; (4) however, the tax payments were integrated into the Iviron's charge.

(3) Recovery of *Paroikoi* by the State Officials

(a) Kladon document (the 2nd document of Iviron)

The emperor's document mentioned in the 32nd document was also referred to in the Iviron's 2nd document. The 2nd document also provides some very interesting facts from a tax viewpoint. It is an administrative document, called *sigilion*, created and issued in September of 975, before the Iviron was founded (in 979/980). Later, Theodoros Kladon, who was the *ek prosopou* and appeared also in the 33rd document, issued this document to three monasteries, the Kolobou, the Polygyros, and the Leontia, which were later donated to the Iviron.

The content of the 2nd document is considered to be similar to that of the Kladon document referred to in the 33rd document, as described previously. In other words, while the state officials in Thessalonike investigated the districts in charge and confirmed the actual situation of the peasant households that directly belonged to the state treasury, they also conducted an investigation and recorded the owners of farmlands. The document was the record of this confirmation procedure. The 2nd document of Iviron also describes that the state official, Kladon, was ordered to bring back the peasants called *stratiotes*, *prosodiaroi*³¹ and *dēmosiaroi*, all of whom belonged to the state treasury, by order of Emperor Johannes I. Tzimiskes. The document describes how "the peasant households represented by these three terms "ran away and were under the control of the land holders". The following is an excerpt written in the text³²:

Teodros Kladon, who was *Protospatharios*, and *epi tou maglabiou*, and *ek prosopou* in Thessalonike and Strymon catholicates, created *sigilion*. This was issued to each monastery of

31 The term is found only in Iviron no. 2 and Lvra no. 6 (*Actes d'Iviron*, I, p.111). Presumably it is related to the prosodion, although there is no conclusive evidence. The prosodion literary means "come closer," and represents the voluntary gratuity by tax payers to tax collectors and their retinues. Oikonomidēs assumes that the prosodion was gradually institutionalized as the item of additional tax. Oikonomidēs, *Fiscalité*, p.89-90. The term was used in the novel issued between 945 and 959 (Zepos, *Jus graecoromanorum*, I, p.227), and its usage was consistent to some extent. For example, "the judge is not qualified to receive the ectagiatika. They are for the retinues (proeleusimaioi). The judge must be satisfied with what is granted by the Emperor, and with his share of the prosodion." In our documents, the term was supposed to represent the peasants who were under an obligation to pay the prosodion (only?) as an additional tax. In other words, the peasants in this category were exempted from the main part of tax and other additional taxes. In lavra no. 6, l. 7, the conjugation prosodiazo was used, whereas in Iviron no. 2, l. 5, *ajpaitw'* (demand back, inquire) was used. The content of both documents was identical.

32 *Actes d'Iviron*, I, no.2, p.112-113; Joachim Iberites, *Sigivllion peri ton monon Kolobou Polygyrou kai Leontia*, in Gregorios ho Palamas, I, 1917, p.787-788. cf. Lemerle, *Agrarian History*, p.167-168; Kaplan, *Les terres* p.267-278; Dölger, *Ein Fall*, S.17. Each scholar depends on Ostrogorsky to determine the date of execution of the sigillion. Ostrogorsky, *Paysannerie*, p.13.

the Kolobou, the Polygyros, and the Leontia in September of the 4th indiction.

By respectful ruling, *pittakion*, of the powerful and sacred emperor (Johannes Tzimiskes), Kladon went to search for *strateiai*, *prosodiaroi* and *dēmosiaroi*, who were hidden by the landowners related to secular and church properties. If such people are found, these *dēmosiaroi* should be brought back under the control of the emperor, a tax imposed on them, and then delivered to the emperor. (Lines 3 to 6).

According to this order, Kladon searched the Thessalonike Catholicate and imposed the taxes on *dēmosiaroi*. Then, he left 20 *paroikoi* households, who were not *dēmosiaroi*, in the Kolobou. This is because the Kolobou had held these households under the authority of two *chrysobulli* issued by Constantine VII. Moreover, he left 40 *paroikoi* households in the Polygyros because the Polygyros was holding these households by the patronage of Romanos II. These 60 *paroikoi* peasant households in total were living in various areas such as Kastron of Erissos, but they were exempted from tax, and each monastery could decide where they would live. (Lines 6 to 15).

Furthermore, the monks of the Leontia in Thessalonike showed a *chrysobullos* issued by Constantine VII to Kladon. That *chrysobullos* described: while this monastery and its properties, “tax exempted *paroikoi* (*paroikoi ateleis*)” and *douloparoikoi* living in the properties, are exempted from any burdens or financial duties, the 36 tax exempted households (*oikoi exkousatoi*) from Thessalonike Catholicate should be returned to this monastery. (Lines 15 to 23).

Kladon examined this *chrysobullos* and confirmed its validity, but during the process of creating this *sigilion* he could not find these peasant households in the Leontia properties or in its affiliated monasteries. This is because savage tribes invaded the area and these households disappeared. There, Kladon only found several households of “tax exempted people” and “poor people”. Kladon ignored this situation and gave up trying to find the main 36 households. He asked the affiliated monasteries, such as Ambakoum, Shibles and others to continue to look for them.

However, he declared that if the monasteries were to find them, because they were already given the right to hold the peasant households by their *chrysobullos*, they could hold the peasant households as tax exempted households. (Lines 23 to 31).

By the authority of *chrysobullos*, neither the Kolobou, the Pteleotes (Polygyros), nor the Leontia monasteries can force peasants to perform any tasks, such as the performance of labour, the establishment and operation of facilities, the provision of food, the changing of old customs or the incurring of damages. (Lines 31 to 35).

(b) Simeon document (the 6th document of Lavra)

One year before the creation of Iviron’s 2nd document, another *sigilion* was created and issued in a similar format .

It was a document organized as the 6th document in the Lavra Monastery documents. A person called Simeon, who was an *ek prosopou* like Kladon, also went to the properties to search for peasant households by the ruling of the emperor and allowed the monastery to hold the peasant households related to the Lavra. The document described this process. The issuance date was written as “September of the 3rd indiction” and in the text, *chrysobullos* issued by “the late emperors, Nicephoros and Romanos”, were referred to. From this description, the document is assumed to have been created in September of 974, when Johannes I. Tzimiskes reigned. It is interesting that this document, as well as the previously mentioned Kladon document, are both assumed to have been created in September, but there is no evidence to support this point of view. As the fiscal year in the Byzantine state started in September and ended at the end of August of the next year, his work was possibly to prepare for the new year, but evidence to support this has not been found. A summary of the text is as follows:³³

This *Sigilion* was created by Simeon, who was in *Protospatharios*, and was the *ek prosopou* in Strymon and Thessalonike catholicates, and issued for Athanasios (who was a founder of the Monastery) of Great Lavra and its people in September of the 3rd indiction.

By respectful ruling, *pittakion*, of the powerful and sacred emperor (Johannes Tzimiskes), Kladon went to search for *strateiai*, *prosodiaroi* and *dēmosiaroi*, who were hidden by the landowners related to secular and church properties. If such people are found, these *dēmosiaroi* should be brought back under the control of the emperor, tax imposed on them, and then delivered to the emperor. (Lines 3 to 6).

Simeon went into the town in Herissos, found the *dēmosiaroi*, and recorded each of them. Then he brought them back according to the announcement from the sacred emperor and requested their return to the Lavra. However, Simeon left 32 people who were not *dēmosiaroi* in the monastery of Athanasios. This measure was taken because there were two *chrysobulli* issued by Nikephoros Phokas and Romanos (II). These said people were from Herissos, Nomeriastai and other properties. Simeon created the list of the peasants and cited individual names. Based on *chrysobulli*, he took measures to exempt the peasants from tax and put them back under the authority of the monastery.

No one could make any claim, or serve duties such as labour, establish and operate housing facilities, provide food, change old customs or incur damages. The above numbers of *Paroikoi* were to be exempted from any demands to render service in a place of the monks’ choosing.

These two documents describe how “recovery work” involving peasants serving the state

33 *Actes de Lavra*, no.6 (974), p.110. cf. Lemerle, *Agrarian History*, p.167-168; Kaplan, *Les hommes*, p.242-244, p.267-278, p.294.

was implemented in Strymon, Thessalonike, and Boleron catholicates in 974 and 975. It is immediately inferred that these two documents corresponded to the texts found in the last half of the 33rd document of Iviron. Ostrogorsky assumed that uniformed investigation and peasant recovery were implemented all across the state, but the actual situation is not clear.³⁴ However, the existence of these two documents, which were written in similar format, and another document referred to in the 33rd document of Iviron, leads us to assume that the recovery project was generally implemented.

The contents of these two documents are as follows: (1) State officials, Kladon and Simeon, while conducting an overall investigation on peasants, visited each of the affiliated monasteries of the Iviron and the Great Lavra and conducted investigations thereabout. (2) *Strateiai*, *prosodiarioi*, and *dēmosiarioi* who were found there were returned to the original state treasury. (3) However, the specific peasant households, by a certain proportion as dictated by the emperor's document, were officially donated to each monastery.

When examining the details, (4) the peasants, as privileged objects, were “under the authority of the monastery”, and they were forced to live in the places that the monks assigned them. Moreover, (5) the fact that the imposed duties from which the peasants left in the monastery properties were exempted were listed (the performance of labour, the establishment and operation of facilities, the provision of food, the changing of old customs or the incurring of damages) is interesting.

The facts regarding the peasants as being privileged due to the patronage of the emperor are as follows:

(a) Related to the Iviron Monastery

- (1) 20 *pariokoi* households in the affiliated monastery, Kolobou (according to the two *chrysobulli* issued by Constantine VII).
- (2) 40 *paroikoi* households in the affiliated monastery, Polygyros (according to the *chrsobullos* issued by Romanos II). These 60 households were located in Kastron of Erissons or other places, but actual places of residence are up to each monastery's discretion.
- (3) “Tax exempted *pariokoi* (*paroikoi ateleis*)”, complete tax exemption for “*douloparoi*”, and 36 tax exempted households are to be donated to the affiliated monastery, Leontia (according to the *chrysobullos* issued by Constantine VII).

(b) Related to the Monastery of Great Lavra

- (1) 32 households (in Hessoris), who were not *dēmosiarioi*, will remain (Confirmation of the privilege given from the two *chrysobulli* issued by Nikephoros II Phokas and Romanos II).

The original purpose of this paper was to examine the documents of the middle of the eleventh century and the tax system of that time. However, while examining old official documents, the two documents created in the last half of the tenth century were discovered.

34 Ostrogorsky, *Paysennerie*, p.13.

Following the examples of individual documents similar to the two documents mentioned above, the documents in the eleventh century were also used to receive official approval of asset security from the state. This interesting fact makes us consider the continuity of the same system. In the middle of the eleventh century, the Iviron requested state officials to inspect the site and confirm the number of peasants with tax privilege living in the properties as seen in the documents of the tenth century. In the end they were secured.

5. Result of “moving peasants”

(1) “*Pariokoi* of the state” or “the state and *paroikoi*”

Both of the documents introduced in the previous sections were thoroughly reviewed by Ostrogorsky. These are famous and important documents in history as scholars having opposing opinions, such as Lemerle and Karayannopoulos, were involved with their analysis. Regarding the review of the statements and the arguments of Ostrogorsky, no other studies, even those undertaken in Western countries, are better than the meticulously researched paper written by Kin-ichi Watanabe.³⁵ In this paper, we cannot go into a detailed argument about the history of the study, but we would like to make some comments about the interpretation of the facts made by Ostrogorsky and an understanding of Byzantine society from a different point of view. My understanding is just that of a rough assumption, made without an exhaustive examination of all related historical materials, but based on my own understanding after reviewing each document. I have doubts about the validity of the concept of “enslaved peasants of the state” as assumed by Ostrogorsky and the argument made based on this concept. Therefore, I would like to make some comments for future reference. (By introducing the detailed argument made by Watanabe, Ostrogorsky’s claim will become apparent; therefore, reference to the documents will be omitted.)

It is an accepted fact that these two documents describe the investigation of peasant households by state officials; even if these documents are related to the Iviron in the eleventh century. In the two documents dated from the last half of the tenth century and in the 32nd and 33rd documents of Iviron dated from the middle of the eleventh century, “peasants” related to monastery properties were categorized into “tax exempted *pariokoi* (*paroikoi aleteis*)”, “tax exempted households (*oikoi exkousatoi*)”, and “*douloparoikoi*”, or “enslaved peasants of the state (*dēmosiarioi paroikoi*)”. There can be no doubt that the peasant households were grouped into these categories based on field investigations made by state officials; but were they truly slaves of the monasteries, and were their places of residence truly dictated at the discretion of the monastery? While maintaining independence (the freedom to own land and to move about), were they paying tax, which they were originally supposed to pay to the state, to the monasteries, and were they rendering their service to the landowners? Or were they supposed

35 See note 23.

to pay tax to the state based on their original legal position? In field investigations made by state officials, the categories must have been grouped in a similar manner as are the concepts mentioned above. The following issues suggested by Ostrogorsky raise a great controversy in the history of the study of Byzantine economic society: the categories of the peasant households made by the state; the legal, social and economic positions of the peasants in each category, and; the relationship between the property owners and state power.

To roughly summarize Ostrogorsky's argument: "churls", who were "small land owners" and who had supported the state since the seventh century as a basic constituent, unexpectedly lost their independence with the expansion in the amount of land owned by large landowners which took place in the tenth century. As a result, this raises the issue of how the organization of state labor, and the political and economic systems that depended on that labor, were transformed. Ostrogorsky assumed the existence of a "small customary tenant" in the core part of his argument when discussing Byzantine economic society after the tenth and eleventh centuries. According to him, small landowners, who had the freedom to own land and to move about, were basic constituents of Byzantine society as of the seventh century. The "farmer's law" of the seventh to the eighth centuries and the Taxation Treatise of the tenth century targeted such peasants.

However, these small landowners faced a crisis as the larger private landowners went about enlarging their properties throughout the course of the tenth century. Responding to this situation, the state had to take into consideration securing the status of the "churls". Furthermore, the state had to take measures to secure the churls under the state. In short, "the rights of landowners to transfer their own lands" became a clue for influential people to begin to secure the properties of the peasants. However, great risks occurred from the situation that put an end to the independence of the peasants. This was not just caused by the fact that the peasants were increasingly taken over by influential people. The other reason is because in addition to the above, in order to protect the peasants from risk the state virtually deprived them of the rights to discard their own land or to move to a property owned by large landowners. As a result, it is contended that the state changed the peasants' status into that of "enslaved peasants of the state".³⁶ Moreover, the relationship with "the state" became the same as that of the relationship between landowners and *paroikoi*. One characteristic that was recognized was that the historical data often represented the peasants as *pariokoi of the state*³⁷.

(2) Managed *paroikoi*

These peasant households were as essential as the land as "assets" to the state and the monasteries. As seen in the 29th document of Iviron, the Byzantine state investigated and

³⁶ Ostrogorsky, *Paysannerie*, p.18-19; Watanabe, "Some Observations on Byzantine Peasants," p. 330.

³⁷ *ibid.*, p.18.

recorded ownership of all farmed lands and according to the condition of the land calculated the tax amount with a flat rate. It is known that the state officials who appeared in the documents as “judge” were well informed about the locations of the monasteries, the quality and the quantity of their means of production, and the resources of their lands.

In the Byzantine state, religious organizations such as monasteries received preferential treatment, but at the same time taxes were theoretically imposed on them. The state government had the original records for land and tax rolls in its aggregate records. Generally, the state officials extracted the records and created property statements and then issued them to the property owners (the 29th document endorsement). The records we are looking at are these cases. There, the name of each peasant household head, who was the main holder of each land, the animals owned for farming, and information about the land that was adjacent to each peasant household’s land was described, and for each household the taxable amount was confirmed and clarified. The list, which is translated as a “fiscal register/liste nominale (*katonoma*)” in this paper, was an official record of the exhaustive enumeration of peasant households, and at the same time it must have been the most important kind of title certification by which monasteries could manage the basic foundation of daily life. After the beginning of the twelfth century, a more comprehensive list, called “*Praktikon*”, appeared. All lists have been preserved and handed down until today, and were considered precious in the archive, but why have they been preserved and handed down so carefully? This is most likely because the monasteries wanted to protect their rights and benefits as property owners as the collective memory of successive state officials may fade, neighbors may become greedy, peasants may move on, or at times even the very existence of a peasant may “disappear”.

The documents preserved conversations and many facts. The process of creating the documents explains the fact that the monasteries tried to secure their properties by asking the state officials to confirm the actual situation of the properties. As far as the documents examined in this paper go, it appears that intentional land acquisition by landowners was not rampant in Byzantine society after the tenth century, as illustrated in studies by Ostrogorsky et al. Moreover, I do not get the impression that there was farming space consisting only of “enslaved peasants” which existed beyond state power at least until the latter half of the eleventh century.

As a major assumption of his argument, Ostrogorsky emphasized the fact that the monasteries aggressively motivated the small landowners to donate their land to be merged. This point was not a target for criticism from opponents such as Lemerle et al, because even other critics had made similar assumptions. Even Lemerle focused on the point of continuous financial intervention measures taken by the state while he presumed that large landowners took aggressive action to gain land. He insisted that *exkouseia*, which meant a compromise from the state finance viewpoint, should be described as one of measures in the state financial system. However, this aggressive land acquisition taken by the monasteries, which both Ostrogorsky and Lemerle took for granted, does not seem realistic. It is probably true that

monastery properties were gradually enlarged. As introduced in this paper, large monasteries such as the Iviron or the Lavra appeared after the middle of the tenth century and they expanded their property while holding privileged peasants. This was probably a characteristic phenomenon of the time.

However, as an explanation, proof of the charge that the monasteries aggressively promoted activities of aggrandizement (such as the purchasing of peasant's lands, or the encouraging of peasants to donate their land) has not been found in many places yet. Ostrogorsky, Lemerle, Karayannopoulos, have presumed an "antagonistic" relationship between the state and the landowners, and therefore it seems as though they regard the movement of the small landowners as rather "passive" and do not pay much attention to it. In other words, while explaining that an active approach made by large landowners such as monasteries brought the peasantry to ruin by depriving them of their freedom and independence and demoted them to being enslaved peasants of the monasteries, they did not pay attention to the issue of the free will of the small landowners. Social organization, consisting of land and peasants as essential resources for both the state and landowners, was an extremely important issue to the Byzantine state. There is the possibility that at that time, the proposition that the peasants might willingly donate their own land has not been even discussed. Therefore, it seems as though the possibility of a passive attitude on the part of the monasteries or their affiliated churches was not discussed.

(3) The state regulations regarding donation made by small landowners

Nikephoros II Phokas issued a *chrysobullos* forbidding land transfer to monasteries in 964. Generally this novel is interpreted as an anti-monastery measure, but through this novel, Nikephoros II could complain about the current situation of the monasteries. Was the real situation in the middle of the tenth century really a reflection of what the emperor perceived it to be? The following is his description.³⁸

“If people have spirit for love's decent and great behavior, I will call them ambitious. Then, if somebody desires to build a *xenon* (hospice) or a *gerokomeion* (old people's home), nobody will prevent him from doing it. However, as I mentioned previously, there are many devastated and damaged monasteries, and those people who have the spirit will take care of and help these monasteries, through which action they can show love for God. Therefore, I shall order for more consideration

38 Nicephoros II Phocas, *Neara* (Novella XIX) de monasteries. (963/4): Zachariae, *Jus Graeco-Romaorum*. III. p.292-296; Zepos, I, p.249-252; Rhalles & Potles, *Syvntagma*, V (Athens, 1855), p.261-265; Svoronos, *Les Nouvelles des Empereurs Macédoniens*. p.151-161; Dölger, *Regesten*, No.699. Watanabe, “Social Structure of Byzantine Villages in the Tenth Century,” p. 437-442; Otsuki, Yasuhiro, “A Reconsideration on Basileios II's Novels: Imperial Fiscal Problem and Church Policy in the Tenth Century Byzantine Empire,” *Hitotsubashi University Research Series. Economics*, 40 (October, 1998), p. 183-229.

for existing monasteries that are ruined and in need of help. However, this does not mean that land or buildings will be given to these facilities. This is because these things have already been provided and the monasteries have enough. However, consideration has not been given and land has not been farmed properly due to a lack of funds. Those who feel such consideration to these monasteries is meaningful should sell their assets to ordinary people or to whomever they want, and in exchange for this money, liverymen, cows, sheep, and other cattle should be provided to these facilities. From now on, nobody shall give land or property to monasteries, *gerokomeion*, *xenon*, metropolitan, or bishop.”

Moreover, Basileios II also issued a long novel, which was interpreted as intended to prevent the monasteries from owning large tracts of land, and he described it as follows:³⁹

“According to the reports of almost all *themes*, what I have been concerned about is that most villages were ravaged and received maltreatment. In other words, several villages were in danger of disappearing and the reason can be traced to the “monasteries”. More specifically, a peasant builds a hermitage on his own land and donates all of his assets to this hermitage based on the rest of the villagers’ agreement, and then he spends the rest of his life there. This is reported to be common in many villages. One after another villagers join this, and in the end two or three monks will have joined the hermitage. When these monks die, the bishop or metropolitan bishop take over the hermitage and it is called a “monastery”. The metropolitan or the bishop keep such “monasteries” as their own facilities or donate them as gifts to influential people. This kind of process ravages, maltreats, and damages the villages. That is why I shall order you to return all hermitages to peasants (although I do not call them “monasteries”) and ignore the claims made by the bishop and the metropolitan. Then, if the metropolitan bishop or the bishop donates the hermitages to people as gifts, those who receive them, even if they repair and keep them for a long time, will have to give them up.”

These novels imply that small landowners in each area of the state decided to live in hermitages and became tonsured monks, and although there were already enough land assets in the possession of the monasteries or charitable institutions, men (or women), as good neighbors, kept on donating their own land or real estate to them. A person builds a small “cathedral” in his own land and donates the building and the land assets to the bishop

39 Basil II, Neara(996.1.1.). Zachariae, *JGR*, III, p.306-318; Zepos, I, p.262-272; Svoronos, *Les Nouvelles*. p.190-217; Dölger, *Regesten*, No.783. Watanabe, “Social Structure of Byzantine Villages in the Tenth Century,” p. 453-468; Otsuki, “A Reconsideration on Basileios II’s Novels,” as cited above.

(metropolitan) or the monastery in his area. This behavior was not in line with the intentions of Nikephoros II or Basileios II. However, based solely on this fact, to conclude that these two emperors were anti-monastery would be presumptuous. In fact, in the document dealt with in this paper, a glimpse of patronage given by the monastery is evident. It would be valid to assume that the emperors issued these novels in a general sense in terms of state finance rather than from an anti-monastery stance.

Moreover, as one example, one interesting text regarding the history of Polygyros, which became an affiliated monastery of the Iviron, is as follows:

This related information was included in the 10th document of Iviron created in 996.⁴⁰ This document of Iviron, in which the founder's will was included, was created to confirm the facilities and the assets of Polygyros, which was conquered by Bulgarians, and the confirmation and return were implemented by Nicolas, a judge of the catholicate. According to the text, Demetrios Pteleotes, who was dignified as *Protospatharios*, inherited one third of the Polygyros property, which was also called Chabounia, in 959. Pteleotes purchased the rest, which was two thirds of the property. He built a monastery, under the control of the Patriarch, to "save his own soul" and then donated it. That was simply a declaration saying that he would exclude intervention by the bishop and the metropolitan bishop. An interesting point was that his patrimonial position was to be kept in this monastery, and his son, Johannes Pteleotes, was appointed as the first monastery dean.

According to the text, Pteleotes also donated an additional two properties to this monastery. They were Bolbos and Myriophyton. The text of Pteleotes' will contains specific information about compartments and each part of the "property Polygyros, also called Chabounia." According to the will, Hospis of the state and land in Myriophyton, which was given to Armenian, were listed as a neighboring area.⁴¹ Moreover, this 10th document described how Constantine VII gave 20 households of *paroikoi* to this monastery and a privilege of exemption from various burdens. This monastery asset was under the control of the Kolobou in 975 and then owned by the Iviron in 979 and 980.

Did *Paroikoi*, which was expressed as being "seekers of shelter" in the two documents in the reign of Johannes Tzimiskes mentioned above, really give up their land and seek shelter in secular or church related facilities?

As you can imagine, it cannot be assumed that there were no cases like that. As Dölger assumed, we must take into consideration that the agricultural villages in the Macedonia area became fluid after the Slavic people came there. 36 tax exempted households, *oikoi exkousatoi*, belonging to the Leontia, granted by chrysobullos of Constantine VII, also disappeared in 975 as a result of the "wild tribes' invasion." There must have been areas that were abandoned and

40 *Actes d'Iviron*, I, no.10. p.163-172.

41 For a short report of the remains of this monastery and its property in the western part of the Chalcidike Peninsula, see Lefort, Jacques, *Villages de Macédoine. Notices historiques et topographiques sur la Macédoine orientale au Moyen Age. I. - La Chalcidique occidentale*. Paris, 1982. p.127-129.

ruined.

However, at the same time, it is necessary to think about the possibility that peasants with their lands may have “run to and sought for” shelter with the property owner (*prosopa*). It is necessary to assume that if the peasants went to the property owners, it meant “sell”, and if they went to churches or monasteries, it meant “donate”, and all of the lands would be transferred. It is assumed that peasant households such as *strateiai*, *prosodeiarioi*, and *dēmosiarioi*, which were returned by the financial officials (Kladon and Simeon) to the emperor, contained the cases related to the situation which was explained in two novels issued in 964 and 996.

Closing Note

In the reign of Tzimiskes, which existed between that of Nikephoros and Basileios, no novel was issued to regulate the “development of large estate”, which former emperors had been concerned about. However, it seems that this “lack”, which Ostrogorsky pointed out, was compensated for in a different sense by a consistent administrative measure found in the two documents.⁴²

However, the history of the Polygyros and its assets, which were transferred into the Iviron property, suggests the fate of the monasteries, which expanded in Byzantine society after the tenth century. It could be assumed this was an example of donation by a mid-sized asset owner, who could not be categorized as a small landowner. However, these lands were not small, so therefore, they were left as continual and perpetual donations in the future. The question is that of the possibility of people’s philanthropic behavior, of which no record was left. These behaviors should not be considered as donations according to the novels issued in 964 and 996. It would not be surprising that they were charged by state officials.

How did large monasteries such as the Iviron increase their assets? What were the motivations for establishing the Byzantine monasteries, which were generally established by ordinary people? Moreover, what fate did the mid-sized religious facilities and noble people’s assets meet that may have been contrary to the principles of their proprietors? The cases and the facts described above are still providing interesting information about the Byzantine tax and financial system beyond the specific social category of the monastery.

42 Ostrogorsky, *Paysannerie*, p.15-16; Lemerle, *Agrarian History*, p.154-155; Watanabe, “Some Observations on Byzantine Peasants,” p. 326-7.