

3.2.2. The Legislation of the Macedonian Dynasty and its Conflict with the "Powerful"

What were the objectives of the legislative activity of the Macedonian Dynasty?

1. To improve the functioning of the administration
2. To solve the urgent problems of society

How did they achieve this?

1. They took care to change the legislation of the Isaurians
2. They took care to issue laws adapted to the economic and social conditions of their time.

What collections or individual laws were issued and what was their content?

1. Prochiros Nomos: collection of laws that replaced the Ekloge, a legal collection of the Isaurians.
2. Epanagoge: introduction to the Prochiron Nomos that defined the powers of the emperor and the patriarch.
3. Basilika: collection of laws, which is based mainly on the legal collections of Justinian (60 books).
4. Epiroticon Biblion: regulations governing the operation of the guilds of Constantinople.
5. Neaira: new laws that primarily aimed at limiting large landownership.

What is the characteristic feature of the social history of Byzantium during the Macedonian years?

The struggle of the state against the great landowners ("powerful").

What were the aspirations of the powerful?

1. To make the land of the poor their own
2. To acquire privileges
3. To conquer political power

Why was the protection of free farmers important for the Byzantine State and how did it try to ensure it?

1. They served in the armies of the themes
2. The taxes they paid were the main source of state revenues
3. The defense and the economy of Byzantium were inconceivable without small and medium-sized agricultural property.

For 80 whole years (922-1002) the emperors tried with their Neaira to protect the rural community and the free farmers from the abuses of the powerful.

What did the Macedonian emperors impose with these laws?

1. To prefer neighbors and relatives as buyers when a piece of community land was sold.
2. To return the fields that the powerful had made their own to the previous poor owners without compensation.
3. To prohibit the sale and purchase of military estates. Anyone who had such estates was obliged to enlist.
4. To limit the increase of church property.
5. To make the powerful pay the taxes of the poor of the village (1002), an obligation that previously weighed on the community collectively (alliegyuion).

Exercises

A. Choose the correct or the correct answers in each option:

1. Who belonged to the Macedonian dynasty?
 - Justinian
 - Constantine I
 - Basil II
 - Heraclius
2. What was the main characteristic of the social history of Byzantium during the years of the Macedonians?
 - The state's struggle against the large landowners
 - The increase in church property
 - The rise of intermediaries
 - The development of handicrafts
3. What were the main objectives of the powerful?
 - To appropriate the land of the poor
 - To extract privileges
 - To conquer political power
 - All of the above
4. These secured the state's income through the taxes paid by:
 - The powerful
 - The emperors
 - The church
 - The free farmers

5. What did the Macedonian emperors try to achieve with their Young?
 - To protect the powerful
 - To protect the agricultural community
 - To protect free farmers
6. What did the Macedonian emperors achieve with their laws?
 - To make the powerful pay the taxes of the poor in their area
 - To increase church property
 - To strengthen the military power of the state
 - To take back from the powerful the fields of their poor owners without paying anything.

B. Correct the mistakes, where there are any:

1. The legislation of the Macedonian emperors was adapted to the economic and social conditions of their time.
2. The powerful were nobles who owned small areas of land.
3. The defense and the economy of Byzantium did not make sense without small and medium-sized agricultural property.
4. The Prochiron Nomos replaced the Ekloge, a legal collection of the Isaurians.
5. The Epanagoge was an introduction to the Neaira that defined with accuracy the powers of the emperor and the patriarch.
6. The Basilika were a collection of laws, which is mainly based on the legal collections of Heraclius (60 books).
7. The Epiroticon Biblion was regulations governing the operation of the guilds of Constantinople.
8. The powerful sought to appropriate the land of the poor, to acquire privileges and to conquer political power