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The Maritime Neighborhoods of Constantinople: Commercial and Residential Functions, Sixth to Twelfth Centuries

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Constantinople, like New York, is a city not only by the sea, but also, to a large extent, in the sea. The effect of the sea on the fabric of the city is strongly pervasive, and it makes sense to start from the sea when investigating urban neighborhoods. By far the best evidence for the texture of urban neighborhoods comes from twelfth-century documents concerning the real estate conceded to the Italian maritime republics of Venice, Pisa, and Genoa—real estate that lay close to the shores of the Golden Horn.

Since the sea is not far from any part of the city or its suburbs, and is indeed visible from almost anywhere within the Theodosian walls, it may well be asked what is meant by a maritime neighborhood. What distinguishes it from an inland neighborhood? Where does the one end and the other begin? Eleven of the twelve urban regions of the fifth-century *Notitia urbis Constantinopolitanae* bordered on the sea, but only Regions I and IX had a long coastline.¹ Most of the other regions extended from a narrow stretch of coast to a narrow bloc of the city center. However, the regions were administrative rather than social or economic units. If we take into account the topography, the layout of public spaces, and the location of public monuments, we can draw a broad working distinction between those parts of the city that looked primarily toward the sea and those orientated toward the central avenue (Mese), the fora, and the great public buildings. Only in rare cases was a focal point such as the Strategion or the Leomakellon situated so close to the sea as to constitute a rival attraction.² In this paper, I shall be concerned with those neighborhoods whose proximity to the sea may be assumed to have been decisive, whether directly or indirectly, for the location of houses and businesses. The assumption is that a seaside location was desirable, first, for the loading, unloading, storage, and marketing of seaborne merchandise, and second, for the recreation afforded by a view of the sea. The commercial importance of proximity to the sea is self-evident, although, given the low status of commerce in Byzantine society and culture, it is almost never

¹In *Notitia dignitatum*, ed. O. Seeck (Berlin, 1876), 229–43. For German translation, commentary, map, and earlier bibliography, see A. Berger, “Regionen und Straßen im frühen Konstantinopel,” *IstMitt* 47 (1997): 349–414.

²On these locations, see A. Berger, *Untersuchungen zu den Patria Konstantinupoleos*, Ποικίλα Βυζαντινά 8 (Bonn, 1988), 406–11, 515–56, and below.

articulated by the sources and must be inferred from the geographical incidence of harbors and landing-stages. Byzantine sources are rather more eloquent on the recreational value of a sea view. Imperial legislation relating to Constantinople in the fifth and sixth centuries concurs with the treatise on urban planning emanating from sixth-century Palestine under the name of Julian of Ascalon in insisting that new buildings should not obstruct a neighbor's view of the sea.³ The legislation proved difficult to enforce, and the eleventh-century judge Eustathios Romaios ruled that it did not apply outside Constantinople. However, the grounds on which he justified his decision show that the sight of the sea had lost none of its appeal:

For where a man can go and walk on the shore, what need is there to urge a neighbor to keep the regulation distance? For here we are enclosed by the walls, and it is not possible for us to leave our homes and spend the night on the shore. But outside, people are not shut off from the sea by walls, and there is nothing to prevent them from spending as long as they like on the seashore.⁴

The site of Constantinople is bordered by three expanses of sea: the Sea of Marmara, the Bosphoros, and the Golden Horn. I shall have little to say about the area beside the Bosphoros, the area consisting of the eastern slope of the ridge that terminates in the acropolis of ancient Byzantium. This was certainly a residential area: there were private houses next to the Great Palace in the ninth century, and several individuals are recorded as living on the Acropolis.⁵ But there is no evidence for commercial premises along this stretch of coast, where the only proper harbor was that of the Great Palace,⁶ and the few landing-stages that are attested were used either for ferries across the Bosphoros⁷ or for servicing the great religious and imperial houses that took up most of the space between the Great Palace and the Acropolis point.⁸ Partly because of the proximity of the Great Palace and partly because this part of the city had developed out of the sacred and recreational area of ancient Byzantium, it tended to be dominated by a few large religious complexes—the orphanage, the Mangana, the Monastery of the Hodegoi, the churches of the Archangels and St. Menas—that did not really add up to an urban neighborhood. I shall therefore concentrate on the parts of the city beside the Golden Horn and the Sea of Marmara, and in particular on those coastal districts within the Constantinian wall that were important because they were close both to the commercial axis of the Mese and to the harbors that handled most of the city's maritime traffic during the height of its

³Laws of Zeno and Justinian: CIC, *CI* 8.10.12.2–4; CIC, *Nov* 63; Julian of Ascalon, 52.2, ed. and trans. C. Saliou, *Le traité d'urbanisme de Julien d'Ascalon*, *TM*, Monographies 8 (Paris, 1996), 72–73. Cf. in general S. N. Troianos and K. G. Pitsakis, *Φυσικὸ καὶ δομημένο περιβάλλον στὶς βυζαντινὲς νομικὲς πηγές* (Athens, 1998).

⁴*Peira*, 18.5; ed. P. Zepos and I. Zepos, *Jus graecoromanum* (Athens, 1931; repr. Aalen, 1962), 4:68–69.

⁵*Theophanes Continuatus*, ed. I. Bekker, CSHB (Bonn, 1838), 328.14–15; *ibid.*, 382, 838 (Georgius Monachus Continuatus); John Skylitzes, *Synopsis historiarum*, ed. I. Thurn, CFHB 5 (Berlin–New York, 1973), 500; *Life of St. Luke the Stylite*, ed. and trans. P. Vanderstuyf, “Vie de Saint Luc le Stylite (879–979),” *PO* 11 (1915), 246–47.

⁶See C. Mango, “The Palace of the Boukoleon,” *CahArch* 45 (1997): 47.

⁷Vanderstuyf, “Saint Luc”; *Notitia*, 5.15, ed. Seeck, p. 233.

⁸A landing-stage at the Mangana is mentioned by Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. I. Bekker, CSHB (Bonn, 1853), 73. The ship that brought Pope Martin I to Constantinople in 653 docked “near the Arkadianai” (*PG* 92:392), which must refer to the deep-water anchorage near the Baths of Arcadius: Procopius, *De aedificiis*, 1.11.2–4; R. Janin, *Constantinople byzantine: Développement urbain et répertoire topographique*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1964), 311–12.

development in the fifth and sixth centuries. I shall not, however, be dealing primarily with this period but with its aftermath, with the question of how the port neighborhoods of Constantinople evolved between the reign of Justinian I and 1204. I shall be revisiting problems that Cyril Mango posed in the mid-1980s⁹ and solutions that I suggested in the mid-1990s.¹⁰ I take the opportunity to develop, refine, and modify my ideas, particularly in the light of recent work by Albrecht Berger.¹¹ In conclusion, I shall attempt to convey something of the texture of the urban fabric that is documented in the twelfth-century evidence for the Italian quarters beside the Golden Horn (see Fig. 1).

One of the great natural advantages of the site of Constantinople, as Byzantines from Procopius to Pachymeres were well aware, is the presence of a large sheltered anchorage in the shape of the Golden Horn.¹² The commercial port and the naval dockyard of ancient Byzantium, the Prosphorion and Neorion, were on the north coast of the city, and in Ottoman times all important shipping, apart from a small fleet of war galleys, used the Golden Horn. In Byzantine times, however, things were much less one-sided, at least until the shock of the Fourth Crusade, which prepared the way for the development of the Ottoman city. From the fifth to the thirteenth century, business was more evenly distributed between the north and south coasts of the city, and for a time, from ca. 550 to ca. 1050, the south coast was probably busier. This was entirely due to the construction, by the emperors Julian and Theodosius I, of two large artificial harbors that gave the Marmara coast a port capacity at least as great as that of the Golden Horn. It is evident that both harbors were constructed as part of the infrastructure supporting the rapid growth of population and built-up area in the century following the foundation of the city.¹³ The work coincided with the extension of the city's water supply and is explained, in part, by the need to cater for an increase in the food supply. The *Notitia* of Theodosius II lists two granaries, the Horrea Alexandrina and the Horreum Theodosianum, in the ninth region of the city, which stretched between the harbors of Julian and Theodosius.¹⁴ These harbors thus handled part of the grain shipments coming from Egypt. However, the storage facilities on this side of the city were not equal to those near the ports of the Golden Horn. In Region V, which contained the Strategion and the Prosphorion harbor, the *Notitia* lists three granaries in addition to an oil storage depot, the Horrea Olearia;¹⁵ one of the granaries, the Horrea Valentiaca, was evidently constructed by the emperor Valens (364–378), so after the Harbor of Julian (361–363). Such was the concentration of food supply infrastructure in this region that the *Notitia* describes it as containing the “essential buildings of the city” (*necessaria civitatis aedificia*)—something not said of Region IX. The greater importance, or at least the higher profile, of the northern complex is suggested by a fifth- or sixth-century text preserved in the

⁹C. Mango, *Le développement urbain de Constantinople (IVe–VIIe siècles)*, TM, Monographies 2, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1990).

¹⁰P. Magdalino, *Constantinople médiévale: Études sur l'évolution des structures urbaines*, TM, Monographies 9 (Paris, 1996).

¹¹See below, p. 221.

¹²Procopius, *De aedificiis*, 1.5; Leo the Deacon, *Historia*, ed. C. B. Hase, CSHB (Bonn, 1828), 129; George Pachymeres, *Relations historiques*, ed. A. Failler (Paris, 1984), 2:469.

¹³Mango, *Développement urbain*, 37 ff.

¹⁴*Notitia*, 10.6, 9, ed. Seeck, p. 237; Berger, “Regionen,” 369.

¹⁵*Notitia*, 5.13, 15–17, ed. Seeck, pp. 233–34; Berger, “Regionen,” 364.

Book of Ceremonies that details the procedure to be followed when the emperor goes to inspect the granaries of the Strategion¹⁶—it makes no mention of those on the south coast. The conclusion would seem to be that the food storage facilities on this side were not commensurate with the capacity of the vast new artificial harbors and that these were not constructed solely in order to receive grain imports but to handle other traffic. The commodity that comes most readily to mind is building material—the timber, the bricks, and, above all, the Proconnesian marble needed for the great building programs of the late fourth and early fifth centuries.¹⁷ In the main, the most massive constructions of this period, the palaces and the public monuments of the Theodosian dynasty, were closer to the south than to the north coast.¹⁸

Given the continuing importance of the Golden Horn for the urban food supply during Constantinople's first two centuries, the subsequent decline of the port areas on the north coast is all the more striking. The most important single piece of evidence for this development is the statement of the *Parastaseis*, repeated by the *Patria*, that under Justinian the wholesale import market (αἱ ἀγοραὶ τῶν θαλασσίων ἐμπορευμάτων) was transferred from the Neorion to the Harbor of Julian.¹⁹ The historical information of these texts is suspect, but there is no need to doubt that it always reflects the material reality of the times when they were written. In other words, during the eighth and tenth centuries, the wholesale business of the port of Constantinople was concentrated beside the Harbor of Julian. There is, moreover, an accumulation of circumstantial evidence to prove not only that the port of Julian and the adjacent neighborhoods along the Marmara coast were flourishing at the expense of the old harbors and urban neighborhoods at the lower end of the Golden Horn, but also that the shift dated from the middle of the sixth century.

1. By the beginning of the ninth century, at the latest, the Harbor of Julian was alternatively known as the Harbor of Sophia.²⁰ This supports the information, contained in the *Patria* and certain chronicles, that the harbor was dredged by Justin II (565–574), embellished with statues, and renamed in honor of

¹⁶*De cerimoniis aulae byzantinae*, 2.51, ed. J. J. Reiske, CSHB (Bonn, 1829), 1:699–701; cf. M. McCormick, “Bateaux de vie, bateaux de mort: Maladie, commerce, transports annonaire et le passage économique du Bas-Empire au Moyen Age,” *Morfologie sociali e culturali in Europa fra tarda antichità e alto medioevo*, *Settimane*, 45 (1996): 37–40.

¹⁷See N. Asgari, “The Proconnesian Production of Architectural Elements in Late Antiquity, Based on Evidence from the Marble Quarries,” in *Constantinople and Its Hinterland*, ed. C. Mango and G. Dagron (Aldershot, 1995), 263–88.

¹⁸This is obvious in the cases of the fora of Theodosius and Arcadius (see Mango, *Développement urbain* 43–45) and the *domus* of Pulcheria and Arcadia in the third and ninth regions (*Notitia*, 4.8, 10.7, ed. Seeck, pp. 232, 237; see below, p. 216). The *domus* of Placidia, Eudocia, and Arcadia in the tenth region (*Notitia*, 11.11–13, ed. Seeck, pp. 237–38) are probably to be sought in the area just to the north of the Capitol, where a number of Theodosian family mansions were situated: cf. Magdalino, *Constantinople médiévale*, 47 n. 170. I will deal further with the topography of these residences in a forthcoming study.

¹⁹*Scriptores originum Constantinopolitanarum*, ed. T. Preger, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1901–7; repr. 1989), 67, 188; *Constantinople in the Early Eighth Century: The Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai*, ed. and trans. A. Cameron and J. Herrin (Leiden, 1984), 152–53, 267.

²⁰Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig, 1883; repr. Hildesheim, 1980), 1:184.

- his wife Sophia.²¹ Although the Neorion on the Golden Horn was dredged in 698, this was almost certainly to restore the harbor to use as a naval dockyard, and the dredging was, significantly, connected with an outbreak of the plague.²²
2. Justin II and Sophia are credited with three buildings in the neighborhood of the harbor: their own palace, which they inhabited before Justin became emperor,²³ and two churches, dedicated to the Archangel Michael and St. Thekla, which they built or restored.²⁴ Another important complex of buildings near the harbor, comprising a hospital and two adjacent churches, is attributed to one of their ministers, the *praipositos* Narses.²⁵ It is to be noted that this foundation provided the southern port area with a symmetrical counterpart to the fifth-century hospital of Markianos and the church of St. Eirene at Perama on the north coast.²⁶ It is also to be noted that the northern port neighborhoods saw no comparable development in the late sixth century, the church of the Theotokos *ta Protasiou*, attributed by the *Patria* to Justin II, being the only construction datable to this period.²⁷
 3. The churches and monasteries which the iconoclast emperor Constantine V (741–775) is said to have converted to secular use were all on the south coast, and most were in the vicinity of the Harbor of Julian.²⁸
 4. By the tenth century, the only public granary still in use was the one known as the Lamia, in the vicinity of the port of Theodosius; this is probably to be identified with the Horrea Alexandrina or the Horreum Theodosianum of the fifth-century *Notitia*.²⁹
 5. According to the tenth-century *Synaxarion* of Constantinople, the feast of St. Thekla was celebrated at her church “in the barley market” (ἐν τοῖς Κριθοπωλείοις).³⁰ If, as seems likely, this church was identical with the one restored by Justin I or Justin II, it may be deduced that the market for barley and other bulk foodstuffs was situated close to the Harbor of Julian. In this connection, it is worth noting that of the few urban fires that tenth-century

²¹ *Scriptores*, ed. Preger, 184, 229–31; George Kedrenos, *Historiarum compendium*, CSHB (Bonn, 1838), 1:685.

²² Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. de Boor, 1:370; cf. Mango, *Développement urbain*, 56, and see below, pp. 218–19.

²³ Corippus, *In laudem Iustini Augusti minoris*, 1.97–114, ed. and trans. A. Cameron (London, 1976), 39, 89, 132–33; ed. and trans. S. Antès (Paris, 1981), 20–21; see below, p. 216.

²⁴ *Scriptores*, ed. Preger, 228–29; Berger, *Untersuchungen*, 563–66, 578–80. Procopius, however (*De aedificiis*, 1.4.28), attributes St. Thekla to Justin I.

²⁵ *Scriptores*, ed. Preger, 248–49; Berger, *Untersuchungen*, 591–96.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 447–49; for the hospitals, see T. S. Miller, *The Birth of the Hospital in the Byzantine Empire*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore, 1997), 91–92.

²⁷ *Scriptores*, ed. Preger, 220; Berger, *Untersuchungen*, 403–4.

²⁸ Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. de Boor, 1:439 (St. Euphemia), 443 (monasteries of Kallistratos, Dios, Maximinos); Nikephoros, *Antirrhethika*, 3, PG 100:493D (monasteries of Phloros and Kallistratos); *Scriptores*, ed. Preger, 148, 217, 240, 258 (churches of St. John the Baptist *ta Probou*, St. Euphemia, St. Julian the Myrelaion, St. Andrew at Boukinon, all near the Harbor of Julian).

²⁹ Mango, *Développement urbain*, 54–55.

³⁰ *Synaxarium CP*, col. 75.

chroniclers considered worth recording, two ravaged the quarter of *ta Aman-tiou*, near the Harbor of Julian.³¹ From later evidence, it is clear that neighborhoods where merchandise was stored were particularly at risk.³²

6. When sources of the seventh to tenth centuries mention a precise embarkation or disembarkation point for sea travelers, this is mostly the Harbor of Julian or Sophia, and never the Golden Horn. It was at the Harbor of Sophia that Heraclius landed in 610,³³ that Eustratios, abbot of the monastery of Agauros on Bithynian Olympus, disembarked in the mid-ninth century,³⁴ and that Leo of Synada set sail on his diplomatic mission to Rome in 996.³⁵
7. We know of several people who lived on the south coast of the city from the eighth to eleventh centuries. There was a cluster of aristocratic residences near the former Harbor of Theodosius.³⁶ A succession of illustrious persons lived at the Harbor of Sophia, possibly in the palace of Justin and Sophia,³⁷ and in the mid-eleventh century, an imperial secretary, Nicholas, had a “not very fine house” at Bykinon, between the harbor and the Hippodrome.³⁸ Most significantly, we hear of three tradesmen (ἐργαστηριακοί), one of them said to be very rich, who lived near the Harbor of Sophia.³⁹ The same period yields only one reference, of which I am aware, to a resident of the area near the old harbors on the Golden Horn. This was Antony, a *patrikios* under Michael III, who owned a fine house, complete with church and bathhouse, near the dockyard of the Neorion.⁴⁰

In every respect, the evidence for the development and prosperity of the south coast, particularly in and around the Harbor of Julian, is as striking as the almost complete lack of evidence for business and residential activity in the area beside the Golden Horn, which had been the main hub of the city’s economy in the fourth to sixth centuries. The picture changes slightly if one takes into account the marketing of livestock, which, according to the *Book of the Prefect*, was divided between the Strategion and the Forum Tauri. This distribution may be much older than is generally supposed, because it corresponds to the location of the main meat markets, the *macella*, listed by the *Notitia* of

³¹*Theophanes Continuatus*, ed. Bekker, 354, 462.

³²See the poem of Constantine Stilbes on the fire of 1197, ed. J. Diethart, “Der Rhetor und Didaskalos Konstantinos Stilbes” (doctoral diss., University of Vienna, 1971), lines 165–73; George Pachymeres, *De Andronico Paleologo*, ed. I. Bekker, CSHB (Bonn, 1835), 2:227, 582 (see also the fuller text of this second passage published by A. Failler in *REB* 36 [1978]: 157–58).

³³Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. de Boor, 1:299.

³⁴Ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, Ἀνάλεκτα Ἱεροσολυμιτικῆς Σταχυολογίας (St. Petersburg, 1897), 4:391.

³⁵*The Correspondence of Leo Metropolitan of Synada and Syncellus*, ed. and trans. M. P. Vinson, CFHB 23 (Washington, D.C., 1985), 14–15.

³⁶*Life of St. Basil the Younger*, ed. A. N. Veselovsky, in *Sbornik ot dela russkogo jazyka i slovestnosti imperatorskoj akademii nauk* 26 (1889): 6, supplement, 57, 72; Mango, *Développement urbain*, 59.

³⁷See below, pp. 216–17.

³⁸Michael Psellos, *Orationes forenses et acta*, ed. G. Dennis (Leipzig-Stuttgart, 1994), 172.

³⁹*Life of St. Basil the Younger*, ed. Veselovsky, 51, 54; Pseudo-Symeon, in *Theophanes Continuatus*, ed. Bekker, 674.

⁴⁰*Synaxarium CP*, col. 935.

Theodosius II: two in Region V and two in Region VIII.⁴¹ But here again, the trend seems to have been toward a greater concentration in the south; horses were sold in the Amastrion, and if we can believe the *Patria*, Constantine V moved the cattle market to the Forum of Theodosius (Tauri) from the area of the Prosporon harbor.⁴²

What brought about this apparent gravitational shift in the city's maritime economy? By docking on the Marmara coast, ships avoided the strong currents and headwinds of the Bosphorus; yet these hazards were known long before the foundation of Constantinople. The silting up of the old harbors on the north coast was certainly a problem; it may have encouraged business to move not only to the south coast but also, as we shall see, further up the Golden Horn, where ships could moor closer to the sea walls.⁴³ But as we shall also see, silting did not prevent the eventual re-use of the old harbor area, and it affected the Marmara coast just as badly: the Harbor of Julian had to be dredged two centuries after its construction, and the Harbor of Theodosius was allowed to silt up almost completely.⁴⁴ The question is, why of all the four artificial harbors that had served Constantinople in the fifth century was the Harbor of Julian kept open? The shrinking of the urban population is surely part of the answer, as Cyril Mango has suggested.⁴⁵ Another part lies, no doubt, in the changing nature of supply. The cessation of grain shipments from Egypt in the seventh century meant, presumably, that basic commodities were imported, to a greater extent, over smaller distances in lighter loads and smaller craft that did not draw much water and did not need elaborate docking facilities. The trend toward smaller ships may have begun under Justinian with the construction of a large granary at Tenedos, where the large grain transports from Alexandria could leave their cargoes to be carried on by local vessels.⁴⁶ Certainly, the picture we get from Attaleiates in the eleventh century is one of boats unloading at jetties all along the coast rather than in specially localized harbors.⁴⁷ However, none of this properly explains why the depopulated Constantinople of the early Middle Ages gravitated toward the south coast instead of concentrating around the original commercial center beside the Golden Horn, where the "necessary buildings" of the city had always been situated.

The explanation may have more to do with the residential than with the commercial attractions of the south-facing Marmara coast—this was the place to be in during the harsh winter.⁴⁸ The Harbor of Julian was also conveniently close to the Great Palace. The coastal district to the west of the harbor was known by 425 as Kainopolis, or New City, and this has led Cyril Mango to identify it with the large built-up area that Zosimus says

⁴¹ *Notitia*, 6.27, 9.17, ed. Seeck, pp. 234, 236; *Leonis Sapientis Liber Praefecti*, 5.1, 5, and 16.2, ed. and trans. J. Koder, *Das Eparchenbuch Leons des Weisen*, CFHB 33 (Vienna, 1991), 122–25.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 21.3, 8, pp. 136–39; *Scriptores*, ed. Preger, 263–64; cf. Berger, *Untersuchungen*, 425.

⁴³ Magdalino, *Constantinople médiévale*, 89; see below, pp. 221–23.

⁴⁴ See A. Berger, "Der Langa Bostani in Istanbul," *IstMitt* 43 (1993): 467–77.

⁴⁵ Mango, *Développement urbain*, 53 ff.

⁴⁶ Procopius, *De aedificiis*, 5.1.7–16; note that Procopius refers to the harbors of Constantinople in the plural (ἐς τοὺς Βυζαντίους λιμένας). On the capacity of the grain fleet, cf. McCormick, "Bateaux de vie," 103–7.

⁴⁷ Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Bekker, 277–78; cf. P. Magdalino, "The Grain Supply of Constantinople, Ninth–Twelfth Centuries," in Mango and Dagron, *Constantinople and Its Hinterland* (as above, note 17), 41–43.

⁴⁸ E.g., the winters of 716–717 and 762–763: Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. de Boor, 1:396–97, 434–35.

was reclaimed from the sea.⁴⁹ The identification finds some support in the *Patria*, which records a tradition that a harbor on this stretch of coast, the Harbor of Eleutherios, was filled in with construction debris from the Forum of Theodosius.⁵⁰ What is interesting here is the evident demand, in the first phase of the city's expansion, for building land along the south coast in preference to other parts of the city, where land did not have to be reclaimed from the sea.

The desirability of residing on the south coast is demonstrated by the presence here of large aristocratic residences that seem to have had almost no equivalent on the Golden Horn, at least within the Constantinian wall. The earliest mentions of these are found in the *Notitia* of Theodosius II, which records a palace in Region III belonging to the Augusta Pulcheria, then the most powerful person in Constantinople, and one belonging to the Nobilissima Arcadia in Region IX; both women were important enough to have second homes elsewhere in the city.⁵¹ We do not know what happened to these palaces after the fifth century, but to judge from what we know of other Theodosian buildings in Constantinople, they must have been magnificent and solid constructions of a kind that would have been easier to re-use than demolish.⁵² Is it coincidence, then, that we find later references to large and important princely residences in similar if not identical locations? At the end of the eighth century, the favorite residence of the empress Eirene, her palace at *ta Eleutheriou*, was in the vicinity of the palace of the Nobilissima Arcadia.⁵³ The palace of Justin II and Sophia overlooked the Harbor of Julian/Sophia on one side and the open sea on the other;⁵⁴ it is therefore likely to have stood on the east side of the harbor, somewhere between the Hippodrome and the sea. This is exactly the part of Region III where we should look for the palace of Pulcheria.⁵⁵ Three centuries later, the "enormous house" Nikephoros Phokas the Elder received from Basil I and passed on to his son Bardas stood "near the church of St. Thekla," according to one version of the Logothete Chronicle; according to Leo the Deacon, it was "on the descent of the street

⁴⁹*Notitia*, 10.5, ed. Seeck, p. 237; Zosimus, *Historia nova*, ed. F. Paschoud (Paris, 1971), 1.108, 2.35; Mango, *Développement urbain*, 17–18, 45.

⁵⁰*Scriptores*, ed. Preger, 184–85.

⁵¹*Notitia*, 4.8, 10.7, ed. Seeck, pp. 232, 237, and see 11.12, 12.9 for the *domus* of Arcadia and Pulcheria in Regions X and XI, respectively. Region III included the Hippodrome and the whole area to the south of the Mese between the Hippodrome and the Forum of Constantine. This has led Berger, "Regionen," 361, to suggest that the *domus Pulcheriae* of the *Notitia* was originally the palace of Antiochus, the remains of which have been excavated on the north-west side of the Hippodrome. The suggestion is plausible in that the building existed, and had become imperial property, by the time the *Notitia* was composed. Against it, however, is the fact that the house of Antiochus was subsequently known by the name of its original owner. It is also to be noted that the *domus* of other Theodosian princesses (Placidia, Marina, Arcadia) in the southern part of the city were evidently close to the sea. On Pulcheria, see K. Holum, *Theodosian Empresses* (Berkeley–Los Angeles, 1982).

⁵²The main evidence comes from the excavations of the palace complexes to the west of the Hippodrome: R. Naumann and H. Belting, *Die Euphemia-Kirche am Hippodrom zu Istanbul*, *IstForsch* 25 (Berlin, 1966); J. Bardill, "The Palace of Lausus and Nearby Monuments in Constantinople: A Topographical Study," *AJA* 101 (1997): 67–95. Cf. also C. L. Striker, *The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul* (Princeton, 1981); C. Mango, "The Palace of Marina, the Poet Palladas and the Bath of Leo VI," in *Εὐφρόσυνον. Ἀφιέρωμα στὸν Μανόλη Χατζηδάκη*, ed. E. Kypraiou, 2 vols. (Athens, 1991), 1:321–30; Magdalino, *Constantinople médiévale*, 42–43.

⁵³Berger, *Untersuchungen*, 588–89.

⁵⁴See the translation of the relevant passage of Corippus, below, p. 217.

⁵⁵See above, note 52.

leading down to the sea where the Harbor of Sophia opens out.”⁵⁶ These two pieces of information combined again point to a location on the east side of the harbor.⁵⁷ In the twelfth century, the brother of one of the Komnenian emperors lived in a grand house whose location is described by Choniates in terms very similar to those used by Leo the Deacon.⁵⁸ It is tempting, and I think not unreasonable, to see all these references as pertaining to a single house occupied, over the centuries, by close relatives or favored associates of the emperor.

What does seem certain is that the re-investment in the Harbor of Julian and its neighborhood made by Justin II and the *praipositos* Narses was not unconnected with a preference for this location, which Justin II clearly shared with eminent people before and after him. The charms of the spot are evoked by Corippus in his poem in praise of Justin:

One side looks out over the wide sea, the other backwards over the harbour—the harbour formed by the embrace of the arms of the two banks, with walls on top; they make it defy the swift winds, and render the open sea quiet inside the anchorage. They break the waves of the sea with their marble barrier and keep away the waters as they flow back with their narrow neck. The royal pair loved this place; from it they used to watch the waves in the strait and the curving ships carrying all the trade of two worlds.⁵⁹

The description is too precise to be merely an ekphrastic topos, and it is reminiscent of what Julian of Ascalon has to say about the importance of a sea view: “If a man can see a harbor or the shore, or even just look at ships at anchor in the case of a town or village which does not have a proper harbor, his view of them should in no way be impaired or removed, for they are a source of recreation to those who behold them.”⁶⁰

But it was one thing to invest in renewing the Harbor of Julian and another thing to do so at the expense of the existing economic hub of the city by the Golden Horn. If there was a major relocation in the mid-sixth century, what caused it? I think we have to focus attention on the greatest catastrophe to hit the Mediterranean world at this time, the bubonic plague. There is still no systematic study of the sixth-century plague in all its aspects, and its significance has been debated.⁶¹ It has been cogently argued, by Jean Durliat and Mark Whittow, that the long-term demographic and economic effects of the plague were negligible compared with the wars and the territorial losses of the seventh century.⁶² The evidence for building programs and problems of overcrowding in late sixth-century Constantinople tends to support this view.⁶³ However, plague mortality in the short term was undoubtedly devastating and shocking. The horrific eyewitness ac-

⁵⁶H. Grégoire, “La carrière du premier Nicéphore Phocas,” in Προσφορὰ εἰς Στίλπωνα Κυριακίδην (Thessalonike, 1953), 2:250; Leo the Deacon, ed. Hase, 83–84.

⁵⁷This is where Berger, *Untersuchungen*, 566, places the church of St. Thekla.

⁵⁸*Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, ed. J. L. van Dieten, CFHB (Berlin–New York, 1975), 1:445; cf. Magdalino, *Constantinople médiévale*, 47, 91.

⁵⁹Corippus, *In laudem Iustini*, trans. Cameron, 89.

⁶⁰Saliou, *Traité*, 72–73.

⁶¹For a recent discussion, with some new insights, see McCormick, “Bateaux de vie,” 48 n. 20, 52–65.

⁶²J. Durliat, “La peste du VI^e siècle: pour un nouvel examen des sources byzantines,” in *Hommes et richesses dans l’Empire byzantin* (Paris, 1989), 1:107–19; M. Whittow, *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium, 600–1025* (London, 1996), 66–68.

⁶³Magdalino, *Constantinople médiévale*, 58–59.

counts by Procopius and John of Ephesus of the initial outbreak in 542 are not to be dismissed.⁶⁴ Later outbreaks were less severe, but they ensured constant concern about the likelihood, and measures for the prevention, of future recurrences. The official and the popular explanation was that the plague was a scourge sent by God, and this undoubtedly quickened the pace of investment in pious and charitable foundations that is so marked during the age of Justinian and his successors. At the same time, the rational and natural explanations offered by ancient medical theory were not entirely discredited, especially as it became evident that the plague struck the righteous and the unrighteous with equal ferocity. Not only did the medical profession adhere to the wisdom of Hippocrates and Galen, which held that the body was predisposed to plague infection by bad air,⁶⁵ but the seventh-century theologian known for convenience as Anastasius of Sinai decided that the credibility of Divine Providence was better preserved by attributing the plague to natural causes. Witness one of his *erotapokriseis*:

Q. Whence do plagues arise, and why do they not occur in certain desert lands of the nations, but mostly in densely inhabited, crowded and filthy cities?

A. Fatal diseases often arise from corrupt air, and dust, and the stench of dead bodies, summer rains, and exhalations of land and sea.⁶⁶

It seems to me that considerations of this kind were bound, eventually, to affect residential patterns in plague-stricken cities. In the case of Constantinople, it may also be relevant that stagnant waters and those polluted by the effluent from large settlements were believed to be sources of noxious exhalations.⁶⁷ It is clear from the *Notitia* of Theodosius II that in pre-plague Constantinople, the highest concentration of ordinary housing, and therefore the greatest source of human waste, lay in the area beside the Golden Horn, to the west of the Neorion.⁶⁸ The Golden Horn is not flushed out by currents or waves. And, as we have seen, the dredging of the Neorion in 698 was associated with a bad outbreak of plague; the wording of Theophanes, our source, leaves no doubt that the association was perceived to be causal as well as temporal.⁶⁹ John of Ephesus says that in the plague of 542 many bodies were dumped in the sea; any dumped in the Golden Horn would not have been washed away. Both Procopius and John of Ephesus tell us that when the authorities got around to disposing of bodies in a more organized way, the

⁶⁴Procopius, *De bello Persico*, 2.22–23; John of Ephesus, in Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre, *Chronicle, Known Also as the Chronicle of Zuqnin: Part III*, trans. W. Witakowski, Translated Texts for Historians 22 (Liverpool, 1996), 74–98.

⁶⁵See, e.g., Aetius of Amida (early 6th century), *Libri medicinales*, 5.95, ed. A. Olivieri, *Corpus medicorum graecorum* 8.2 (Berlin, 1950), 80–82; Stephen the Philosopher (6th–7th century), *A Commentary on the Prognosticon of Hippocrates*, 1.17, ed. and trans. J. M. Duffy, *Corpus medicorum graecorum* 11.1, 2 (Berlin, 1983), 56, 62.

⁶⁶PG 28:661; see also PG 89:744–45, 748, 765–68. On the author, see J. F. Haldon, “The Works of Anastasius of Sinai: A Key Source for the History of Seventh-Century East Mediterranean Society and Belief,” in *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, vol. 1, *Problems in the Literary Source Material* (Princeton, 1992), 107–47.

⁶⁷See, e.g., Galen, *De sanitate tuenda*, 1.11, 15 ff, ed. H. Koch et al., *Corpus medicorum graecorum* 5.4, 2 (Leipzig-Berlin, 1923), 27: healthy air is ὁ μητ’ ἐκ λιμνῶν ἢ ἐλῶν ἀναθυμιάσεως ἐπιθολούμενος . . . οὕτω δὲ καὶ ὅστις ἐκ τινὸς ὄχετος τῶν καθαιρόντων ἢ μεγάλην τινὰ πόλιν ἢ πολυάνθρωπον στρατόπεδον ἐπιθολοῦται, μοχθηρὸς ἰκανῶς ἐστὶ.

⁶⁸*Notitia*, 7.13, 8.19, ed. Seeck, 234–35, 238; Berger, “Regionen,” 382–83.

⁶⁹Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. de Boor, 1:370 (trans. Mango and Scott, 517); cf. McCormick, “Bateaux de vie,” 64.

disposal took place at Sykai, the suburb north of the inlet. According to Procopius, bodies were piled inside the towers of the fortification; according to John of Ephesus, vast pits were dug to receive the corpses oozing pus and putrefaction. Either way, rot would have been rapid in the summer heat and the stench carried by the prevailing north wind to the south shore of the Golden Horn overpowering. Altogether, there is reason to suppose that the plague was a strong incentive to move business and residence to the Marmara coast. In this connection, it is worth noting that the worst outbreaks of plague recorded in the sources, the first in 542 and the last in 747, occurred under the same emperors, Justinian I and Constantine V, who are said by the *Patria* to have transferred commercial facilities away from the Golden Horn.⁷⁰

Whatever it was that caused the shift to the Marmara coast, when and why did the Golden Horn re-emerge as the city's main commercial artery? It is clear that a decisive moment was the establishment of the Italian trading quarters in an area corresponding roughly to what had been the commercial harbor in late antiquity.⁷¹ We know about these trading quarters partly from Greek and Latin narrative histories but most importantly from documentation in the archives of Venice, Genoa, and Pisa concerning the real estate grants the city communes received from a succession of Byzantine emperors.⁷² The pattern of grants was set by Alexios I Komnenos in 1084 when he granted Venice a wharf, a church, a mall (*embolos*), and houses close to Perama, the embarkation point for the ferry to the northern suburb of Pera. Pisa and, much later, Genoa followed with similar acquisitions further to the east, near the ancient ports of Neorion and Prosfhorion. In the course of the twelfth century, each city requested and received additional grants of property, extending their original enclaves both inland and along the shore—though not, it must be emphasised, so far that their properties adjoined. A document of 1192 also reveals the existence of an Amalfitan presence closely associated with that of Pisa: a wharf that became included within the Pisan section of the waterfront and a quarter inland from the Pisan enclave.⁷³ The events of 1204 and 1261 led to further changes beyond the scope of this paper.

There can be no doubt that the establishment of the Italians increased the commercial importance of the Golden Horn. But would the Italians have asked for concessions in this area if it had not been fairly important already to their business interests? The

⁷⁰See above, pp. 212, 215; for the plague of 747, see Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. de Boor, 1:422–43 (trans. Mango and Scott, 586–87), and Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople, *Short History*, ed. and trans. C. Mango, CFHB 13 (Washington, D.C., 1990), 138–41.

⁷¹For what follows, see Magdalino, *Constantinople médiévale*, 78–90, and the important study of A. Berger, “Zur Topographie der Ufergegend am Goldenen Horn in der byzantinischen Zeit,” *IstMitt* 45 (1995): 149–65, which appeared after my book had gone to press.

⁷²Venice: *Urkunden zur älteren Handels und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig*, ed. T. L. F. Tafel and G. M. Thomas, vol. 1 (Vienna, 1856); new edition of the early charters by M. Pozza and G. Ravegnani, *I trattati con Bisanzio, 992–1198* (Venice, 1993); a private document of 1184 of topographical interest is published by S. Borsari, *Venezia e Bisanzio nel XII secolo: I rapporti economici* (Venice, 1998), 154–56. Pisa: *Documenti sulle relazioni delle città toscane coll'oriente cristiano e coi Turchi fino all'anno MDXXXI*, ed. G. Müller (Florence, 1879; repr. Rome, 1966), 46–49; the Greek version also in MM 3:16–23. Genoa: A. Sanguineti and G. Bertolotto, “Nuova serie di documenti sulle relazioni di Genova coll'Impero bizantino,” *Atti della Società ligure di storia patria* 28 (1896–98): 337–573.

⁷³Müller, *Documenti*, 47–49, 56–57; Magdalino, *Constantinople médiévale*, 86; the same conclusion was reached independently by Berger, “Ufergegend,” 161.

Venetians and Amalfitans had been active in the empire's trade since the tenth century, and possibly earlier, so it is likely that the neighborhoods where their quarters were located in the twelfth century were those that they had always frequented. There are two indirect indications that the area's recovery was well under way by the time Alexios I formalized the grant of the Venetian quarter in 1084. One is the information that in 1056 the emperor Michael VI proposed to renovate the Strategion, perhaps indicating that this square was now more than the pig- and sheep-market that figures in the *Book of the Prefect*.⁷⁴ The other, more useful, indication lies in the twelfth-century documents concerning the Italian quarters. These documents give details of property ownership in the area at the time when the Italians were granted their premises. As I have attempted to show elsewhere, the pre-existing proprietors—that is, those whose premises either adjoined or were acquired by the Italians—consisted overwhelmingly of religious institutions founded or refounded in the tenth and early eleventh centuries.⁷⁵ The almost complete absence of earlier foundations is striking. Assuming that the endowments were made at the time of the foundations, it is reasonable to suppose that they reflect the profitability and availability of commercial and residential real estate in lower Golden Horn neighborhoods in the period 900–1050. In other words, this was an area where rent-producing property was still available for endowment purposes in the tenth and eleventh centuries, because prior to then it had not been sufficiently valuable. If this reading of the evidence is correct, it means that the beginnings of the revival of the lower Golden Horn area coincided generally with the arrival of the Venetians and Amalfitans on the trading market of Constantinople.

Yet, as we have seen, in the tenth century the market was still oriented primarily toward the Harbor of Julian and the Sea of Marmara. So why did the Italians apparently not operate in this area? What were the incentives, or the constraints, that made them base their operations on the north coast? The answer is to be sought, I believe, in a consideration of the independent evidence for several foci of commercial and maritime activity beside the Golden Horn. The settlement at Pera (the ancient Sykai, to the north of the inlet) created, at the very least, a demand for ferry services to and from Perama; from the mid-eleventh century, if not earlier, the Jewish quarter, with its tanneries, was situated at Pera.⁷⁶ East of Perama, on the south coast, was the Neorion, the naval dockyard, which generated business building, servicing, and supplying the imperial fleet; in this context, we should note that Venetians and Amalfitans were, according to Liudprand of Cremona, engaged in the empire's armed forces in the 960s.⁷⁷ At Perama itself, an important focus was the *mitaton* of the Saracens at Perama, near the ancient church of St. Eirene and the hospital of Markianos. This *mitaton* is first attested in 1203 as the site of a mosque.⁷⁸ Although this mosque may well have been the one inaugurated—or

⁷⁴Skylitzes, ed. Thurn, 482; *Liber praefecti*, ed. Koder, 122–25; Magdalino, *Constantinople médiévale*, 51–52.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 83.

⁷⁶D. Jacoby, “Les quartiers juifs de Constantinople à l'époque byzantine,” *Byzantion* 37 (1967): 168–73; repr. in idem, *Société et démographie à Byzance et en Romanie latine* (London, 1975); see also idem, “The Jews of Constantinople and Their Demographic Hinterland,” in Mango and Dagron, *Constantinople and Its Hinterland* (as above, note 17), 224–25. Jacoby does not, in my opinion, offer convincing proof that the Jews had not been confined to Pera prior to 1044.

⁷⁷Liudprand of Cremona, *Relatio de legatione Constantinopolitana*, 45, ed. and trans. B. Scott (Bristol, 1993), 17, 46; Magdalino, *Constantinople médiévale*, 83.

⁷⁸Choniates, ed. van Dieten, 1:553–54; Magdalino, *Constantinople médiévale*, 88.

renewed?—in 1188–89 at the insistence of Saladin, there is no reason to assume that the hostel and entrepot for visiting Arab traders with which it was associated, as the name *mitaton* clearly indicates, were of such recent creation.⁷⁹ In other words, the *mitaton* of the Saracens at Perama can plausibly be identified as one of the *mitata* used by the Syrian merchants mentioned in the *Book of the Prefect*,⁸⁰ and is likely to have dated from the very beginnings of Muslim trade with Constantinople. The Venetians and Amalfitans first developed their international trade by exporting slaves to Muslim North Africa. By the time they became active in Constantinople, they had a history of trading with the Arab world that would have linked their business interests with those of visiting Arab traders. The proximity of the Saracen *mitaton* to the Venetian quarter cannot be coincidental.

A final key point on the Golden Horn was the Leomakellon, whose location and significance have recently been highlighted by Albrecht Berger.⁸¹ Whether or not the Leomakellon had anything to do with the emperor Leo I, whose name became attached to it in urban folklore, the second part of the word indicates the existence of a *macellum*—a market for meat and possibly other products—at a coastal site in the area of modern Unkapani.⁸² This market can plausibly be identified with an agora mentioned by Procopius near the church of St. Akakios,⁸³ and, perhaps, with the market called Basilike mentioned by a Russian traveler in 1390.⁸⁴ Whether or not this second identification is correct, there are other indications to confirm that an important retail market was located beside the Golden Horn throughout the Middle Ages, well to the west of the area where the economic hub of early Constantinople had been and where the Italians were based. First, the main food markets of the city in Palaiologan times were located along the Golden Horn between Blachernai and Perama.⁸⁵ Second, John Tzetzes alludes to a perfumer/druggist workshop at the Leomakellon market.⁸⁶ Third, the stretch of coast near St. Akakios was known, from at least the tenth century, as the Heptaskalon, meaning “seven *skalai*,” which suggests that this was a particularly active port area.⁸⁷ Finally, and perhaps most important, it can be inferred from the Genoese documentation that the most sought-after stretch of waterfront was to the west of the Venetian concession. When the Genoese were negotiating the terms of their treaty with Manuel I, their ambassador was instructed as follows:

You will ask for and strive by all means to obtain an *embolos* and *skalai* in Constantinople between the *embolos* of the Venetians and the palace of the Despot Angelos. And if you don't manage this, then in “Perforo” [Prosphorion]. And if not there, then in some other

⁷⁹The assumption is made by S. V. Reinert, “The Muslim Presence in Constantinople, 9th–15th Centuries: Some Preliminary Observations,” in *Studies on the Internal Diaspora of the Byzantine Empire*, ed. H. Ahrweiler and A. Laiou (Washington, D.C., 1998), 140–43.

⁸⁰*Liber praefecti*, 5, ed. Koder, 94–97; Reinert, “Muslim Presence,” 131 ff.

⁸¹Berger, “Ufergegend,” 152–55.

⁸²It was thus situated at the center of the most densely populated area of the 5th-century city: see above, note 68.

⁸³Procopius, *De aedificiis*, 1.4, 26.

⁸⁴G. Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, DOS 19 (Washington, D.C., 1984), 150.

⁸⁵N. Oikonomides, *Hommes d'affaires grecs et latins à Constantinople, XIIIe–XVe siècles* (Montreal, 1979), 97–100, 106.

⁸⁶*Ioannis Tzetzae epistulae*, ed. P. A. M. Leone (Leipzig, 1972), 85–86.

⁸⁷Berger, *Untersuchungen*, 464–68.

convenient place within the city of Constantinople. If indeed you are in no way able to obtain an *embolos* and *skalai* within the city you should strive to obtain them in Pera.⁸⁸

This passage offers a unique insight into the commercial preferences of the Italian merchants. As we might expect, they wanted to be in the city rather than the suburbs. Less expected is the revelation that the location where the Genoese eventually received their trading quarter, the old harbor area of Proosphorion,⁸⁹ was not their first but their second choice. Their first choice was for a location between the Venetian quarter and the palace of Constantine Angelos.⁹⁰ This building is not otherwise known, but it is clear from the context that it must have been a prominent landmark near the sea walls. If it had been east of the Venetians, it would have been between them and the Pisans; the distance was not great, and neither Venetian nor Pisan documents refer to such a palace. It is therefore likely to have been west of the Venetian quarter. This likelihood is strengthened by the consideration that there is no evidence for large aristocratic palaces on the coast in the lower Golden Horn area: the other palaces mentioned in the Italian documents, the palace of a *sebastokrator* and that of Botaneiates, both lay inland, on the hills to the south of the original Venetian and Genoese quarters, respectively. On the other hand, we do know of one aristocratic *oikos* in the neighborhood of the Leomakellon—the one occupied in 1056 by the *proedros* Theodosios, cousin of the late Constantine IX Monomachos.⁹¹ Theodosios's senior title, and the fact that he considered himself to have a right to the throne, suggest that his house was a fairly grand affair—grand enough, perhaps, to have been a fitting residence, a century later, for the son-in-law of Alexios I.

It is now clear that the decline of the Golden Horn area in the early Middle Ages was by no means absolute, and that the picture presented earlier of a concentration of maritime traffic and wholesale business at the Harbor of Julian must be qualified by the evidence for continuing foci of commercial activity on the north coast of the city. The Italians sought concessions in this area because it was good for business, and they were already doing business there well before the late eleventh century. As their presence increased, it undoubtedly made the Golden Horn busier than the Harbor of Julian. I think it is revealing that in Ptochoprodromos's satire on the *hegoumenoi*, the poor novice who is sent to go shopping for the senior monks goes to the forum, to the Milion, to the Venetians, and to *ta Eugeniou*, a location on the lower Golden Horn.⁹² This does not mean, however, that the Harbor of Julian was deprived of business overnight, and we should not forget that when the Venetians and Amalfitans started trading at Constantinople in the tenth century, it remained, so far as we can tell, the most important port area. If I am right in thinking that the Italians developed their business interests at Constantinople through association with the Arabs and their *mitaton* at Perama, they gravitated to the Golden Horn because this was the place for foreigners to trade. Furthermore, the Genoese ambassador's instructions show that there was a ranking of commercial locations

⁸⁸Ed. Sanguineti and Bertolotto, "Documenti," 346.

⁸⁹This location is confirmed by the 1170 description of the quarter as being "in positione locorum Onorii," a toponym clearly deriving from the Thermae Honorianae of the 5th century: *Notitia*, 6.7, ed. Seeck, p. 233.

⁹⁰See Magdalino, *Constantinople médiévale*, 80–83.

⁹¹Skylitzes, ed. Thurn, 481.

⁹²*Ptochoprodromos*, ed. and trans. H. Eideneier, *Neograeca Medii Aevi* 5 (Cologne, 1991), no. IV, lines 120–21, 450, 456, 571.

along the lower Golden Horn, rising in value from east to west. It is no surprise that of the three major Italian trading communes in the twelfth century, it was Venice, the longest established and most privileged, that enjoyed the best position. But this does not mean that the Venetians were the most highly favored of all the rentiers along the coast. We should remember that the Italians obtained their concessions at the expense of former property-holders, who were dispossessed in their favor. Thus, what they received depended not only on what they wanted but also on what vested interests would be affected by satisfying them. This may be why we encounter no major eleventh- or twelfth-century foundations, and no members of the imperial family, among the owners whose properties were granted to the Italians—we tend to see proprietors whom the emperor could afford to offend. Sometimes the properties in question needed major investment, like the burnt-out houses granted to the Pisans and Genoese in 1192.⁹³ The one occasion on which the Italians received a politically sensitive grant of highly lucrative real estate was in 1189, when Isaac II, under pressure from his Venetian patriarch Dositheos, and desperate to secure Venice's support against any threat from the Third Crusade, granted Venice's request to be given the *emboloi* and *skalai* in the possession of the French and Germans.⁹⁴ We do not know where these properties were situated, but it was probably to the west of the existing Venetian quarter. Nor do we know when and why the French and Germans acquired these lucrative concessions, but we can guess that it had something to do with the importance of France and Germany in the Crusades and in the international diplomacy of the Komnenian emperors.⁹⁵ Indeed, when we consider the care that John II and Manuel I had put into trying to form marriage alliances with the French and German royal dynasties, we may suppose that the properties in question were at least as valuable as those originally granted to Venice.

What we can conclude with confidence, I think, is that the twelfth-century documents concerning the Italian concessions on the Golden Horn present a picture of urban neighborhoods that had revived after a long period of depression but that, although prosperous, were not yet the most prosperous parts of the city. With this in mind, let us now consider the texture of these neighborhoods. The first point to note is that the holdings of all three Italian cities lay on either side of the sea wall. From 1148, the intra- and extramural sections of the Venetian quarter seem to have been treated as a continuum, but the Pisan and Genoese documents maintain a clear distinction between properties pertaining to the *embolos* inside the wall and the *skalai*, or landing-stages, outside the wall. By 1192 the Pisans acquired properties up to the wall on either side, but in 1201 the Genoese were still seeking to join up their separate blocs, and although they received further concessions from Alexios III in 1202,⁹⁶ he evidently declined their ambassador's request for the monastery between their *embolos* and their *skalai* or the church that separated their *embolos* on the southern side from the aristocratic palace granted to them in 1192.⁹⁷ In general, it seems that trading quarters were not granted *en bloc* but as compos-

⁹³ Ed. Müller, *Documenti*, 47 (Greek text), 56 (Latin text); Sanguineti and Bertolotto, "Documenti," 443.

⁹⁴ *I trattati*, ed. Pozza and Ravegnani, 105–10; for Dositheos, see Choniates, ed. van Dieten, 1:404–5. Cf. D. M. Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice* (Cambridge, 1988), 115–16.

⁹⁵ See P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180* (Cambridge, 1993), chap. 1.

⁹⁶ Sanguineti and Bertolotto, "Documenti," 475–76 (Greek text), 483–84 (Latin text).

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 470.

ite packages of individually negotiated units. Of these units, the most complex were the *skalai*. A *skala* comprised not only a quayside, formed of an earth embankment fronted by a wall of wooden piles, but also a fenced rectangular terrain built over with houses, workshops, and the booths of money-changers. Otherwise, the standard unit of transfer was the single house (οἶκημα, rendered in Latin as *habitaculum*) or cluster of houses. Thus, when the documents refer to a commune's requesting or possessing an *embolos*, this is shorthand for acquiring a section of frontage on a street that itself belonged to the state or, in the case of a small unroofed passage in the Genoese quarter, to a neighboring monastery.⁹⁸

Apart from the city wall, the main lines of division within the neighborhoods were the water courses and drainage channels coming down to the sea, and the streets. Between the walls and the shore in the Pisan and Genoese quarters, and, no doubt, in the Venetian area as well, ran a public road (δημοσία ὁδός) that bisected the strips of land belonging to the *skalai*. Inside the wall, the main spatial feature of each quarter was the *embolos*, also on an east-west axis. This was evidently a covered portico: the earliest description of the Genoese quarter specifies that another *embolos*, belonging to a local monastery, was "unroofed."⁹⁹ The description of the Venetian quarter in 1148 also mentions a transverse *embolos*, and the Pisan and Genoese documents mention alleys (ρύμίδες) running in both directions.

The existence of east-west *emboloi* in each of the three Italian quarters raises the question whether these were not, in fact, sections of a single covered portico running parallel to the coast. The question is well founded, in view of the following passage in the account in the *Patria* of Constantine's foundation of the city:

Also, he built four *emboloi* with masonry vaults from the palace as far as the land walls. One went by the Tzykanisterion and the Magnaura and the Acropolis and *ta Eugeniou* and extended as far as St. Antony's; the other went by way of the Daphne and the Sophiae as far as Rabdos; the other two *emboloi* went by way of the Chalke and the Milion and the Forum to the Tauros, the Ox, and the Exakionion.¹⁰⁰

Again, this seems to be a case of the *Patria* making fanciful sense of a visible reality; here, a series of *emboloi* aligned with the sea walls on both coasts and looking as if they were meant to form a continuum. We find a trace of the southern line of *emboloi* in the *Book of Ceremonies*, in the mention of an *embolos* in front of the church of St. Panteleemon beside the Harbor of Julian.¹⁰¹ This may well have been the curved portico, built by Julian, that gave access to the harbor.¹⁰²

Although the Pisan and Genoese quarters must have been close to the Strategion, this square is not mentioned in any of the documents. Indeed, apart from the city wall, they mention only one local landmark known from other sources, the hospital of St. Markianos. All the well-known churches and monasteries that owned property in these neighborhoods were themselves located in other parts of the city. Churches and monasteries actually located in these neighborhoods are not otherwise known, confirming the

⁹⁸ Ibid., 364–65: *prescriptus absque tecto parvulus embolus pertinet et idem monasterio tu Apologothetu*.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ *Scriptores*, ed. Preger, 148.

¹⁰¹ *De cerim.* 2.13, ed. Reiske, 1:561.

¹⁰² Zosimus, *Historia nova*, 3.11.3, ed. F. Paschoud, vol. 2.1 (Paris, 1979), 25; cf. Berger, "Regionen," 361.

suspicion that the majority of modest religious foundations in Constantinople have gone unrecorded.¹⁰³

A few open spaces are recorded in the Pisan quarter, but on the whole the neighborhoods the Italians moved into were dense concentrations of *oikemata/habitacula*. These varied considerably in use and in architectural form. Some were purely residential, while others were partly or wholly occupied by workshops. Many houses had specific luxury features familiar from descriptions of imperial or aristocratic residences: a reception/dining hall (τρικλινάριον), a solarium (ἡλιακὸν), a chamber (κούβουκλον). It is notable, however, that no building was more than two storeys high, in a city where a house of three or more storeys was a recognized mark of social distinction. It is also notable that interior courtyards are rarely mentioned, in interesting contrast to the evidence for Thessalonike, where the urban properties described in the documents of Athonite monasteries were generally grouped around courtyards.¹⁰⁴ Where supporting columns are mentioned, these were invariably wooden. In general, the impression is of fairly modest buildings of recent construction.

Considering that these were trading quarters, the number and variety of businesses mentioned is surprisingly low. Most numerous were the booths of money changers (*numularii/καταλλάκται*): eight in the intramural part of the Venetian quarter in 1148, four on the Pisan *skalai* in 1192, and one on the Genoese part of the waterfront in the same year. There were bakers in all three quarters, a butcher and a tavern in the Genoese section, and three candlemakers among the Venetians—but these were providers of basic everyday necessities, and their equivalents were no doubt found in every urban neighborhood. The only businesses that dealt in a specialized product were the workshops of the oarmakers, which gave the area colonized by the Genoese its name, Koparia. It is not clear whether these workshops supplied commercial shipping or, as I rather suspect, the galleys of the imperial fleet. What is clear, however, is that the Italian *emboloi* were not important markets or manufacturing areas. Things may have been different on the landing-stages, where several *ergasteria* are listed, but unfortunately the documents do not say what they produced.

As for the residential functions of the neighborhoods, we can only assume as a probability that the *oikemata* of the Italian quarters were actually occupied by Italians. There was a Latin baker named Walter in the Pisan quarter, but all the lay tenants and the lay neighbors of the properties acquired by Genoa were Greeks: Kaparina, the widow of the exarch Alexios, John Pastos, Leo Strobiliates, John Rapsommates, Makrogenes, the Opsikianos brothers, the widow Eudokia, the head of the (palace?) goldsmiths (ἄρχων τῶν χρυσοχόων) Kyriakos, Eudokios.¹⁰⁵

The documents present a picture of Byzantine urban neighborhoods into which Italian traders were moving or had moved recently. The properties they describe in detail are those that the Italians had just acquired. The documents do not, therefore, illustrate the extent to which the neighborhoods were being transformed by the Italian presence,

¹⁰³Cf. Magdalino, *Constantinople médiévale*, 63.

¹⁰⁴E.g., *Actes de Docheiariou*, ed. N. Oikonomides, Archives de l'Athos 13 (Paris, 1984), no. 4. See in general E. S. Papagianni, *Μορφές οικοδομῶν κατὰ τὴν ὕστερη Βυζαντινὴ περίοδο: πληροφορίες ἀπὸ νομικὰ ἔγγραφα* (Athens, 1995), 40 ff.

¹⁰⁵Sanguineti and Bertolotto, "Documenti," 475 ff.

and we should certainly resist the temptation to visualize them in terms of the more plentiful evidence for the Venetian and Genoese colonies of later centuries. The description of the Pisan quarter in 1192 provides, however, one revealing detail: it mentions two big churches, one of St. Peter and one of St. Nicholas, that the Pisans had built since becoming established in 1112.¹⁰⁶ These churches, which had not existed before, may well have been built in Tuscan Romanesque style. That the Byzantine imperial chancery described them as large suggests that they loomed over the neighborhood in a way that the average middle Byzantine church would not have done. They were, therefore, highly visible symbols of the wealth and power of the Latin West that was imposing itself on the other cultures of the Mediterranean world. The sight of them might have done much to inflame the mob that massacred the Latins of Constantinople in 1182, “that race of Latins who, in accordance with ancient custom, were set apart on the shore of the Horn of Byzantion, in the area of Phosphorion.”¹⁰⁷

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¹⁰⁶Müller, *Documenti*, 47–48. Both churches had existed—though not necessarily in the same form—since 1162, and that of St. Nicholas is mentioned in 1141: *ibid.*, 10.4.

¹⁰⁷Eustathios of Thessalonike, *La espugnazione di Tessalonica*, ed. S. Kyriakides, trans. S. Rotolo (Palermo, 1961), text repr. with same pagination and English trans. by J. R. Melville-Jones (Canberra, 1988), 34–37. “Phosphorion is evidently a variant of Bosporion,” a name sometimes applied to the Proosphorion harbor: Berger, *Untersuchungen*, 424.