

Between village and city: Peasants in the new economic context of medieval Crete (13th-15th c.)

For many centuries, Crete was on the periphery of the Byzantine Empire with mainly rural characteristics. The island was dominated by powerful landowners who possessed the land either in full ownership or by concession from the state. Agricultural production was aimed at self-sufficiency, whilst any surplus was exported from the only active port, Candia, a rather small settlement enclosed in its walls¹. The arrival of the Venetians in the early 13th century changed decisively the role of Crete. It ceased to be simply a regional part of an empire and instead became a colony of a new political and economic power that gradually secured an important place in the sea routes of the eastern Mediterranean². Over the years, the island of Crete, although a colony, was systematically organized and developed all the political, social and economic structures that finally transformed it into a complete state. From its Byzantine past, Crete had inherited hundreds of villages scattered across the island that, for centuries, had been the mainstays of its rural economy³. The Venetians maintained and strengthened the structure of the countryside in order to secure more marketable agricultural products, and also organized the cities of the north coast by enhancing not only their ports but also their settlements⁴. The new impetus acquired by those decadent old urban settlements was one of the main features of the Venetian rule in Crete, especially during the 13th and 14th centuries. In Crete, as everywhere else in the Byzantine Empire or in Europe since the 13th century onwards, two complementary major poles developed that determined the appropriate social and economic balance: on one hand, the countryside with its villages and rural population that actually produced and, on the other hand, the city where a part of the rural production was consumed whilst the main part was exported.

The cities of Crete evolved not only as ports for export and transit trade but also as political and economic centers,

both of the island and of a wider area in the South Aegean. All three cities on the northern coast became administrative headquarters: the capital city of Candia was the seat of the central government of the colony, whilst the cities of Rethymnon and Chania were the seats of local governments, all of which had their own councils and appropriate officers⁵. Structures of urban economy were established throughout the 13th century and a large number of merchants, artisans and other professionals soon settled in the cities.

In the new political, social and economic environment that gradually developed on the island from the 13th century onwards, the relation between peasants and the urban environment was a new phenomenon, whilst the city's dependency, especially economically, on the village continued and deepened. Therefore, it is necessary to look at how cities and villages communicated in Venetian Crete. Although we know little about the economic situation in Byzantine Crete, we now believe that Venetians encouraged contact between peasants and the urban economy. On an island such as Crete that had a purely rural economy and no major urban center, the increasing contact between city and village that is generally typical of the later medieval period is quite a significant change.

In this context, the peasants of the island faced, on the one hand, a new reality that was quite different from that which had been experienced before. In economic terms, the new challenges involved a larger city market, a significant number of merchants, as well as a significant number of those who had any kind of funds; in political terms, the challenge was a well-organized state mechanism with administrative, judicial and police authorities. On the other hand, Venetian, other Italian and Greek landowners benefited from their peasants' economic activity in the cities as they received, either directly or indirectly, some of the profits thereof. Besides, all land-

1 The 11th and 12th c. Byzantine cities were «centers for the consumption of surplus wealth appropriated from the rural economy». The growth of Byzantine cities was based on the exportation of agricultural production. Due to the overgrowth of Constantinople, very few Byzantine cities, and especially those in the European part of the Empire, had any industrial importance. See Harvey, *Economic expansion in the Byzantine Empire 198-243*. See also Dagron, *Urban economy 393-405*. An overview of the heretofore studies on the history of Byzantine cities s. Saradi, *Byzantine cities. For Crete before the Venetian conquest* s. Oikonomides, *Il livello economico di Creta*; Tsougarakis, *Byzantine Crete*; Jacoby, *Byzantine Crete*.

2 For the place of Crete in the Venetian navigation network during the 2. Byzantine period s. Jacoby, *Byzantine Crete. For its place in the main Venetian maritime routes after the 13th c. and its conquest* s. Stöckly, *Le système de l'Incanto 100 and passim*.

3 For the Cretan village s. Gasparis, *Villaggio a Creta veneziana*.

4 Gertwagen, *L'isola di Creta e i suoi porti*; Gasparis, *Diamerisma kai è polè tou Rethymnou*; *Catasticum Chanee 75-88*.

5 See e. g. the administration system in the region and the city of Chania: *Catasticum Chanee 56-70*.

owners lived in the cities and the goods produced on their land were usually sent there. Moreover, the strong Venetian central government always maintained control of the entire population, regardless of social or economic status, which meant that all peasants could or sometimes were forced to go to the city for various reasons.

During the 13th century, the peasants of Crete gradually moved beyond the boundaries of the village where they resided and communicated not only with neighboring villages or castles but also with the city, the administrative and economic center of their region. The city offered them quite diverse challenges: the feudatories, who offered land, the wholesale and retail market for agricultural products and the feeders of funds in kind or money. Whilst the cities attracted peasants, the villages attracted merchants and new temporary or permanent residents from outside Crete, as well as from other villages around the island. During the 13th and 14th century, there was significant mobility, generally among the free rural population.

We accept that, since landowners actually lived in cities, almost all residents of villages were more or less engaged in farming or livestock. Consequently, we have included in our data every person who was a resident of a village and, at the same time, we have taken into account the various social and economic characteristics of rural society, although we have not attached equal importance to all. Consequently, we have free or dependent peasants, poor or wealthy peasants, Greek or Latin peasants and, finally, native or immigrant peasants. The most important of all the above-mentioned characteristics is whether or not a peasant was actually a free person. Personal liberty gave the peasant the opportunity to move, either permanently or temporarily, to the city or to other villages. However, things were not always better for a free peasant than for a villein⁶. Both free peasants and villeins had to work hard in order to improve their economic status.

Peasants' activity in the city depended on various other factors that we have also taken into account, such as the distance of the village from the city, the accessibility of the sea, the existence of a small or large port, the extent to which the land was farmed, the quality of the land and the kind of agricultural produce or livestock. The volume and quality of the produce were also important factors in the peasants' contact with the city and its economy, mainly the international Venetian trade.

Finally, we should not forget the intermediate category, i. e. the peasants who, both in the Byzantine Empire and in medieval Europe before the 13th century, lived inside the city walls or within its suburbs and cultivated land within the city limits or in nearby villages. Due to the simultaneous increase

of the urban population and the expansion of the boundaries of the city agglomeration, their numbers probably increased in the cities of Crete after the arrival of the Venetians. Although these peasants maintained almost daily contact with the city, their economic activity was no different from that of all other peasants living in villages.

The frequent contact of peasants with the city, usually for economic reasons, contributed to the slow and cautious adoption of elements of urban life. In Crete, the familiarization of the peasants not only with the city but, indirectly, also with the Mediterranean world and important centers, such as Venice or Constantinople, had a significant impact. As an indicative example, we can mention the main sources used for our study, i. e. the contracts that became very common practice from the 13th century onwards. The notary practice, already known from the Byzantine period, spread rapidly after the arrival of the Venetians in Crete in the 13th century, not only among city residents, but also among the rural population, as it did elsewhere in Europe during the same period. In 1271, in the protocol of the oldest surviving notary of Candia, in 124 out of 455 contracts (i. e. 30%), one or more parties were residents of villages⁷. The protocols of all subsequent Cretan notaries confirm that the adoption of a formal written agreement was, necessarily or not, widely adopted by the rural population⁸.

There is no doubt that the practice of written agreements was initially more common amongst the residents of villages located near the city. However, city notaries gradually also began to draw up contracts for residents of remote villages. As the notary practice continued to spread, Latin and Greek notaries were also active in castles or large villages. All the existing contracts were drawn up at the office of the notary in the city, where all parties seemed to be present, and there was no mention of drawing up a contract outside the city. There are indications, however, that in several cases, the agreements had probably taken place in the villages, where the peasants lived, in the presence of the notary, who then recorded the acts in his protocols in the city. In this way, during the course of a day, the same notary was able to draw up more than one agreement in the same village. In these cases, the procedure indicates that the agreements were likely drawn up *in situ* and that the contracting peasants did not move to the city.

It seems that the written agreements were initially required from the peasants by the feudatories, traders and investors; however, the fact that written agreements were also common when both parties were peasants demonstrates the gradual adoption of a new mentality by the rural society. In any case, residents of the city were present in almost every

6 Gasparis, *Gē kai oi agrotēs* 209-226; Gasparis, »Phtōchoi« pheoudarchēs kai »plousioi« agrotēs.

7 See Pietro Scardon.

8 See the protocols of three notaries of Candia, active between 1278 and 1357: Leonardo Marcello; Pietro Pizolo; Zaccaria de Fredo. In 116 out of 575 contracts, i. e. 20%, in Leonardo Marcello's protocols, one or more parties are

residents of villages. We find almost the same percentage in the protocols of the other two notaries. It is worth noting that all three notaries acted in the city of Candia whilst some Greek notaries were probably active in the Cretan villages. For the notary practice in Crete and the problem of the language used by local notaries s. Maltezou, *Portrait of the notary*; Gasparis, *Glōssa tes benetikēs grapheiokratias*; Lambrinos, *Notariakē technē kai benetikē exousia*.

contract »signed« by peasants. These residents could be the other party, the owner of the peasant, if he was a villein (the owner's consent was required), a guarantor for the peasant, the notary and witnesses. In most cases the agreement was finally completed in the city by the delivery or receipt of the products. In April 1357, for example, a pre-sale contract was drafted by the notary Zaccaria de Fredo in Candia⁹. Nikolaos Gligoropoulos, resident in the village of Ambrussia, guaranteed by Leo Tourkos, resident in Candia, received from the Jew Moyse, son of Iecuda, resident in Candia, eight *hyperpyra*, in order to deliver by the end of August a quantity of grapes that would produce 150 *mistata* of wine. Gligoropoulos was obliged »*dare et presentare [...] huvas de dicta vinea [...] hic Candide, conductos ad domum tuam omnibus nostris expensis.*« The buyer agreed to pay the corresponding duty of the Gate (»*introitum Porte civitatis pro dictis huvis*«) when the peasant entered Candia carrying the grapes. The contract was signed by three witnesses, all Latins and without doubt residents in Candia: ser Nicolo Marcello, ser Giovanni Gerardo and ser Antonio de Tridento, who used to collaborate with the notary as they were present in numerous of his contracts. In our example, the notary, the guarantor, the buyer and the witnesses are all residents in Candia, while the grapes would be delivered in Candia at the buyer's house.

Let us now focus on various practices that illustrate the direct or indirect contact of the peasant with the city. These practices, either completely new or of long-standing, intensified on Crete during the 13th and 14th centuries. Two distinct roles can be attributed to the city: that of the economic center and that of the center of political power and administrative functions. In this context, a peasant may have been a seller of his own products or a buyer of other goods, a person who fulfilled his obligations derived from certain agreements or who searched for funds and technical knowledge, as well as a person who had contact with the public authorities for various reasons. In our paper we will pay more attention to the economic activities of the peasants in the city than to their contact with the various authorities established there.

We shall start with the peasants as sellers of their products in the cities of Crete. During the 13th century traders or middlemen began to assume a leading role in the organized retail or wholesale markets¹⁰. Although we do not know how strong the activity of the peasants as sellers had been during the Byzantine period immediately preceding, we believe that, after the Venetians' arrival, this activity began to wane. However, the peasants who used to come into the city market were still those who lived in nearby areas. The sale of agricultural products can be divided into two categories: the

wholesale of products related to the Venetian trade (such as cereals, wine, wool and cheese¹¹), and the retail sale of the same or various other products. Peasants were involved in both types of sale, but to a different extent in each case.

One of the most intense activities of the Cretan peasants, at least from the second half of the 13th century onwards, was the pre-sale of their surplus agricultural crops and livestock¹². The starting point of this practice was the city, in other words the merchants who were interested in securing quantities of certain products at a good price. However, the peasants also had a great interest in securing money for their needs. In all cases it was the merchant who normally arrived in the village to choose the product or the producer, and not the peasant going to the city to find a buyer. With the pre-sale peasants usually ensured money, as well as products, for seed or consumption. In this way they could obtain the necessary capital in order to continue their cultivation, usually that of cereals. Similarly, peasants could also secure working animals.

One of the major obligations of the peasants, as outlined in the contracts, was to deliver the products owed in the city. These products can be divided into two categories: 1. The annual fees paid by the peasants to the feudatories for the use of the land. 2. The obligations derived from the agreements signed by the peasants, usually the pre-sale of agricultural products. The majority of the people, feudatories or other buyers, with whom peasants would deal, were declared residents of a city. Consequently, most of the products had to be delivered there. That meant additional costs in terms of time and money, as many peasants did not have the necessary means of transportation. When the feudatory had a house in the village, the annual contributions were collected there, thus saving the peasants time and money.

There have been, as yet, no studies into what exactly was the relationship between peasants as sellers and the authorities who controlled the trade of goods. It seems that retail sales were exempt from duties¹³. As far as wholesale and pre-sales were concerned, a duty was charged for every transaction, but who actually paid the duty – the buyer, the peasant or both? In the case of a pre-sale, the contract typically stated that the product would be delivered to the buyer's house in the city (*conductum in civitatem ad domum tuam*). However, it is probable that, before the delivery, peasants used to go to the headquarters (*statera comunis*) of the responsible officials, i. e. the check-weighmen (*ponderatores* or *mensuratores comunis*)¹⁴ who first certified that the amount of product to be delivered was correct, and then fixed the appropriate duty.

9 Zaccaria de Fredo no. 93.

10 For the well organized market in the 14th c. Candia s. Gasparis, Organosē mias agoras Chandakas.

11 For the Venetian policy on the cereals trade s. Tsougarakis, Sitikē politikē tēs Benetias stēn Krētē. For the wine and cheese trade s. Jacoby, Cretan Cheese; Gasparis, Paragōgē kai emporia krasiou.

12 On the characteristics of the pre-sale contracts s. Gallina, Finanza 401-409.

13 In a decree of 1349 we read: [...] *quicumque emerit caseum, recoctam seu lanam ad minutum in statera nichil debeat solvere pro modo messetarie, sicut nichil hactenus propea solvebatur* [...]. Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Duca di Candia, b. 14, f. 226^r.

14 For these state officials who were important for the market s. Gasparis, Epangelmaties 122-128.

Certain decrees prove the contact of the peasants with the competent supervisory authorities in the city, either for pre-sold products or for products to be sold. Such a decree, of 1327, forbids the responsible check-weighmen from charging a free peasant or a villein more than was specified in the regulations¹⁵. Another decree of 1319 obliged the officials responsible for collecting duties on trade (*messete*) to inform one party of an agreement that the other party was a public or a private villein, otherwise the transaction could be invalidated¹⁶. Finally, a decree of 1349 concerning the duty of *messetaria* for the wholesale of cheese, ricotta and wool reveals the direct contact of the peasants with the city market and the responsible officials. The check-weighmen were obliged to write two receipts stating the quantity and value of the products sold by the villeins or anyone else from outside the city; one receipt was for the seller and the other for the buyer. According to these receipts, both seller and buyer had to pay the duty, which was equal to two *parvi* for each *hyperpyrum* value of the product; one *parvum* had to be paid by the seller and one by the buyer¹⁷. The other articles of the same decree regulate the relations between peasants and merchants, who always tried, by various means, to obtain greater profits by avoiding paying the duty owed¹⁸.

All the above-mentioned documents confirm that 1.) peasants were in direct contact with public offices and officials who controlled the trade, 2.) peasants paid duties on products sold, 3.) the authorities had detected irregular charges against those peasants who used to come to the city to deliver or sell their products and decided to protect them, and 4.) dependent peasants got the right of a transaction, but their personal social status had to be known to the other party.

What is finally proven by the evidence mentioned thus far is that peasants came to the city, where they had direct contact not only with the buyers of their products but also with the state mechanism that was responsible for regulating trade and collecting the relevant duties. What we also notice is that the reason for a peasant's contact with the state offices was the delivery of the pre-sold products, as well as the wholesale of the products on the free market. At the moment it is quite difficult to ascertain which one of these two reasons was more common.

Peasants' contact with the retail market as sellers seemed quite different, although we do not have enough information about this. Over the decades of the 13th century, and certainly since the 14th century onwards, the penetration of the peasants as sellers in the organized retail markets of the

city was more difficult due to the increasing presence of small merchants and the regulations made by the authorities. Small merchants and retailers were present even in the trade of products that were not subject to systematic and organized trade, such as fruits, vegetables, small animals or animals that had been hunted. However, decrees of the Venetian authorities in Crete referring to the reduction in tax evasion by the traders reveal the presence of peasants inside the city walls or in its suburbs, carrying their products in order to sell them, perhaps directly, to consumers. In 1344, a decree forbade anyone coming from the countryside from carrying partridges, hares, young goats, lambs, pigs, chickens, roosters and eggs in order to sell them outside the city; they could only sell them in the central square of the city¹⁹. Those wanting to sell such goods included peasants, particularly from the surrounding villages.

Documentary evidence of peasants as buyers is quite limited and existing sources indicate this »role« without defining it precisely. There is no doubt that peasants mainly bought products for use in their occupation, i. e. agricultural products to seed, animals and tools. They were much less likely to buy other products for use in their private life, such as fabrics, utensils or furniture. The role of peasants as buyers was determined by their economic status, and perhaps by the proximity to a large or small market. This means that, in Crete, the role of peasants as consumers was strengthened over the years by the establishment of multiple economic strata among the rural population, and by the development of the markets in the cities and castles²⁰.

One of the most lucrative areas of trade that was almost completely controlled by city traders was the trade in animals. The animals sold can be divided into two categories: working animals (such as oxen, donkeys and mules) and those that provided food or products that could be traded (such as cattle and sheep). Peasants bought mainly oxen and donkeys and, less frequently, mules and sheep. In Crete, soon after the arrival of the Venetians, city traders began to travel to the countryside in order to buy animals of both categories from peasants and sell them either to other traders or other peasants, making substantial profits. Thus, the bulk of the trade in animals moved from the countryside to the city.

The widespread trade in animals in the cities is reflected in numerous contracts in the protocols of the notaries of Candia. Whether or not the peasants actually went to the city in order to receive the animal purchased and sign an agreement, there is no doubt that they were almost forced to search all the city traders for the animals they needed, and very often to

15 Duca di Candia, Bandi no. 412: *Nullus ponderator statere comunis sive daciarius dicte statere de cetero audeat accipere aliquam solutionem ab aliquo francho vel villano, ultra id quod concessum et ordinatum est [...]*.

16 Ibidem no. 202.

17 The fact that, in some agreements (like the above-mentioned contract of 1357), the *datio Porte* was paid by the buyer means that this term was the exception rather than the rule. We have a similar example from a much earlier period. In 1271, Kalli, widow of Andrea Porco, resident of the village of Mathie, agreed

to deliver 50 *mistata* of wine at Giovanni de Porta's house in Candia at her own expense, except the *datio Porte* (Pietro Scardon no. 83).

18 Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Duca di Candia, b. 14, 226-227; cf. Gasparis, *Epangelmaties* 124-126.

19 The same decree was also issued in 1354, 1368, 1372 and 1374. Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Duca di Candia, b. 14, f. 171; b. 15, ff. 15', 156', 217'-218', 237'; cf. Gasparis, *Epangelmaties* 100.

20 On the various economic strata of the peasants of Crete s. Gasparis, *Gē kai oi agrotos* 209-226; Gasparis, »Phtōchoi« pheoudarches kai »plousioi« agrotos.

sign a painful agreement. In the event of a future repayment in money or kind, they were obliged to deliver one or the other in the city where the seller lived.

The lucrative trade in animals was also served by the partnership (*societas*) between a peasant and a city resident, whereby the latter offered the peasant a number of animals to look after and breed. These agreements primarily concerned small animals bred for their products rather than large working animals. The person who owned and offered the animals could be a merchant, who secured animals and products for trade, or other professionals, such as butchers or tanners, who were interested in animal products. We sometimes find an intermediary between the owner of the animals and the peasant-shepherd who rented the animals and then used a stipendiary shepherd for their grazing²¹.

Let us see some examples of the various types of partnership involving animals. We see how elaborate these agreements were, containing every necessary detail, in order to be more profitable. In 1303, Nicolo da Pazo, resident in the village of Moulia, received from Nicolo Pechigna, resident in Candia, 140 sheep, worth 49 *hyperpyra*, to look after and breed for three years. The shepherd, Nicolo da Pazo, would also be responsible for any damage caused to crops by the sheep. They would sell all products, i.e. cheese, ricotta and wool, and then share the profits minus all necessary expenses and, eventually, the value of the animals. After three years they would also share the animals²². In this case the peasant primarily offered his labor and some of the expenses, probably in kind, and earned half of the profits generated by the animal products and half of the sheep. The owner kept the total value of the initial number of animals and also half of the profits and half of the animals, almost duplicating his initial capital in three years. A similar agreement was signed in 1319 between the villein Manolis Aspreas, by the permission of his lord, and Leonardo Da Canal, resident of Candia. Here, we see more variations on the usual scheme of partnership. Aspreas received 50 sheep, worth 24 *hyperpyra*, to breed and look after for a period of two years. During this time, the shepherd offered not only labor but also all the necessary expenses, except those for the *nomi*, i.e. the contribution to the owner of the pastureland, and for the transportation of the cheese to Candia. Da Canal would receive all profits generated by the animal products up to the value of 24 *hyperpyra*, and then they would share the remaining profit. For this reason, Aspreas was obliged to inform Da Canal every month of the quantity of products obtained from the sheep and the profit they generated. At the end of two years, as in the previous example, the two partners would also share

the sheep²³. In this agreement, the peasant covered more expenses but eventually gained more animals.

In both of the above-mentioned examples of partnership between a peasant and a city resident, the peasant earned not only money, but also important capital in terms of animals, offering, primarily, labor and some of the expenses. However, some peasants worked as »professional« shepherds with a total wage in kind or money for the period agreed. Such an agreement was not a partnership, but the employment of a peasant by a city resident who was interested in the trade in animals. The increasing trade in animals in the city offered peasants, especially those residing in villages near Candia or another city, the opportunity to work as shepherds and earn more money than they could by remaining in their homes. In 1271, for example, Giovanni Quirino, resident of the village of Finikies, received from the goldsmith Giovanni Sclavo, resident in Candia, 200 cattle to »pasture and guard« for the period of one year. The shepherd agreed to pay an annual rent equal to two *milliaria* and 200 *libre* of cheese in two installments and, at the end of the year, to return all 200 cattle to the owner²⁴. In the contract there is no mention of a wage, which means that the shepherd would very probably have kept some of the products from the cattle during the year. In 1321, the villein Michalis Mourtzouflos, by the permission of his lord, agreed with Antonios Choumelas to pasture 67 goats for two years. Mourtzouflos would receive half of the revenue from the goats and, after two years, deliver to the owner the same number of goats with all their newborn kids²⁵. Finally, in 1339, Nikolaos Mothoneos, resident of the village of Doxara, declared »guard of oxen« (*custos bovium*), signed an agreement with a term of ten months with Andrea de lordano, resident in Candia. Mothoneos would pasture twelve oxen in the pastureland owned by De lordano with compensation totaling twelve *grossi*. If Mothoneos took more animals to pasture, he would be obliged to notify De lordano on the first Sunday that he led these animals to the central square of Candia²⁶. This last term of the contract means that the oxen were probably for sale in the market of Candia and the shepherd was responsible for leading them there. In this case, the peasant was a free man, probably without land, who agreed to leave his village and work as a shepherd hired by an animal trader, as other acts in the same notary protocol prove²⁷.

Traders also used to import animals from abroad or buy them from peasants. The »invasion« of the traders into the countryside resulted in a significant increase in the price of animals, which posed an additional burden on the economic situation of the peasants. There was much speculation during

21 For the partnerships concerning animals s. Gasparis, *Gē kai oi agrotēs* 121-125.

22 Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Notai di Candia, b. 8 notaio Stefano Bon, f. 17^v.

23 Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Notai di Candia, b. 233 notaio Andrea de Bellamore, f. 54^r.

24 Pietro Scardon no. 440.

25 Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Notai di Candia, b. 233 notaio Andrea de Bellamore, f. 9^v.

26 Franciscus de Cruce no. 438.

27 Franciscus de Cruce nos 177. 266. 357. 370. 409. The economic activities of Andreas de lordano were not confined to Crete but also extended to the Turkish Emirates in Asia Minor, from where cattle and horses were usually imported to the island. In 1339, de lordano commissioned Fidele de Ascoli, resident in Candia, to collect in these Emirates all debts owed to him and at the same time to obtain loans of 100 *hyperpyra* in total. Ibidem no. 264.

the 14th century that the metropolitan authorities intervened in the early 15th century in order to partially free the trade in animals from the merchants and, consequently, reduce prices. It is worth mentioning that the intervention of the authorities was the result of various complaints expressed by the feudatories who, by their embassy to Venice in 1416, protested against the difficult economic situation of their peasants. According to the document »many traders travel to the villages of Crete and buy any newborn cow for 25 *hyperpyra* each. They transfer them to the castles, where the peasants come and buy the same animals for 60 *hyperpyra*, or also on credit for one year or more. When the time comes to repay and the peasants do not have the money, they are forced to sell the animals at a very low price. This activity is financially destroying both peasants and feudatories«. The Venetian authorities acknowledged the difficult situation and imposed stricter rules. Henceforth, traders did not have the right to buy cows that were born in Crete in order to resell them on the island. However, they could import and sell as many of them as they wanted. As noted in the decree, »in this way poor peasants will be able to buy local cows at a low price, in order to cultivate their fields«²⁸.

The purchase of animals by peasants was a very common activity and richly documented. However, our information is quite limited regarding other products also purchased by peasants. This does not mean that there was a lack of interest in other goods, rather that the practices were not documented in our sources. The import, for example, of agricultural tools or raw materials to make tools²⁹, or even the making of such tools in Crete, suggest a local trade, but the information we have is limited and we do not always know how, in what quantities and at what prices these products were sold and whether the buyers were usually landowners or peasants. The trade in agricultural tools was essential for the majority of the local population. In order to prevent speculation the local authorities tried to control the prices of tools, as well as the wages or certain work of the relevant craftsmen. A decree of 1351, for example, specified the maximum price of agricultural tools on the market in Candia: a pruning hook for 4 *grossi*, a sickle for 10 *soldi*, a large hoe for 7 *grossi* and a narrow hoe for 10 *soldi*. The same decree also determined the maximum wage of the tool craftsmen (*custodes ferri ad cudinem*) and the work of the blacksmiths, either for repairing tools or shoeing horses and donkeys³⁰. It is quite interesting that, for safety reasons, during certain

periods all blacksmiths living in the villages were obliged to leave their homes and go and work inside the walls of Candia or in the nearest village castle³¹. This proves, first, the existence of such craftsmen in the Cretan villages, and, second, that peasants were obliged to go to the city or a castle when the need arose.

Further examples give us an indication of what peasants in Crete purchased, apart from the necessary agricultural tools. However, these examples may not be considered characteristic of usual practices. In 1305, the villein Kostas Skoureas, resident of the village of Stavrakia near the city of Candia, bought from Stephano della Dulce in the same city the Greek slave Theodoro de Scamandito, worth 10 *hyperpyra*, paid in cash³². This is a rather exceptional example because the buyer was a villein; however, many villagers bought slaves from the city markets³³. This means that there were peasants with an accumulated fund of money that they used in order to procure the necessary workforce so as to increase their production. In 1305, another peasant, resident of a village south of the city of Rethymnon, signed an agreement for the repayment, within two months, of the amount owed for a coat that had been purchased in the city of Candia³⁴. Finally, another resident of a village, which is currently around 45 km from the city of Candia, bought fabrics from a city store for about 11 *hyperpyra*, mediated by a guarantor. In early 1306, the peasant signed an agreement with his guarantor, agreeing to give him, about three months later, as much wool as the cost of the fabrics purchased³⁵. It seems that, in this case, the guarantor acted simultaneously as a lender, who paid for the fabrics. So it seems that at least some peasants were familiar with more complex market mechanisms, which were used to secure the product that interested them.

The peasants' needs for money or kind were always great and searching for available funds was an old practice. In Crete, from the 13th century onwards, there was a notable change: The available funds gradually increased and many new ways developed of investing them in the rural economy. Investors were interested both in agriculture and stock farming because both areas offered products for commercialization and therefore significant profits. The city had been and remained the main source of funds. Apart from the landowners, who traditionally reinvested their capital in land, more and more people from various economic and social strata of the city would offer peasants a small or large amount of money, or even products, as funds.

28 Gerland, Das Archiv 63-64; cf. Gallina, Creta 73.

29 For the trade in agricultural tools (ploughshares, hoes, nails, axes, pickaxes etc.) or raw materials (mainly iron) for their construction s. Gasparis, Thalassies metaphores.

30 In 1351, for example, the repair of a ploughshare cost 4½ *soldi* and the external lining of a new wooden ploughshare with iron cost 3½ *soldi* for each *libbra* of iron. In that same year, the shoeing of a donkey using materials provided by the blacksmith cost 2 *soldi*, with nails provided by the blacksmith and shoe by the owner it cost 3 *tornesii*, and with materials provided by the owner it cost 3 *parvi*. See Gasparis, Epangelmaties 108-110.

31 Such decrees were issued in 1342 and 1343 because of a rebellion that had broken out in 1341 in central Crete. See Gasparis, Epangelmaties 106-107.

32 Angelo de Cartura, Documents no. 165.

33 In the protocol of the notary Angelo de Cartura (s. Angelo de Cartura, Documents) 24 out of 99 contracts of slave sales were signed by residents of villages.

34 Theocharis Troulinos, resident of the village Kerames in the *turma* of Kato Syvritos in the area of Rethymno, promised to pay off 4 *hyperpyra* and 4 *grossi*, the rest of the amount for a scarlet coat (»*mantelum de scarletis*«) bought from Giovanni Fradello in Candia. Angelo de Cartura, Documents no. 234.

35 Kostas Latino, resident of the village of Garipa, bought fabrics at the store of Gabriele Aymo in Candia and borrowed money from Marino Quirino. Angelo de Cartura, Documents no. 392.

The loans were always the most common way for a peasant to find funds in order to fulfill his annual obligations in terms of contributions or farming. In Crete, there were two types of loan: At interest and interest-free (*causa amoris*), which probably had a lower interest rate³⁶. Free or dependent peasants borrowed, generally without interest, money or goods and returned, respectively or vice versa, money or goods³⁷. The repayment period of a loan ranged from a few months to a few years, however, the most common period was no more than one year, i.e. a full cycle of cultivation and production, and the repayment was often associated with this. In the notary protocols loans were very common from the 13th century, and a significant number of them involved peasants. Based on certain notary protocols from the second half of the 13th and first half of the 14th century we observe that the 6 to 30 % of all loans signed concerned residents of villages who were borrowing money or goods³⁸.

Borrowing seed from a city or village resident was a simple way for a peasant to seed his land, however, it was not the most common means in Crete. In August 1279 for example, Thomas de Gruaro, resident of the village of Chudetsi, borrowed without interest (*mihi dedisti et prestitisti causa amoris*) from Viviano Lusco, resident in Candia, 18 *measure* of wheat in order to deliver the same quantity by the end of the following July³⁹. A similar loan was signed in January 1306 between residents of villages. Georgios Fomopoulos and Pietro Cauco, residents of the village of Silamo, borrowed from Dominico Kastropoulos, resident of the village of Steriano, 50 *measure* of wheat and 26 *measure* of barley in order to deliver the same quantity by the end of the following August⁴⁰. This form of agreement looks like the pre-sale of agricultural products, but the terms of the contract and the way in which the repayment was effected refer to a loan rather than a pre-sale. Besides, most of these contracts contain the term *prestitisti*, i.e. »you lent me«⁴¹.

Instead of agricultural products peasants would borrow money not only in order to procure the seed they needed but also to fulfill other needs or obligations. Unfortunately we are often unable to ascertain the purpose of a loan because it was not generally mentioned in the contract. In June 1271 for example, Alexios Naptopoulos, resident of the village of Assariti, borrowed without interest for four months from Erini, widow of Pietro Calzavacca, resident in Candia, the significant amount of 22 *hyperpyra*⁴². The month in which Naptopoulos received the money, the short repayment term of the loan and the amount borrowed lead

us to assume that he aimed to fulfill various obligations during the summer.

However, we sometimes have evidence enabling us to ascertain the purpose of a loan. In February 1339, Anitsa, widow of Nikolaos Foukadopoulos, resident of the village of Aitania, borrowed without interest from Angelo Tedaudo, resident in Candia, eight *hyperpyra* to return them by the end of the following September. According to the contract Anitsa would use this money to pay off a sentence that the same Tedaudo possessed against her⁴³. In fact, it was a lengthening of a debt through a loan. On March 19 1300, shoemaker Giovanni Scandolarius, resident of the village of Silamo, rented for ten years one tenth of all land and gardens in the village of Vasilies, owned by Antonio Staniario, resident in Candia. On the same day, in another contract, Scandolarius borrowed from the same Staniario, the owner of the land, 20 *hyperpyra* to repay them in a period of three years. The next day he bought from a third party an ox worth 18 *hyperpyra* and 8 *grossi*. About a month later, on April 16, Scandolarius borrowed 50 *measure* of wheat in order to return an equal quantity from his new wheat crop. And finally, on May 23, the same Scandolarius borrowed another 13 *hyperpyra* to repay them in a year⁴⁴. It is quite obvious that Scandolarius received three loans in money and wheat in order to set up a new farm under rather difficult conditions since he seemed to lack any of the necessary resources, i.e. land, working animals, seed or money. In this case it is the same person that leased the land and lent the money and wheat in order to help the new farmer plant and grow a satisfactory crop.

If the starting point for searching for money or products was the village and the peasant himself, other investments in the rural economy started from both the city and the village, which meant that both city residents and peasants were interested in the best use of the available »capital« such as land, animals, seed etc. The ways of using capital depended on the type of capital and, of course, on the contracting parties, their social status and the relationship between them. We mainly examine forms of partnership, the so-called *societates*, which resulted from one party's search for another party for the better utilization of the capital available to each one. Apart from money and land, city residents used to offer animals and rural facilities, such as wind or water mills and winepresses, to exploit with one or more peasants. We exclude the land that peasants used to rent from their own lords. On the other hand, a peasant usually offered his own or his family's labor and animals and, occasionally, also some additional capital,

36 Gallina, *Finanza* 393-397.

37 In medieval Crete, a dependent peasant (*villanus*) borrowed money or other goods by the permission of his lord who in fact acted as guarantor for him. In August 1339, for example, the villein Ioannis Miliotis, resident of the village of Laranni, by the permission of his lord Giovanni Vido, borrowed without interest from the fisherman Georgios Vlachos, resident in Candia, the significant amount of 14 *hyperpyra* to return them by the end of the following May. Franciscus de Cruce no. 226.

38 This rather rough estimate of loans signed by residents of villages is based on four published notary protocols; s. Pietro Scardon; Pietro Pizolo; Zaccaria de Fredo; Leonardo Marcello.

39 Leonardo Marcello no. 119.

40 Angelo de Cartura, *Documents* no. 340.

41 Mario Gallina (*Finanza* 401-402) thinks that in fact this form was not a loan but a pre-sale.

42 Pietro Scardon no. 390.

43 Franciscus de Cruce no. 114.

44 Pietro Pizolo nos 252-253. 259. 402. 520.

usually in kind. In any case, money was the less common component of a partnership, although money was necessary in order to obtain the main capital such as land, animals, seed and other ordinary expenses.

The forms of partnership concerning land and other rural capital were, like those concerning animals, quite elaborate with the aim of achieving better financial results. The simplest form of partnership existed between a resident of a city, offering land, and a peasant, offering labor. They both shared all the expenses for cultivation as well as the annual crop. There were many variations of this form of partnership, depending on what was offered by the two parties, or on the kind of cultivation and capital used. The two parties shared the annual crop according to what each had brought into the partnership. However, each one usually offered what was necessary in order to share the crop equally. The agreements usually contained all the necessary details determining the final share of the profits. These quite interesting details highlight the importance of each component of the partnership for the economy of the time as well as the rural workings and the cost of cultivation⁴⁵.

Let us look at a few examples showing the variety of capital available in the cities and villages of Crete as well as the ways of matching of which was offered by both parties. In 1301, Leonardo Lambardo, resident of the village of Panagia very close to Candia, rented from Giovanni Signolo a vineyard, located in the village of Papagaidaro, in order to cultivate it for 29 years. As we do not have the contract we do not know the exact terms of this agreement, however, we assume that Lambardo agreed to deliver to Signolo the usual one third of the annual production in wine must⁴⁶. Three years later, in 1304, Lambardo entered into partnership with Benvenuto Fermano, resident in Candia, for five years and for the above-mentioned vineyard. Each year Fermano was to pay all the necessary expenses, the cost of the new vines and the manure used, as well as half the expenses for the vineyard guard. They would share Lambardo's part of the production, i.e. two thirds of the total production, less all Fermano's expenses. The contract also mentions the possible extension of the partnership after the expiration of the five years of the agreement up to the 29 years rental of the vineyard⁴⁷.

In fact, Lambardo rented an old vineyard over a long period of time in order to generate some profits, and he cul-

tivated it for three years. We can assume that, due to its age, the vineyard was not very productive, and Lambardo thus decided to renew it in order to increase the size of the crop and generate greater profit⁴⁸. He did not have the money to do this and knew that during the gradual renewal of the vineyard its annual production would be diminished. He lived very close to Candia and it was easy for him to search for money in the city. For greater security, rather than obtaining a loan, he decided to share his annual part of the wine production with a partner who would finance the desired renewal. After all, it was the farmer who was searching for the financier in the city, and it was the same farmer who was the first party to sign the contract and obtain a partner (*recipio te socium*). This was a quite clear and simple form of partnership: the peasant who offered the land and cultivated it, and the city resident who offered the necessary money for the cultivation or renewal. This partnership reveals how lucrative it was to invest in land, particularly in a vineyard, due to the exportable wine, as three persons profited from the annual production of the same vineyard: the owner who took one third, the investor-partner who also took one third plus his expenses and finally the farmer who took less than one third. In this case, it seems that the investor earned more than the other two parties to the contract.

The partnership signed in 1367 took on a more complex form. Fimis Moussouros, resident in Castro Novo, and Angelo Quirino, resident in Candia, signed an agreement for a term of two years. Moussouros offered an ox, a cow, a bull, land rent from the state and labor for the cultivation of the land. Quirino offered half of the expenses for cultivation and half of the value of the animals, i.e. 17 *hyperpyra*. They would share the annual crop, less the rent for the land paid by Moussouros to the state⁴⁹. It is clear that Moussouros was searching for capital in the form of money since he possessed both land and working animals and cultivated the land. We do not know whether Moussouros searched for money just for the cultivation of land or also for an additional activity. In any case, he managed to attract funds in the form of money by offering a future income in kind, probably rural products for commerce. This form of partnership was less common.

In 1374, Cristoforo Bartolomei, resident in Candia, and Markos Ragousaios and Georgios Therapemenos, residents

45 In 1367, for example, the owner of a garden agreed with a peasant to take him as *socium et participem* for a period of four years and three months. For the first year the owner would offer all the plants to be cultivated and the peasant all the necessary annual labor. For the rest of the time the peasant would continue to offer the labor, as well as half of the necessary plants. In the contract we also read about some of the labor and expenses that the peasant was obliged to offer: [...] *laborare debes personaliter in dicto iardino in auriendo aquam et balneando ipsum, zapando et custodiendo ac seminando ibi queque erunt sibi necessaria cunctis temporibus annis [...] extractis de monte ipsius lucri omnibus expensis necessariis pro gerani, ascondavla, copreti et bruschis, pro clausura ipsius iardini et cisterna [...]*. Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Notai di Candia, b. 11 notaio Antonio Brixano, f. 89^v.

46 For the 29 years concession of vineyards and the annual rent paid by the cultivator s. Gasparis, Gē kai oi agrotēs 198-199.

47 Pietro Pizolo no. 773. The same day that the partnership was signed Leonardo Lambardo also received from Benvenuto Fermano eight *hyperpyra* in the form of a loan to be paid off within three months (Pietro Pizolo no. 775). The purpose of the loan is unknown, however, the money could have been used either in the cultivation of the vineyard or in some other activity or obligation of Lambardo. In 1300, together with the shoemaker Filippo Sclavo, Lambardo bought an ox worth 16½ *hyperpyra* (Pietro Pizolo no. 108). He might also have cultivated land by growing cereals.

48 According to the contract, in the first year, the cultivator would plant 200 new vines and fertilize them with 100 *saume* of manure. For the next four years he would plant 100 new vines and fertilize them with 50 *saume* of manure every year. This meant the complete renewal of an old vineyard.

49 Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Notai di Candia, b. 11 notaio Antonio Brixano, f. 98^v.

of the village of Kato Marathitis, entered into a partnership for the cultivation of land. Bartolomei offered three oxen, worth 66 *hyperpyra* and one *grossum*, rented dry land in the same village and all the wheat, barley, oat and pulses for seeding. The other party offered land, which Ragousaios rented in the same village, and all the necessary labor, i. e. all the annual rural labor and cultivation until harvest time. Every year the two parties would share the produce (after they had gradually deducted the value of the oxen and seed), all the expenses and the rent of the land offered by Bartolomei and Ragousaios. When the agreement came to an end the two parties would also share the oxen⁵⁰. In this example the city resident Bartolomei offered the most important components, i. e. some of the land, working animals and seed to start cultivation. The two peasants simply offered some of the land and the indispensable labor. Bartolomei kept all the initial capital and earned an annual income in kind; Ragousaios and Therapemenos also earned an annual income in kind, plus half the work animals which were needed for future cultivation without a partner. Ragousaios rented the land but would probably not have cultivated it on his own. Thus he entered into an agreement with Therapemenos who did not possess anything and, together, they searched in the city for the necessary capital. They did not borrow money, buy animals or pre-sell parts of the future production and thus did not take a risk on having a good harvest and profit; they preferred to generate lower but more secure profits.

In 1326, the lawyer Matteo Doto, resident in Candia, and the villein Xenos Alevropoulos, resident of the village of Petrokefalo, by the permission of his lord, signed a partnership contract with a term of five years. Doto offered land, a pair of oxen and a donkey, and Alevropoulos offered a donkey and labor as well as the labor of his sons. At the end of the first year the peasant would pay off the value of an ox and the barley that Doto had given him to seed. For the next four years the two partners would share the annual crop and, at the end of the five year period, Alevropoulos would keep the ox⁵¹. In this agreement the peasant primarily offered the labor of his family, and the resident of the city offered everything else. After five years the peasant would have earned not only the annual profit but also an ox, which was indispensable if he was to continue to cultivate the land.

Every form of partnership seemed to be quite profitable and advantageous for both parties and it is logical that every peasant would be interested in such an agreement. Thus it is important to study: a.) how easy it was for a peasant to find a partner in the city, b.) how many city residents were available to assume the risk of a partnership with a peasant, and c.) if

such a partnership was actually a peasant's first and maybe only chance to cultivate land and generate an income, or if it was the usual way of generating more profits by means of complementary cultivation.

Apart from the market, traders, investors and various funds the city also provided the peasants with technical services and knowledge since many and more highly skilled artisans lived in the cities. There is no doubt that peasants needed artisans and many of them actually lived in villages (for example the above-mentioned blacksmiths) and they often served more than one neighboring village. These artisans, who could also be defined as peasants with a vocational qualification, taught the next generation of artisans⁵². However, some parents or lords put their children or villeins into apprenticeship with city artisans⁵³. In 1306, for example, Xenos Profitis, resident of the village of Armiros, which was situated very close to the city of Candia, put his son Emanuel into apprenticeship with the shoemaker Giovanni, son of the late Cavossus, for a period of six years⁵⁴. After six years Emanuel would return to his village to work, with all the necessary equipment offered to him by the master shoemaker. In 1321, Maria de Policandro, resident of the village of Pendamodi, also situated near Candia, took her daughter to the city and agreed that she would work alongside the weaver Eirini Vlastudena for a period of 10 years in order to learn her art⁵⁵. Finally, in 1339, Agnes, widow of Giovanni Vassalo, resident in Candia, put her villein Pavlos into apprenticeship for seven years with the blacksmith Hemanuel Argyropoulos, resident in Candia⁵⁶. Those living in remote villages or castles also brought their children to the city, for example Folco Trevisan, resident of the castle of Belvedere, now about 65 km from Candia. In 1271 Trevisan put his son Leonardo into apprenticeship for four years with the tailor Viviano Penna, resident in Candia⁵⁷.

Peasants not only travelled to the city in order to buy or sell goods, deliver agricultural products or pay duties, or in order to search for investors or partners. In some cases there was also obligatory contact with the administrative, judicial and police authorities of the Cretan cities. It is worth commenting briefly on the relationship between peasants and the authorities, and the extent to which peasants exercised their rights and came into contact with the authorities still has to be studied. All three cities of the island, each for its own territorio, had the appropriate authorities and offices whilst the capital city of Candia was the seat of the island's central government and other senior officials. The most common reasons for a peasant to travel to the city were: 1.) to seek justice from the duke and his council, 2.) to solve economic problems, and 3.) to sign a contract.

50 Ibidem f. 442r.

51 Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Notai di Candia, b. 142 notaio Benedetto de Milano, f. 39r.

52 There is sufficient evidence of craftsmen living in the Cretan villages. However, all information we have concerns agricultural rather than professional activity. For example, Ioannis Petramoris, resident of the village of Pendamodi, a carpenter (*marangonus*) and villein of the Jew Marco, sold in 1271 in advance 30

mistata of wine for three *hyperpyra* that he had already received. Pietro Scardon no. 64.

53 On the apprenticeship in Crete s. Santschi, Contrats de travail.

54 Angelo de Cartura, Documents no. 485.

55 Donato Fontanella no. 49.

56 Franciscus de Cruce no. 423.

57 Pietro Scardon no. 89.

In theory residents of the countryside, as well as those of the cities, were allowed to address the authorities in order to solve their problems. It is necessary to distinguish between cases in which the peasant was asked by the authorities to go to the city for some reason, and those in which the peasant went to the city on his own initiative in order to solve his problems. In the first case the peasant was almost forced to obey and consequently to travel to the city. There were a significant number of decrees in which Cretan authorities required peasants, for various reasons, to appear before them within a certain period of time⁵⁸. We do not know whether or not they actually arrived in Candia or any other city in order to solve their problem but we are sure that, at least some of them, did so in order to defend themselves against a criminal accusation. Only in very few cases do we know whether a peasant appeared before the authorities by his own free will or by force. In 1329, for example, the villeins Hemanuel de Rizo, resident of the castle of Milopotamos, and Kostas Katsaras, resident of the village of Chersonissos, were accused of theft and summoned to court. According to a note in the relevant decree Katsaras was brought to the court by his lord, Daniele Greco, and was sentenced⁵⁹.

On the other hand we are not sure whether it was an easy decision for a peasant to travel to the city to solve a specific problem. Such a decision would undoubtedly have depended on the distance of the village from the city and, of course, on the seriousness of the problem that a peasant was facing, for instance, the question of his personal freedom, i. e. when a landowner claimed him as his villein⁶⁰. There are numerous court decisions concerning free or dependent peasants such as the denunciations about villagers injured by residents of the same or other villages⁶¹. However, we are not sure if all these peasants travelled to Candia in order to appear in court although it would have been very important for them to defend their rights. Documentary information concerning peasants who were present in the city in an attempt to solve their problems is quite limited and all examples can be used as evidence of the fact that a peasant might also have reached the city by his own initiative and for reasons not strictly economic. One such example concerns Michalis Vramakostis and his wife Maria who, in 1320, appeared before the authorities to declare that they had found a male infant in the village of Pendamodi and that they had baptized him, giving him the name Nikolaos. The authorities called anyone who knew

anything about the infant to declare it within a month. If anyone recognized the infant as his own villein or slave, then he would compensate the afore-mentioned couple for their expenses⁶². Troubles with the authorities forced the villein Protichi Matuiano to reach Candia. In 1317 he was accused of having gone to the headquarters of the state treasurers in order to testify instead of his brother. The authorities denounced him for fraud⁶³.

Finally, in Crete from the 13th century onwards, under the new political and mainly economic circumstances, peasants, whilst adhering to the land, could not ignore the city and everything the city represented at economic and institutional level. With the ultimate goal of higher profits and survival both city residents and peasants were forced into contact with the countryside and the city.

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58 This is the usual term: *dominus duca et eius consilium dant ipsi terminum quod usque ad octo dies proximos comparere debeat ad excusandum se de dicta accusatione*. See such decrees: Duca di Candia, Bandi nos 11. 28. 149. 155. 189f. and *passim*.

59 *Ibidem* no. 480.

60 In such a case the villein would appear in court in order to defend his personal freedom, taking with him as many witnesses as he could. These witnesses were usually residents of the same or a nearby village. A villein and his family were an important part of feudal property, and the claim of a free man as villein was quite usual practice. See Santschi, *Quelques aspects du statut*.

61 Santschi, *Régestes* nos 678f. 682. 693 and *passim*.

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63 *Ibidem* no. 163.

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Zusammenfassung / Summary / Résumé

Zwischen Dorf und Stadt – Bauern im neuen wirtschaftlichen Kontext des mittelalterlichen Kreta (13.-15. Jh.)

Im frühen 13. Jahrhundert wurde Kreta eine Kolonie Venedigs. In diesem neuen politischen, sozialen und ökonomischen Kontext veränderten sich die Beziehungen zwischen den ländlichen Bewohnern und dem städtischen Umfeld, während die Abhängigkeit der Stadt vom Dorf, besonders in ökonomischer Hinsicht, fortbestand und sich sogar steigerte. Unter diesen Bedingungen mussten sich die Bauern der Insel einer neuen Realität stellen, die sich von der vorherigen der byzantinischen Epoche unterschied. Unter wirtschaftlichen Gesichtspunkten waren die neuen Herausforderungen mit größeren Stadtmärkten, einer erheblichen Zahl von Händlern und von Personen, denen sonstige Geldmittel zur Verfügung standen, verknüpft; in politischer Hinsicht bestand die Herausforderung in gut organisierten staatlichen Strukturen mit administrativen, rechtlichen und polizeilichen Autoritäten.

Während des 13. Jahrhunderts überwand die ländlichen Bewohner Kretas nach und nach die Grenzen ihrer Dörfer und begannen nicht nur mit benachbarten Dörfern oder Burgen zu kommunizieren, sondern hauptsächlich mit der nächsten Stadt, dem administrativen und wirtschaftlichen Zentrum der jeweiligen Region. Die Stadt bot ihnen in der Regel diverse Möglichkeiten: Feudalherren, die Land anboten, Groß- und Einzelhandel für landwirtschaftliche Produkte, Leihgeber von Mitteln in Form von Geld oder Sachmitteln. Und während die Bauern von den Städten angezogen wurden, wurden die Dörfer gleichzeitig attraktiver für Händler und neue temporäre oder permanente Bewohner aus den Städten oder anderen Dörfern der Insel sowie von außerhalb Kretas.

In dieser Studie liegt der Schwerpunkt auf den Praktiken des direkten oder indirekten Kontakts der ländlichen Bewohner mit der Stadt. Diese Praktiken, entweder neu oder althergebracht, wurden auf Kreta während des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts intensiviert. Der Stadt fielen dabei zwei unterschiedliche Rollen zu: die des ökonomischen Zentrums und die des Zentrums politischer Gewalt und administrativer Funktionen. In diesem Kontext konnten die Bauern als Verkäufer eigener Produkte oder Käufer anderer Güter auftreten, als Personen, die ihre Verpflichtungen erfüllen mussten, welche sich aus bestimmten Vereinbarungen ergaben, die Finanzierungen suchten, Partner oder technische Unterstützung, oder die aus unterschiedlichen Gründen mit Behörden in Kontakt treten mussten.

Übersetzung: J. Drauschke

Between village and city: Peasants in the new economic context of medieval Crete (13th-15th c.)

In the early 13th century, Crete became a colony of Venice. In this new political, social and economic context, the relation that developed between peasants and the urban environment was a new phenomenon, whilst the city's dependency, especially economic, on the village continued and deepened. Under these circumstances, the peasants of the island faced a new reality, which was quite different from the one that had existed during the Byzantine period. In economic terms the new challenges involved a larger city market, a significant number of merchants, as well as a significant number of those who had any kind of funds; in political terms the challenge was a well-organized state mechanism with administrative, judicial and police authorities.

During the 13th century the peasants of Crete gradually moved beyond the boundaries of their villages and began to communicate not only with other neighboring villages or castles but mainly with the city, the administrative and economic center of their region. The city offered them quite diverse challenges: The feudatories, who offered land, the wholesale and retail market that offered agricultural products, and the feeders of funds in kind or money. Whilst the cities attracted peasants, the villages attracted merchants and new temporary or permanent residents from the cities or other villages around the island, as well as from outside Crete.

In our study we focus on various practices that illustrate the direct or indirect contact of the peasant with the city. These practices, either completely new or of long-standing, intensified on Crete during the 13th and 14th centuries. Two distinct roles can be attributed to the city: that of the economic center and that of the center of political power and administrative functions. In this context a peasant may have been a seller of his own products or a buyer of other goods, a person who fulfilled his obligations derived from certain agreements or who searched for funds, partners or technical knowledge, as well as a person who had contact with the public authorities for various reasons.

Entre village et ville – Les paysans dans le nouveau contexte économique de la Crète médiévale (13^e-15^e s.)

Au début du XIII^e siècle, la Crète devient colonie de Venise. Dans ce nouveau contexte politique, social et économique, une nouveauté se dessine: les paysans entrent en relation avec l'environnement urbain, tandis que la dépendance, notamment économique, des villes à l'égard des villages, continue en s'intensifiant. Les paysans Crétois se trouvent alors face à une nouvelle réalité, très différente de celle de l'époque byzantine. En termes économiques, ils ont à affronter de nouveaux défis: un marché plus grand, celui de la ville; un nombre de commerçants et de bailleurs de fonds plus important. En termes politiques, le nouveau défi est constitué par les mécanismes d'un État bien organisé avec des autorités administratives, judiciaires et policières.

Au cours du XIII^e siècle, les paysans Crétois dépassent progressivement les frontières de leur village et commencent à communiquer non seulement avec d'autres villages ou châteaux voisins, mais surtout avec la ville, le centre administratif et économique de leur région. La ville leur offre des opportunités variées: feudataires qui offrent des terres; marchés pour vendre leurs produits agricoles en gros et en détail; bailleurs de fonds qui peuvent les approvisionner en produits ou en argent. Et tandis que les villes attirent les paysans, les villages attirent en même temps des marchands et de nouveaux résidents, permanents ou temporaires, venant des villes ou d'autres villages de l'île, ainsi que de l'extérieur de la Crète.

Dans notre étude, nous nous concentrons sur certaines pratiques, qui mettent en évidence le contact direct ou indirect du paysan avec la ville. Ces pratiques, qu'elles soient tout à fait neuves ou bien anciennes, ont été intensifiées en Crète au cours du XIII^e et XIV^e siècle. Deux rôles distincts peuvent être attribués à la ville: celui du centre économique et celui du centre du pouvoir politique et des autorités administratives. Dans ce contexte, le paysan peut devenir vendeur de ses propres produits ou acheteur des produits des autres; quelqu'un qui remplit ses obligations à l'égard de certains accords ou bien quelqu'un qui cherche des fonds, des partenaires ou un savoir technique; il peut être aussi la personne qui, pour des raisons diverses et variées, entre en contact avec les autorités publiques.