

The word *pronoia* (πρόνοια) is derived from the adjective *pronoos* (πρόνοος) “thinking beforehand, wary, discreet” which is formed from the prepositional prefix *pro* (πρό) “before, forward” and the noun *noos* (νόος) with its simple meaning “the mind, a thought.” Thus, in its simplest sense *pronoia* means “a seeing or perceiving beforehand, foresight, forethought, forecast.” From Plato downwards the word also acquired a sense of “providence” (paralleling the Latin *provideo*), especially “divine providence.”

The word was used throughout the Byzantine era in a number of senses. The following survey begins with the use of the word in its simple meaning “care” or “solicitude,” and the special cases of divine and imperial solicitude. From there we follow the philological development of the word as its meaning forked into the sense of a concrete manifestation of such solicitude – “reward” or “benefaction,” as well as “maintenance” – and into a practical, almost bureaucratic sense involving “administration” or “management.” Along the way we will also be dealing with a number of idiomatic expressions that use the word.

This overview has two purposes. The first is to demonstrate the polysemy of the word in the Byzantine era. In this I make no claim to comprehensiveness. To treat or even discern every nuance of the word would require its own monograph. I am merely establishing a few general categories. The second purpose of this overview is to demonstrate, as we seek to establish certain technical uses of the word, how some specific passages interpreted by previous scholars as a technical use of the word need not have had any technical sense whatsoever. Because it is important to establish that most of the senses of the word existed contemporaneously, the examples I cite tend to fall chronologically within the later centuries of Byzantium.

Simple “care” or “solicitude”

Often *pronoia* means simply “care” or “solicitude.” In 1312 the *protos* (head of the governing council) of Mount Athos wrote that a certain property dispute was “worthy of our *pronoia* and attention and correcting.” In a

chrysobull of John VI Kantakouzenos from 1349 we encounter the clause, “. . . it is always necessary for the emperor to have *pronoia* for the useful things” in regard to the laws of the empire, and we have the phrase “*pronoia* toward the poor” in a letter of Patriarch Athanasios I.¹ In a passage from the *typikon* (foundation charter) for the monastery of Hilandar which deals with the treatment of the ill within the monastery, the monks are ordered “to entrust to the will of the leader everything of their [i.e., the sick brothers’] *pronoia*.” The Slavic version of the *typikon* for the Studenica monastery in Serbia substitutes *promyšljenije*, literally “forethought,” for *pronoia* in the parallel passage. This sense of “care” could merge with the sense of “providence,” as is seen in a passage from the history of George Pachymeres dealing with the insecure position of the nine-year-old John IV Laskaris after his father’s death: “He had absolutely a need of *pronoia* so as not to suffer from anything unforeseen, as there were many intrigues.”²

The word *pronoia* also appears in a number of idiomatic expressions with the meaning “care” or “solicitude.” The most common of these constructions is ποιῆσθαι (τὴν) πρόνοιαν τινος, meaning “to have forethought for” or simply “to take care of something.” Thus, the Continuator of Skylitzes (late eleventh century) writes about the need “to have taken care of [or to make provision for] victuals by transporting grain via grain ships.” In the eleventh century Kekaumenos recommended that generals receive enemy deserters with joy, “show [them] kindness and take good and liberal care of them [lit. ‘make the *pronoia* of them good and liberal’], but keep an eye on them.” Since *pronoia* here naturally would have included the daily maintenance of these deserters, Paul Lemerle wrote that this passage offers

¹ *Docheiariou*, no. 12.1: ἀξία . . . προνοίας καὶ τῆς παρ’ ἡμῶν ἐπιμελείας καὶ διορθώσεως, and similarly, line 10. *Vatopédi*, II, no. 102.10: τῶν συμφερόντων ἀεὶ τὸν βασιλέα δεῖ πρόνοιαν ἔχειν. The idiom ἔχειν τινος πρόνοιαν “to have thought for something” is recorded in the lexica, but it appears much more rarely than the other idiomatic expressions discussed below. We may also note that the phrase πρόνοια τοῦ συμφέροντος appears, in various forms, several times in the letters of Emperor Theodore I Laskaris. For example, he wrote to George Akropolites, “I am astonished at your solicitude toward my well-being” (Θαυμάζω σου τὴν πρὸς ἐμὲ πρόνοιαν τοῦ συμφέροντος): *Theodori Ducae Lascaris Epistulae ccxvii*, ed. N. Festa (Florence, 1898), no. 54.1. *The Correspondence of Athanasius I Patriarch of Constantinople*, ed. and trans. A.-M. Talbot (Washington, D.C., 1975), no. 78.39: ἡ πρὸς τοὺς πένητας πρόνοια, and Ad App. 1.

² V. Ćorović, *Spisi sv. Save* (Belgrade, 1928), 142.16–18, and 139.9. Similarly, P. Gautier, “Le *typikon* du Christ Sauveur Pantokrator,” *REB* 32 (1974), 1–145, line 1171. Other examples of *pronoia* as “solicitude” or “care”: (10th c.) *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, ed. G. Dennis (Washington, 1985), 200.10; (12th c.) P. Gautier, “Réquisitoire du patriarche Jean d’Antioche contre le charisticariat,” *REB* 33 (1975), 125.502; and (14th c.) *Nikephoros Gregoras, Antirrhethika I*, ed. H.-V. Beyer (Vienna, 1976), 91. Pachymeres, ed. Failler, I, 63.18: προνοίας ἔδει πάντως τοῦ μὴ τι παθεῖν ἀπρόοπτως, and cf. 31.25–26 for a similar usage.

a new and interesting example of the word's semantic development. But there really was nothing new about *pronoia* implying subsistence. In the *Strategikon* of Maurice (ca. 600) the word is linked to animal feed: "it is necessary to take care of the feeding of the horses [lit. 'make provision for the feeding of the horses']."³

In his memoirs John Kantakouzenos uses this idiom frequently. For example, in the space of some forty lines of printed text he employs the idiom three times in regard to Alexios Apokaukos, governor of Constantinople and Kantakouzenos' enemy during the early 1340s. Apokaukos, he writes, "always took care to be near the walls" so that he could escape easily from the capital in the event of a popular revolt against him. He also "took much care for the guard around him," and whenever he entered the prison of the Great Palace, "he took great care of himself," surrounded as he was with bodyguards.⁴

Even more common is Kantakouzenos' use of the idiom ἀξιῶ τινα προνοίας. This expression appears in a novel (law) of Justin II from 570: "and worthy of such *pronoia* from our majesty" (καὶ τοσαύτης ἡξιωμένον παρὰ τοῦ ἡμετέρου κράτους προνοίας); in a writing of John Oxiteas, patriarch of Antioch, from the late eleventh century: "those worthy of a certain *pronoia*" (μερικῆς τινος προνοίας ἀξιουμένους); and in a letter of Patriarch Gregory II Kyprios from 1284: a man claiming to be a relative of the patriarch "thought himself worthy of a certain *pronoia*" (καὶ τινος ἀξιωθῆναι προνοίας αὐτόν). In the later fourteenth century Patriarch Philotheos used this expression to refer to imperial benefactions: "these [children] were

³ Skylitzes Continuatus, ed. E. Tsolakes, *Ἡ συνέχεια τῆς Χρονογραφίας τοῦ Ἰωάννου Σκυλίτση* (Thessaloniki, 1968), 171.5–6: πρόνοιαν γούν τροφῶν καὶ διὰ μετακομιδῆς γεννημάτων διὰ σιτηγῶν πλοίων ποιήσασθαι. Kekaumenos, *Sovety i rasskazy Kekavmena, sočinenie vizantijskogo polkovodca XI veka*, ed. G. Litavrin (Moscow, 1972), 138.7–9: καὶ εὐεργέτι καὶ τὴν πρόνοιαν αὐτῶν ποιεῖ ἀγαθὴν καὶ σαφιλῆ, ἔχε δὲ αὐτοὺς εὐόπτους. Lemerle, *Agrarian History*, 222. Maurikios, *Das Strategikon des Maurikios*, ed. G. Dennis, trans. E. Gamillscheg (Vienna, 1981), xi.2.106: δέον πρόνοιαν . . . ποιεῖσθαι τῆς ἀποτροφῆς τῶν ἀλόγων. Other examples of this idiom: Romans 13:14; (6th c.) *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, 82.(chap. 26)9; (7th c.) *Das Strategikon des Maurikios*, xi, B Pr.5: καὶ ὀπλίσεως καὶ ἐσθῆτος ἐποιοῦσάμεθα πρόνοιαν; (10th c.) *Lavra*, i, no. 8.1; (11th c.) the *typikon* of Constantine Monomachos from 1045 for the monks of Athos: *Prôtaton*, no. 8.6; the *Peira* (38, 11): Zepos, *JGR*, iv, 153–54 = Zacharia, *Jus*, i, 168, cited by Uspenskij, "Značenie," 3–4; (12th c.) P. Gautier, "Le typikon de la Théotokos Kécharitoménè," *REB* 43 (1985), 1–165, line 674; Gautier, "Le typikon du Christ Sauveur Pantokrator," line 984: πρὸς τὸ ποιεῖν ἀνελλιπῆ τὴν πρόνοιαν ἀπάντων; *Docheiariou*, no. 4.15; (13th c.) *The Correspondence of Athanasius I*, no. 102.12; *Ivion*, iii, no. 58.77; and (14th c.) *Docheiariou*, no. 48.11, and *Kutlumu*, no. 11.1–2.

⁴ Kantakouzenos, ii, 541.13: αἰεὶ γὰρ ἐποιεῖτο πρόνοιαν ἐγγύς εἶναι τῶν τειχῶν, 542.6–7: τῆς . . . φρουρᾶς περὶ ἑαυτὸν πολλὴν ἐποιεῖτο πρόνοιαν, 542.21–22: πολλὴν πρόνοιαν αὐτοῦ ποιοῦμενος, and cf. 536.12–14.

worthy of all other *pronoia* – I speak of all kinds of outlays and provisions from the imperial treasury and of money, of which those enjoying imperial favor partake.”⁵

While the construction (a form of ἄξιω with *pronoias*) appears just over 200 times in the online *TLG*, with all but a handful of instances from the Christian era, the writings of John Kantakouzenos account for about 14 percent of the total instances. For example, he writes that at the time of the Zealot revolt in Thessaloniki the leaders of the revolt refused to allow Gregory Palamas to assume his see. Thereupon, “he returned to Lemnos and lived there, and he was deemed worthy of appropriate *pronoia* by the emperor.” Alexander Kazhdan interpreted *pronoia* in this passage in a technical sense and wrote that Palamas had received a *pronoia* grant from the emperor. On the other hand, Timothy Miller translated the key phrase with the simple sense “the emperor cared for him as was fitting.” While it is certainly possible that Kantakouzenos was using *pronoia* in a technical sense, this conclusion is far from secure.⁶

In another instance Kantakouzenos reports that in 1342, during a period of civil war, Alexios Apokaukos wrote to Manuel Asan, the commander of Didymoteichon, and Asan’s sister Irene, Kantakouzenos’ wife. Seeking to win them over to the side of the young John V Palaiologos, Apokaukos attempted to buy their defection: “Asan and his sister and her children, when I arrive in Didymoteichon, are worthy of *pronoia*, which should appear sufficient to them under the present circumstances.” Was Kantakouzenos suggesting that Apokaukos, in the name of John V, intended to grant *pronoiai* to Asan and his family? John Kantakouzenos was quite familiar with the technical meaning of “*pronoia*” as an imperial grant; and he indeed employs the word in his history in that sense [8.26]. To what extent then was his use of the idiom in passages such as this a play on words?⁷

⁵ Zacharia, *Jus*, II, 18.34–35. Gautier, “Réquisitoire du patriarche Jean d’Antioche,” 125.502. Gregory II Kyprios, ed. S. Eustratiades, “Τοῦ σοφωτάτου καὶ λογιωτάτου καὶ οἰκουμηνικοῦ πατριάρχου κύρου Γρηγορίου τοῦ Κυπρίου Ἐπιστολαί,” *Ἐκκλησιαστικός Φάρος* 4 (1909), 23 (no. 136). D. Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204–1330* (Cambridge and New York, 2007), 144, considers the passage from Gregory II a request for a real *pronoia* grant. Migne, *PG* 151, col. 559C: ὡς ἀξιῶσαι μὲν αὐτοὺς καὶ τῆς ἄλλης πάσης *pronoias*.

⁶ Kantakouzenos, III, 105.12: καὶ *pronoias* παρὰ βασιλείως τῆς δεούσης ἤξιοῦτο. Kazhdan, *Agrarnye otnosenija*, 218. *The History of John Cantacuzenus (Book IV): Text, Translation and Commentary*, ed. T. Miller, diss. Catholic Univ. (Ann Arbor, 1975), 236.

⁷ Kantakouzenos, II, 278.5–8: Ἀσάνην δὲ καὶ τὴν ἀδελφὴν καὶ παιδία τὰ ἐκείνης . . . *pronoias* ἀξιῶσιν, ἥτις καὶ αὐτοῖς ἂν δόξειεν ἄρκουσα ὡς τοῖς παροῦσαν. Kazhdan, *Agrarnye otnosenija*, 218, linked this passage to the institution of *pronoia*. For the correct identification of Manuel Komnenos Raoul Asanes, see *PLP*, no. 1506.

In one case, the idiom seems to be simply an idiom. Kantakouzenos writes about how his supporters had been mistreated by those who opposed his usurpation in 1342. One such supporter was a monk named Savas who remained loyal to Kantakouzenos despite being confined to a monastery by his enemies. Even though the latter wished “to honor [the monk] with much *pronoia* [βουλομένων δὲ καὶ προνοίας ἄξιον πολλῆς], he did not accept [it], saying that it was not right to take something from those who enjoy bloodshed and murder.” Kazhdan thought that this was a technical reference to a *pronoia* grant. However, this is unlikely. Just prior to this passage Kantakouzenos writes that these same enemies condemned another monk, the head of a monastery, “to remain in seclusion,” but nevertheless, “depriving [him] of no *pronoia* fitting to the body.”⁸

Less common is the idiom τίθεσθαι πρόνοιαν τινος, as in the phrase “to take care of the wounded” (τῶν τραυματίων τίθεσθαι πρόνοιαν) or “to make provision for the future” (τινα καὶ τοῦ μέλλοντος τίθεσθαι πρόνοιαν).⁹ Zonaras (mid-twelfth century) writes that an emperor “did not deem those of the senate worthy of honor which was fitting nor provided for them [lit. ‘took care of them’] in due measure [οὔτε πρόνοιαν αὐτῶν ἐτίθετο κατὰ τὸ ἀνάλογον]; rather, he hastened to humble them.” In the early tenth century Patriarch Nicholas Mystikos granted the administration of a monastery to a bishop with the command that he “show care. . . for the improvement of [its] condition” (θεοῦ πρόνοιαν . . . εἰς ἐπίδοσιν καταστάσεως).¹⁰

I think we must be careful not to read too much into these idiomatic constructions. While we should obviously expect the phrase “to take care of someone” often to include providing one with sustenance, it is imprudent in these cases to conclude that the word *pronoia* must therefore signify “one’s

⁸ Kantakouzenos, II, 213.11–12, 213.6–7: προνοίας τῆς εἰς τὸ σῶμα προσηκούσης οὐδεμιᾶς ἀποστερήσαντες. A. Kazhdan, “The Fate of the Intellectual in Byzantium A Propos of *Society and Intellectual Life in Late Byzantium* by Ihor Ševčenko,” *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 27/1 (1982), 87.

⁹ *Das Strategikon des Maurikios*, VIII.2.126, VIII.2.160, and cf. VIII.2.154.

¹⁰ Zonaras, *Ioannis Zonarae Epitomae Historiarum libri xviii*, ed. M. Pinder (Bonn, 1841–97), III, 766.17–19. Nicholas I Patriarch of Constantinople, *Letters*, ed. R. Jenkins and L. Westerink (Washington, 1973), no. 123.26. In this case, the claims of J. Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations in the Byzantine Empire* (Washington, 1987), 146–47, 156–57, for a technical significance for *epidosis* may be overstated. Other examples of this idiom: (6th c.) a novel of Justin II from 569: Zacharia, *Jus*, II, 12; and (10th c.) from a novel of Constantine VII: Zepos, *JGR*, I, 222.9. Even less common is the idiom γίνεσθαι πρόνοιαν: N. Svoronos, *Les Nouvelles des empereurs Macédoniens concernant la terre et les stratiotes* (Athens, 1994), no. 9A.37–38 (and cf. no. 9B.23–24) = Zepos, *JGR*, I, 248.19–20. Also, cf. Zacharia, *Jus*, II, 18.5. The expression is also found in the form πρόνοια γίνεται τινος: *Docheiariou*, no. 3.20.

livelihood.” In a passage from the Continuator of Skylitzes, the author writes of how Nikephoros III Botaneiates dealt with Eudokia Makremvolitissa, the mother of the deposed emperor Michael VII, and two defeated rivals to the throne, Nikephoros Vryennios and Nikephoros Vasilakios. “He deemed the former empress Eudokia and her son worthy of great *pronoia* and honor, and made her mistress of three government bureaus [*sekreta*]. But he did not deem Vryennios and Vasilakios worthy of fitting *pronoia*.” While our first inclination is to conclude with confidence that *pronoia* meant some kind of concrete grant in this passage, another manuscript of this text reads, for the first occurrence of “*pronoia*,” *kedemonia* (κηδεμονίας), simply “solicitude.”¹¹

Divine and imperial “solicitude”

“Divine *pronoia*” (θεία πρόνοια, πρόνοια Θεοῦ) was a very special form of *pronoia* usually rendered in English as “Providence.” In a chrysobull of Nikephoros Botaneiates for Iviron from 1079 we read, “everything of the monastery would have been threatened with deadly danger if *pronoia* had not shone on them from above.” Theodore I Laskaris writes, “Should not one say that this deed is of *pronoia* and of divine dispensation and entirely of God?” This is one of the most common uses of the word *pronoia*.¹²

There is also imperial *pronoia* (βασιλική πρόνοια), “solicitude,” flowing as a benefaction from the imperial office. Thus, in a novel of Basil II from 996 the emperor refers to oratories that were receiving yearly cash allowances from the emperor “since earlier they were worthy of imperial *pronoia*.” And much later, we read in a silver bull of Despot Demetrios Palaiologos

¹¹ Skylitzes Continuatus, 184.22–25: Ἡξίωσε δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ τὴν πρὸ τοῦ αὐγοῦσταν Εὐδοκίαν καὶ τοὺς παῖδας αὐτῆς προνοίας τε μεγάλης καὶ τιμῆς, . . . οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν Βρυέννιον καὶ τὸν Βασιλάκιον προνοίας ἐνδεχομένης ἠξίωσεν.

¹² *Iviron*, II, no. 41.19–20: εἰ μὴ τις ἄνωθεν αὐτοῖς ἐπέλαμψε πρόνοια. *Theodori Ducae Lascaris Epistulae* CCXVII, no. 95.25: ἄρ' οὖν οὐ προνοίας εἴποι τις εἶναι τὸ ἔργον τοῦτο καὶ θείας οἰκονομίας καὶ δῶως ὅλον Θεοῦ; and cf. no. 39.54: ἡ ἡμετέρα μετὰ Θεὸν πρόνοια. Other examples: (ca. 600) *Das Strategikon des Maurikios*, XII D.9; (10th c.) *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, 210.135, 224.28; (12th c.) a chrysobull of Manuel Komnenos in Zepos, *JGR*, I, 389.16ff, cited by H. Hunger, *Prooimion, Elemente der byzantinischen Kaiseridee in der Arengen der Urkunden* (Vienna, 1964), 85; (13th c.) *Theodori Ducae Lascaris Epistulae* CCXVII, no. 39.54, and cf. Appendix III, no. VII.1–3; *The Correspondence of Athanasius I*, no. 17.95, no. 83.19; (14th c.) Gregory Palamas in Migne, *PG*, 150, 1185C, cited by Hunger, *Prooimion*, 84, also citing Genadios II Scholarios and Nicholas of Methone; an act of Despot John Uglješa: Solovjev–Mošin, *Grčke povelje*, no. 35.63; a chrysobull of John V: *Pantéléemôn*, no. 11.4; *Nikephoros Gregoras, Antirrhethika I*, 167.12, 229.18, 235.15; *The Letters of Manuel II Palaeologus*, ed. G. Dennis (Washington, 1977), no. 67.87.

for the city of Monemvasia from 1450: “For my majesty wishes and orders that this city of Monemvasia enjoy *pronoia* and care in its constitution and amelioration, since this is one of the most valuable cities subject to my majesty.” *Pronoia* here is simply imperial “solicitude,” “favor,” or even “kindness,” a purely abstract concept.¹³

The historian Pachymeres speaks of such imperial *pronoia* when discussing John III Vatatzes’ scrupulous attention to provincial defenses:

For at this time John had forethought for everything, so that, showing the [things] called *zeugelateia* a special solicitude of [his] imperial authority, he established villages on these around each *kastron* and fort, where from their fruits and income they could provision the local fort, and hence the ruler could open to many or even to all the floodgates of kindness.

Zeugelateia were imperial estates, and the emperor’s plan here was to reinforce the self-sufficiency of provincial forts. While this “special concern” (ἰδίαν πρόνοιαν) could be viewed as simply a use of *pronoia* in its most elementary sense as care, its association with “the imperial authority” lends a further nuance.¹⁴

To enjoy imperial solicitude was also to enjoy the effects of this solicitude, which could be something as abstract as a grant of imperial attention or as concrete as a grant of money, titles, or property. We can see this in a chrysobull of Romanos I Lekapenos from 934, which confirms an act of Leo VI from 908. Romanos’ act first makes a reference to “imperial *pronoia* and sagacity” (βασιλικῆς . . . προνοίας καὶ ἀγχινοίας), and then repeats a phrase of Leo’s from the earlier act: “the monastery founded by John Kolovos is to enjoy such *pronoia* and to hold the region of Hierissos.” In other words, one might say that because the monastery enjoyed imperial “solicitude” (*pronoia*), it held the region of Hierissos.¹⁵

¹³ Svoronos, *Les Nouvelles des empereurs Macédoniens*, no. 14A.127–28 = Zepos, *JGR*, I, 268.29–30; Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations*, 160–61. *MM*, v, 171.6–9: προνοίας ἀπολαύειν καὶ ἐπιμελείας τὴν τοιαύτην πόλιν τῆς Μονεμβασίας εἰς τὸ συνίστασθαι καὶ βελτιοῦσθαι αὐτήν. Other examples: a novel of Constantine VII from around 947 (Svoronos, *Les Nouvelles des empereurs Macédoniens*, no. 5.51–52 = Zepos, *JGR*, I, 224.1–2); an act of Patriarch Niphon from 1312 (*Prôtaton*, no. 11.50); and *The Letters of Manuel II Palaeologus*, no. 13.5: προνοίας καὶ εὐμενείας βασιλικῆς.

¹⁴ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, I, 99.6–11 (Bonn edn., I, 69.5–10): ἰδίαν πρόνοιαν τῆς βασιλικῆς ἐξουσίας, cited by Ostrogorsky, *Féodalité*, 64, who considered the arrangement described here as a possible, though certainly oblique reference to the institution of *pronoia*.

¹⁵ *Prôtaton*, no. 3.3–4 (Romanos’ act). *Prôtaton*, no. 2.7 (Leo’s act) = no. 3.9–10: καὶ τὴν παρὰ τοῦ Κολοβοῦ Ἰωάννου νεουργηθεῖσαν μονὴν τῆς τοιαύτης προνοίας καταπολαύειν καὶ κατέχειν τὴν ἐνορίαν τοῦ Ἐρισσοῦ καὶ μόνον. The difficulties involved in interpreting the meaning of *pronoia* in a given passage are illustrated by A. Kazhdan’s interpretation of Leo’s act (Kazhdan, *Agrarnye otnošenija*, 210, and *Derevnja i gorod*, 107), written before the act of Romanos was

“Maintenance”

In the above examples, by enjoying the emperor’s solicitude (*pronoia*), a monastery might also enjoy property, yearly allowances, or other material benefits. *Pronoia* therefore could be not only the abstract solicitous regard of an emperor toward a subject, but the concrete benefactions bestowed because of this regard. In a letter of Patriarch Michael Oxeites from 1143 the patriarch writes that a particular man was “worthy of the appropriate *pronoia*” from a monastery for the sake of the salvation of its deceased founder. In his lexicon Du Cange rendered *pronoia* here as “*provisiones, pensiones annuae*.” Thus *pronoia* could denote “maintenance,” another non-technical meaning of the word. Similarly, in 1465 Cardinal Bessarion wrote a letter about the children of the deceased despot Thomas Palaiologos. Their father had been receiving 300 ducats a month from the pope and Bessarion addresses the need for “the restoration of the *pronoia* of the ruler’s children.”¹⁶ *Pronoia* is used here in the sense of a pension. Further, in the second half of the eleventh century Eustathios Voilas bequeathed some property to a church he founded, λόγου προνοίας τῶν ἐκδουλεύοντων ἐν αὐτῇ κληρικῶν. This phrase can be translated any number of ways: “out of concern for the clergy serving in it,” “in order to care for the clergy,” “for the maintenance of the clergy,” and so on. The idea of “concern” attached to property leads to the more concrete use of the word *pronoia* as “maintenance.”¹⁷

published. Since the opening lines of Leo’s act are mutilated, the connection between the “*pronoia*” the monastery enjoyed and imperial solicitude can be made only on the basis of Romanos’ act. But since Kazhdan had access only to the act of Leo, he constructed a very different interpretation of the phrase in question and concluded that Leo used the word *pronoia* to signify the power of an outsider or monastery (in this case John Kolovos) over a spiritual institution; in fact, he later claimed that “*pronoia*” in Leo’s act meant *charistike* (the temporary grant of the administration of a monastery to a layman) and that John Kolovos was a *charistikarios* (the *charistike* is discussed below, in Chapter 4, “Grants for life”).

¹⁶ G. Rhalles and M. Potles, *Σύνταγμα τῶν θείων καὶ ἱερῶν κανόνων* (Athens, 1852–59), v, 89: καὶ τῆς ἐνδεχομένης προνοίας ἀπὸ τῆς δηλωθείσης μονῆς χάριν ψυχικῆς σωτηρίας τοῦ αἰοδιμου κτίτορος αὐτῆς ἀξιούμενον. C. du Fresne Du Cange, *Glossarium ad scriptores mediae et infimae graecitatis* (Paris, 1688; repr. Graz, 1958), col. 1246. For another example of this expression: Thomas Magistros in Migne, *PG* 145, col. 545; A. S. Lampros, *Παλαιολόγεια καὶ Πελοποννησιακά* (Athens, 1912–30), iv, 284.3–4 = S. Lampros, “Τρεῖς ἐπιστολαὶ τοῦ καρδινάλιου Βησσαρίωνος ἐν τῇ δημῶδει γλώσσῃ,” *Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων* 5 (1908), 21.1–2: τις ἀποκατάστασις τῆς τῶν αὐθεντοπούλων προνοίας, cited by Ahrweiler, “La concession des droits incorporels,” 104 note 10. In the apparatus a variant refers to “some restoration for the *pronoia* [εἰς τὴν πρόνοιαν] of the ruler’s children.”

¹⁷ Lemerle, *Cinq études*, 23.101–02. The last rendering is that of S. Vryonis, “The Will of a Provincial Magnate, Eustathios Boilas (1059),” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 11 (1957), 267. Also, cf. *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, 220.65–66.

[1.1] Anna Komnene on her father's orphanage (ca. 1150)

This is how Anna Komnene uses the word in the often-cited description of her father's state-run orphanage (*orphanotropheion*). She first employs *pronoia* in its simple sense of "care" or "solicitude," by asking rhetorically "who could possibly number those who eat there daily or the expenses each day and the *pronoia* devoted to each?" but then adds that Alexios "set aside the *pronoiai* for them from land and sea." George Ostrogorsky regarded this as a play on words proving the existence of the institution of *pronoia* grants under Alexios I, but on the face of things Anna is simply telling us that her father had furnished his endowment with incomes from the land economy and from fisheries or the sea trade.¹⁸ In fact Fedor Uspenskij had already noted that a few lines later she uses the verb *προνοῶ* in the more elementary sense of "to administer," referring to the "accounts of those administering the properties of the poor" (καὶ λογοπραγία τῶν προνοουμένων τὰ τῶν πενήτων κτήματα). Nevertheless, Paul Lemerle rightly observed that *pronoia* "in the sense of solicitude for a certain category of beneficiaries, passes to that of resources for whom this solicitude is exercised," demonstrating its evolution toward a technical sense.¹⁹

"Administration" or "management"

Just as the meaning of *pronoia* could expand from simple "solicitude" to the object of that solicitude, so a parallel extension of the word's meaning occurred that embraced the idea of administration and management. Thus, according to the historian John Zonaras, Nikephoros III Botaneiates entrusted to John, metropolitan of Sidon, "the *pronoia* of the public matters." This sense of "administration" or "management" – in effect the kind of care exercised by someone in authority – is encountered frequently in sources from the tenth and eleventh centuries.²⁰

¹⁸ *Alexiad*, xv.vii.7: ed. Reinsch, 483.79–484.82 = ed. Leib, III, 216.27–31: ἄλλὰ τίς ἐξαριθμῆσαι δυνήσαιο τοὺς καθήμεραν ἐσθιοντας ἢ τὴν καθεκάστην δαπάνην καὶ τὴν γινομένην εἰς ἕκαστον πρόνοιαν, and ἐκεῖνος γὰρ ἀφορίσατο τὰς ἀπὸ γῆς καὶ θαλάττης αὐτοῖς προνοίας. Ostrogorsky, *Feodalité*, 27–28, and also A. Hohlweg, *Beiträge zur Verwaltungsgeschichte des oströmischen Reiches unter den Komnenen* (Munich, 1965), 84. But cf. Hohlweg, "Zur Frage der Pronoia," 298; Kazhdan, *Agrarnye otnošenija*, 204, 211; Kazhdan, "Formen," 220; and D. Constantelos, *Byzantine Philanthropy and Social Welfare* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1968), 129.

¹⁹ *Alexiad*, xv.vii.7: ed. Reinsch, 484.88–89 = ed. Leib, III, 217.7–9. Uspenskij, "Značenie," 6. Lemerle, *Cinq études*, 283, 311 note 122.

²⁰ Zonaras, Bonn ed., III, 725.4: τὴν τῶν κοινῶν ἀνέθετο πρόνοιαν. Evidently, the Armenian word *hog* ("care," "solicitude") was used in the eleventh century in this sense as well: K. Juzbašjan, "Varjagi' i 'pronia' v sočinenii Aristakesa Lastivertci," *VizVrem* 16 (1959), 21–24.

One could be given the “pronoia” of a theme (military district),²¹ and the emperor could entrust someone with the “pronoia” of church and imperial property.²² It is this latter sense that we find expressed in one of the best-known examples of the use of the word *pronoia*. After the deposition and death of Patriarch Michael Keroularios in 1059, Constantine Leichoudes, a man who had risen to the office of *mesazon* (first minister and the emperor’s chief confidant) under Constantine Monomachos (1042–55), was chosen as patriarch. According to Skylitzes Continuatus (written not long after 1079), Monomachos had appointed Leichoudes to be “guardian of the pronoia and of the property titles of the Mangana” (καὶ τῆς τῶν Μαγγάνων προνοίας καὶ τῶν δικαιωμάτων φύλαξ). John Zonaras, who composed his chronicle after 1118 and who was familiar with Skylitzes Continuatus, wrote, “Monomachos assigned [to Leichoudes] the pronoia of the Mangana and entrusted [to him] the documents concerning its freedom” (ὁ Μονομάχος καὶ τὴν τῶν Μαγγάνων ἀνέθετο πρόνοιαν καὶ τὰ περὶ τῆς ἐλευθερίας αὐτῶν ἐνεπίστευσε ἐγγράφα). Upon nominating him to be patriarch, Isaac I Komnenos thought the moment propitious to set himself in possession of these documents. Isaac halted his consecration as patriarch until Leichoudes gave way and returned the documents of the Mangana. His elevation to the patriarchate then proceeded smoothly.²³

It seems that Nikolaj Skabalanovič was the first to suggest that in these passages we should see the first mention of the institution of pronoia. This opinion was later adopted by George Ostrogorsky, repeated by Armin Hohlweg, and became what Paul Lemerle called a “legend.”²⁴ However, while the notion that Leichoudes was the “first *pronoiaris*” still appears

²¹ *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, 150.4–5: τοὺς τῶν μεγάλων ἀκριτικῶν θεμάτων τὴν πρόνοιαν ἀναδεχομένους. *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus*, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, 1838), 6.14–16: τῶν πέντε θεμάτων τῶν κατὰ τὴν Ἄνατολὴν τὴν ἐφορείαν καὶ πρόνοιαν διοικούμενον, and H. Delehaye, “Vita S. Pauli iunioris in monte Latro,” *Analecta Bollandiana* 11 (1892), 64.1–2, both cited by Kazhdan, *Agrarnye otnošenija*, 212. Nikephoros II Phokas’ *taktikon*, *Le traité sur la guérilla (De velitatione) de l’empereur Nicéphore Phocas*, ed. G. Dagron and H. Mihaescu (Paris, 1986), 1.3 (cited by Uspenskij, “Značenie,” 3), as well as xvi.7 and xx.53.

²² Skylitzes Continuatus, 103.13: ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκονομίας . . . ἐπὶ τῆς τῶν ἱερῶν κειμηλίων προνοίας καὶ προστασίας, and Delehaye, “Vita S. Pauli iunioris in monte Latro,” 138.17ff.: ἡ τῶν βασιλικῶν κτημάτων ἐγχειρίστο πρόνοια (both cited by Kazhdan, *Agrarnye otnošenija*, 209, 211).

²³ Attaleiates, *Miguel Attalates, Historia*, ed. and trans. I. Pérez Martín (Madrid, 2002), 51.1–6 = *Michaelis Attalioatae Historia*, ed. W. Brunet de Presle (Bonn, 1853), 66.12–19. Skylitzes Continuatus, 106.8–9. Zonaras, xviii.5.9–13: Bonn edn., iii, 670.7–9.

²⁴ N. Skabalanovič, *Vizantijskoe gosudarstvo i cerkov v XI v.* (St. Petersburg, 1884), 264. Ostrogorsky, *Féodalité*, 22, and *History of the Byzantine State*, rev. ed. (New Brunswick, N.J., 1969), 331 note 1. Hohlweg, *Beiträge zur Verwaltungsgeschichte*, 84. Lemerle, *Cinq études*, 281.

from time to time in historical writing,²⁵ for the most part this view has been abandoned. Rather, beginning with Hélène Ahrweiler, most scholars have argued that Leichoudes actually received a *charistike*.²⁶ As for what “the Mangana” was, initially scholars tended to identify it as the monastery of the Mangana in Constantinople,²⁷ but scholars now generally connect it to the government bureau (*sekretion*) of the Mangana which administered extensive properties belonging to the imperial domain. For example, Nicolas Oikonomides suggested that the grant to Leichoudes was neither a *pronoia* nor a *charistike*, but a special arrangement in which Leichoudes was granted a lifetime appointment as head of the *sekretion* of the Mangana.²⁸

The Leichoudes–Mangana affair can safely be omitted from any discussion of *pronoia* as an institution. That “*pronoia*” in the Zonaras passage has no technical sense, but simply meant “administration,” is confirmed by the other passage from Zonaras cited above in which he writes that Nikephoros Botaneiates entrusted to John, metropolitan of Sidon, “the *pronoia* of public affairs,” which in fact parallels Michael Attaleiates’ statement that John of Sidon was “governor of public matters” (τῶν κοινῶν πραγμάτων διοικητής) under Michael VII. Similarly, it is clear that Skylitzes Continuatus did not use the word *pronoia* in a technical sense either. Several lines after stating that Leichoudes received the “*pronoia* of the Mangana,” he juxtaposes the adjective *pronoetikos* with the noun *pronoia*, and writes that Patriarch Leichoudes “was generous [δωρηματικός] and solicitous [προνοητικός] not only of those of the Church, but simply of all, so

²⁵ K. Varzos, *Ἡ γενεαλογία τῶν Κομνηνῶν*, 2 vols. (Thessaloniki, 1984), II, 10, and D. Geanakoplos, *Byzantium: Church, Society, and Civilization Seen through Contemporary Eyes* (Chicago, 1984), 68–69. With some subtlety, G. Litavrin, *Vizantijskoe obščestvo i gosudarstvo v X–XI vv.* (Moscow, 1977), 108, argued that, inasmuch as Leichoudes’ *pronoia* was a grant of an incorporeal right, in a broad sense it could be called a *pronoia*.

²⁶ Ahrweiler, “La concession des droits incorporels,” 108, and H. Ahrweiler, “Charisticariat et autres formes d’attribution de donations pieuses aux X^e–XI^e siècles,” *ZRVI* 10 (1967), 10, 25. Ostrogorsky, “Die Pronoia unter den Komnenen,” 42; Hohlweg, “Zur Frage der Pronoia,” 294; Lemerle, *Agrarian History*, 222, *Cinq études*, 280–81 and note 70, and “Un aspect du rôle des monastères à Byzance,” in Lemerle, *Le monde de Byzance* (London, 1978), no. xv, 24 note 3; N. Svoronos, “Ἡ «Χαριστική δωρεά»,” in *Ἱστορία τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ Ἔθνους*, vol. 9 (Athens, 1980), 70; and S. Varnalides, *Ὁ θεσμός τῆς Χαριστικῆς (Δωρεᾶς) τῶν μοναστηρίων εἰς τοὺς Βυζαντινοὺς* (Thessaloniki, 1985), 138–39.

²⁷ Mutafčiev, “Vojniški zemi,” 42. Dölger, *Regesten*, II, no. 925. Hohlweg, “Zur Frage der Pronoia,” 292. Ostrogorsky, “Die Pronoia unter den Komnenen,” 42.

²⁸ Kazhdan, *Agrarnye otnošenija*, 212–13. Ahrweiler, “La concession des droits incorporels,” 108, and “Charisticariat et autres formes d’attribution,” 10 and 25. Lemerle, *Cinq études*, 280–81. N. Oikonomides, “St. George of Mangana, Maria Skleraina, and the ‘Maly Sion’ of Novgorod,” in Oikonomides, *Byzantium from the Ninth Century to the Fourth Crusade* (London, 1992), no. XVI, 245.

that no one remained without a measure of his pronoia and did not profit from his hand.”²⁹

Rights to administer something (to be entrusted with its pronoia) were not conferred by the emperor alone, nor did they consist only of state properties. In 1071 the metropolitan of Kyzikos asked whether “it is not just for the archpriest of an area to have the pronoia of monastic matters . . . if otherwise at the time the means are insufficient?” And the *typikon* of the empress Irene for the Kecharitomene monastery in Constantinople (1118) refers to people who were “appointed to the pronoia of the properties of the monastery” that she founded. This is evidently a reference to *charistike*, but as in other cases, one need not see an equivalence between pronoia and the latter institution; rather, a formal institution was being alluded to in a non-technical manner.³⁰

In Michael Attaleiates’ *Diataxis* (1077), the instructions for the administration of his religious and charitable foundations after his death, the word *pronoia* appears numerous times. Several times he writes of God’s pronoia, and once the word is used simply to mean “care,”³¹ but most often the word *pronoia* appears as a component of the responsibilities of the secular administrator, stipulated by Attaleiates to be a relative, who after his death would succeed him in the management of his monastic and religious foundations. Thus, we read that if any successor to Attaleiates did not hold to the rules of the founder, he was “to be expelled from its overseeing and lordship and pronoia.” Everyone should be subordinate to Attaleiates’ heir, “who is lord of the pronoia and management of everything.” If one of his relatives shamed the monks and their monastery, “he shall be removed from their overseeing and lordship and pronoia.” If there is no relative left to replace a bad one, he who holds the “lordship” (*kyriotes*) and “overseeing”

²⁹ Zonaras, Bonn edn., III, 725.4, and Attaleiates, ed. Pérez Martin, 133.6 = Bonn ed., 180, cited by Lemerle, *Cinq études*, 281 note 71 and 262 note 25. Skylitzes Continuatus, 106.19–22. Hohlweg, “Zur Frage der Pronoia,” 290, 292.

³⁰ F. Uspenskij, “Mnenija i postanovlenija,” *IRAİK* 5 (1900), 23.12: τὴν πρόνοιαν τῶν μοναχικῶν πραγμάτων, cited by Kazhdan, *Agrarnye otnosenija*, 209. Gautier, “Le typikon de la Théotokos Kécharitomène,” line 1064: ἀποστελλόμενοι εἰς τὴν τῶν κτημάτων τῆς μονῆς πρόνοιαν. Kazhdan, *Agrarnye otnosenija*, 209, viewed a passage from the 1093 will of Christodoulos, founder of the Patmos monastery, as evidence of the word *pronoia* being used to indicate a *charistike*. Christodoulos ordered that, once the bishop George Strovelitzes entered his monastery, he should be treated by future *charistikarioi* (lay administrators) of the monastery no differently than the other monks: “his [Strovelitzes’] pronoia shall be without hindrance” (καὶ γένηται ἡ πρόνοια αὐτοῦ . . . ἀκωλύτως): MM, VI, 84.27–33. Strovelitzes’ “pronoia” was, broadly conceived, the solicitude directed toward him, manifested concretely in the maintenance or sustenance he was to receive. The passage makes no connection between pronoia and *charistike*.

³¹ P. Gautier, ed., *La diataxis de Michel Attaleiate* (Paris, 1981), 19.25, 85.1123, 117.1619, and 31.241.

(*ephoreia*) should abandon the “management” (*dioikesis*) and “pronoia” of the monastery, and the monks “should manage things for themselves, and take thought for and govern everything according to my instruction.”³²

In these passages there is a close association between the words *kyriotes*, *ephoreia*, *dioikesis*, and *pronoia*, but by no means should this suggest that the words were synonyms. Rather, they reflected aspects of the authority of Attaleiates’ successor: lordship, overseeing, management, and administration. Similar juxtapositions are found in the *typikon* of the monastery of St. Mamas from 1158: “pronoia and management [*dioikesis*]” of the monastery, and in the 1136 *typikon* for the Pantokrator monastery in Constantinople: “the care [*kedemonia*] and pronoia and management [*dioikesis*]” of the monastery. Indeed as early as the sixth century, when a man transferred a religious foundation to his brother, he referred to its “holy governance [*dioikesis*], management [*epimeleia*], and pronoia.” In all of these passages *pronoia* means “administration” or a type of formal “care.”³³

This sense of *pronoia* also appears in the idiomatic constructions discussed earlier. In the eleventh century Kekaumenos uses the idiomatic phrase ποιῆσθαι πρόνοιαν τινος in regard to the administration of a *kastron*: “the one taking care of the *kastron*” (ὁ τοῦ κάστρου τὴν πρόνοιαν ποιούμενος). This idiom is also found in the *typikon* of Gregory Pakourianos, where he writes of “the *hegoumenoi* and the rest of the brothers taking care [of the monastery] along with me.”³⁴ The construction with γίγνομαι is found in a document which notes that Romanos I Lekapenos (920–44) and his co-emperors granted a yearly allowance to a monastery on the condition that the monks take care of a spring, literally “the pronoia of this [spring] shall be by the monks.”³⁵

³² Gautier, *Diataxis*, 37.318–19: ἐκδιωχθήσεται τῆς ἐφορείας καὶ κυριότητος καὶ προνοίας αὐτοῦ, 57.653–54: ὡς κύριον τῆς τῶν ὄλων προνοίας καὶ διοικήσεως, 71.896–97: ὁ τοιοῦτος ἀποκινῆται τῆς ἐφορείας καὶ κυριότητος καὶ προνοίας αὐτῶν, 73.908–13: διοικῶσι τὰ ἐπ’ αὐτοῖς καὶ προνοῶται καὶ διανέμωσι πάντα κατὰ τὴν παροῦσάν μου διάταξιν.

³³ S. Eustratiades, “Τυπικὸν τῆς ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει Μονῆς τοῦ Ἁγίου μεγαλομάρτυρος Μάμαντος,” *Ἑλληνικά* 1 (1928), 256–314, prologue, line 122. Gautier, “Le *typikon* du Christ Sauveur Pantokrator,” line 42, and also lines 691, 1406. Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations*, 68.

³⁴ *Sovety i rasskazy Kekavmena*, ed. Litavrin, 178.7–8, and cf. 296.30. P. Gautier, “Le *typikon* du sébaste Grégoire Pakourianos,” *REB* 42 (1984), 119.1656–57: τοὺς μετ’ ἐμὲ τὴν πρόνοιαν ποιουμένους κατηγουμένους τε καὶ λοιποὺς ἀδελφούς (cited by Kazhdan, *Agrarnye otnošenija*, 209). For another example, MM, vi, 72.4–6.

³⁵ *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, ed. H. Delehaye (Brussels, 1902), 937.17–18: ἐφ’ ᾧ γίνεσθαι τὴν τούτου πρόνοιαν παρὰ τῶν μοναχῶν τῆς τοιαύτης μονῆς (cited by Kazhdan, *Derevnja i gorod*, 108, and *Agrarnye otnošenija*, 210, who tried to read a more technical sense into the word *pronoia* here). The idiomatic construction with τίθημι is found in a document from 1094: MM, vi, 91.7–12, cited by Kazhdan, *Agrarnye otnošenija*, 209.

The verb *προνοῶ*

Related to the noun *pronoia* are the verb *προνοῶ* and the noun *προνοητής*. The ancient verb *προνοῶ* (*πρό* and *νοῶ* from *νόος*), as well as its middle form *προνοοῦμαι* meant “to perceive beforehand,” “to act cautiously (providently),” “to provide” something, and with an object in the genitive, “to provide for” or “to look after” something. In the Byzantine era the latter senses are the most common. In the thirteenth century Theodore II Laskaris wrote: “I shall take care of my affairs as Christ governs me” (*προνοήσω μου τοῦ συμφέροντος ὡς πρυτανεύσει μοι ὁ Χριστός*). The preface of a chrysobull of Michael VIII Palaiologos from 1258/9 states that, since the emperor provides for soldiers, it would be wrong not “to provide for and to reward [monks] with costly gifts and to devise means of provisions.” And a document from 1353 refers to inhabitants of the area of Karyes on Mount Athos who, from their tower, were “providing for [their] safety and freedom from danger from” the attacks of Turks (*τὸ ἀσφαλῆς ἐκ τούτου καὶ ἀκίνδυνον . . . προνοοῦμενοι*).³⁶

As a man can provide for his affairs, the emperor can provide for monks, and people can provide for their own safety, so God provides for His people. In the late eleventh century, John Oxeites, patriarch of Antioch, prayed for God to “watch over us and direct our life in mercy and compassion” (*ἡμῶν καὶ προνοεῖς καὶ διοικεῖς ἐν ἐλέει καὶ οἰκτιρμοῖς τὴν ζωὴν ἡμῶν*). In these examples, *προνοεῖν* and the middle *προνοεῖσθαι* both mean “to have *pronoia*,” and are equivalent to *ἔχειν πρόνοιαν*.³⁷

Just as *pronoia*, when exercised by people in authority, took on the sense of administration or management, so *προνοεῖν* and *προνοεῖσθαι* could take on the sense of “to administer or manage,” or, literally, “to undertake the

³⁶ *Theodori Ducae Lascaris Epistulae cccxvii*, no. 61.38, and also, no. 48.15. *Esphigménou*, no. 6.16: *προνοεῖσθαι καὶ δωρεαῖς ἀνταμείβειν πολυτελέσι καὶ σιτηρεσίων ἐπινοεῖν ἀφορμάς*, and cf. *Esphigménou*, no. 23.9. V. Mošin and A. Sovre, *Supplementa ad acta graeca Chilandarii* (Ljubljana, 1948), no. 7.29, and cf. *Iviron*, III, no. 72.6. Also, in an act from southern Italy from 1130: “and to confirm and to provide for the security [of certain properties] in every way” (*κυροῦν καὶ τὸ ἀσφαλῆς αὐτοῖς πάντοθεν προνοεῖν*): F. Trinchera, *Syllabus graecarum membranarum* (Naples, 1865), no. 106, p. 139.2–3, cited by Kazhdan, *Agrarnye otnošeniia*, 221, who thought the verb was used here in the sense of “to grant, or to entrust.”

³⁷ Gautier, “Réquisitoire du patriarche Jean d’Antioche,” 129.52. Similarly, *Theodori Ducae Lascaris Epistulae cccxvii*, 100.9, and 130.18: *προνοησαμένης μοι τοῦτ’ αὐτὸ τῆς δυνάμεως τοῦ Χριστοῦ*. Other examples of the use of these verbs: (6th c.) a novel of Justin II from 570: Zacharia, *Jus*, II, 18.28; (7th c.) *Das Strategikon des Maurikios*, VIII.2.224; (10th c.) *Le traité sur la guérilla (De velitatione) de l’empereur Nicéphore Phocas*, XVI.1 (p. 91); *typikon* from ca. 970: P. Meyer, *Die Haupturkunden für die Geschichte der Athosklöster* (Leipzig, 1894), 115.22: *ποιμαίνεσθαι τε καὶ προνοεῖσθαι*.

pronoia of something.” Nikephoros II Phokas (963–69), in his treatise on warfare, speaks of “the generals administering the borders at the time” (παρὰ τῶν τότε τῆς ἄκρας προνοουμένων στρατηγῶν). This parallels a passage from the tenth-century treatise on skirmishing which mentions those commanders “undertaking the *pronoia* of the large border themes.”³⁸

The verb is used frequently in regard to financial officials. Thus, an act of Tiberios Constantine (578–82) refers to “the *kouratores* . . . of the divine houses administered by them” (τοὺς . . . κουράτωρας . . . τῶν παρ’ αὐτῶν προνοουμένων θείων οἰκῶν), and in a novel of Basil II from 996: “the *epoptai* [fiscal assessors] and those otherwise managing the fisc” (οἱ ἐπόπται καὶ οἱ ἄλλως προνοούμενοι τοῦ δημοσίου). The use of the verb in this sense has already been cited in a passage from Anna Komnene which refers to “accounts of those administering the properties of the poor” [1.1].³⁹

This sense of “to administer” was by no means a technical formulation, for it could be applied to people with no real official (public) responsibilities. In the late eleventh century John Oxeites complained that an “impious” *charistikarios* would often circumvent the normal administrative structure of the monastery with which he was entrusted by sending his orders not to the *hegoumenos*, but “to his man who was appointed to manage the [affairs] of the monastery” (πρὸς ὃν ἐπέστησε τὰ τῆς μονῆς προνοεῖσθαι ἄνθρωπον αὐτοῦ). In this case a private arrangement led to the exercise of *pronoia*.⁴⁰

Pronoetes

The word *pronoetes* (προνοητής), via the verb *pronoō*, is, like *pronoia*, ultimately derived from *pró* and *vóos*. It denotes someone who exercises *pronoia*, who administers or manages or cares for things. Manuel II

³⁸ *Le traité sur la guérilla (De velitatione) de l'empereur Nicéphore Phocas*, III.6 (p. 45). *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, 150.4–5, and also 200.6.

³⁹ Zacharia, *Jus*, II, 26.30–31. For other examples of the use of the verb in the sixth and seventh centuries in regard to an imperial *oikos*, and for the construction *προνοούμενος ὑπό*, see L. Jalabert and R. Mouterde, *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*, II (Paris, 1939), 290, no. 528, cited by Lemerle, *Cinq études*, 280 note 69. Zepos, *JGR*, I, 270.4–5 = Zacharia, *Jus*, III, 316.9, cited by Kazhdan, *Agrarnye otroženija*, 211.

⁴⁰ Gautier, “Réquisitoire du patriarche Jean d’Antioche,” 121.452. The verb is connected as well to the institution of *ephoreia* (similar to the *charistike*): John Apokaukos, ed. S. Pétridès, “Jean Apokaukos, lettres et autres documents inédits,” *IRAİK* 14 (1909), 7, no. 5.5–6.

Palaiologos (1391–1425) once referred to God as “the maker of all, the *pronoetes* of all, overseeing all.”⁴¹

Sometimes a *pronoetes* was a government official.⁴² An act of Nikephoros III Botaneiates from 1080 freed a monastery from the “incursions” of “*kastrophylakes* [commanders of fortresses], *episkeptitai* [administrators of imperial domains], *pronoetai*, and everyone else,” and in 1085 Alexios I Komnenos ordered that a monastery’s properties be troubled “neither by *strategoï* [provincial military governors] nor *kastrophylakes* nor *pronoetai* nor by any others.” This meaning is based on the verb *προνοῶ* in its sense “to provide for” or “to administer,” and the connection is seen clearly in a passage from a chrysobull of Alexios I that refers to “the *epoptai* and those otherwise administering [*pronooumenoi*] the fisc.”⁴³

Specifically, a *pronoetes* could also be the administrator of an imperial property, such as an *episkepsis*, a usage that dates back at least to the sixth century.⁴⁴ Other *pronoetai* appear to have had even more important responsibilities. In the tenth century the *vestarches* Michael Antipapas was a *pronoetes* of Athens, and the *protoproedros* Xiphilinos was a *pronoetes* of Lakedaimonia, while in 1089 the *patrikiος* Eustathios Charsianites was “*strategos* and *pronoetes* of Samos.”⁴⁵ Lead seals mention an official called the “*pronoetes* of Bulgaria,” and in Kekaumenos’ *Strategikon* the military commander Basil Monachos is called “*pronoetes* of the Bulgarians” (προνοητής Βουλγάρων). While there is disagreement whether the “*pronoetes* of Bulgaria” was the Byzantine governor of Bulgaria, or simply the military commander of the forces stationed in the newly conquered region, the charge clearly had no direct connection to land tenure or any kind of imperial grant.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Manuel II. Palaiologos, *Dialogue mit einem “Perser,”* ed. E. Trapp (Vienna, 1966), 122.27, and cf. 264.3. And cf. *Letters of Gregory Akindynos*, ed. and trans. A. Hero (Washington, 1983), no. 66.69–70, 16–17.

⁴² Hohlweg, “Zur Frage der Pronoia,” 294 and note 34. G. Stadtmüller, *Michael Choniates, Metropolit von Athen* (Rome, 1934), 25.

⁴³ Vatopédi, I, no. 10.55. L. Petit, “Le monastère de Notre-Dame de Pitié,” *IRAIK* 6 (1900), 26.22–23. Zepos, *JGR*, I, 270.4–5, and cf. Zacharia, *Jus*, III, 429.

⁴⁴ E.g., *Iviron*, II, no. 50.70, G. Schlumberger, *Sigillographie de l’empire byzantine* (Paris, 1884), 151. Zacharia, *Jus*, II, 26.9, 28.34. Kazhdan, *Agrarnye otnošenija*, 213. H. Glykatzi-Ahrweiler, “Recherches sur l’administration de l’empire byzantin aux IX^e–XI^e siècles,” in Ahrweiler, *Études sur les structures administratives et sociales de Byzance* (London, 1971), no. VIII, 50 note 4. N. Banescu, “La signification des titres de Πραίτωρ et de Προνοητής à Byzance aux XI^e et XII^e siècles,” *Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati, III = Studi e Testi* 123 (Vatican, 1946), 396, incorrectly argued that *pronoetai* were only financial officials and administrators of imperial domains.

⁴⁵ Schlumberger, *Sigillographie*, 170. Kazhdan, *Agrarnye otnošenija*, 212. *Patmos*, II, no. 52.3–4, 42, 129, 183, and also no. 53.186. Banescu, “La signification des titres,” 396.

⁴⁶ C. Sathas, *Μνημεία Ἑλληνικῆς Ἱστορίας, Documents inédits relatifs à l’histoire de la Grèce au moyen âge* (Paris, 1880–90), II, p. iv note 3, and Schlumberger, *Sigillographie*, 239–41, 575.

In a related sense, a *pronoetes* could be a kind of servant or steward who was employed by the beneficiary of an imperial grant. For example, a 1092 act of Alexios I ordered that a *metochion* of Lavra in the area of Thessaloniki enjoy a tax exemption and not be bothered by “the *pronoetai* of the properties” of his brother the *sevastokrator* Isaac.⁴⁷ That the *pronoetes* was in these cases a subordinate to a private individual is clear from the *typikon* of Gregory Pakourianos [4.2]. Among the properties listed in the *typikon* are several buildings purchased “by our man Vardanes, who became *pronoetes* from our decision.” Monasteries also had *pronoetai* to manage their properties. In a document from 1103 a monk is identified as both “the one taking care of [or administering]” (ὁ τοῦ χωρίου . . . προνοούμενος) a village held by a monastery, as well as the *pronoetes* of this village. Thus, we can at times translate the word simply as “manager” or even “caretaker.”⁴⁸

As early as the fourth century in Egypt, there were also lay *pronoetai* of monasteries. Some were appointed by the founder, while others were appointed and supervised by clerical authorities for the management of the religious institution. In this same sense holders of *charistikai* sometimes employed *pronoetai* to manage the monasteries they held. A document from 1049 mentions a monk who was *pronoetes* of a monastery.⁴⁹ This, and the fact that, on rare occasions, the word *pronoetes* appears as a synonym for *charistikarios*,⁵⁰ have led some scholars to the conclusion that *pronoetes* and *charistikarios* meant essentially the same thing.⁵¹

Uspenskij, “Značenie,” 3. *Sovety i rasskazy Kekavmena*, ed. Litavrin, 164.20–21. T. Wasilewski, “Les titres de duc, de catépan et de pronoétés dans l’empire byzantin du IX^e jusqu’au XII^e siècle,” *Actes du XI^e Congrès international d’études byzantines* (Belgrade, 1964), II, 236–37. Banescu, “La signification des titres,” 396 note 22, 398, denied that the *pronoetes* could be governor of a theme and calls the reference “l’effet d’une inadvertence.”

⁴⁷ *Lavra*, I, no. 51.13–14. Other examples of this: L. Petit, “Typikon du monastère de la Kosmosotira près d’Aenos,” *IRAİK* 13 (1908), 71.15 = G. Papazoglou, *Τυπικὸν Ἰσαακίου Ἀλεξίου Κομνηνοῦ τῆς Μονῆς Θεοτόκου τῆς Κοσμοσωτείρας (1151/52)* (Komotini, 1994), lines 2043–44; *Xéropotamou*, no. 7.25; and *Iviron*, II, no. 45.24.

⁴⁸ Gautier, “Le typikon du sébaste Grégoire Pakourianos,” 37.292–95. Banescu, “La signification des titres,” 397. Kazhdan, *Agrarnye otnošenija*, 211. Lemerle, *Cinq études*, 135. *Iviron*, II, no. 51.96, 105, and cf. line 129.

⁴⁹ Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations*, 66–69, 190. MM, IV, 315.17–18. Skabalanovič, *Vizantij-skoje gosudarstvo i cerkov*, 264. Uspenskij, “Značenie,” 3. Cf. the phrase in the *Peira* IX.10, cited by Kazhdan, *Derevnja i gorod*, 105: προνοούντες τῆς μονῆς.

⁵⁰ E.g., Uspenskij, “Mnenija,” 19.12–13, 20.4. Varnalides, *Ὁ θεσμός τῆς Χαριστικῆς*, 41. Kazhdan, *Agrarnye otnošenija*, 209. Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations*, 169.

⁵¹ W. Nissen, *Die Diataxis des Michael Attaleiates* (Jena, 1894), 53, and Hohlweg, “Zur Frage der Pronoia,” 291.

In his *Diataxis*, Michael Attaleiates often writes of *pronoetai*, and perhaps he saw little distinction between *charistikarios* and *pronoetes* when he ordered the monks not “to install some other *charistikarios* or *pronoetes* aside from those I mention.” However, it seems that when *pronoetes* is encountered in relation to *charistikai*, it is not really synonymous with *charistikarios*, but merely reflects one aspect of the *charistikarios* (*pronooumenos*, “he who takes care” of a monastery), or is a general term denoting someone who administers a monastery regardless of his status (founder, *charistikarios*, *ephoros*, etc.). As George Ostrogorsky wrote, a *charistikarios* could be called a *pronoetes*. But the word *pronoetes*, even when it appears in the context of religious foundations, need not mean *charistikarios*.⁵²

Peter Charanis believed that the word *pronoetes* was connected to the word *pronoia* in its technical sense, that a *pronoetes* was someone who “held a *pronoia*.” The preceding discussion shows that this view cannot be maintained. *Pronoetes* was a multipurpose word that was applied to many types of occupations. Even when it appears as a title, that is, with a technical sense, it should be translated as “caretaker” or “administrator.” This technical sense predates the technical sense of *pronoia*, and in fact, one does not find the words *pronoia* and *pronoetes* in proximity in any source.⁵³

As this survey of the general senses of the word *pronoia* comes to a close, it is necessary to repeat that some of the passages cited in this chapter may indeed have at their core a more technical meaning of *pronoia*. Here and throughout this study I have chosen to err on the side of caution and exclude references which, after careful examination, remain ambiguous. When seeking to characterize the nature of an institution, it is my belief that to include a single bad reference that in reality had nothing to do with the institution can cause much more mischief than to dismiss accidentally a few legitimate references. With that said, let us look at the first references to the institution of *pronoia*.

⁵² Gautier, *Diataxis*, 33.251–52. Other uses of the word: 25.133, 35.280, 49.528, 51.556–59. Lemerle, *Cinq études*, 79–80. Varnalides, *Ὁ θεσμός τῆς Χαραριστικῆς*, 41 note 24. Ostrogorsky, *Féodalité*, 18.

⁵³ Charanis, “Monastic Properties,” 87. Alexander Kazhdan, *Agrarnye otnošenija*, 213, went a step further than Charanis, arguing that the various applications of the word *pronoetes* showed that the term *pronoia* signified a variety of institutions that had in common the right to extract income in various forms, at times from monasteries, at times from taxes and so on. However, it seems to me that the collection of revenues was essentially only incidental to the functions of most of the *pronoetai* described above.