SERBIAN PRONOIA AND PRONOIA IN SERBIA:
THE DIFFUSION OF AN INSTITUTION

Of all of Byzantium’s neighbors who appropriated the fiscal and agrarian institution of pronoia, it was the Serbs whose adaptation of the institution most closely resembled the Byzantine model. The article re-examines the institution of pronoia in Serbia from its earliest manifestation during the reign of Stefan Uroš II Milutin through the time of the Brankovići in the mid-fifteenth century. In the course of analyzing the character of Serbian pronoia, particularly during the reign of Stefan Dušan, the administration of conquered Byzantine pronoiai is distinguished from the creation of pronoiai in native Serbian territory.

Key words: pronoia, Serbia, property, agrarian, land, Zakonik, Dušan

It has been sixty years since George Ostrogorsky published his landmark work on the institution of pronoia. With the passage of time new sources have come to light and new ways of looking at the material have arisen, and thus the natural process in historical studies to re-evaluate a subject is ripe for application here. While I will be presenting a major re-evaluation of the Byzantine institution of pronoia elsewhere, in these pages I would like to focus on pronoia as it appeared in medieval Serbia.¹

By the fifteenth century the fiscal term pronoia appears here and there in most areas of the Balkans south of the Danube. What it means is another matter. It appears a couple of times in the Chronicle of the Tocco which deals with the situation in Epiros in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Further north, a contract from Kerkyra (Corfu) from 1472 mentions a “sir Stephen Phiomachos

pronoiarios” (σὲρ Στεφανῆ Φιωμάχων προνίαρτον) as one of the parties. While George Ostrogorsky saw the survival of the Byzantine institution of pronoia, Michael Lascaris thought that the term pronoiarios was employed to designate the holder of one of the baronies instituted since the occupation of Kerkýra by the Angevins of Naples in 1272, and that the reference is actually to a fief that remained in the hands of the Fiomaco family up through the seventeenth century.2

The term pronoia is found as well in fifteenth-century Venetian documents dealing with their possessions in the Aegean, specifically on Tinos and Mykonos. For example, in 1442 the rector of Tinos granted a man named Michael Aspergi a pronoia and other properties that had belonged to the widow Paraschi who was childless. In return Aspergi and his descendants were required to do homage to the rector and serve as crossbowmen aboard ship. David Jacoby points out that in these cases the grants did not involve fiscal revenues, but agricultural land and even houses exploited directly by the recipients for which they paid taxes. The men seem to be of a relatively modest social level, and the only difference between these men and the rest of the population was found in the service they owed. Jacoby hypothesized that the use of the term pronoia can be explained by the fact that with rare exception the recipients of these grants were Greeks.3

In most cases such as this, it would be misleading to say that the institution of pronoia had passed to Byzantium’s neighbors. Rather, it is more accurate to say that the term pronoia, signifying some kind of property grant from a governmental authority, had been appropriated. Indeed there appears to have been something almost magical about the word pronoia that it would be incorporated into the land tenure jargon of areas that in some cases had not known a Byzantine presence for centuries. The abundant Venetian sources dealing with the appearance of the term pronoia on the Adriatic coast and the islands of the Aegean tell us about how the Venetians accommodated the indigenous institutions they encountered in their conquests but nothing about any Byzantine institution. Consequently, any conclusions regarding how Byzantium’s neighbors appropriated the institution of pronoia can be no more reliable than our understanding of the native institutions of these peoples. George Ostrogorsky, who devoted a large chapter of his book on pronoia


to the study of how pronoia manifested itself in Zeta and northern Albania before and after Venetian occupation, found that the institution as imported into these areas confirmed his understanding of Byzantine pronoia. Indeed, if one posits that any difference between, say, Albanian “pronoia” and Byzantine pronoia is due to the influence of native institutions, any conception of Byzantine pronoia will be confirmed.

I tend to regard many of these appearances of “pronoia” outside of a Byzantine context as curiosities which in the end may tell us as little about the societies in which they appeared as they do about Byzantium. On the whole, the study of “pronoia” as it appears in these non-Byzantine areas is best left to specialists interested in those areas.

The one exception to this is Serbia, whose rulers first encountered pronoia in the later decades of the thirteenth century and, through the conquest of Byzantine territory, actively administered Byzantine pronoiai. But more than this, we have many documents that deal not only with the Serb administration of pronoiai within conquered Byzantine territory, but also with pronoiai as it eventually manifested itself in traditional Serbian territories. Thus, we are on much firmer ground when dealing with Serbian pronoia. It bore a certain resemblance to Byzantine pronoia, and the circumstances of Serbian contact with Byzantium and information provided by the documentary evidence permit us to make some generalizations about Serbian pronoia and do in fact illuminate some aspects of the Byzantine institution.

Another exception should be Bulgaria, which similarly conquered Byzantine territories in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and certainly must have encountered pronoiai in its administration of conquered Byzantine territories. Even though the scholarship occasionally states the existence of pronoia in Bulgaria as a fact, not a single Bulgarian source makes any mention of the institution of pronoia, nor does any other source refer to pronoia in Bulgaria. This is probably due to nothing more than the fact that we have so few extant documents dealing with the area of later medieval Bulgaria. The area where Bulgaria came into contact with Byzantium—Thrace—did not have the good fortune to be an area where the monasteries of Mt. Athos had substantial holdings. I would certainly bet on the existence, even on the extensive existence, of pronoiai in fourteenth-century Bulgaria, but I cannot prove it.

The appropriation of the institution of pronoia by the Serbs was a two-step process. First, Serbian rulers had to figure out what to do with Byzantine pronoiai

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4 Ostrogorsky, Féodalité, 222–57.
5 E. g., J. Sedlar, East Central Europe in the Middle Ages, 1000–1500, Seattle 1994, 73: “When Bulgaria reverted to Byzantine rule in 1018, its territories were organized on the Byzantine model into military fiefs called pronoias”; D. Nicolle and A. McBride, Hungary and the Fall of Eastern Europe, 1000–1568, London 1988, 24: the Second Bulgarian Empire “controlled large areas held by pronoia cavalry and other troops”; and J. Fine, The Early Medieval Balkans, Ann Arbor 1991, 303. On the other hand, the comprehensive work of I. Biliarski, Instituciite na srednovekovna Bălgarija: Vtoro bălgarsko carstvo, XII–XIV vek, Sofia 1998, does not mention pronoia at all.
in territories that they had conquered. And second, they began to create their own pronoiai. Thus, when the E. P. Naumov asked whether pronoia entered Serbia simply because the Serbs took over the administration of Byzantine lands after conquest or whether the institution of pronoia was borrowed as a response to Serbian needs, the answer is, of course, both.\textsuperscript{6} When the Serbs conquered areas in which there were Byzantine pronoiai, it was necessary for them to determine how pronoiai would fit into their fiscal, economic, agrarian, and military systems. And because Serbian rulers then began to create their own pronoiai, the institution was evidently of some utility.

Our knowledge of the Serbian appropriation of the institution of pronoia is derived almost exclusively from the documentary sources. These sources fall into three categories: those written in Greek, those written in Serbian, and a few written in medieval Italian in the cases where Venetian authorities had direct relations with Serbia. The Greek and Serbian documents can be further divided according to whether the documents deal with pronoiai granted by Byzantine rulers or Serbian rulers, though sometimes it is not easy to distinguish between the two. The Greek documents can be further subdivided according to whether they were issued by Byzantine or Serbian authorities.

\textbf{Stefan Milutin (1282–1321)}

The earliest reference to pronoia in a document issued in Serbia (or, for that matter, in a Slavic language) is the chrysobull issued by Stefan Uroš II Milutin for the monastery of St. George near Skopje from 1299/1300. While this document provides us with the earliest evidence of Serbian familiarity with pronoiai, it represents merely the terminus ante quem for the Serbian introduction to the Byzantine institution of pronoia. When did the Serbs first encounter pronoiai? Certainly Milutin would have encountered it with his early invasion of Byzantine territory in 1282. Whether it was known to the Serbs before this is unknown. While Serbia was a vassal state of Byzantium under Manuel I Komnenos, there does not appear to have been any attempt to introduce Byzantine fiscal or military practices into the area.\textsuperscript{7} This does not preclude the possibility that Serbian rulers were familiar with the pronoia, but there is no evidence for this. For Serbian military history the date of the introduction of the pronoia has some importance. As Stojan Novaković wrote long ago, if it could be established that the institution of pronoia entered Serbia during Milutin’s reign, then up to that time the army was composed

\textsuperscript{6} E. Naumov, K istorii vizantijskoj i serbskoj pronii, Vizantijskij Vremennik 34 (1973) 23.

\textsuperscript{7} On the whole, the nature of the Byzantine administration of the Balkans during the twelfth century is quite obscure, and, as a result, opinions of its tenor vary. For example, M. Angold, The Byzantine Empire, 1025–1204: A Political History, 2nd. ed., London and New York 1997, 134, wrote, “Byzantine rule in the Balkans was harsh. It had many of the characteristics of a military occupation.” On the other hand, P. Stephenson, Byzantium’s Balkan Frontier: A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900–1204, Cambridge, Eng. 2000, 133, emphasizes “the independence of action retained by the local Slav rulers, and the process of consultation with regional župans that was essential for decision-making.”
solely of landowners—a general popular army—with pronoia holders and then mercenaries entering the ranks only around the turn of the fourteenth century.  

Within Milutin’s chrysobull the passage of interest concerns a property (mesto, the equivalent of the Greek word topos) in a village called Rečice. This property was once held by a man named Dragota, who was evidently dead. Rečice had been granted to the monastery centuries earlier by the monastery’s founder, “Emperor Romanos,” probably Romanos III Argyros (1028–1034).

And Dragota’s plot of land [mesto] in Rečice is ascertained as imperial pronoia, and not Dragota’s baština, and my majesty gives it to the church. Further, [because] Manota, Dragota’s son-in-law, thought that he would lose his father-in-law’s dowry, he delivers himself to the church so that he might hold his father-in-law’s property and that he might work for the church according to the military law, [that is, on the condition] that his horse not be loaded and he not bear loads [for the church, since he is a soldier]. If Manota and his children and grandchildren withdraw from the church, let them be deprived of Dragota’s plot; let the church hold it, as my majesty ascertained it in old chrysobulls as imperial pronoia, and not Dragota’s baština (I Dragotino mesto u Rečicah’ obrèete se carska pronija, a ne baština Dragotina, i dade je kraljev’stvo mi cr’kvi. I togo radi Manota, zet’ Dragotin’, vidèv’ ere ot’sstupi ot’ njego t’stna prikija, i prèdade se cr’kvi da si dr’ži t’stninu i da rabota cr’kvi u vojnič’ski zakon’, da mu se kon’ ne tovari i tovara da ne vodi. Ako li Manota i egova dètca i unuèije otstupet’ ot’ cr’kve, da su lisi Dragotina mèsta; da si ga dr’ži cr’kvi, jakoèe ga i obrèete kraljev’stvo mi u starih’ hrísovulèh’ car’ske pronije, a ne Dragotinu baštini).

In medieval Serbia, baština was allodial or patrimonial property, and in this document it is distinguished from pronoia. If Dragota’s holding had been baština, he would have had more of a claim to it, and, presumably, Milutin would not have given it to the monastery.

Michael Lascaris proposed to identify Dragota as the resident of Melnik and Bulgarian governor of Serres named Dragota who, according to the Byzantine historian Akropolites, surrendered Serres to John III Vatatzes in 1246 and was rewarded with a purple cloak and gold. After this, Dragota and another resident of Melnik Nicholas Manglavites helped Vatatzes capture Melnik. Later, Dragota is seen commanding what Akropolites calls the “Melnikiotikon army.” As very weak support for this identification, Lascaris pointed out that Milutin’s chrysobull

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8 S. Novaković, Stara srpska vojska: istorijske skice iz dela “Narod i zemlja u staroj srpskoj državi,” Belgrade 1893, 74–76.
also mentions—among scores of names of people and properties—a “M’glavitsko Pole” (“Manglavites’ field”) and a field donated by a Kosta Ljutovoj (a Nicholas Litovoes was the Bulgarian governor of Melnik at the time it was captured by Vatatzes). He concluded that Manota, as the son-in-law of an important wealthy man, would not have accepted the patronage of a monastery unless he had good reasons, unknown to us.12

While the size of the field that Akropolit once held is not provided, and while the aforementioned property of Dragota was only a small part of the village of Rečice, a mere mesto, the document states that the monastery was granted fields of 85 pogoni that Kosta Ljutovoj had given to a church, as well as 15 zeugaria in the field of Manglavit (v Poli M’glavit’skom). Fifteen zeugaria was equal to some 1,500 modioi, and the 85 pogoni, if the pagon was equivalent to the zeugarion,13 amounted to something on the order of 8,500 modioi, properties of large if not enormous size. Further, we do not know what other properties any of these men, including Dragota, may have held, and, as Ostrogorsky pointed out, Manota might not have been Dragota’s only heir (and the similar case can be made for the other personages).14

However, the appearance of these other names may be mere coincidence. A family named Ljutovoj is attested in the area of Skopje from the 1160s through 1220, and members of the family held patrimonial property in the region.15 More significant, as Ostrogorsky also pointed out, is the fact that Dragota, according to Akropolites, was already dead in 1255. In fact he died while in rebellion against Byzantium. As Akropolites writes, “he did not judge befitting the things provided to him by the emperor John” Vatatzes.16 It is unlikely that his heirs would have been allowed to keep any land holdings he may have received from Byzantium. But even if they had, this would mean that Manota had been holding the dowry property for at least forty-five years. Thus, it seems unlikely that the Dragota of our document should be the Dragota of Akropolites.

While it is not possible to link Dragota with some historic personage, it is possible to narrow down the date at which Dragota received his pronoia. Milutin refers to Dragota’s holding as an “imperial pronoia,” and because Milutin never claimed to be an emperor, Dragota received his pronoia from a Byzantine em-

13 See SnM, I, 214 note 37. The size and method of computing the zeugarion has not yet been resolved: see The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium, ed. A. P. Kazhdan et al., New York 1991, s.v. “zeugarion” [hereafter, ODB]. Nevertheless, for our purposes, a Byzantine document from 1286 provides a useful figure; in one specific case, four zeugaria were equivalent to 400 modioi: Actes de Zographou, I. Actes grecs, ed. W. Regel et al., Vizantijskij Vremennik 13 (1907), suppl. 1 (repr. Amsterdam 1969), no. 10.
15 A. Soloviev, Srbi i vizantijsko pravo u Skoplju početkom XIII v., Glasnik Skopskog naučnog društva 15–16 (1936) 29–43, esp. 35.
peror, not a Serbian ruler. Since the area around Skopje was conquered by Milutin in 1282, and if this includes Rečice, or Rečica, today a suburb two miles southwest of the center of modern Tetovo in the Vardar valley, about 26 miles west of Skopje, we have a terminus ante quem. Further, the ruler of Bulgaria Konstantin Asen (1257–1277) issued a chrysobull for the monastery of St. George confirming its possessions, including the village of Rečice with all its contents, which mentions no other landholders in the village. Thus, the property in question was confiscated from the monastery and granted to Dragota after this document was issued. Unfortunately the chrysobull of Constantine Asen bears no date; V. Mošin placed it around 1258 and R. Grujić in the mid–1260s. This means that the holding was taken from the monastery and granted to Dragota sometime after 1258 (at the very earliest), most likely after 1270 when the area around Skopje was restored to Byzantine authority, and before 1282, when Milutin conquered the area around Skopje. In other words, the confiscation occurred during the reign of Michael VIII, probably after 1270.

It seems that Dragota was no longer alive in 1300 and his pronoia was in the hands of his son-in-law Manota. Ostrogorsky wrote that Manota, in order not to lose the pronoia of his father-in-law which the king had given to a monastery, put himself at the service of the church of St. George. Thus Manota entered the service of the church, and the act of Milutin notes clearly that he and his descendants should perform military service for the church. Nevertheless, by the formula characteristic of the act, Manota was free of the corvées imposed on men of servile condition.

Ostrogorsky argued that this document shows that a principle of succession for pronoiai existed in Serbia “to a full and unlimited degree.” He reasoned that since Dragota was no longer alive in 1299/1300 and his pronoia was in the hands of his son-in-law, the pronoia had been alienated by Dragota. However, it is by

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17 Primarily on the basis of this phrase “imperial pronoia,” Naumov, K istorii vizantijskoj i serbskoj pronii, 24–25, argued that Milutin’s chrysobull had nothing to do with the Byzantine institution of pronoia, and that “pronoia” in the act simply meant “property.” But Naumov’s argument falls apart because a Byzantine mathematical treatise of which Naumov was unaware uses the phrase προνοια βασιλική to denote grants held by soldiers: K. Vogel, ed., Ein byzantinisches Rechenbuch des frühen 14. Jahrhunderts, Vienna 1968, 48–51, no. 32.1.

18 For the location of Rečice (41.990°N, 20.944°E), see also V. Kravari, Villes et villages de Macédoine occidentale, Paris 1989, 215–16, map 2. The accepted dating for Milutin’s conquest of Skopje (1282) was challenged by L. Mavromatis, La fondation de l’empire serbe, Thessaloniki 1978, 35, who argued for a later date (the early 1290s). J. Fine, The Late Medieval Balkans, Ann Arbor 1987, 219, thought that Mavromatis had made the date of the conquest an open question, but since then scholars have generally ignored Mavromatis’ argument. See, e.g., Kravari, Villes et villages, 49; M. Živojinović, La frontière serbo-byzantine dans les premières décennies du XIV siècle, Βυζαντινο και Σερβικό κατά τον ΙΑ’ αιώνα, Athens 1996, 57; and ODB, s.v. “Skopje.”

19 SnM, I, 182, 191. The history of the area of Skopje during the 1250s and 1260s is poorly known: see SnM, I, 122–23.

20 The ruler of Bulgaria does refer to himself as tsar, which raises the possibility that “imperial pronoia” could mean a pronoia granted by a Bulgarian ruler, for which otherwise there is no evidence whatsoever.


22 Ostrogorsky, Féodalité, 190.
no means certain that Manota held the pronoeia legitimately. Indeed he received it in dowry when he married Dragota’s daughter, and he felt he had a claim to it. But Milutin, it would seem, disagreed. He gave Dragota’s pronoeia to a monastery. In order to maintain his hold of the property, Manota agreed to serve the monastery as a soldier. If there was a principle in play here, it was that a pronoeia remained the property of the state. The situation was irregular. Dragota held a pronoeia from a Byzantine emperor. The region in which the pronoeia lay was conquered by Serbia. No longer feeling any obligation toward the Byzantine emperor (if he ever had one), Dragota grouped the pronoeia with the rest of his property. The pronoeia became the dowry he gave his son-in-law. After Dragota’s death it was discovered that the property was not Dragota’s hereditary property and Milutin gave the property to a monastery.

All of this was in accord with the handling of pronoiae in Byzantium. What is not in accord with Byzantine practices is what Manota agreed to in order to keep possession of the property. “Delivering oneself to the church” is without precedent in Byzantium and reflects Serbian practices.

The “soldier’s law” to which the document refers is known only through this document. It was not an actual code of law, but the general set of rules—customary and juridical—under which soldiers lived. It pre-dates the Serbian appropriation of the institution of pronoia. This “soldier’s law” is again mentioned in Milutin’s chrysobull in a passage that immediately follows the passage dealing with Manota. We read, “My majesty [gives] Kalogorgije with his children and with their baština to the church, that they serve St. George according to the soldier’s law [vojnički zakon]” and that their horse not be loaded and they not bear loads.” Evidently, Kalogeorge—a Greek, based on his name—held hereditary property in the same village as Manota.

Yet a third case similar to that of Manota is mentioned later in the document: “And Hranca for his father-in-law’s property agrees with the church to be a church soldier according to the law of St. Symeon and St. Sava, and that his horse not be loaded and he not bear loads.” T. Taranovski pointed out the similarity to the western European commendatio whereby a man bound himself more or less voluntarily in service for life to another in return for protection and maintenance; one could add that the inclusion of a property element is reminiscent of the western European fief de reprise whereby a man agreed to convert his patrimonial holding into a fief for the mutual benefit of him and his lord.

Ostrogorsky wrote that Manota entered church service as a pronoia holder and that, after conveying himself and his baština to the monastery, Kalogeorge

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“doubtlessly joined the class of soldier-pronoiai” as well. These statements raise some questions about the status of Manota and his property. First, was Manota a pronoia holder prior to 1299? Ostrogorsky assumed he was, but the document says nothing about this. We read only that the property was an “imperial pronoia” and that Manota received it from his father-in-law Dragota. Because Manota was to serve the monastery as a soldier, he evidently was a soldier before 1299. Nevertheless, it does not appear that Manota considered the property a pronoia; if anything, it would seem that he considered it baština, and Milutin was arguing otherwise. Second, was Manota’s property a pronoia after it was granted to the monastery? And if so, who was its holder? If, as Ostrogorsky, wrote, Manota was a pronoia holder after he entered church service, then his property has to be considered his pronoia. The odd thing is that, according to this scenario, the granting authority of the pronoia would be the monastery. Yet this is how Ostrogorsky viewed the matter. By the same token, when Kalogeorge turned himself and his property over to the monastery, he likewise became a pronoia soldier of the monastery and his property became a pronoia. But one can raise a serious objection to whether either man was a pronoia holder under the monastery. In the last section of the document dealing with Rečice, we read, “and from now and through the centuries, no pronoia is to enter Rečice except St. George” (da ne ulèze in’ pronijar’ u Rečice razvè Sveti Georgije). The only way this statement can be literally true is if Manota and Kalogeorge (who “held” land in the village) were not considered pronoiai and if the church was considered the pronoiai of their properties. Further, at the very end of this last section, after assigning a monetary penalty for anyone who illegally demanded charges from the property of the monastery, we read, “The same goes for all the church villages in Vodno and in Nerezi, in which is church pronoia and not at all baština” (Takožde i po vsèh’ selèh’ cr’kvnih’ vo Vodnè i v’ Nerèzih’, ponježe cr’kvna pronija jest’, a ne nièija baština). The easiest way to make sense of this is to read the last phrase as “and not at all (someone else’s) baština.” In any event, the clause refers to “church pronoia.”

Is the document dealing with ecclesiastical/monastic pronoiai or ecclesiastical/monastic pronoiai? If it was the monastery that held the pronoiai, then the men, Manota and Kalogeorge, were simply part of the traditional Serbian practice of assigning men, including lesser nobles, to serve monasteries as soldiers. The Serbian innovation would be that a monastery could hold a pronoia. If Manota and Kalogeorge were the pronoiai, then the traditional Serbian practice of assigning military men to monasteries was modified to account for the introduction of

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26 Ostrogorsky, Fèodalité, 196.
29 This hypothesis would find some support if the post-Byzantine Serbian word prnjavor, meaning a “village belonging to a monastery,” is derived from pronoia, as Novaković, Stara srpska vojska, 74, and Ostrogorsky, Fèodalité, 211, assumed.
pronoia into Serbia. The men became pronoiars and the properties from which they derived their livelihood were their pronoiai. Either interpretation works as a Serbian adaptation of pronoia, and I cannot decide between the two.

This is the first Slavic document to contain either of the terms pronija or pronijar. Pronija obviously is derived from the Greek pronoia. As for pronijar, there are two possible etymologies: (i) Pronijar may be an abbreviated form of proniariji (a noun in the singular), which is derived directly from the Greek pronoarios. The earliest appearance of pronoarios in Greek is found in a letter of John Apokaukos, metropolitan of Naupaktos, from 1228, which of course pre-dates the first appearance of pronijar.30 For parallel derivations we have apoklisijar from the Greek apokrisarios and notar, derived either directly from the Latin notarius or via the Greek notarios. (ii) However, after the appearance of pronoarios in Apokaukos’ letter, the Greek term does not appear again in any source until the fifteenth century. Thus, it is possible that the origin of pronijar in Serbia is completely independent of the Greek pronoarios and instead was formed by adding the common Slavic agent-noun suffix -ar (pisar “writer,” globar “fine collector,” ulijar “beekeeper,” all attested in medieval Serbian) to pronija. The fact that the plural of pronijar in Serbian documents is usually pronijarije would tend to support the first possibility.

Around the same time as Milutin’s chrysobull for St. George a couple of Greek documents mentioning pronoia were issued that were later translated into Serbian. One is a Slavic translation of a lost Greek praktikon from 1300 for the possessions of the monastery of Hilandar in the theme of Thessaloniki. In one particular village—Gradac (or Gradec), the Slavic translation of the Greek Kastrion or Kastrin—the monastery held numerous paroikoi that had come “from the pronoiai” of six laymen, all Greeks. Because Gradac (today Kastri) is located in the lower Strymon valley near the Aegean, and because all of these men who earlier held pronoiai in Gradac without doubt had received their grants originally from a Byzantine emperor, this praktikon tells us little more than that Serbs had encountered Byzantine pronoia by 1300.

Of slightly more interest is a chrysobull of the Byzantine co-emperor Michael IX Palaiologos (1294/5–1320), issued sometime between April 1299 and the end of 1300, which confirmed King Milutin’s gift to Hilandar of the monastery of St. Niketas north of Skopje. Among the properties belonging to St. Niketas was “the pronoiaastic village called Banianis with all its rights.”31 This is the last

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30 A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, Ιωάννης Απόκαυκος και Νικήτας Χωνιάτης, Τεσσαροκονταετρία της καθηγεσίας Κ. Σ. Κόντου, Athens 1909, 379–82.

extant document in which a Byzantine emperor uses any form of the word *pronoia* (noun, adjective, verb, etc.) in its technical sense until the fifteenth century. The parallel chrysobull of the senior emperor, Andronikos II, which was probably issued at the same time, has not been preserved, but it does exist in a Slavic translation. While this Slavic translation bears the date May 1308, it was produced in the middle of the fourteenth century and contains a number of fabricated interpolations. Nevertheless, it too speaks of “the village of Banjane, a pronoia, with all its rights” (*selo Banjane pronija s’ vsemi pravinami jego*). As in the case of Manota and Kalogeorge, ambiguity frequently accompanies these documents that deal with pronoia.

The village of Banjane, about eight miles north-northwest of Skopje, came under Serbian control following Milutin’s conquest of the region of Skopje in 1282. We do not know why Banjane was called a “pronoiasch village.” If it was so called because it had recently been held by a pronoia holder, it would have been originally granted by Milutin after 1282, or more likely by a Byzantine emperor during one of three periods: before 1203, between ca.1218 and 1230 (by a despot of Epiros), or between 1246 and 1282 (by a Nicaean emperor or Michael VIII). If this village had indeed been granted as a pronoia by a Byzantine ruler, it would represent the northernmost limit of the Byzantine institution of pronoia. Nevertheless, there are other possibilities, among which is the possibility that, following Serbian practice, the village passed to the church as a pronoia.

**Stefan Dečanski (1321–1331)**

While it is certain that Dragota’s pronoia was not granted by a Serbian ruler, the next example of pronoia in a Serbian document is not as easy to characterize. In 1326 Milutin’s successor Stefan Dečanski granted the bishop of Prizren the village of Hoča “that pronoias held” (*sto držali pronijarije*). In addition, Dečanski confirmed the bishop’s possession of a *stasis* at Djurdjevište which Milutin had given him, with its peasants, “that they would be the church’s and that they serve the church, as it is their condition [zakon]. And let them be free of all ‘pronoiaric’ corvées as they were before [the donation]” (*A ot’ vseh’ rabot’ pronijarskyih da su svobodni kako su i ot’ ispr’va bili*).

Granting a religious foundation a village “that pronoias held” is reminiscent of a common phenomenon in Byzantium, though in Byzantium the passage would be phrased “that person N. held” or “that soldiers held.” The Serbs had

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32 SnM, I, 319, and see 317. A composite act, with falsified interpolations, of Milutin from around 1303 mentions Milutin’s earlier donation of St. Niketas and its properties, including the village of Banjane, to a dependency of Hilandar. Here Banjane is called simply a “village” (*selo*), not a pronoia: SnM, I, 313.137 (and see 297–99) = Novaković, Zakonski spomenici, 477 iii = Actes de Chilandar, II. Actes slaves, ed. B. Korablev, Vizantijskij Vremennik 19 (1915), suppl. 1, no. 16.13.

33 On this chronology, Kravari, Villes et villages, 161.

34 See Ostrogorsky, Féodalité, 191–92. Ostrogorsky misidentifies some of the relevant documents.


36 SnM, III, 270 x = Novaković, Zakonski spomenici, 640 x.
adopted Byzantine phraseology. Another example is found in Dušan’s chrysobull for the tower of Chrysea (near Hilendar on Mt. Athos) from January 1345. He gave the tower the village of Gajdarohor (mod. Aedonochori, west of the Strymon and north of the Aegean by a bit less than three miles) including land there “which Serbo held” (što je držal Sr’бо)\(^{37}\). Serbo was probably a pronoia holder. On the other hand, the reference to “‘pronoiaric’ corvées” in the second reference is more a reflection of a Serbian than Byzantine practice. In Serbia there was a much greater emphasis on corvées, whereas Byzantium was more monetized.\(^{38}\)

Hoča has been identified as modern Hoča Zagradska (42.175°N, 20.691°E), about four miles southwest of Prizren, and Djurdjevište is about thirty-two miles west-southwest of Skopje, about seven miles west of the Vardar River (41.893°N, 20.864°E).\(^{39}\) This area was conquered by Milutin in 1282–83, and so it had been outside of Byzantine control for more than forty years. Nevertheless, we cannot say whether these pronoia holders were Greeks or Serbs, or whether they, or even their fathers, had received their initial grant before or after Milutin’s conquest. Yet the fact that the peasants were specifically freed of “pronoiaric corvées” would indicate that there were still pronoia holders in the area of Djurdjevište.

In regard to terminology, this is the earliest appearance of the Slavic form *pronijarije*, the plural of *pronijar*, as well as the only appearance of the adjective *pronijarski*, formed simply by adding the Slavic adjectival suffix of possession –ski to *pronijar*.

**Stefan Dušan (1331–1355)**

With the conquests of Stefan Dušan the Serbs came into even greater contact with Byzantine pronoia. Generally, Dušan did little to inject Serbian practices into the Greek-speaking areas that he conquered and that he simply continued Byzantine administrative practices. Thus, when the sources mention pronoiai in areas taken by Dušan, it is often difficult to know whether these were grants created by Dušan or by Byzantine rulers. For example, Dušan’s 1345 act for the church of the Perivleptos at Ohrid permits “neither kephale nor sevastos nor pronoiai (ni kefalija, ni sevast’, ni pronijar’) entry into the villages and metochia of the church. All of the terms in the clause denoted functions and were borrowed from Byzantium. A *kephale* was normally the governor of a town, an island, or a province. While in Byzantium *sevastos* was generally an honorary title or epithet frequently used in conjunction with another courtly title (e.g., the *sevastos tzaousios* N.) and implied no function, in Serbian sources the situation was a bit different. The term *sevast* designated an official, evidently a high functionary, but it is unclear exactly what his functions were or whether the title could cover different types of officials. Milutin’s chrysobull for the monastery of St. George discussed


\(^{38}\) Ostrogorsky, Féodalité, 202.

above, as well as other sources, mentions a sevast' gradsky (“town sevastos”) who may well have been the governor of a town.40

Thus, Dušan’s act for the church of the Perivleptos forbids two types of government officials as well as pronoiai from entering church property. The association of government officials with pronoia holders in exemption clauses does have a parallel in Byzantium. A number of imperial documents from the Nicaean period list pronoia holders along with state officials as the people who should not both the property of a particular monastery. For example, in 1258 Michael VIII Palaiologos issued an order to safeguard the rights of the monastery of the Virgin Kechionismene near Miletos, a dependency of the monastery of St. John Theologos on Patmos. The document concludes with a passage that orders certain categories of people to keep the monastery’s property: “those serving successively as doukes [in this] region, apographeis, [reassessors,] and soldiers having pronoiai in this place, and even those of Miletos themselves, ought to keep the things belonging to such monastery without loss and unharmed.”41 The fact that the list includes “those of Miletos themselves”–which could certainly include any landholders–in addition to doukes, fiscal assessors (apographeis), and soldiers having pronoiai locally, suggests that it was not exclusively government officials who might trouble the monks, but anyone with some status. All of the people in the list were in a position to make unjust demands of the monastery. By the same token, this is probably why Dušan includes pronoiai with sevastoi and kephalai in the 1345 act.

Dušan acquired the town of Ohrid in 1334 by treaty with Byzantium. Evidently there were pronoiai in the area of Ohrid in 1345, but what we do not know is whether these pronoia holders were Greeks or Serbs, or whether they received their pronoia from a Byzantine or Serb ruler. Nevertheless, it does appear that Dušan granted pronoiai to Serbs in the Byzantine territories he conquered. In one specific case we read that when the Serbs invaded the area of Verrhoia around 1344, they took a metochion from the monastery of Prodromos tes Petras and “the Serbs gave this in a pronoiastic way to various persons” (τῶν Σέρβων καὶ τοῦτο διδόντων προνοιαστικῶ τρόπῳ πρὸς διάφορα πρόσωπα). When Byzantine control was restored over the area in 1356, the monks received the property back from the emperor.42


41 E. Vranouse, Βυζαντινά έγγραφα της μονής Πάτημος, Ι. Αυτοκρατορικά, Athens 1980, no. 25.17–18: τῶν κατὰ καιροῦς δουκ[.]κενούντων ἐν τῇ τῇ ἱσούτη χώρᾳ ἀπογρα[φέ]ων [τε καὶ ἐ]ξουσιαστῶν καὶ τῶν προνοιῶν ἐχόντων στρατιωτῶν ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τόπῳ, ἀλλὰ δὴ καὶ αὐτῶν τῶν Παλαιατάνων . . . We should understand dουκενούντων for the document’s misspelled dουκ[.]κενούντων. And for other documents with similar lists, see Vranouse, no. 23.7 (1214), and no. 26.20–22 (1258).

Here we have a case in which a Byzantine source claims that the Serbian government granted pronoiai in conquered territory. Should we accept this at face value? Even though the events described had taken place years earlier, monasteries had a long collective memory, especially when it served their purpose. The monks of Verrhoia, from whom the information was obtained, certainly knew whether their property was confiscated or not. The only questions are, Was the confiscated property granted to Serbs? and under what conditions was the property granted? Because the document notes that the monastery regained the property once the area again came under Byzantine control, it would seem that the property had been granted to Serbs. But it would be presumptuous to assume that the monks in Verrhoia or the judicial tribunal in Thessaloniki had knowledge of the terms under which the individual Serbs were granted this property or that they could distinguish between property granted as a Byzantine-style pronoia or property granted as a simple reward in full ownership. At most we can say that it appeared to the monks that some of the Serb conquerors had been granted the monastery’s property as pronoia grants.

The first clear evidence that Serbian rulers granted pronoiai in areas that were not under Byzantine control at any time during the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries is found in a chrysobull from 1346 for the monastery of St. Stefan in Banjska, southeast of Novi Pazar. Dušan granted two villages to the monastery: Kičiki with its possessions, “as pronoiaiars held them earlier” (kako jesu držali pr’vo pronijarije), as well as the village of Ulotino with all its associated properties, “as pronoiaiars held” (kako su pronijarije držali). While I do not know the location of the village of Kičiki, Ulotino is northwest of the town of Plav in Montenegro, near the Albanian border, about sixty-eight kilometers (by road) west of Peć. Because this area had not been under Byzantine authority since before the Latin Conquest of 1204, it is quite unlikely that the document is referring to men who received grants of pronoiai from a Byzantine emperor. The ethnicity of the pronoiars (Serb or Greek) is unknown as well as which Serbian ruler made the initial grants.

**Dušan’s Zakonik.** One of the most important sources for the history of medieval Serbia is the Zakonik, or Law Code, of Stefan Dušan. This collection of law contains three passages referring to pronoia, all of which date to the initial issuance of the code in 1349. Article 59, entitled “Concerning pronoia,” states that “no one is free to sell or buy a pronoia who does not have baština; from ‘pronoiaric’ land no one is free to place [it] under the church; if it is [so] placed, it is not valid” (O pronii: Proniju da nêst vol’ni nikto prodati ni kupiti, kto ne ima baština; ot pronijar’ske zemlje da nêst vol’ni nik’to podložiti; pod cr’kov’; akoli podloži da nêst tvr’d). The literal meaning of the first sentence of the passage is...
that someone would need to have *baština* before he could buy or sell a pronoia. In other words, someone who held patrimonial property and a pronoia was permitted to sell his pronoia and buy one, but someone who held no patrimonial property could not sell or buy a pronoia. As much as I am loath to rewrite sources, this interpretation simply will not do. Rather, when the first sentence is viewed in conjunction with the second and third sentences, it is relatively clear that the intent of the article, despite the poor wording of the first sentence, is to prevent the alienation of pronoiai through purchase, sale, and pious donation.\textsuperscript{46} *Baština* could be alienated or acquired privately; pronoia could not. This is in accord with the Byzantine treatment of pronoia at that time as well as Milutin’s act of 1299/1300 for the monastery of St. George.\textsuperscript{47}

As a way to make sense of the first sentence of the article, Aleksandar Solovjev suggested that *baština* should be interpreted as “patrimonial rights” over the property. If so, this would leave open the possibility that some pronoiai in Serbia were regarded as *baština*, that is, the holder enjoyed patrimonial rights over the grant. On the other hand, George Ostrogorsky preferred to see a firm distinction between pronoia and *baština*, and he noted only that this article does not forbid the hereditary transmission of pronoiai.\textsuperscript{48}

A creative solution to the problem was proposed by E. P. Naumov: in the Slavic text, reverse the first comma and first semi-colon. The article may then be translated, “no one is free to sell or buy a pronoia; he who does not have *baština* is not free to place [something] from ‘pronoiaic’ land under the church; if it is [so] placed, it is not valid.” The passage is no longer quite as awkward. In any event the meaning suggested by Ostrogorsky remains the same.\textsuperscript{49}

The second appearance of pronoia in the Zakonik appears in Article 68 entitled “On the law,” and it deals with the obligations on *meropsi*, the Serbian equivalent of paroiroi:

The law for *meropsi* in all lands: that they work two days in a week for the *pronijar*; and that they give him every year the imperial hyperpyron; and during mowing time, that they cut hay for him one day; and at grape-gathering time one day; and who [among the pronoia holders] does not have vineyards, let them [the *meropsi*] do other corvées for him one day; and he gets everything of what the *meropsi* accomplish, and nothing [else] is taken by

\textsuperscript{46} As George Ostrogorsky and other scholars have concluded: see Ostrogorsky, Féodalité, 198, with further references to the secondary literature.

\textsuperscript{47} In 1343 a man named Demetrios Calapija, who held a village “by God and by the mercy [po milosti] of the lord kralj” donated it to the Htetovo monastery: SnM, III, 298 (84). D. Angelov, Agrarnite otношения в северна и средна Македония през XIV век, Sofia 1958, 53, hypothesized that this man was the holder of a pronoia and not of *baština*, but if so, this would be a clear violation of article 59 of the Zakonik.

\textsuperscript{48} A. Solovjev, Zakonik cara Stefana Dušana 1349. i 1354. godine, Belgrade 1980, 223. Solovjev’s comment that follows this, “[W]e do not have documents about pronoiai from Dušan’s time,” is of course incorrect. Ostrogorsky, Féodalité, 199.

\textsuperscript{49} Naumov, K istorii vizantijskoj i serbskoj pronii, 28 note 27.
him against the law (O zakonu: Mërofom’ zakon’ po v’sei zemli; u nedeli da rabotaju dva d’ni pronijaru; i da mu daje u godišti per’peru carevu; i zama-nicom’ da mu kosi séna d’na jedin’; i vinograda d’n’ jedin’; a kto ne ima vinograda; a oni da mu rabotaju ine rabote d’n’ jedin’; i što urabota meroph’ tozi v’se da steži; a ino prez’ zakon’ ništo da mu se ne uzme).

Ostrogorsky assumed that “in all lands” meant every type of land as distinguished by its holder—church, noble, emperor, and pronoiar—and that pronijar was used in the article as a catch-all synonym for any landholder. From this Ostrogorsky concluded that there must have been a great expansion of pronoia in Serbia under Dušan for him to use pronijar to designate any landholder.\(^{50}\)

This is not necessarily so. “In all lands” need not mean “in every type of landholding arrangement.” In the Zakonik zemlja (“land”) is used in its concrete as well as its abstract sense. Thus, we read as well in another article, “All churches that are found in the land of my majesty [or, ‘my empire’ po zemli carstva mi]; my majesty frees of all corvées great and small.” And another article begins, “The mountains in the land of my majesty. …”\(^{51}\) Therefore, it is possible that “in all lands” means “in all the lands of my dominion,” and that the article is not concerned with every type of landholding, but exclusively with pronoia.

Further, the notion that pronijar could mean any landholder is unsupported by any other source. In many other articles of the Zakonik we find gospodar, the normal word used to designate the holder of property or the holder of paroikoi, which incorporates the meaning of “lord,” “master,” and “owner.”\(^{52}\) There was no reason for Dušan to use pronijar in this one article if he did not mean people who held pronoiai. In other Serbian documents pronijar appears far too rarely for it to be recognized as a synonym for landholder. Not even Ostrogorsky claimed that other appearances of the term had this broad sense.

I think it is quite possible that we are viewing in this article the integration of the Byzantine institution of pronoia into the medieval Serbian agrarian and fiscal system. The obligations of meropsi on the properties of the church and of the holders of baština were handled by customary rules. There was no need for Dušan to explain them. Rather, Dušan was applying to pronoia grants the customary rules that applied to baština. This was simple enough to do because, as Ostrogorsky wrote, even though pronoia differed from baština in principle, from an economic point of view the two were essentially the same.

As for baština, the Zakonik deals with only limited aspects of what was the main form of large-scale property ownership in Serbia. All of the regulations that mention baština are concerned with the legal status of baština or the relations between baština and the state. Thus, there are articles on the legal status of the baština of priests (art. 31 and 37) and of baština given to people by Dušan or by

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\(^{50}\) Zakonik, art. 68, ed. Radojičić, pp. 56, 108. Ostrogorsky, Féodalité, 200.

\(^{51}\) Zakonik, art. 26, ed. Radojičić, pp. 48, 96; and art. 81, pp. 58, 112. Similarly, art. 101, 118, 119, 132, and 156.

\(^{52}\) E. g., Zakonik, art. 22, 65, 77, 115, and 117.
prior rulers (art. 39, 40, and 134). Other articles address the hereditary transmis-
sion and alienation of baština (art. 41 and 174). Other articles confirm that ba-
ština was free of corvées and was not to be confiscated (art. 42 and 43), that
slaves were to be considered part of one’s baština (art. 44 and 46), that the admin-
istration of churches held as baština was a private matter (art. 45), and that
baština was to be distinguished from pronoia (art. 59). One article prohibits alter-
ing documents involving baština (art. 138). There is nothing here about the internal
management of one’s baština; this matter was left to the owner.

The third and last reference to pronoia in Dušan’s Zakonik is in an article
titled “On courtiers”: “If someone of a lord’s court who is a pronijarević does
evil, let [his] father’s companions punish him by jury; if he is a commoner, let him
face the boiling cauldron” (O dvoraněh: Dvorane vlastel’sci ako učini koje zlo ktoo
ot nih; ktoo bude proniarevik’; da ga oprave očina družina porotom’; akoli e sebr’;
da hvati u kot’l’). This article distinguishes pronijarevići—literally “sons of pro-
noiars”—from commoners (sebri), both of whom were to be found at the personal
court of a lord (evidently one of high status).53

Ostrogorsky thought that pronijarevići were the sons of pronoiai but that
they held no pronoiai, because if they held pronoiai, they would be called pro-
noiars.54 This is possible, and Solovjev suggested that they may have been the
younger sons of pronoiai, which might explain why they had no pronoiai of their
own. In Byzantine sources the issue never arises because primogeniture was not
practiced and because of the existence of pronoiai held jointly by more than one
person. Further, Solovjev speculated that such a pronijarević would seek his live-
lihood in the service of some powerful lord, probably as a soldier, distinguish
himself in battle, and then receive his own pronoia (from whom Solovjev does not
say). According to Solovjev, the purpose of the article was to establish the social
level of those who would judge him.

This is all quite reasonable, but the evidence is only circumstantial. Could
not pronijarevići have been pronoiai who had inherited their pronoiai from their
fathers, rather than receiving them from an initial grant from the Serbian ruler?
But all of this begs the more obvious question: are we to think that the only mem-
bers of a lord’s private court were the sons of pronoiai and commoners? Because
this obviously was not the case, the point of the article, as Solovjev noted, was to
establish the social position of pronijarevići.55

During Dušan’s reign there was a presence of pronoia in the area of Stru-
mica, and nothing better illustrates the difficulty in dealing with medieval Serbian
documents than the two passages referring to pronoia found in the two versions of
a “revised”—or simply falsified—chrysobull of Stefan Dušan which confirms Stefan
Hrelja’s donation of properties in that area to the monastery of Hilandar. In the

53 Zakonik, art. 106, ed. Radojičić, pp. 63, 119. A. A. Majkov, O zemel’noj sobstvennosti v
drevnej Serbii, Čtenija v Imperatorskom obščestve istorii i drevnosti rossijskih (1860), kniga 1, p. 29.
54 Ostrogorsky, Őst-)alitâ, 209–10, quoting Taranovski, Istoria srpskog prava, I, 38.
55 Solovjev, Zakonik cara Stefana Dušana, 263.
first passage, among the properties listed from the area of Strumica, one version mentions “the village of Sekirnik and a parcel of land that Laskar Kotanic held” (Selo Sekir’nik i komat’ zemlje što jest’ držal’ Laskar’ Kotanic’), which is followed immediately by “the village of Štuka and a parcel of land that the Greek pronoiairs Tutko Osan, Laskar Siderofaj held” (Selište Štuka i komat’ zemlje što su držali pronijarije grč’sci Tut’ko Osan, Laskar’ Siderofai). The other version of the chrysobull is similar: “The village of Sekirkirnik and land that Laskar Kotanic held. And land that the Greek pronoiairs Tutko Osan, Laskar Siderofaj held” (Selo Sekirnyk’ i zemlju što je držal’ Laskar’ Kotanic’. I zemlju što su držali pronijarije grč’sci Tutko Asan’, Laskar’ Siderofai).56

The second passage found in the chrysobull which mentions pronoia appears in the description of a property called Kunarani. One of the versions contains the phrase “by the road to the pronoiair’s pear tree” (putem’ na pronijarevo krušiše). The published edition of the second version omits this part of the document.57

There are a number of reasons to doubt the authenticity of this act. The month and world-year of issuance (“May 6844,” corresponding to May 1336), found in both versions of the chrysobull, do not agree with the indiction year (“11”) as found in both versions of the chrysobull (May 6844 is indiction 7). Further, sometime before Hrelja’s death (in December 1342 or 1343) an unknown Byzantine emperor (generally considered Andronikos III Palaiologos, but possibly John VI Kantakouzenos) issued a chrysobull confirming Hrelja’s donations to Hilandar.58 This act omits any reference to the properties of Laskar Kotanic, Tutko Osan, and Laskar Siderofaj, or to the property called Kunarani. Later, between around 1364 and 1376, the monasteries of Hilandar and Panteleemmon were embroiled in a pair of disputes over two sets of properties: the village of Breznica, once held by the Koteanitzes family, and the properties that once were held by Tutko Osan and Laskar Siderofaj. Thus, we have a discrepancy between two acts (the Byzantine chrysobull confirming the donation and Dušan’s chrysobull) and a motive for the discrepancy (a later property conflict between two monasteries).

Thus, it is quite possible that the two versions of Dušan’s chrysobull were produced during the dispute between Hilandar and Panteleemon, that is, between around 1364 and 1376. As for the lost, original act of Dušan that confirmed Hrelja’s donation, while opinions vary, the true chrysobull, upon which the two versions were based, was probably issued in 1343.59

56 Novaković, Zakonski spomenici, 400 vii, 401 viii. Actes de Chilandar, II. Actes slaves, no. 27.54–56. The printed editions of both versions place commas between “Tutko” and “Osan,” and between “Laskar” and “Siderofaj,” implying four men. However, other documents (see below) show that the passage is dealing only with two men. Cf. the treatment of the document in Ostrogorsky, Féodalité, 204–05, repeated in Ostrogorsky, Étienne Dušan et la noblesse serbe dans la lutte contre Byzance, Byzantion 22 (1952) 157–58.
57 Actes de Chilandar, II. Actes slaves, no. 27.67–68.
58 Chilandar, ed. Petit, no. 131.
Another possibility has been offered by Mirjana Živojinović who treats the information found within the two versions of the chrysobull more sympathetically and presents a clever interpretation. She argued that the reason that the Byzantine chrysobull omitted all mention of the lands of the two Greek pronoia holders was because the Byzantine emperor chose not to recognize that this area had been lost to the Serbs.60

The pronoiars Laskar Siderofaj and Tutko Osan. Whether or not we should regard the two versions of the chrysobull of Dušan as reliable recreations of a lost act or as falsifications serving the interests of the monks of Hilandar, we read of Laskar Siderofaj and Tutko Osan in two other documents. In a Slavic act from 1375/6, two bishops, on the order of Constantine Dragas, decided, probably on the basis of Dušan’s chrysobull, that “the land of Laskar Siderofag and of Tutko” (zemli Laskara Siderofaga i Tutkově) belonged to Hilandar. The document specifies that “neither in Greek days” nor in the time of Emperor Dušan was “the land of Laskar Siderofag or of Tutko” connected with the villages of Makrijevo or Mokrani (which belonged to the monastery of Panteleemon), and that Hilandar in fact had received these properties as a gift from Hrelja.61 In the other act, from 1376/7, the despot John Dragas confirmed Panteleemon’s possession of several properties. Among them was the village of Makrijevo, with everything it contained, including “the land of Tutko and the land of Siderofaj” (i zemljу Tutkove i zemljу Siderofajeve).62

It is quite odd that, a year after the bishops decided in Hilandar’s favor, the despot John (Constantine Dragas’ brother) confirmed Panteleemon’s possession of these properties. Perhaps the irregularities of Dušan’s chrysobull were discovered. In any event, we observe that the two versions of Dušan’s chrysobull alone claim that Osan and Siderofaj were Greeks and pronoia holders. That the pair were Greek is quite plausible. Certainly “Laskar” is the Greek surname “Laskaris,” while “Siderofag” or “Siderofaj” evidently corresponds to the unattested Greek “Siderophagos/-phagas” (Σιδηροφάγος/-φαγάς, “iron eater”). The two Slavic forms reflect respectively the written form and the pronunciation of the name. Osan/Asan appears to be the Byzantine family name Asen/Asan/Asanes. On the other hand, Tutko is certainly not Greek; it seems to be Slavic though I have not


62 Novaković, Zakonski spomenici, 511 iii, and see Actes de Saint-Pantéléémôn, ed. P. Lemerle et al., Paris 1982, actes serbes, no. 7. Only the 1376/7 act indicates that each of the two held distinct property. From the two versions of the chrysobull of Dušan and the 1375/6 act, one might think that Tutko and Siderofaj held this part of their pronoia jointly. In Byzantium it was rather common for two men to hold a share a pronoia, but, aside from the case of Tutko and Siderofaj, there is no evidence of this phenomenon in Serbia. On all these documents dealing with Hilandar’s property near Strumica, see M. Živojinović, Strumički metoh Hilandara, ZRVI 45 (2008) 205–21.
encountered it in other medieval Balkan sources. If the two were pronoia holders, they may have held their pronoia a long time earlier.63

However, given that only a single questionable act claims that Laskar Siderofaj and Tutko Osan really were pronoia holders raises the question of whether the two really were pronoia holders. The documents do make errors regarding the earlier status of properties. A notable example of this, and one that ostensibly involves a pronoia, is found in an act from 1369 of the despot John Uglješa. At that time the bishop of Hierissos and the monastery of Zographou were quarreling over a property in Hierissos “which the soldier called Saravares held in his pronoia” (ἡν ἑχεν εἰς πρόνοιαν αὐτῶ καὶ στρατιώτης Σαράβαρης ἐπικεκλημένος).64 The story behind the dispute went back to the 1310s when, according to a Byzantine act from 1320, in exchange for a property turned over to the fisc, Zographou had received a property in Hierissos “which was taken away from Saravares” (ἡτὶς ἀπεσφάσθη ἀπὸ τοῦ Σαράβαρη). A few years later another document retells the story, explaining that the fiscal officials located a property near Hierissos “which was from the kellion found inside the Holy Mountain called tou Saravari.” Evidently the monastery of Saravari had relinquished control over this property—it is called exaleimmatike ge—for the officials state that, before they transferred it to Zographou, it was being worked by the monks of Esphigmenou and the inhabitants of Hierissos. Thus, a property that once belonged to a small monastery erroneously was transformed into a part of a soldier’s pronoia.65

Nevertheless, if Siderofaj and Tutko were pronoia holders, they had received their pronoiai most likely during the reign of Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282–1328), since the area of Strumica was in Serb hands by 1334 if not earlier. The location of the properties of Tutko and Siderofaj is problematic. Both versions of Dušan’s chrysobull list the property after mentioning the village of Sekirnik, on the north bank of the Strumica river about eight miles east of the town of Strumica. One version indicates that their property was either in or quite near

63 The name Siderophas (Σιδηρόφας) is attested: E. Trapp et al., Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit, Vienna 1976ff., CD-ROM version 2001, no. 20817. Someone named “Sidrofaj,” certainly the same name, once held a property in the village of Bogomila, about 17 miles north-northwest of Prilep; SnM, IV, 120 (53), 145 (16), 181 (33), and cf. 85 (20), and on the location of the village, Kravari, Villes et villages, 240, map 5. The closest parallel form I can find to Tutko is “Tutic,” the surname of a monk known from an inscription in Prizren from around 1332: Lj. Stojanović, Stari srpski zapisi i natpisi, I, Belgrade 1902, repr. 1982, no. 60.


65 Zographou, no. 17.80–84 (1320), and no. 18.11–14 (issued sometime after May 1325): ἥτις ἑν {τοῦ} ἀπὸ τοῦ {ἐντός τοῦ} κελλίου τοῦ εὑρισκομένου ἐντός τοῦ ἅγιου ὅρους, τοῦ Σαράβαρι λεγομένην. To make better sense of the clause, the words found in the printed text which I have bracketed should be deleted. On this monastery, see Th. Papazotos, Η μονή του Σαράβαρη στο Άγιον Όρος, Κληρονομία 12 (1980) 89–90. Also see Actes de Lavra I–IV, ed. P. Lemerle at al., Paris 1970–82, II, no. 109.350 (1321), for a reference to a vineyard πληθυντὸν τοῦ Σαράβαρι at Drymosytra. And see M. Bartusis, The Late Byzantine Army: Arms and Society, 1204–1453, Philadelphia 1992, 376–77.
Štuka, a village today about two miles north of Sekirnik (see Figure 1). The other version does not mention Štuka.

The act of the two bishops from 1375/6, which includes the assertion that their land was never part of the villages of Makrijevo or Mokrani, both about five miles southwest of Sekirnik, and south of the Strumica river, indicates their property bordered on these villages. If these references are all accurate, then Siderofaj and Tutko held property bordering on both the village of Štuka and the adjacent villages of Makrijevo and Mokrani. Even though the modern village of Štuka is over six miles from the other two modern villages, this is not impossible. The territory of each village could easily have extended to a point at or close to the Strumica. The property of Siderofaj and Tutko probably lay close to the Strumica.

**Laskar Kotanic.** The reference to Laskar Kotanic in the two versions of Dušan’s chrysobull is connected to a dispute between the monks of Hilandar and Panteleemon over a village called Breznica. Sometime in the early 1360s the monk Makarios Laskaris Koteanitzes (his first name, before he became a monk, is unknown) donated this property to Panteleemon. The monks of Hilandar challenged this donation, arguing that it had been theirs through chrysobull, and in 1370 the council (Protaton) of Mt. Athos, at the order of the Serbian despot John Uglješa, issued a ruling in a Greek act that ordered Panteleemon to return the village to Hilandar (Chilandar, ed. Petit, no. 153). To support their claim they evi-
dently produced the falsified chrysobull of Dušan, as well as a Greek chrysobull dated 1293, in which Leo Koteanitzes was granted Preasnitza (i.e., Breznica) by Andronikos II Palaiologos. The extant version of the latter document is either a poorly-crafted copy of an original chrysobull or a forgery. In 1371 a Greek act (see below) was issued by a judge-general named Michael Skoules, who, on the order of John Uglješa, established the boundaries of Breznica for the benefit of Hilandar.

Three years later (1374), in a Greek act, Constantine Laskaris Palaiologos, who inherited the village of Breznica from his mother, notes that the dispute over Breznica had been going on for ten years, beginning during the time of his father. He writes that he appealed the decision of 1370 to the patriarch and in the end succeeded in proving that he (and his father) had every right to donate Breznica to Pantelelemon. The document includes the signatures of Constantine’s two brothers, Leo Laskaris Koteanitzes and (simply) George.

Ostrogorsky thought that the Kotanic (that is, Koteanitzes) in the falsified chrysobull of Dušan was a pronoia holder, but there is little evidence to support this view. The family was Greek, and they held property in the plain of Strumica. Evidently they held such property before the Serb conquest of the area around 1330, and they were not displaced by these events. If the content of the questionable chrysobull of Andronikos II from 1293 is true, the family held Breznica as patrimony. But because we do not know this, the manner in which they held the property is ambiguous.

The pronoia’s pear tree. The second reference to pronoia in the questionable chrysobull of Dušan involves the property description of Kunarani and the mention of “the pronoia’s pear tree.” According to Sima Ćirković, this property description is based on a genuine prostagma of Stefan Dušan, issued sometime between 1349 and 1353, which confirmed Hilandar’s possession of Kunarani, located east of Strumica. In this document, one of the property’s borders runs, at one point, “to the [or ‘a’] pronoia’s pear tree” (na pronijarêvo krušije).

The 1371 act of the judge-general Michael Skoules which describes the boundaries of Breznica also refers to a pronoia’s pear tree. One of the borders ran “toward the south to the pronoiarikos pear tree, at which there is a stone” (προς μεσμηβρίαν εἰς τὴν προνοιαρικήν ἀπιδέαν, ἐν ην καὶ λίθοις). This is the only

66 Chilandar, ed. Živojinović, 1, no. 12 = Chilandar, ed. Petit, no. 11. Dölger, Regesten, no. 2155, considered it a false act, but the recent editors have concluded tentatively that the document is a medieval facsimile. The Koteanitzes family later donated this property to a monastery, and this would explain why someone might fabricate a document that allowed Koteanitzes to alienate the property. For the earlier history of the Koteanitzes family, see Lj. Maksimović, Kotanitik Tornik, ZRV 29/30 (1991) 183–91.


69 V. Mošin and A. Sovre, Supplementa ad acta graeca Chilandarii, Ljubljana 1948, no. 8.53. For the correction to the reading of Skoules’ name, see Živojinović, Le conflit entre Chilandar et Saint-Pantéléémon, 241 note 16.
appearance of the adjective pronoiarikos (προνοιαρικός). It clearly derives from the Serbian pronijarevo. The translator rendered the possessive adjectival suffix -evo as the Greek adjectival suffix -ikos, and was familiar enough with Greek to restore the omicron in pronoia that the Serbian pronija drops.

Although somewhat uncommon, it is not unheard of for fruit trees to denote property boundaries. A “pronoiar’s pear tree” would be, obviously enough, a pear held or once held by a pronoia holder. Because many of the toponyms in the documents describing Kunarani (Dušan’s prostagma of 1349–53, and the questionable chrysobull of Dušan) and Breznica (Skoules’ document from 1371) are the same, it seems certain that the two properties shared a common border, on which there was a “pronoiar’s pear tree.” It is impossible to say where this tree was located. Because the course of the Strumica and its ancillary streams have changed since the Middle Ages due to canalization and other natural alterations, it is quite difficult to reconcile the toponyms in the property descriptions with modern toponyms found in the area. I suspect that some of the toponyms have moved. Based on my examination of the relevant document, my guess is that the pear tree was somewhere between Štuka and Sekirnik. Whether the tree was connected to the pronoias Siderofaj and Tutko, or perhaps even to Laskaris Kotanic, is unknown. In the end all these documents tell us quite little aside from the fact that pronoiai, probably granted by a Byzantine emperor, existed in the area of Strumica.

Thessaly and Epiros after Dušan’s death

After Dušan’s death in 1355 his empire fragmented. Relatives, governors, and military leaders took control over the various provinces of his territory. Here and there the documents make mention of pronoia. In the fourteenth century Thessaly was under direct Byzantine authority for a relatively short time, from 1335 to 1348 when, after initial resistance, it submitted as a whole to Stefan Dušan in 1348. Dušan’s half-brother Symeon Uroš was appointed despot and governed Thessaly (along with Epiros) until Dušan’s death. In the confusion that followed Symeon was forced to abandon Thessaly. Nevertheless, he proclaimed himself emperor in 1356, and after the death of the despot Nikephoros II of Epiros in 1358 or 1359, he became the independent ruler of Thessaly and Epiros.

Two documents issued by Symeon refer to pronoia. The first is a Greek chrysobull, issued in 1359, for the monastery of St. George in Zavlantia. The act

70 E. g., in Lavra, II, no. 90.214–16, a “great pear tree” forms a boundary.

71 S. Ćirković’s diligent attempt to locate the toponyms in the description of Kunarani (Ćirković, Hreljin poklon, 110 and see his map), further elaborated by Živojinović, Le conflit entre Chilandar et Saint-Pantéléémon, map on page 239), points to an enormous property of more than 150 square miles (more than 400 km²). For comparison, such a property would be larger than the entire peninsula of Mt. Athos. Even though much of this land was mountainous pasturage, to me the scale of such a holding seems unlikely.

72 We may note that the toponym Krušica (from kruš, the root for “pear”) exists on modern maps at a place to the north and adjacent to the village of Sekirnik. See the map: Vojnogeografski institut, Belgrade, 1:50,000, sheet 184.2 “Strumica” (1955).
confirmed the monastery’s possession of and rights over a number of properties. One was the *metochion* of St. George in a place called Kotzekovo with its “men, vineyards, fields, and watermills, as well as the share of the deceased Eudokia […] around Voxista, which Vodeses held for his *oikonomia*” (ἐπερ καταίχεν ὁ Βοδέσης εἰς οἰκονομίαν αὐτοῦ).\(^73\)

In Greek sources from the later thirteenth century through the fourteenth century, *oikonomia* was the technical term for a pronoia. *Pronoia* continued to be used in common parlance during this period, but it embraced a sense much larger sense than *oikonomia*, denoting any grant that originated from an imperial benefaction. Oddly enough, there is no evidence that the term *oikonomia* in its fiscal sense was ever imported by any of Byzantium’s neighbors including Serbia. This is yet another indication that most of Byzantium’s neighbors who began to use the term *pronoia* were not in fact appropriating the Byzantine institution of pronoia at all. Rather, they appear to have appropriated the term *pronoia* to designate any grant of property or privileges from the government with only a vague connection with the Byzantine institution.

Returning to the 1359 chrysobull, it is not clear from the syntax whether Vodeses held the entire complex or merely the “share” (*meridion*, i.e., the *stasis*) of the deceased Eudokia. The dependency of St. George is again listed as a possession of the Zavlantia monastery in a chrysobull from 1366 of the same ruler. Here it is simply “St. George near Kotzekovo.”\(^74\) Vodeses appears to have been a pronoia holder, but nothing can be said about when or from whom he received his oikonomia, whether from a Byzantine emperor, from Dušan, from Symeon himself, or even from Nikephoros II. Even his ethnicity is unknown.

The other document of Symeon Uroš is of much greater interest because it deals with the possibility of someone granting a pronoia who was not a ruler in his own right. In January 1361 Symeon issued a chrysobull on behalf of “the much-beloved, most tender father and godfather of my majesty [πατὴρ καὶ σύντεκνος τῆς βασιλείας μου], megas konostaulos kyr John Tzaphas Orsini Doukas.” In the document Symeon reports that a fire in Arta had destroyed all of the records of the extensive properties that Tzaphas had received from Stefan Dušan. At Tzaphas’ request, Symeon now confirmed his possession of these properties with complete tax exemption and the right of him and his heirs to alienate them.\(^75\)

D. M. Nicol has pointed out the problems with this document, for which no manuscript is any longer extant. Symeon refers to his document as a “*chrysovoullon prostagma*,” an incorrect use of diplomatic terminology. Many of the properties mentioned were not under Symeon’s authority at this time, including the island of Leukas, held by a Venetian. Many of the places mentioned, such as

\(^73\) Solovjev–Mošin, Grčke povelje, no. 31.42–46.
\(^74\) Solovjev–Mošin, Grčke povelje, no. 34.77–79.
\(^75\) Solovjev–Mošin, Grčke povelje, no. 32.4, and repeated almost identically no. 32.47–48,77.

Igoumenitsa, are here mentioned for the first time in any historical source. Nicol concluded that this document granting a suspiciously large assemblage of properties to Tzaphas was created at a later time “to support the claims or the vanity of latter-day members of the Italian family of the Orsini.”

With these caveats in mind, we turn to the section of the document of interest to us. Within a long list of properties is “Phiatza, as he gave it to his nephew kyr John Tzaphas Orsini by means of pronoia” (τὴν Φιάτζαν καθὼς δέδωκεν αὐτὴν τῷ ἀνεψιῷ αὐτοῦ κυρίῳ Ἰωάννῃ τῷ Τζάφα Ούρσινῳ διὰ προνοίας).

In their edition, A. Solovjev and V. Mošin, along with G. Soulis, identified the holder of Phiatza, “John Tzaphas Orsini” with the beneficiary of the document, the megas konostaulos John Tzaphas Orsini Doukas. Solovjev and Mošin suggested that the pronoia was conferred by Dušan, while Soulis implied it was granted by Symeon. If Solovjev and Mošin or Soulis are correct, then the beneficiary of Symeon’s chrysobull, John Orsini Tzaphas Doukas, was not only the godfather of Symeon, but the nephew of Dušan or Symeon.

On the other hand, G. Ostrogorsky wrote that the passages should be interpreted such that the megas konostaulos John Tzaphas Orsini Doukas granted his nephew John Tzaphas Orsini a property as a pronoia. Thus, he implies, John Tzaphas Orsini Doukas and John Tzaphas Orsini were two different people. This is probably correct because (a) three times in the document the megas konostaulos is referred to as John Tzaphas Orsini Doukas, while in this one passage (lines 41–42), “Doukas” is omitted, and (b) nothing in the passages suggests that the implied antecedent of δέδωκεν is Dušan or Symeon; the immediate verb prior to δέδωκεν in the chrysobull is κατέχει (line 25), which clearly refers to the megas konostaulos Tzaphas. (However, since the megas konostaulos Tzaphas was evidently descended from a brother of John II Orsini, and since Symeon was married to Thomais, John II Orsini’s daughter, there was a familial relationship between Symeon and the megas konostaulos.) Yet, Ostrogorsky’s interpretation creates an otherwise unattested situation: a pronoia granted by someone other than a ruler. He concluded that we should not try to generalize from this case, and, in any event, the megas konostaulos Tzaphas was a Latin anyway. Indeed, Tzaphas may have had his own unique understanding of pronoia. In the end, this chrysobull tells us little about either the Byzantine or the Serbian pronoia.

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77 Solovjev–Mošin, Grčke povelje, no. 32.41–42.

78 Solovjev–Mošin, Grčke povelje, pp. 486, 525. G. Soulis, The Serbs and Byzantium during the Reign of Tsar Stephen Dušan (1331–1355) and His Successors, Washington 1984, 244 note 15. Soulis also states that Symeon granted Tzaphas the title of megas konostaulos and, through this chrysobull, increased Tzaphas’ properties (pp. 122, 244 note 15); however, nothing that I see in the chrysobull allows these observations.

79 Ostrogorsky, Féodalité, 208–10.
A few years after the issuance of this chrysobull, Symeon appointed his son-in-law, the Serbian despot Thomas Preljubović, as governor of Ioannina. Preljubović ruled Ioannina and northern Epiros from 1366/7 until his death in 1384. The sole source for his reign is the anonymous Chronicle of Ioannina, written around 1440, which makes two vague references to pronoia in Ioannina, both in connection to what the mid-fifteenth century chronicler regarded as Thomas’ misrule. The chronicle first notes his imposition of corvées (angareiai) and taxes: “about the wine, the grain and angareiai and burdens and taxes the whole time, and other kinds of sufferings, that is, mitata and pronoiai and monopolies, at one time on wine and grain, at another on meat, and then on cheese, always on fish and fruits, and sometimes for himself and sometimes for his archons.”

The association of mitata, pronoiai, and monopolia, is puzzling. Mitata and monopolies were related: the former were various rights of requisition of food and supplies in kind, and the latter, as they imply, were franchises granting the right to control the sale of commodities. It would be difficult to create any link between these and pronoiai except to say that they were all privileges that Thomas either created for himself or granted to certain of his favorites.

The chronicle describes further depredations of Thomas from 1380/1: “And as many of the paroikoi from the church who were left as a result of his misdeeds, while he cast them from the pronoia of the Serbs, he did not permit them in the church, but held them for himself” (Καὶ ὁσοὶ τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας πάροικοι ἀπὸ τὴν κακοπραγίαν αὐτοῦ ἔναπελεύφησαν ἄνθρωποι, ἐξεβάλε μὲν αὐτοὺς ἀπὸ τῆς προνοιας τῶν Σερβῶν, οὐκ έίσαι δὲ αὐτοὺς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, ἀλλὰ δι’ ἐαυτοῦ αὐτοὺς ἐπεκράτει). At least this passage links “pronoia” to paroikoi and property: paroikoi were confiscated from the church and granted to Serbs as “pronoiai,” and later taken from the Serbs. But the nature of this “pronoia” cannot be determined.

**John Uglješa (1366–1371)**

Meanwhile the Serbian despot John Uglješa ruled a substantial portion of Byzantine Macedonia from his base at Serres. In April 1369 he gave to the monastery of Koutloumousiou a village on the plain of Mavrovo called Neochorion (today Novo Selo, 12 miles east of Strumica and about four miles west of the Bulgarian border: see Figure 1). The village was granted “unto Theodor’ Oduevik’ pri carstvé mi, i pri Kalavari proniari Što su držali iljudi ili města ili vokie s’ vsem . . .” The syntax of the passage is ambiguous and there are two ways to translate it:

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Neither translation is satisfactory. In the first rendering there is nothing for the plural “they” to refer to, only Odujević. The second rendering takes care of this problem; “they held” (su držali) refers to the pronoiars. And it creates a nice parallel between each “with everything” (s’ vsem’). But this second rendering has its own problems. In all of the other documents which use the Slavic pronijar in the plural, the plural of pronijar is pronijarije, not proniari. In its inflection proniari would seem to be connected to Kalavari, and that takes us back to the first rendering.

Both renderings assume that there is a parallel between pri carstvě mi and pri Kalavari so that the preposition pri in pri carstvě mi and in pri Kalavari should mean the same thing. Pri carstvě mi is easily translated as “under my empire,” but only in the sense of “during the time of my empire.” This is seen in another document (discussed below) in which Stefan Lazarević gave a village to his mother “which Mladen Pisin held in pronoia under pri my lord and father the holy prince.” What could “in the time of Kalavar” mean? Alternatively, pri Kalavari could mean “near Kalavari.” Was he perhaps the commander of a group of pronoia soldiers? If so, that would take us back to the second rendering.

An attempt to identify this Kalavar meets with some success. A Serbian chrysobull of Stefan Dušan from 1347 mentions a Kalavar in his service, and a man named Kalavaris donated the river of Ploumiska to Lavra in a Greek act dated, weakly, to 1350/1. The men in these two documents are referring either to the Kalavar in the 1369 act or to an immediate ancestor. But such an identification does not do much to clarify the meaning of Uglješa’s act.

In the end, we can say only that Odujević may have been a pronoia holder, and that his land as well as land held either by Kalavar in pronoia or by other pronoia holders who were connected somehow to Kalavar were granted to Koutloumousiou. Whether the pronoia grant or grants referred to were granted initially by a Serbian or Byzantine ruler is unknown.

Another act of Uglješa, this one from May 1369, also mentions pronoia. Uglješa confirmed Caesar Vojihna’s gift of property near Drama to the church of the Archangels at Gabrovo near Strumica (see Figure 1). Vojihna, Uglješa’s father-in-law, was the semi-independent governor of the town of Drama in the later 1350s. The document includes a common type of clause forbidding a list of people from troubling the church over the property: “[neither dvo]rodźica

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83 Ostrogorsky, Féodalité, 212, thought the second translation more likely.
84 Solovjev, Odabrani spomenici, 144. Lavra, III, no. 130.
[“courtholder”–a rare word], nor pronoia, nor courtier, nor who is in authority who [(illegible)][in] my empire” ([ni dvo]rodr’žica, ni pronijar’, ni dvoranin’, ni koja vlast’ koja se . . . carstva mi).85

Vladimir Mošin suggested that the linking of pronoia holders with what appear to be government officials suggests that pronoiars were representatives of state authority.86 Whether or not this was true in Serbia, it was certainly not the case in Byzantium. Pronoia holders in Byzantium were no more representatives of the state than were monasteries which had received fiscal privileges from the emperor or laymen who had received outright grants of land from the emperor. As discussed above in relation to Dušan’s 1345 act for the church of the Perivleptos, similar phrases ordering government officials and pronoia holders not to bother the properties of particular monasteries appear in several thirteenth-century Byzantine documents. Pronoia holders, like government officials as well as other laymen, were all in a position to make unjust demands of the monastery and, at least in Byzantium, that is why they appear in these lists.

More generally, George Ostrogorsky made the observation that it is remarkable that, of the eight or nine extant documents issued by John Uglješa (the authenticity of one is highly suspect), two should mention the institution of pronoia. His conclusion was that this indicates something of the widespread frequency of pronoia grants in the part of Macedonia ruled by Uglješa.87

In 1371 Uglješa and his brother Vukašin died fighting the Turks at the battle of Marica. That same year Dušan’s son and heir, Stefan Uroš V, the last “tsar” of medieval Serbia, died as well. The fact that neither Uroš nor his successor Prince Lazar (1371–1389), both based in Skopje, issued any extant documents mentioning pronoia might suggest the limited establishment of the institution of pronoia in Serbian lands.

Stefan Lazarević (1389–1427) and the despots Branković (1427–1458)

Nevertheless, pronoia reappears in Serbia under Lazar’s son Stefan Lazarević in three documents, two of which illustrate the appropriation of the institution by the Serbs and one the spread of the institution of pronoia further afield. In January 1388 Stefan Lazarević’s father Prince Lazar confirmed the foundation of the church of the Presentation of the Virgin at Ibar by a man named Obrad Dragosalić who had endowed the church with his own baština. These properties—a village and three hamlets—were located in the area east of the Ibar River, about 14 miles northeast of Novi Pazar. That same month the Serbian patriarch Spyridion confirmed this as well.88 However, around 1392 Lazarević issued a chrysobull in

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86 SmM, I, 262.
87 Ostrogorsky, Féodalité, 212.
88 Novaković, Zakonski spomenici, 775–76, 776. B. Zarković, Ibarski posed manastira Hilandara, Baština 25 (2008) 189. The property of the church included the village of Kukan with the hamlets of Ćajetina, Šipačino, and Novoselo. Kukan has been identified as Beljak (see Zarković, Ibarski
which he gave this church and its endowment of villages and hamlets to the monastery of Hilandar. He explains that Dragosalić had promised this church and its property to Hilandar, but “because of his unfaithfulness, I took it from him and I gave his baština to my noble in pronoia” (i daj’ njegovu baštinu vlastelinu momu u proniju). Now Lazarević granted Hilandar’s request that it receive the church and its endowment.89 The pronoia holder is not named; he held the property no longer than four years or so.

Another act of Lazarević, issued in 1404/5, gave the village of Jablčje (or Jabučje, in the area of Levač south of Kragujevac) “which Mladen Psisin held in pronoia under my lord and father the holy prince” (što je držal’ u proniju Mladen’ P’sisin’ pri gospodinu i roditelju mi svetomu knezu) to his mother Jevpraksia. She was to hold it as baština or kupljenica (purchased property), so that she might donate it to Hilandar.90 As in Byzantium, something described as a pronoia was transferred by the ruler to another party as an alienable grant.

The final document of Stefan Lazarević leads to another area where one finds pronoia. This is Zeta, the Adriatic littoral roughly from Kotor to Skadar. After the death of the ruler of Zeta, Baša III (1403–1421), Lazarević acquired his territory, sent an army there, and continued Baša’s war with Venice. A peace treaty was signed in 1423 and further negotiations were concluded in 1426 between Venice and Serbia, the latter represented by the future ruler George Branković, acting in the name of his uncle Stefan Lazarević. Among the terms of the revised 1426 agreement Serbia agreed that the Paštrovići and Viševići clans—clients and allies of Venice who inhabited the coastal area south of Kotor now controlled by Serbia—would keep their “pronoiai, patrimony, and dowries” (cum tute so pronie, patrimonii et dote) and everything else that they held at the time of Baša’s death.91

Even though Zeta had been a part of the Serbian state since the twelfth century, the earliest evidence that the institution of pronoia existed there dates to the very end of the fourteenth century, to the period of Venetian control over the area of Skadar which began in 1396. This suggests that it was the Venetians and not the Serbs who introduced pronoia into Zeta. Throughout the fifteenth century numerous Venetian documents and a few from other archives illuminate the adaptation of pronoia to the tribal culture of Zeta, as well as the manner in which the Venetians accommodated that adaptation of pronoia. Most notable is the so-called Cadaster of Skadar from 1416–17 which lists, among the villages owing taxes to

89 Novaković, Zakonski spomenici, 458 i. This document grants the village of Prisojnik and three hamlets in Hrašti in which there were beehives as well. Whether these were part of Dragosalić’s donation, and were later granted to a pronoiar, is unclear. See Žarković, Ibarski posed, 191–92. Ostrogorsky, Féodalité, 212–13.
90 Solovjev, Odabrani spomenici, 190–91. Ostrogorsky, Féodalité, 214.
91 Novaković, Zakonski spomenici, 283 ii.
Venice, a number of villages held by pronoiaiars. Altogether sixteen pronoia holders appear in the document. This document, combined with the other fifteenth-century documents dealing with the area of Skadar, dwarfs the Byzantine sources available for the study of pronoia. Given the complexity of the material, no brief summary of the material is possible. The subject deserves a monograph in its own right.92

Following Stefan Lazarević’s death in 1427 his territory was inherited by his nephew George Branković who ruled the Serbian state until his death in 1456. He was succeeded by his son Lazar (1456–1458). During their reigns the last references to pronoia in medieval Serbia appear.

Two of these involve the city of Dubrovnik. A document from March 1447 from the archives of Dubrovnik contains the instructions of the government of Dubrovnik for its ambassadors at the court of George Branković. We read that while Branković had given Dubrovnik the right to seize the property of Serbian debtors, the city did not have the right to take property given in pronoia (*quello fosse dato in pronia*). The despot had the right to dispose of these as he pleased (*e che la soa Signoria possa far de tal caxe et possession date in pronia ogni so voler*). Further, the ambassadors were to ask Branković to issue a document ordering his officials who would judge such disputes to satisfy such claims of property and house, “save and reserving that which was given by the Seigneur [Branković] in pronoia” (*salvo et reservando quello fosse dato per lo Signor in pronia*).93 The implication is clear that the ruler maintained control over the pronoiai that were granted by him.

Another document from the archives of Dubrovnik deals with Nicolin Crijević, a citizen of Dubrovnik and by all evidence a businessman. In 1453 he and his brother Jakov formed a company, pooling their assets. At this time he declared, “And I Nicolin have certain villages in ‘Slavonia,’ which I have held in pronoia of the lord despot [George Branković], as well as whatever else in the future I have from the lord despot, we should wish that we should enjoy the said

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92 The Cadaster is found under entries 2045, 2107, and 2158 in Acta Albaniae Veneta secularum XIV et XV, ed. G. Valentini, part 2, vol. 8, Milan 1970; vol. 9 in the series is the valuable index to vol. 8. G. Ostrogorsky’s chapter on pronoia in Zeta (*Ostrogorsky*, Féodalité, 222–57) remains the best introduction to the subject, though it only scratched the surface and it is colored by his own understanding of Byzantine pronoia. Some of the richness that further study of the subject promises can be seen in the various works of Ivan Božić: Proniaari et capita, ZRVI 8/1 (1963) 61–70; Paraspor u skadarskoj oblasti, ZRVI 4 (1956) 13–30; and Le systême foncier en ‘Albanie vénitienne’ au XV siècle, Bolletino dell’ Istituto di Storia della società e dello stato veneziano 5–6 (1963/64) 65–140. Also, P. G. Valentini, Chiarimenti sulla natura della pronia bizantina attraverso la documentazione della sua continuità in Serbia e Albania, Atti dello VIII Congresso internazionale di studi bizantini, I, Rome 1953 = Studi bizantini e neoellenici 7 (1953) 488–510. It is surprising that O. Schmitt’s hefty 700-page book, Das venezianische Albanien (1392–1479), Munich 2001, devotes a mere seven pages (pp. 167–73) to pronoia (and most of his analysis is based on scholarship dealing with pronoia in Byzantium).

possession between ourselves” (Et jo Nicolin o certi caxali in Schiauonia, li qual o avuto in pronia del signor despot, tanto queste quanto che altre che per lo avignir avero del signor despot, vogliemo che le dicte possession usufructemo tra nui), but if the company dissolved, “these above-mentioned villages in Schiauonia should remain of me Nicolin” (quelli caxali in Schiauonia sporadetti resteno et siano de mi Nicolin). Bariša Krekić made the point that this is the only known instance of a foreigner receiving a pronoia in Serbia and in fact one who was no military man. Thus, by the middle of the fifteenth century there was no necessary connection between pronoiai and military service in Serbia. We do not know what Nicolin did to earn his pronoia, but he seems to have felt that he had the right to include it within his company.94

A more traditional document, and one that has numerous parallels in Byzantium, was issued in December 1457 by Despot Lazar Branković. Through this act he granted his treasurer Radoslav some villages and other properties in the area of Smederevo and of Golubac “that my lordship gave to him [as] pronoia” (sto mu e dalo gospodstvo mi proniju). If Radoslav died or became a monk, these properties were to pass to Radoslav and Radovan, his nephews by his sister, “to hold these in pronoia and to work and fight as the other pronoiai” (da ih dr’`e u proniju a da od nih rabotaju i vojiju kako i ini proniarie). This is the one clear example where a pronoia in Serbia was hereditary. However, as in Byzantium it seems that it could not be otherwise alienated. Like the previous document, there is the sense here that military service was no longer an essential component of holding a pronoia in Serbia. Michael Lascaris noted that, even though Radoslav’s heirs were “to work and to fight as the other pronoiai,” it would be difficult to conclude that Radoslav, Lazar’s treasurer, was a military man. Lascaris suggested that the phrase may have been a mere formula.95

The last document dealing with pronoiai in Serbia was not issued by a Serbian ruler at all, but by the king of Bosnia Stefan Tomaš (1443–1461) and his son Stefan Tomašević. In October 1458 they issued an act for the benefit of Stefan Ratković, the logothetes at the courts of the despots George and Lazar Branković. Ratković “held pronoia from the deceased lord . . . Despot George, and from the deceased lord Despot Lazar” (sto e imao pr’niju [second time ‘pr’nie’] u sveto počivšega gospodina . . . despota Djurdja, i u sveto počivšega gospodina despota Lazara) consisting of many villages. With the death of Lazar in 1458 Serbia fell under the control of Bosnia. Consequently, after the death of his previous lords, Ratković went to the Bosnian king and through this act the king transformed his pronoia into baština. Henceforth, Ratković held the properties in full ownership with the right to alienate them. G. Ostrogorsky pointed out how unique this was: “Although the inheritance of pronoia had been since the fourteenth century frequent in Byzantium, and general in Serbia, pronoia, never in Byzantium and never

94 Krekić, Contribution, 4, 6–8.
Table 1. Summary of known pronoia holdings connected with Serbia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>date when pronoia held</th>
<th>what was held in pronoia</th>
<th>location</th>
<th>held by</th>
<th>granted by</th>
<th>passed to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>before 1299/1300</td>
<td>small parcel</td>
<td>Rečice, southwest of modern Tetovo</td>
<td>Dragota, then his son-in-law Manota</td>
<td>a Byzantine ruler</td>
<td>a monastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before 1299/1300</td>
<td>“pronoiaistic” village of Banjane</td>
<td>north of Skopje</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>a monastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before 1300</td>
<td>paroikoi</td>
<td>Gradac on the lower Strymon</td>
<td>multiple Greeks</td>
<td>a Byzantine ruler</td>
<td>a monastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before 1326</td>
<td>village of Hoča</td>
<td>southwest of Prizren</td>
<td>“pronoiais”</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>the church of Prizren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before 1326</td>
<td>a stasis at Djurdjevište and its peasants</td>
<td>in the upper Vardar valley</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>the church of Prizren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before 1334</td>
<td>land</td>
<td>at Štuka, east of Strumica</td>
<td>Tutko Osan and Laskar Siderofaj, “Greek pronoiais”</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>a monastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before 1334</td>
<td>“pronoia’s” pear tree</td>
<td>east of Strumica</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1344–56</td>
<td>a metochion</td>
<td>Verrhoaia</td>
<td>Serbs</td>
<td>Stefan Dušan</td>
<td>back to a monastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1345</td>
<td>(abstract reference to pronoiais in area)</td>
<td>Ohrid</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before 1346</td>
<td>village of Ulotino</td>
<td>northwest of Plav in Montenegro</td>
<td>“pronoiais”</td>
<td>a Serbian ruler</td>
<td>a monastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before 1346</td>
<td>village of Kičiki</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>“pronoiais”</td>
<td>a Serbian ruler</td>
<td>a monastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before 1359</td>
<td>at least a peasant stasis</td>
<td>Thessaly</td>
<td>Vodeses</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>a monastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1361</td>
<td>village (?) of Phiatza</td>
<td>Epiros</td>
<td>John Tzaphas Orsini, a Latin</td>
<td>Stefan Dušan or Symeon Uroš</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before 1369</td>
<td>village of Neochorion</td>
<td>east of Strumica</td>
<td>one or more pronoiais</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>a monastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>date when pronoia held</td>
<td>what was held in pronoia</td>
<td>location</td>
<td>held by</td>
<td>granted by</td>
<td>passed to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1369</td>
<td>(abstract reference to pronoiaars in area)</td>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.1375–1380</td>
<td>included paroikoi</td>
<td>Ioannina</td>
<td>Serbs</td>
<td>Thomas Preljubović</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bef. 1389–1404/5</td>
<td>village of Jabučje</td>
<td>south of Kragujevac</td>
<td>Mladen Psisin, a Serb pronoiar</td>
<td>Lazar</td>
<td>mother of ruler as baština, and then to monastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after 1389–c.1392</td>
<td>several villages and hamlets</td>
<td>Ibar, northeast of Novi Pazar</td>
<td>probably a Serb</td>
<td>Stefan Lazarević</td>
<td>a monastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1426</td>
<td>? (connected with patrimony and dowries)</td>
<td>Zeta</td>
<td>Paštrovići and Viševići clans</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1447</td>
<td>(abstract reference to pronoiaars in area)</td>
<td>Serbia?</td>
<td>Serbs</td>
<td>George Branković</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1453</td>
<td>villages</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>Nicolin Crijević, a citizen of Dubrovnik</td>
<td>George Branković</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1457</td>
<td>villages and other properties</td>
<td>area of Smederevo and Golubac</td>
<td>Radoslav, a Serb</td>
<td>Lazar Branković</td>
<td>permission granted to transmit to Radoslav’s nephews under same conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1458</td>
<td>numerous villages</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>Stefan Ratković, a Serb</td>
<td>George and Lazar Branković</td>
<td>Ratković as baština by the king of Bosnia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
in Serbia, was transformed into patrimonial property, having kept the character of an inalienable and conditional possession.”

Table 1 summarizes the known pronoia grants either conferred by Serbian rulers or mentioned in Serbian documents. The table supports the hypothesis that Stefan Milutin’s conquests in the area of Skopje, where there was a significant presence of Byzantine pronoiai, marks the genesis of the institution in medieval Serbia. For example, the ample evidence of pronoiai in the plain east of Strumica is probably a vestige of Byzantine control in the area. While there were Slavic pronoia holders in the area of Macedonia since the reign of John III Vatatzes, it is reasonable to think that over the years Milutin would replace pronoia holders who had received their grants from the Byzantine emperor with pronoiaiars of his own choosing, a majority of whom were presumably Serbs.

The earliest secure evidence of pronoia conferred by a Serbian ruler dates to early in the reign of Stefan Dušan and was connected to Dušan’s conquests of Byzantine territory. As for the importation of pronoia into areas of Serbia that had never known Byzantine pronoiai, the earliest evidence of this also dates to era of Dušan. Nevertheless, it is possible, perhaps even likely, that pronoiai were conferred by Stefan Dečanski, if not by Milutin. The fact that we do not know whether a Byzantine or Serbian ruler granted many of the pronoiai in Table 1 shows that the Serbian appropriation of the institution often did not disrupt landholding patterns. It is when the conquering Serbs acted in a heavy-handed fashion, dispossessing local landholders (as in Verrhoia and Ioannina) that we learn clearly who was granting the pronoiai.

Little is known of most of the pronoia holders in Table 1. Following the Byzantine model, and given the nature of the ruling class in both Serbia and Byzantium, we might think that the most of the recipients of such privileges were military men. Certainly by the fifteenth century Serbian rulers were granting pronoiai to men who were not necessarily connected to military matters. The paucity of evidence makes it impossible to say whether this, or any other apparent changes or developments, was connected to any evolution within the institution in Serbia. The most significant known Serbian modification of the institution can be deduced from the 1299/1300 chrysobull of Milutin for the monastery of St. George: either a church held pronoiai or pronoiaiars were specifically commended to a church.

The administration and fiscal management of pronoiai in medieval Serbia is poorly understood as well. As in Byzantium, in Serbia pronoiai were granted exclusively by rulers. Article 68 of Dušan’s Zakonik specifies the obligations of the peasants held by the pronoiaiar in Serbia. As in Byzantium these included corvées and money payments, though in Serbia corvée obligations were much more onerous: two days per week according to the Zakonik, while in Byzantium twelve or twenty-four days per year was the obligation most commonly attested. As in By-

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zantium it was forbidden to alienate property held as pronoia, though the granting of hereditary rights as a special privilege, as in Byzantium, meant that the property could be transmitted to heirs.

Our knowledge of pronoia in Serbia is relatively limited. Because of this, and because of the danger inherent in filling in the gaps in our knowledge with information from what we know about the Byzantine institution, I hesitate to draw many conclusions about the institution as it manifested itself within Serbian society. The most important issue—how significant the institution of pronoia was to medieval Serbia—still cannot be answered with any confidence. And most certainly we cannot assume that the pronoia that Serbian rulers granted to their nobles and soldiers was granted under the same terms and was regarded as the same kind of grant as pronoia in Byzantium. Nevertheless, the appearance of pronoia throughout the territory of Serbia for well over a century, and particularly the several appearances of pronoia in Dušan’s Zakonik suggests that it did play an appreciable role in medieval Serbia.

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Mark Bartusis

СРПСКА ПРОНИЈА И ПРОНИЈА У СРБИЈИ: РАСПРОСТРИРАЊЕ ЈЕДНЕ УСТАНОВЕ

Византијски фискални термин пронија појављује се до 15. века у већини балканских области јужно од Дунава. Међутим, оно што је већина византијских суседа усвојила није била византијска установа проније, него пре сам термин пронија, који је означавао неку врсту имовинског поклона од стране државне власти, инкорпорисаног у терминологију земљишних поседа у областима које, у неким случајевима, нису вековима познавале византијско присуство. На пример, многобројни подаци о пронији у млетачким изворима који се односе на јадранску обалу и егејска острова говоре нам много више о томе како су Венецијанци прилагођавали домаћи институције са којима су се сусретали приликом својих освајања, а мало о било којој византијској институцији као таквој.

Изузетак чини Србија, чија се елита усредела са пронијом 1282–83. године, за време освајања Стефана Уроша II Милутина у области Скопља, где је постојало значајно присуство византијских пронија. Прихваћање установе проније од стране Срба био је двостепени процес. Прво, српски владар је морао да уклопи византијске проније на територијама које је освојио у сопствени фискални, економски, аграрни и војни систем. Друго, почело је стварање сопствених пронија које су личиле на њихове византијске претече.

Освајањима Стефана Душана (1331–1355) Срби су дошли у још ближи контакт са византијском пронијом. Најчешће, Душан је мало чинио да уведе српску праксу у грчке области које је освојио и једноставно је наставио византијску административну праксу. Због тога је, иако се дешавало да Душан поклања проније Србима на византијским територијама које је освојио, често тешко утврдити да ли су проније у областима које је заузео Душан створио он сам, његови наследници или византијски владари. Чињеница да за многе проније не знамо да ли их је поклонио византијски или српски владар показује да српско освајање ове институције често није нарушило постојеће зе-
мљовласничке обрасце. Само у случајевима оштрог наступа освајачких Срба, када долази до одузимања земље од локалних земљопоседника, јасно уочавамо ко је даровао проније.

Иако је могућно, чак можда и вероватно, да су проније поклањали Милојин или његов наследник Стефан Дечански, најраније јасно сведочанство о томе да су српски владари поклањали проније у областима које нису биле под византијском контролом у 13. и 14. веку налази се у једној хрисовуљи из 1346. године. У повељи Душан спомиње два села која су држали пронијаре, од којих је једно у данашњој Црној Гори, области која није била под византијском влашћу још од времена пре латинског освајања из 1204. године.

Законник Стефана Душана садржи три одељка који се односе на пронију. Члан 59 забрањује куповање, продавање или донацију проније духовним уста новама. Члан 68 вероватно се односи на интеграцију византијске проније у српски аграрни и фискални систем, јер специфичку обавезе мереопаха према пронијару. Као и у Византији, она су укључивале радне и новчане обавезе, с тим што су у Србији радне обавезе биле много изразитије. Најзад, један други члан указује на виши статус држаоца проније, при чему се у њему разликују пронијаре — дословно „синове пронијаре“ — од себара.

У политичкој дезинтеграцији која је уследила после Душанове смрти (1355), у документима се понахака спомиње пронија. На пример, српски деспот Јован Угљеша (1366–1371), који је владао значајним делом византијске Македоније из Сера, издао је 1369. пар словенских докумената у којима се спомињу проније. С друге стране, ни Душанов син и наследник Стефан Урош V (1355–1371), ни његов наследник кнез Лазар (1371–1389), нису издали ниједан документ (бар је то случај са сачуваним документима) у којем би се спомињала пронија, што можда упућује на ограничено стапнице уставо проније у српским земљама.

Пронија се поново појављује у Србији за владе Лазаревог сина Стефана Лазаревића (1389–1427) у три документа. Једним од њих даје се његовој мајци неко село у области јужно од Крагујеваца, које је неки човек „држао у пронију“ (ишо је др’жал’ у пронију) од времена Стефановог оца. Мајка је требало да држи ту земљу као да је породично (баштини) или купљено (купљеница) добро, што би јој дозвољавало да га поклони неком манастиру. Као и у Византији, дакле, оно што је било описано као пронија могло је владаревом одлуком да буде претворено, за неког другог, у неотуђиви поклон.

Спомен проније постојао је до самих краја српске срдњовековне државе. Син Ђурђа Бранковића, деспот Лазар (1456–1458), даровао је свом ризничару Радославу додатне привилегије над неким селима и осталом имовином око Смедерева и Голупца, што је Лазар раније даровао истом Радославу као пронију. Ово је једини јасан случај претварања проније у Србији у последње добро. Чини се да такво добро, као и у Византији, није могло да буде отуђено на другу страну и да је требало да буде држано под истим условима под којима га је уживавао првобитни прималац. Будући да Радослав није обављао
војну службу, можемо претпоставити да она у Србији више није била су- штинска компонента држања проније.

Као и у Византији, проније су даривали искључиво владари. Такође, као и у Византији, било је забрањeno отуђивати имовину која је држана као пронија, мада је додељивање наследних права у виду посебне привилегије значило, као и у Византији, да је имање могло бити преношено на наслед- нике. Угледајући се на византијски модел, а у вези са природом владајуће класе и у Србији и у Византији, већина уживалаца таквих привилегија били су вероватно у војној служби. Ипак, тешко је уочити право значење ове ин- ституције у средњовековној Србији. А сигурно је да не можемо да прет- поставимо да су проније које су српски владари даривали својим племићима и војницима биле даване под истим условима и представљале исту врсту поклона као проније у Византији. Ипак, појава пронија на читавој територији Србије током више од једног века, а нарочито неколико одредаба о пронији у Душановом Законику, сугеришу да су играле значајну улогу у средњове- ковној Србији.