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ВИЗАНТОЛОШКОГ ИНСТИТУТА LX/II

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САДРЖАЈ – TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Том II – Tome II

иван <i>Бугарски, Вујадин Иванишевип,</i> Сирмијум и ооласт Друге Паноније у VI и VII веку у светлу нових налаза	669
Ivan Bugarski, Vujadin Ivanišević, Sirmium and the Region of Pannonia Secunda in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries in Light of New Finds	692
Тамара Илић, Правноисторијски прилог истраживању функције претора у Византији	695
Tamara Ilić, A Legal-Historical Contribution to the Research of the Office of Praetor in Byzantium	718
<i>Liliana Simeonova</i> , The Danube–Sava–Kupa Waterway and Bulgaria's Relations with the Papacy and the Eastern Franks, the Mid-860s through the Early 890s	721
Лилиана Симеонова, Пловни пут Дунав-Сава-Купа и односи Бугарске са Светом столицом и Источним Францима, од средине шездесетих година до почетка деведесетих година IX века	738
<i>Maja Nikolić</i> , <i>Bojana Pavlović</i> , Bulgarians, Serbs, and the Rus in the Central Balkans in Byzantine Historical Narratives (Late 10 th – Mid-13 th Century): The View from Constantinople	739
Маја Николић, Бојана Павловић, Бугари, Срби и Руси на централном Балкану у византијским историјским наративима (крај 10. – средина 13. века): поглед из Цариграда	765
Boris Stojkovski, The Byzantine Diocese Tourkia Reconsidered	769
$\it Eopuc C\overline{u}$ ојковски, Поновна разматрања о византијској дијецези Туркије	787
Predrag Komatina, The Diocesan Structure of the Archbishopric of Ohrid in the Charters of Basil II: Historical Development until the Early 11 th Century	
Предраї Комашина, Епархијска структура Охридске архиепископије према повељама цара Василија II: историјски развој до почетка XI века	820
Miloš Cvetković, The Peculiarities of the Byzantine Provincial Administration in the Balkans under the Komnenoi	823
Милош Цвешковић, Специфичности византијске провинцијске управе на Балкану у доба Комнина	841
Bojana Krsmanović, On the Role of Bulgarian Fortresses in the War of 976–1018	843
Бојана Крсмановић, О улози бугарских тврђава у рату 976-1018	873

Jovana Šijaković, Basil from Ohrid and his Circle	875
Јована Шијаковић, Василије Охриђанин и његов круг	897
Mihailo St. Popović, Branka Vranešević, Dorota Vargová, A Combined Approach to the Reconstruction of the "Sacred Landscape" of Duklja and Raška in the Times of Stefan Nemanja Based on Historical Geography, Art and Church History	899
Михаило Сій. Пойовић, Бранка Вранешевић, Дороій Варіова, Комбиновани приступ реконструкцији "светог простора" Дукље и Рашке у време Стефана Немање помоћу историјске географије, историје уметности и црквене историје	927
Срђан Пиривашрић, Хронологија произвођења Светог Саве у достојанство архимандрита	929
Srđan Pirivatrić, The Elevation of St. Sava to the Dignity of Archimandrite: A Chronology	941
<i>Ђорђе Бубало</i> , Да ли је постојала Диоклитија хвостанска? Прилог хронологији живота и култа Светог Петра Коришког	943
<i>Đorđe Bubalo</i> , Did Diokletia Hvostanska Exist? A Contribution to the Chronology of the Life and Cult of St. Peter of Koriška	976
Ивана Комашина, Културна кретања у српско-угарским односима у XIII веку – Леїенда о Св. Ладиславу и Жишије Св. Саве	979
<i>Ivana Komatina</i> , Cultural Tendencies in the Serbian-Hungarian Relations in the 13 th Century – <i>The Legend of St. Ladislaus</i> and <i>The Life of St. Sava</i>	995
Невен Исаиловић, Хум између Немањића и Шубића почетком XIV века Neven Isailović, Hum between the Nemanjić and Šubić Families	997
at the Beginning of the 14 th Century	1021
Isabel Grimm-Stadelmann, Bekanntes und Unbekanntes zum Kral-Xenon in Konstantinopel	1023
Isabel Grimm-Stadelmann, Known and Unknown Facts about the Xenon of the Kral in Constantinople	1038
<i>Даница Пойовић</i> , Гроб краљице Теодоре у Манастиру Бањска – још једно преиспитивање	1041
Danica Popović, The Tomb of Queen Theodora at the Banjska Monastery – Another Reexamination	1077

Ljubomir Milanović, Ever Ready Throne: Reassessing the Role of Hetoimasia in the Church of the Virgin Eleousa in Veljusa	1079
Љубомир Милановић, Приуготовљени престо: преиспитивање улоге хетимасије у Цркви Богородице Елеусе у Вељуси	1107
Miloš Živković, Ljubomir Milanović, Revisiting the Veljusa Frescoes: Notes on the Iconographic Program of the South Parekklesion	1111
Милош Живковић, Љубомир Милановић, Преиспитивање фресака Вељусе: белешке о иконографском програму јужног параклиса	1143
Christine Angelidi, Hagios Germanos of Prespa, a Church and a Patriarch after the Other	1147
Кристина Антелиди, Свети Герман Преспански: црква и патријарх	1165
Сашо Цветиковски, Новооткривени остаци средњовековних фресака у Манастиру Трескавцу	1167
Sašo Cvetkovski, Newly Discovered Remains of Medieval Frescoes in the Treskavac Monastery	1189
Драīан Војводић, Ἡ Σελασφόρος – призренске представе Богородице Светлоносице (Са филолошким прилогом <i>Дарка Тодоровића</i>)	1193
<i>Dragan Vojvodić</i> , Ἡ Σελασφόρος – The Prizren Representations of the Virgin the Light-Bearer (Philological Appendix by <i>Darko Todorović</i>)	1210
Миодраї Марковић, Сликари у Византији и земљама у њеном окружењу – њихов друштвени статус и углед	1213
Miodrag Marković, Painters in Byzantium and Beyond - Their Social Status and Reputation	1243
Brendan Osswald, Le nom des gens. Onomastique et immigration dans la Chronique de Ioannina	1247
Brendan Osswald, The Name of the People. Onomastics and Immigration in the Chronicle of Ioannina	1301
Sergey P. Karpov, Tana between East and West in the 14th and 15th Centuries	1303
Серіеј П. Карйов, Тана између истока и запада у XIV и XV веку	1309
Peter Schreiner, Die byzantinischen Wurzeln Südosteuropas	1311
Peter Schreiner, The Byzantine Roots of Southeastern Europe	1323
Библиографија Зборника радова Византолошког института I – LX (1952–2023), прир. <i>Зоран Јовановић</i>	1325

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BASIL FROM OHRID AND HIS CIRCLE*

The paper explores biographical assumptions about Basil from Ohrid, who became the metropolitan of Thessalonike by October 1154 and met his end after 1160. He had a friendly relationship with John Tzetzes and Leo Charsianites, metropolitan of Dristra. It is possible that Leo and Basil served together as deacons in the patriarchal chancellery sometime between 1140 and 1146. Many issues remain unclear, including the question whether Michael, the Master of the Rhetors, was indeed Basil's nephew. Michael and a circle of like-minded church dignitaries came under scrutiny in the Synods of 1156 and 1157 regarding their understanding of Christ's sacrifice. Basil's personal ties with this group might account for his initially reticent stance in this matter. It seems unlikely that he subscribed to their views. The tenor in his description of the Paschal Service in a later speech before the emperor appears motivated to demonstrate this.

Keywords: Basil Achridenos/Basil of Ohrid, patriarchal *protonotarios*, metropolitan of Thessalonike; John Tzetzes; Leo Charsianites, metropolitan of Dristra; Michael the Rhetor, ὁ τοῦ Θεσσαλονίκης

Basil was a native of Ohrid.¹ He rose to prominence as one of the Constantinopolitan church dignitaries in the first half of the 12th century and went on to become the metropolitan of Thessalonike. The image that emerges from the sources portrays

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¹ PBW (2016), 'Basileios of Ohrid, archbishop of Thessalonike', http://pbw2016.kdl.kcl.ac.uk/person/Basileios/238/. The initial study on Basil was published by *Vasiljevskij*, Василія Охридскаго, архіепископа (митрополита) Солунскаго, неизданное надгробное слово на смерть Ирины, первой

him as a man of letters, an impressive orator and a distinguished archbishop. Given that he came from a Slavic region, scholars have considered the possibility that he might have been a Slav himself. His high offices and the supposed second name Kalos were deemed to be arguments against this hypothesis,² Drawing on the name Kalos, Vasiljevskij proposed that Basil might have been descended from Greeks sent as priests to Ohrid or Greek officials and various attendants who worked at the center of the Archbishopric. However, it was later established that Kalos was neither his second name nor a nickname, but a misreading of his name.³ The name Basil is of little help in determining his background, because it was one of the Greek Christian names that, like the biblical names of John and Michael, commonly appeared among the Slavic-speaking inhabitants of the Ohrid region. The relevant testimonies suggest that it could appear alone or in combination with a Slavic name.⁴ As for education, Theophylact, the Archbishop of Ohrid, might have already had disciples among the local population.⁵ Likewise, it was hardly unusual for bishops to arrange instruction in Constantinople for their protégés.⁶ The two archbishops that succeeded Theophylact were recruited from the clerics on the staff of the Great Church of Constantinople⁷, that is from the same ranks that Basil later joined.

супруги императора Мануила Комнина, in the late 19th century as an introduction to the first edition of the funeral speech for Empress Eirene, the late consort of Manuel I Komnenos. The first edition of Basil's Dialogue with a Latin followed soon afterwards: *Schmidt*, Basilius aus Achrida, Erzbischofs von Thessalonich, bisher unedierte Dialoge. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des griechischen Schismas. Misreadings in these studies were corrected by *Mercati*, Βασίλειος Άχριδηνός e non Βασιλεὺς Άχριδηνῶν, Βασίλειος e non Καλός. The most recent contributions include an article on Basil's understanding of canon law and doctrinal issues, *Pitsakes*, Βασίλειος Άχριδηνός; and a new edition of his funerary tribute to Empress Eirene, *Messina*, Basilio Achrideno, Epitafio per l'imperatrice alamanna.

² Vasiljevskij, Василія Охридскаго надгробное слово, 57; Schmidt, Basilius aus Achrida, 3–4.

³ Mercati, Βασίλειος Άχριδηνός, 350. Cf. earlier notices of the erroneous reading in Patmiakë Bibliothëkë, ed. Sakkeliön, 317, n. 5; Petit, Les évêques de Thessalonique, 29.

⁴ *Dželebdžić*, Словенски антропоними, 486–487, 491, 492 (Basil Dobrešin, who came from Prizren to Ohrid to represent the interests of Černokosa, his wife's sister, before the court, Ponemata diaphora 103), 493 (Basil Druguvil, Ponemata diaphora 19), 494. Cf. the case of Basil from the neighborhood of Ohrid, who was the son of Eirene, who was the daughter of Vukan and Stana, Ponemata diaphora 72. In a *praktikon* of a later date (ca. 1320) we read of Basil, the brother of Dražo Choiroboskos ('Swineherd'), Actes d'Iviron III, 77.119, and Basil, the husband of Dobra, near Strumitza, Actes d'Iviron III, 77.157–158. For the dynamics of the Hellenization of the Slavic population cf. *Lefort*, Toponymie et anthroponymie; *Kravari*, Villes; *Đoković*, Proučavanje antroponimijske građe; *Simeonov*, Alltagsleben im nördlichen Makedonien, 243–260.

 $^{^{5}}$ Theophylactus, Epistulae, 103, cf. the relevant bibliographical note in $\it Mullet$, Theophylact of Ochrid, 367.

⁶ See, for example, the case of Metropolitan of Ephesus who paid Tzetzes to instruct a wayward protégé of his, Tzetzes, Epistulae, 50.

⁷ Leo Moungos, also called Leo the Philosopher, who was of Jewish descent, held the post of didaskalos to the heathen (διδάσκαλος τῶν ἐθνῶν, cf. Magdalino, Empire of Manuel I, 326; Stone, The Missionaries of Manuel I), and Michael, also known as Maximos, was a patriarchal ostiarios and deacon of Hagia Sophia, Gelzer, Patriarchat von Achrida, 7; Snegarov, История на Охридската Архиепископия, 204–205; Prinzing, The Autocephalous Byzantine Ecclesiastical Province of Bulgaria/Ohrid, 380.

The surviving writings of the renowned Ohridian include a dialogue with a Latin⁸, the reply to a letter from Pope Hadrian IV⁹, the funerary oration for Empress Eirene, the first wife of Manuel Komnenos,¹⁰ and a response (*apokrisis*) to the *megas sakellarios* of Dyrrachion concerning marriage impediments.¹¹ Four letters addressed to Basil have reached us: two in the correspondence of John Tzetzes,¹² the letter of Pope Hadrian IV,¹³ and, as it seems, a letter by an unknown author who apparently advised Basil on how to interpret a contentious passage of Maximos the Confessor.¹⁴ Finally, two seals and an inscription on the Walls of Thessalonike have also been attributed to him.¹⁵

Basil's circle in Constantinople

Between 1140 and 1146,¹⁶ John Tzetzes wrote to Basil of Ohrid,¹⁷ the patriarchal *protonotarios*, the first of his two surviving letters, which he later published in his collection of letters.¹⁸ Tzetzes' correspondence reveals the respect they had for one another. Both letters to Basil are exceptional literary miniatures and something of an indicator of the relationship that tied the two together. Neither of the two letters pertains to a specific favor or a practical interest,¹⁹ instead suggesting mutual fondness and a shared love of literature. The first concerns the curious case of Isaac Tzetzes appearing as the author of the *Commentary on Lycophron*.²⁰ Basil seems to have discerned that the real author of the text was John and not his late brother (d. 1138) and inquired about it with a benevolence that others who suspected the same

⁸ Dialogi Anselmi, ed. *Schmidt*, the talks went on for two days in 1154, cf. infra n. 49.

⁹ Rescriptum ad papam, ed. *Migne*, dated to 1155, cf. infra n. 74.

¹⁰ Oratio funebris in Irenem, ed. *Messina*, dated to 1160, cf. infra n. 56.

¹¹ Responsio, ed. Migne, in 1160, cf. infra n. 109.

¹² Tzetzes, Epistulae, ed. Leone, 21, 95.

¹³ Hadriani papae IV. Epistula ad Basilium Achridenum, ed. *Migne*, cf. infra n. 74.

 $^{^{14}}$ See the text of Sancti Maximi ex opere dubiorum LXIII, ed. *Migne*, and the corrections in *Mercati*, Βασίλειος Άχριδηνός.

¹⁵ See infra 884–885, 890.

¹⁶ 1140 according to *Wendel*, Tzetzes, 1981 [also in PBW (2016), 'Basileios of Ohrid, archbishop of Thessalonike']; 1145 according to *Darrouzès*, Recherches sur les ОФФІКІА, 356; between 1143 and 1146 according to *Grünbart*, Prosopographische Beiträge, 189.

¹⁷ Tzetzes, Epistulae, 21: Άχριδηνός, ibid. 95: Άχριδιώτης; in other cases Άχριδηνός: Dialogi Anselmi, ed. Schmidt; Rescriptum ad papam, Responsio, ed. Migne; Oratio funebris in Irenem, ed. Messina.

¹⁸ These are Letter 21 and Letter 95 in the collection that in its modern editions includes 107 letters. Tzetzes arranged the collection chronologically, but his assistant mixed up the order in a part of the corpus, cf. *Wendel*, Tzetzes, 1992–1993; *Leone*, Praefatio, XVIII–XIX; *Shepard*, Tzetzes' Letter to Leo, 202 n. 4. The two earliest manuscripts contain an additional letter in iambic verse composed before the first half of the 1160s, during which time the corpus was compiled, *Pizzone*, Christmas Presents for John Tzetzes, 1316–1317.

 $^{^{19}}$ Expressions of gratitude in Letter 95, when Basil was already a metropolitan, do suggest that he was supportive of Tzetzes.

²⁰ Cf. Coward, Towards a New Edition of Tzetzes' Commentary on Lycophron, 359–360.

had not shown. This kindness might be the reason why Tzetzes 'chose to publish' his explanation through a letter to the good-natured fellow from Ohrid. Besides bearing evidence to Basil's philological affinity, the letter is significant because it was addressed to him as the patriarchal *protonotarios*. The *Commentary on Lycophron* is believed to have been published in 1140,²¹ meaning that the letter must have been written after the Commentary was in circulation and certainly before 1146 when Patriarch Michael II Kourkouas (Oxeites), the addressee of one of the later letters in the dominantly chronological collection, vacated the patriarchal throne.²² That would suggest that Basil became *protonotarios* at some point between 1140 and 1146, either under Patriarch Leo Stypes (1134–1143) or under Patriarch Michael Kourkouas (1143–1146). According to the commonly held view he was the *protonotarios* under Patriarch Michael.²³

It is not quite clear how the change or the interregnum on the patriarchal throne might have affected lower church dignitaries of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Leo Stypes died in January 1143 (while Emperor John II was in Cilicia). His successor was elected six months later, after Manuel's return to Constantinople from Cilicia, where his father had unexpectedly died and he was proclaimed emperor. Michael Kourkouas, ²⁴ the abbot (*hegoumenos*) of the monastery on the island of Oxeia, near Constantinople, became the patriarch in July 1143 and by September already wanted to step down. ²⁵ He remained on the patriarchal throne until March 1146 when he resigned and returned to his monastery. Deacons occupied the post of *protonotarios* in all episcopal sees and it appears already in early protocols of local synods. ²⁶ The patriarchal *protonotarios* was primarily in charge of correspondence ($\pi \iota \tau \tau \dot{\alpha} \kappa \iota \alpha$). ²⁷ Compared to the officials who ran the patriarchal administration, his role was more akin to that of

²¹ Wendel, Tzetzes, 1981.

²² Patriarch Michael is the addressee of Letter 30, cf. *Grünbart*, Prosopographische Beiträge, 183.

²³ See all cited studies in n. 1 and 16. However, Wendel's dating of the relevant letter of Tzetzes (21) would imply that Basil held the post already under Patriarch Leo Stypes.

²⁴ See *Gautier*, Michel Italikos, 53–56. There are reports that the emperor was particularly careful in his choice of the patriarch who would crown him, Choniates, Historia, 51.93–7, cf. *Magdalino*, Empire of Manuel I, 276–277.

 $^{^{25}}$ Reasons are unclear, see Angold, Church and Society, 77–79. Cf. Michael Italicus, Λόγος εἰς τὸν πατριάρχην κῦρ Μιχαήλ, 77.1–79.2.

²⁶ For more on his various duties depending on the period, see *Zhisman*, Synoden, 138–140; *Darrouzès*, οφφικία, 355–359. A 9th-century text, the Kletorologion of Philotheos, added to Porphyrogennetos' *De Ceremoniis*, mentions a ceremonial role of the patriarchal *protonotarios* during the reception of the emperor at the patriarchal court after the liturgy on the Tuesday of the week preceding Lent (Cheese Week). After the main course was served, the patriarchal *protonotarios* would come in and stand to the left of the emperor's table to read aloud a suitable account about Lent (ὑπαναγνῶναι τὸν περὶ νηστείας ἀρμόζοντα λόγον), Philotheos, Kletorologion, ed. *Oikonomidès*, 193.1–14.

²⁷ A letter by Michael Italikos to a person called Alexios Komnenos (the identification is contentious, see *Gautier*, Michel Italikos, 215 n. 1), Michael Italicus, Πρὸς Ἀλέξιον, 215–218, dated to the post-1143 period, mentions an unnamed *protonotarios* with whom this Alexios had a quarrel. It was suggested that this could have been Basil, *Gautier*, Michel Italikos, 216 n. 3. However, if the unnamed *protonotarios* indeed claimed that the meaning of the word ὁμαίμων was restricted to siblings, as the

the Patriarch's personal secretary.²⁸ Given that Michael, the abbot of Oxeia, seems to have been reluctant to make the switch from his monastery to the patriarchal throne, a trusted person with a broad secular education could have been of immense help to him in an administration, whose members were resentful of one another and divided into clans.²⁹ Therefore it might be relevant that Basil seems to self-identify as a monk when he praises the benefaction of the late empress. Before conveying that he witnessed Eirene's generosity as an archbishop, he speaks as follows:³⁰

ναζιραίων χοροὶ οἱ τίμιοι παρ' αὐτῆ, σεμνεῖα θηλειῶν παρθένων, καταγώγια γυναικῶν σωφρόνων ἀγνοούμενα τοῖς πολλοῖς, μηδὲ ἀνοιγόμενα διὰ τὸ ἀπερίσπαστον τῆς ἀσκήσεως, εἰ μὴ ὅτε αἱ τῆς βασιλίσσης εὐποιῖαι τὰς εἰσόδους ἀνεπετάννυον, κλαύσατε πᾶσαι, πάντες πενθήσατε, τὴν εὐμαρίζουσαν ἡμῖν τὸν τραχὺν καὶ κατὰ Θεὸν βίον οὐκ ἔχοντες.

Oh, choirs of monks she revered, monasteries of clement virgins, sanctuaries of chaste women, unknown to many and shut away to avoid disturbing ascetic discipline, except when the good deeds of the empress opened the gates, weep all (you nuns), all (you monks) lament, because we have lost the one who made the harsh life pledged to God easier on us.

If the lines quoted above betray his memories of ascetic life at a monastery that had benefited from the late empress's grace, this would likely fall in the period after her wedding in early 1146, although Eirene had arrived in Constantinople already in 1142 as Manuel's fiancée. However, the significance of $\eta\mu\bar{\nu}$ in this passage

letter suggests, it is highly unlikely that Basil could have been unfamiliar with the usage of this word in a more general sense, denoting relatives in the literary and canonic context or with the examples Italikos lists to support broader usage. On the other hand, if this was a matter of the context in which the term was to be understood, the letter of Italikos can hardly help the addressee to repel the *protonotarios*' attack (ἀποταφρεύειν τὰς τοῦ πρωτονοταρίου ἐπεμβολάς), which is the stated reason for collating the testimonies in the letter. The person in question might be from any episcopal see. Those who restrict the meaning of ὁμαίμων to 'siblings' strike Italikos as novices to Hellenic discourse (δοκοῦσί μοι νεοτελεῖς εἶναι ταῖς Ἑλληνικαῖς διαλέκτοις), and it seems unlikely that any *protonotarios* of the patriarch in Constantinople would fit the description. Cf. Basil's resolution of a legal quandary in 1160, which had to do with consanguinity, see infra n. 109.

²⁸ Darrouzès, оффікіа, 359. Many candidates competed for posts in the patriarchal administration, and they were often protégés of influential bishops, clerics or lay officials. A synodal act from 1145, edited and discussed in Papagianne – Troianos, Die Besetzung der Ämter, concerns office promotions Patriarch Michael had to revoke. Unaware of a previous patriarchal ruling concerning promotion to posts in the skeuophylakion, which were to be filled from a waiting list, he admitted his mistake and annulled the appointments he had previously approved, cf. Angold, Church and Society, 76–77.

²⁹ Angold, Church and Society, 90–91.

³⁰ Oratio funebris, 28.255–260. The following sentence uses the first-person plural when addressing the plethora of archbishops who relied on the empress to speak in favor of their causes before the emperor and who were always met with her wholehearted support, Oratio funebris, 29.261–270. In 1146, Manuel Komnenos issued a chrysobull which ensured that monasteries in Constantinople and its surroundings would not lose any property to the state in the event that their title deeds were inadequate. That right was extended in 1148 to the estates of the patriarchal church and to bishops and metropolitans, see *Angold*, Church and Society, 87. Since Basil praises Eirene for upholding the issues of monks and bishops before the emperor, and since the speech is an indirect praise of the emperor, Basil could here be referring to these concessions as well.

is a matter of interpretation, 31 and therefore it remains unclear whether his monkhood merely preceded his consecration as bishop or he had "pledged his life to God" irrespective of that. In any case, the students sent from the province to continue their education in Constantinople were often schooled at monasteries. 32 As for the possible connection between Basil of Ohrid and Oxeia, it is interesting to note that Gregory \dot{o} $\tau o \tilde{v}$ Boulyapíac, the abbot of the island's monastery at the time when former Patriarch Michael came back to the brotherhood, was a monk well-educated in rhetoric and a protégé of an Ohrid archbishop. 33 Still, it is not clear whether Gregory's patron was the then Archbishop of Ohrid John (Komnenos) 34 or one of his abovementioned predecessors, Leo Moungos and Michael Maximos. 35

Leo Charsianites³⁶, a mutual friend of Tzetzes and Basil, of whom we learn in the second of the mentioned letters (95), was also a deacon in Constantinople prior to ascending to the metropolitan throne of Dristra before the end of 1145.³⁷ If Leo was born before 1115, as Shepard infers, then, given the minimum ordination age of 25 for the diaconate³⁸, he could have been a deacon roughly from 1140 (and earlier) to 1145. During those years, Basil was the patriarchal *protonarios*, as mentioned above. Thus Leo and Basil might have served together at the patriarchal chancellery in similar, low-ranking positions³⁹ (second pentad) considering that there is a surviving seal⁴⁰ from this period that belonged to one "Leo, deacon and *hypomnematographos*." When the rumor that Tzetzes had died reached Thessalonike in 1155, the metropolitan of

³¹ Cf. Messina, Epitafio, 151.

³² Both clergy and laymen could be teachers, as attested by the case of Tzetzes and his rival at the Pantokrator Monastery, who was a priest originally from Pelagonia and did not get along with the archbishop of Ohrid, Tzetzes, Epistulae, 79; cf. *Grünbart*, Prosopographische Beiträge, 206–207; *Wendel*, Tzetzes, 1963.

³³ See Theodore Prodromos' letter to Gregory, a monk and abbot of the monastery on the island of Oxeia, dated to 1146, in PG 133, 1289, and Gregory's letters in *Gautier*, Les lettres de Grégoire. Gregory was a spiritual advisor to members of the imperial family and other prominent individuals. Before Gautier's edition, the epithet ὁ τοῦ Βουλγαρίας was not identified. The prior misreading turned Oxeia into a "Bulgarian" monastery, e.g. *Janin*, Les monastères nationaux et provinciaux, 437. The family of Patriarch Michael Kourkouas was of Armenian descent, and its members had also served at prominent positions in the Plovdiv area, see *Jordanov*, Sceau et inscription de Gregoire Kourkouas; *idem*, Corpus II, 239–242; *Andriollo*, Les Kourkouas.

³⁴ Cf. Angold, Church and Society, 173–174.

³⁵ Gautier, Les lettres de Grégoire, 204. Cf. supra n. 7.

³⁶ PBW (2016), 'Leon Charsianites, metropolitan of Dristra', http://pbw2016.kdl.kcl.ac.uk/person/Leon/207/.

³⁷ Shepard, Tzetzes' Letter to Leo, 229.

 $^{^{38}}$ See Canon 14 of the Council in Trullo with Balsamon's commentary, PG 137, $564_{\rm D}-565_{\rm A}$ (cf. Canon 16 of the Council of Carthage).

³⁹ The letter of Eustathios of Thessalonike to Michael Autoreianos, the future Patriarch of Constantinople (Epistulae, 31), sheds light on the standing of a *protonotarios* in the 12th century. The author jests with the addressee by postulating that the reason for his silence was that he thought himself too important since he was no longer a mere *protonotarios* but had moved up the ranks in the patriarchal administration.

⁴⁰ Laurent, Le corpus des sceaux, V/1, 106 (seal 131); Shepard, Tzetzes' Letter to Leo, 229 n. 91.

Dristra informed Tzetzes about it. Having met him in person in Constantinople as it seems,⁴¹ Leo recounted that the metropolitan of Thessalonike was deeply distraught and began eulogizing him. Moved by the Ohridian's grief and funerary praises, Tzetzes wrote to Basil. Readily discussing his sour state of mind and vividly describing his frail body,⁴² he declares himself hesitant to deny reports of his death because he is barely alive. Tzetzes also sent his regards to Basil's unnamed brother and to everyone in the metropolitan's service. The letter portrays his holiness as an exception among his peers, a model and an ornament of the high-priesthood⁴³, a sincerely humble and genuine lover of mankind who feels the sorrows of others, watchful to conform to the image of the truly great High Priest and God who loves mankind. Somewhat unsurprisingly, we learn that he deeply admired Tzetzes' work, trusting it to outlive its author.

As can be demonstrated through Basil's Dialogue with a Latin, Tzetzes was hardly overstating the significance Basil attached to studying ancient Greek texts.⁴⁴ At the start of the dialogue, both parties declare their commitment to the union of their Churches, with the Latin stating the two main obstacles to this goal: the arrogance (τὴν ἀλαζονείαν) of his side, and the over-ingenuity and artifice in speech (τὸ περισσὸν καὶ ποριμώτατον ἐν λόγοις) of the Hellenes. 45 The exchange quickly builds up to the Greek's remarks on Christ the Logos, whose scent, according to the apostle (Paul), is not equally savory to everyone, 46 and on the fairest attribute of humans - the spoken logos, which comes from the mouth as a messenger of thoughts, not unlike the *logos* of revelation that came from heaven. The shrewd parallels provoke the Latin to doubt the merits of Hellenic education in relation to the logos of the Gospels. The protagonist, who reflects Basil's stance, responds by making Hellenic education nearly indispensable and portrays it as a sharpening tool that renders the Greek tongue acute at clarifying that what is hard to put into words.⁴⁷ He invokes 'the wise Philo' and the analogy of Abraham, who begot offspring firstly with Hagar - the outer learning, and only after many years of hard toil became able to beget offspring with Sarah – the true philosophy. In this Philonic sense⁴⁸ the true champion of 'Hagar' would surely be Tzetzes. The alliance between ardent students of ancient

⁴¹ Shepard, Tzetzes' Letter to Leo, 214.

⁴² Tzetzes complains of being out of breath and reports about other ailments in Letters 88 (ca. 1154), 91 (1154/1155) and 92 (1154/1155); the dates are given according to *Grünbart*, Prosopographische Beiträge, 217, 218.

 $^{^{43}}$ Cf. the laudatory portrayal of Basil in the work of Eusthatios of Thessalonike, Sermones, ed. Wirth, 5.1–16 (ἐς τὸ 'Κύριε ἐλέησον' σκέψις); the entire text on Kyrie eleēson deserves special attention. It contains a quote from Basil's Dialogue and a commentary, as will be discussed in a separate paper.

⁴⁴ Dialogi Anselmi, 34.1-37.10.

 $^{^{45}}$ Ibid., 35.5–7. Cf. the echo of this statement in the work of Eustathios, cited supra n. 43.

⁴⁶ Cf. 2 Corinthians 2:15.

 $^{^{47}}$ Dialogi Anselmi, 37.3–4: ἀκόνη ἐστὶ τὴν γλῶτταν ἡμῶν παροξύνουσα, εἰς τὸ λευκαίνειν τὰ δύσφραστα.

⁴⁸ Philo of Alexandria, De congressu eruditionis gratia, 74–76. For the history of the imagery and its Byzantine reception see Š*ijaković*, Husband of Philosophy. It is tempting to infer from this that Basil was

masters of words and devotees of the mysteries that intrinsically evade words seems natural. They were inevitable brothers-in-arms in forging the capacity to grasp the *logos*. The art of these men of letters was able, for better or worse, to wrest the power away from material reality and subdue it through discourse.

Elevation to the see of Thessalonike

We do not know when exactly Basil became the metropolitan of Thessalonike. The earliest reliable notice of him in Thessalonike is dated to October 2, 1154. It is the occasion of Basil's meeting with Anselm, Bishop of Havelberg, as inferred from his Dialogue with a Latin, 49 and from a reconstruction of Anselm's travels. 50

Placing the beginning of his episcopacy in 1145/1146 based on Tzetzes' Letter 55 seems wrong. Namely, in this letter, Tzetzes writes of a wicked family whose member was a defrocked priest. At a trial before Patriarch Michael the former priest was condemned to death as a heretic. He was able to avoid the sentence because the "incumbent metropolitan of Thessalonike" (ὁ δὲ νῦν Θεσσαλονίκης) intervened on his behalf. Vasiljevskij and the researchers who followed his lead thought that Basil was the unnamed metropolitan who, in the time between the trial in Constantinople and the writing of this letter in 1147, became the metropolitan of Thessalonike. This inference was based on the premise that Basil's predecessor had been Niketas, but the list of archbishops whose names were added to the *Synodikon* of Thessalonike but the list of archbishops whose names were added to the *Synodikon* of Thessalonike but the list Constantine, Leo, and Romanos between Niketas and Basil. Hence, it is unlikely that the reference to the metropolitan pertains to Metropolitan Basil. Letter 61, again dated to 1147, is also pertinent to this dilemma: here, Tzetzes sends his regards to an unnamed protégé of the Metropolitan Constantine of Thessalonike – unless the line

indeed associated with the archbishop Leo Moungos, the Philosopher, who had a Jewish background and might have also preferred to title himself simply as $\theta \dot{\nu} \eta \gamma$ (see infra n. 67). However, Philo's writings were held in high regard in this period and Christianity was traditionally deemed to be the true philosophy.

⁴⁹ The debate went on for two days, on October 2 and 3 in 1154. The text of the Dialogue mentions the daily scripture reading according to the yearly Church schedule (Basilius Achridenus, Dialogi Anselmi, 38.10–13). The reference brought Schmidt to a wrong conclusion about the date, *Schmidt*, Basilius aus Achrida, 32–33. The date was corrected in *Grumel*, Notes, 336. Cf. *Darrouzès*, Les documents byzantins du XII^e siècle, 65–66, and *Lees*, Anselm of Havelberg, 108, who writes that Anselm did not travel as an envoy of the Pope (as alleged in some manuscripts of the Dialogue), but as a member of Frederick's delegation to Constantinople, sent to arrange the king's marriage to a niece of Emperor Manuel. Cf. also n. 77.

⁵⁰ *Dräseke*, Bischof Anselm, 181–182; *Lees*, Anselm of Havelberg, 108–109.

⁵¹ See *Grünbart*, Tzurichos, ein Häretiker. Cf. *Vasiljevskij*, Василія Охридскаго неизданное надгробное слово, 58–59; *Schmidt*, Basilius aus Achrida, 5–6.

⁵² Petit, Le synodicon de Thessalonique, 240, 245; Laurent, La liste épiscopale du synodicon.

⁵³ For Niketas who could have occupied the throne at the time of this trial see *Bucossi – D'Amelia*, Nicetas Thessalonicensis Dialogi, XXIX. Different dates proposed for the trial fall in 1144, 1145, or 1146, see *Vasiljevskij*, Василія Охридскаго неизданное надгробное слово, 58–59; *Schmidt*, Basilius aus Achrida, 5; *Grumel – Darrouzès*, Regestes, 478; *Gautier*, Michel Italikos, 55 n. 16; *Shepard*, Tzetzes' Letter to Leo, 205 n. 11; *Grünbart*, Tzurichos, ein Häretiker; 17, n. 16.

was misread.⁵⁴ As pointed out by Grünbart, it would follow that Constantine was the one who saved the convicted heretic from being consigned to the flames.

Vasiljevskij rightfully drew attention to the Easter liturgy in an imperial military camp⁵⁵ described in the funerary oration for Eirene. Basil recounts that "the emperor was in our area with the empress". According to Vasiljevskij this must have been Easter of 1149, when Emperor Manuel stayed in Dobrochoubista (Δοβροχουβίστα), in the theme of Berroia, not too far from Thessalonike (a two-day travel on horseback), Preparing for an offensive against Sicily. Given that Basil delivered the oration as the metropolitan of Thessalonike in 1160, it seems plausible to assume that he would be referring to the region of Thessalonike and himself as its metropolitan. However, the account of the liturgy does not make it clear whether Basil presided over the ceremony or was just one of the officiants. He says that he was personally present to offer the life-giving sacrifice that purifies the whole world (παρήμην καὶ αὐτὸς ἱεροθυτήσων τὸ ζωοποιὸν θῦμα καὶ παντὸς τοῦ κόσμου καθάρσιον). The verb ἱεροθυτέω is quite uncommon. It denotes here the conduct of Eucharistic service during which Christ's sacrifice becomes actualized reality,

⁵⁴ Tzetzes, Epistulae, 61, 92.5–6, ed. *Leone*: προσαγορευθήτω διὰ τῆς σῆς ὡς πρὸς ἡμᾶς καλλίστης ἀγάπης καὶ ὁ τοῦ Θεσσαλονίκης κυρίου Κωνσταντίνου. In an earlier edition (*Pressel*), at the end it says κύριος Κωνσταντῖνος, meaning that Tzetzes was sending his regards to Constantine, a protégé of the unnamed metropolitan of Thessalonike, which is how Vasiljevskij read this line, Βαςμπία Οχρυμςκαγο неизданное надгробное слово, 60. Cf. *Grünbart*, Prosopographische Beiträge, 210 n. 185.

 $^{^{55}}$ On elaborate tent interiors and worship space in such structures see Mullet, Tents in Space, Space in Tents.

⁵⁶ Oratio funebris in Irenem, 31–33. The speech was delivered at a commemoration some time after her funeral and in front of the emperor, probably in the last months of 1160, see *Messina*, Epitafio, 54.

 $^{^{57}}$ Oratio funebris in Irenem, 31.281–282: ὁ βασιλεὺς σὰν τῆ βασιλίδι τοῖς καθ' ἡμᾶς ἐπεχωρίαζε κλίμασι.

⁵⁸ Translatio imaginis S. Demetrii (BHG 533), ed. *Kotzabassi*, 185.65–68: ... ἐν χωρίφ τοῦ θέματος Βερροίας, οὕτω πως λεγομένω Δοβροχουβίστα, ἀπέχοντι τῆς μὲν Θεσσαλονίκης ίππικὰ δρόμου ἡμερήσια δύο, τοῦ δὲ κάστρου Βερροίας στάδια ώσεὶ μιλίων δύο... Namely, according to the synaxarion text glorifying the relocation of the icon from the tomb of St. Demetrios in Thessalonike to the Pantokrator Monastery in Constantinople, written by a monk from this fraternity, *hegoumenos* Joseph arranged the transfer of the icon in a personal meeting with the Emperor at a place called Δοβροχουβίστα, and the icon arrived in Constantinople on October 23, 1149. Cf. *Kravari*, Villes, 73, *Magdalino*, Empire of Manuel I, 235.

 $^{^{59}}$ Dobrochoubista is understood to be one of the districts (χαρτουλαράτα) where provisions and animals (horses and pack-animals) were assembled for the needs of imperial army expeditions, *Magdalino*, Empire of Manuel I, 235. Cf. *Soustal*, TIB 11, 382. For Manuel's expedition to Sicily see *Magdalino*, Empire of Manuel I, 53–61.

⁶⁰ It is unclear whether Berroia was under his jurisdiction at this time. In the church organization of Basil II's era (cf. *Krsmanović*, O односу управне и црквене организације, 27–35), according to the charter of 1020 (*Gelzer*, 46.26–36; Regesten, edd. *Dölger – Müller*, no. 808), Berroia was disengaged from the jurisdiction of the Metropolitanate of Thessalonike and added to the Archbishopric of Ohrid. Doubts persist as to the extent this was implemented in practice, cf. *Papazōtos*, H Βέροια και οι ναοί της, 57–58; *Prinzing*, Chomateni Ponemata, 31*–32*, n. 141; *Krsmanović*, O односу управне и црквене организације, 37, n. 80.

without specifying the rank of the bearer of the priesthood. He later includes himself among the ministers (τοὺς θύτας⁶¹ καὶ λειτουργοὺς ἡμᾶς), again using a non-specific term that could refer to any member of the clergy taking part in the Divine Liturgy. The officiants and the emperor were the first to partake of the communion. 62 Afterwards Basil carried the chalice bearing the Body and Blood of Christ (τὸν τοῦ θείου σώματός τε καὶ αἵματος ὑποδογέα κρατῆρα)⁶³ in his "sacrifice-holding" hands (ταῖς θυοδόχοις χερσίν) to a chamber, separated by a curtain, where the empress was to partake of the sacrament. Her inner beauty was shining forth as a result of her mind being immersed in the mystery of the bread descending from heaven and giving life to the world. The piety of the empress, who bowed to the Holy Gifts, touching the floor with her forehead and lowering her diadem to Basil's feet, before approaching the chalice. 64 shook him so deeply that he almost dropped the chalice. Conspicuously, none of the terms referring to Basil reflects the hierarchy of ministry. Instead the terms bring to the fore the ordinance of the Holy Eucharist (ἱεροθυτέω, θύτης, $\theta vo\delta \delta voc$). This is a family of words that designate ordinance as effecting sacrifice (θύω). The focus on the Eucharistic sacrifice is also to be found in Basil's letter to Pope Hadrian. 65 The offering of life-giving and bloodless sacrifice (τὴν ζωοποιὸν καὶ ἀναίμακτον θυσίαν), as imparted by the Lord, defines the bishops there also.

That is consistent with the inscription on the seals 66 attributed to Basil as the archbishop of Thessalonike. The inscription identifies him simply in terms of sacerdotal ministry, that is as the 'sacrifice-offerer' ($\theta \dot{\nu} \tau \eta \varsigma$). The seals stand out among

⁶¹ In general, the word may imply any degree of the priesthood; it can designate both priests and bishops, see for example the prayer for a deceased member of the clergy ordained to the priesthood in the Requiem Mass, Εὐχολόγιον sive rituale graecorum, 461: ὁ Ἱερεύς σου ὁ θύτης καὶ πρόπολος τῶν θείων μυστηρίων; the mention of the feast day of Saint Basil τοῦ μεγάλου ἀρχιερέως καὶ θύτου in Attaleiates, Historia, 80.17.

⁶² This was an imperial privilege; see *Darrouzès*, Documents inedits, 412.

⁶³ The practice of consecrated bread being placed inside the chalice to be received together with the consecrated wine by the communicant, as opposed to receiving the two separately, was present in varying extent before the 12th century but it was still viewed as a novelty, see *Taft*, Byzantine Communion Spoons, 223–228. The officiants and the emperor received the holy gifts of bread and wine separately, receiving the sacramental bread in their hands. That priests and the emperor received the Eucharist in this manner, unlike other communicants, is stressed even two centuries later in the description of the communion received by Emperor John VI Kantakouzenos, noted in his Histories, Cantacuzenus, Historiae I, 202.

⁶⁴ Cf. Kantakouzenos' passage cited above in n. 63. Notwithstanding the fact that participation in the Eucharist defines the life of a Christian, Basil's description of the Paschal Service seems careful to portray not just the preparedness, earnestness and the correct understanding of the Eucharist by the emperor and the empress of German descent, but also his own orthodoxy in light of the Eucharist-related disputes of 1157, see infra 889–890.

⁶⁵ Rescriptum ad papam, ed. *Migne*, 932.17-933.49.

⁶⁶ Catalogue of the Byzantine Seals I, edd. *Nesbitt – Oikonomides*, 76, seal no. 18.80, see the photo infra 885. The editors think that a similar seal, published in Le corpus des sceaux V/1, ed. *Laurent*, 335–336, seal no. 461, might be from the same boulloterion. Cf. Corpus der byzantinischen Siegel, ed. *Wassiliou-Seibt*, 107, no. 1622.

their sort⁶⁷ showing a representation of St. Basil, who holds a book standing frontally. The metric invocation on the reverse reads: ὑμώνυμόν σοι Θετταλῶν θύτην σκέπε (Protect your namesake, the minister of the Thessalians).



DO Seals 1, no. 18.80. © Dumbarton Oaks, Coins and Seals Collection, Washington, DC

In view of the possible date of the described Paschal Divine Liturgy, one should bear in mind that, when in western Macedonia, the emperor often spent time in the camps at Berroia and Pelagonia during military campaigns in the period relevant for Basil's appointment. It was not uncommon for his family members to be present in the camps, ⁶⁸ so the emperor's stay at Berroia in 1149 is not the only one to which Basil's account of the Easter Liturgy might refer. Another suggestive source is Tzetzes' letter that precedes the one addressed to Basil as the metropolitan of Thessalonike and mentions that the empress is away from Constantinople, accompanying the emperor in a military campaign. That letter (94) was likely written between the end of 1154 and the fall of 1155.⁶⁹ The chronology of the events of 1154 and 1155 is uncertain, but if it is correct to associate the letter with the emperor's departure for

 $^{^{67}}$ Drpić, Epigrams, 106, notes that the seals of the archbishops of the metropolitan see of Thessalonike mostly bore representations of St. Demetrios, therefore he regards Basil's choice as "highly personal" and revealing of the owner's "spiritual allegiances". Cf. the devotional epigram on an icon from Ohrid gifted by Leo the "minister of God" (Θεοῦ θύτης), attributed by scholars either to the archbishop Leo from the first half of the 11^{th} century or to the archbishop Leo Moungos (the first half of the 12^{th} century), Drpić, Epigrams, 284–289.

⁶⁸ *Jeffreys*, Manuel Komnenos' Macedonian military camps. An unedited poem of ,Manganeios Prodromos' referring to the empress leaving the City to go where the emperor was staying, could be of importance, no. 13 (Mioni), dated by Magdalino in 1153, Empire of Manuel I, 495.

⁶⁹ Shepard, Tzetzes' Letter to Leo, 212–213.

Pelagonia "shortly after the winter solstice" in 1154,⁷⁰ with the campaign continuing into the following year,⁷¹ the described Paschal Service in the imperial tent could have taken place on March 27, 1155.⁷²

Stewardship and debates

Basil's correspondence with Pope Hadrian IV⁷³ is traditionally dated to the same year (1155).⁷⁴ That would mean that they exchanged letters during the first year of Hadrian's pontificate (4 December 1154–1159). The Pontiff writes to plead with Basil to devote himself to restoring the unity of the Church "under blessed Peter, the steersman of all the faithful."⁷⁵ The following lines from the archbishop's reply to the Pope's letter are interesting for the purposes of this paper:

Ήμεῖς μὲν γὰρ βραχεῖς, καὶ βραχέος ποιμνίου κατάρχομεν, μέτριον μὲν καὶ κατὰ σταγόνα τὸν λόγον ἔχοντες, ἀρετῆς δὲ μετέχοντες οὐδ' ότιοῦν· εἰ καὶ ἡ σὴ ἀγιότης μέγιστά τινα περὶ ἡμῶν ὑπενόησεν, ἐκ τῆς τινων ἀγάπης τῶν ἐνταῦθα ἐπιδεδημηκότων, καὶ ἡμῖν ὑμιληκότων, πάντως παραπεισθεῖσα.

But we are small and lead a small flock, our reach is likewise of the tinniest measure, with nothing whatsoever of virtue in our possession. And yet your holiness formed the most elevated impressions about us, because you were utterly misled by the love of those who had stayed here and conversed with us.

Anselm of Havelberg presumably had a public discussion with Basil on two consecutive days⁷⁶ in the fall of 1154, on his way back to Italy from negotiations with

⁷⁰ Choniates, Historia, 101.60–76; Cinnamus, 129–134. Manuel had plans to deal with Sicily, but the Hungarian attack under Geza II at the end of 1154 forced him to march towards the Danube. In the spring of 1155, Manuel made peace with Hungary, engaged with the Serbs, reinstalling Uroš II as Grand Župan, and turned his attention to Italy. *Makk*, The Ārpáds and the Comneni, 59–62; *Maksimović*, Србија и правци византијских похода, 12, 18; *Magdalino*, Empire of Manuel I, 56. Cf. VIINJ IV, 50 n. 111, 128 with footnotes; *Kalić*, Grand Župan Uroš, 84–85.

⁷¹ Cinnamus, 133, *Shepard*, Tzetzes' Letter to Leo, 212.

⁷² The date is given according to the chronological table in *Grumel*, La chronologie, 257.

⁷³ Hadriani papae IV. Epistula ad Basilium Achridenum; Rescriptum ad papam (lines cited here: 933.2–8). Cf. Pitsakes, Βασίλειος Άχριδηνός, 290–295.

⁷⁴ Vasiljevskij, Василія Охридскаго неизданное надгробное слово, 65; Chalandon, Histoire de la domination normande, 211–212; Runciman, The Eastern Schism, 119; Darrouzès, Les documents byzantins du XII^e siècle, 68. However, it has been proposed that the letter should not be situated within the context of aligned interest of the papacy and the Greeks against William of Sicily during the war of 1155–1156, since it would better fit the years 1157–1158, that is, after Manuel's treaty with William of Sicily, "when the abandonment of Greek ambitions in Italy had made a rapprochement between the churches possible", Rowe, Hadrian IV, the Byzantine Empire, and the Latin Orient, 14 n. 52. Cf. Duggan, Servus servorum Dei.

The Hadriani papae IV. Epistula ad Basilium Achridenum, 928.84–85. According to the letter which survived in the Greek version, the obligation to attend to the reunion is the pastoral obligation implied by their respective positions. The pope speaks of himself as having assumed (δεξάμενοι, ibid., 928.77) stewardship of the apostolic throne at present time and says that he assumed (ἐδεξάμεθα, ibid., 929.86) shepherding (τὸ ποιμαίνειν) out of duty (in order to truly be the servant of the servants of God and not out of opportunity or fleeting glory). This might indicate that the bishop of Rome did not assume his throne too far back, which would be in line with the traditional dating of this letter.

⁷⁶ Achridenus, Dialogi Anselmi, (II) 40; cf. Schmidt, Basilius aus Achrida, 27, 29–32.

Manuel on behalf of Frederick Barbarossa.⁷⁷ On June 18, 1155 Pope Hadrian IV crowned Frederick emperor and bestowed on Anselm the pallium of the archbishop of Ravenna.⁷⁸ It might be that Anselm was indeed the one who brought Basil to the attention of Pope Hadrian⁷⁹, having concluded that the metropolitan was the right person to talk to about overcoming the divide between the Churches. He also would have seen in Basil a person of sufficient influence and standing to make the Pope entertain the idea of entrusting Basil with tending to his emissaries and their mission to get an audience with the emperor. The Latin prelate devoted significant efforts to brokering compromises between popes and rulers, Greeks and Latins, and various other conflicted parties. Irrespective of the fact that there was not always a compromise to be had, he seems to have been a keen judge of character and circumstances.⁸⁰

The following year, a theological dispute ensued in Constantinople and the questions raised had to be examined in the Synod of January 1156, and for the second time in May 1157 with Emperor Manuel in attendance. One of the involved church officials was ὁ τοῦ Θεσσαλονίκης Μιχαήλ 82 , Michael '(the one) of the metropolitan of Thessalonike', also known as Michael the Rhetor. 83

References like *o tou Thessalonikēs*, which come up often in the 12th century, are usually interpreted as indicating a sort of paternal sponsorship.⁸⁴ Due to the

⁷⁷ Lees, Anselm of Havelberg, 108–109. Basil's Dialogue between a Greek and a Latin, which presumably goes back to this meeting, is worthy of a separate study and a new edition. The extant manuscripts contain different references concerning the Latin character cf. Darrouzès, Les documents byzantins du XII^e siècle, 66; Repertorium Auctorum Polemicorum, RAP 4573, https://apps.unive.it/pric/rap/visualizza/4573. The question of whether Basil met Archbishop Henry of Benevento, who was sent by the successor of Pope Hadrian IV, Alexander III as an envoy to Constantinople more than once, remains interesting even if the dialogue was not recorded in writing. On the dates of his travels (1161, May 1164 or 1166) see Ohnsorge, Die Legaten Alexanders III, 73–79; Harris – Tolstoy-Miloslavski, Alexander III and Byzantium; Falkenstein, Review, who points out the relevance of Lamma, Comneni e Staufer, 88 n. 2, 129 n. 1. Cf. Vasiljevskij, Bacunia Oxpunckaro слово, 74–76; Schmidt, 14–15, 34 n. 2.

⁷⁸ Lees, Anselm of Havelberg, 114.

⁷⁹ When Anselm met with Pope Eugenius III in 1144, he was asked to write a report on the debate he had had with Niketas of Nicomedia in Constantinople in 1136, see *Hussey*, The Orthodox Church, 178. The actual resemblance between the held debates and the writings supposedly portraying them remains to be explored, cf. *Dunkle*, Anselm of Havelberg's Use of Authorities. On the debates see literature listed in *Lees*, Anselm of Havelberg, 5 n. 9. Cf. *Pitsakes*, Βασίλειος ἀχριδηνός, 283–290.

⁸⁰ Lees, Anselm of Havelberg,122. Anselm died on August 12, 1158.

⁸¹ Choniates, Historia, 210.85–211.14; Cinnamus, Epitoma, 176.13–178.2; PG 140, 148–201; cf. *Grumel – Darrouzès*, Regestes N. 1038, N. 1041, N. 1042; *Gouillard*, Synodikon de l'Orthodoxie, 210–215; *Angold*, Church and Society, 82–83; *Magdalino*, Empire of Manuel I, 279–281; *Ermilov*, Current Problems; *Ermilov*, Константинопольские споры XII века.

⁸² Choniates, Historia, 211.92–93. Cf. Ermilov, Current Problems.

⁸³ *Browning*, The patriarchal school at Constantinople, Byzantion 33, 12–14; PBW (2016), 'Michael Ho tou Thessalonikes', http://pbw2016.kdl.kcl.ac.uk/person/Michael/17004/.

⁸⁴ Cf. Vasiljevskij, Василія Охридскаго неизданное надгробное слово, 60; *Darrouzès*, Notes, 179–180; *Wirth*, Michael von Thessalonike? (he interprets the designation in the sense of *Zögling*); *Gouillard*, Le Synodikon de l'Orthodoxie, 210–211; *Lefort*, Prooimion de Michel neveu de l'archevêque de Thessalonique, 376; *Kazhdan*, 'Michael Rhetor', ODB, 1369.

celibate nature of the life devoted to God, necessarily associated with the higher ranks of clergy, the title is by many understood to refer to episcopal nephews. Therefore, Michael could be a nephew of Basil from Ohrid. Around the time Basil served as the patriarchal *protonotarios*, Michael likely began teaching secular education at the Church of Theotokos Chalkoprateia, higher which was served by the clergy of Hagia Sophia. Around 1148–1149, Michael was appointed *didaskalos* of the Psalter, a post held by deacons. A reference in the work of a later metropolitan of Thessalonike records that Michael composed iambic verses as a deacon in Thessalonike in honor of St. Demetrios before ill fate struck him. He signed his confession drawn sometime after the 1157 Synod, as an "unworthy deacon and *protekdikos*," so his stay at Thessalonike could fall any time before that. In the intervening years, he held prominent teaching positions (after *didaskalos* of the Psalter, he was *didaskalos* of the Apostle, and afterwards *didaskalos* of the Gospel and Master of the Rhetors). His appointment to the distinguished post of *protekdikos* occurred around the time that Basil's reputation increased due to his involvement in the debates with the Latins.

In an imperial oration that Michael delivered as Master of the Rhetors on the feast of Epiphany, dated to 1153, he mentioned that the emperor had bestowed privileges on Thessalonike but did not dwell on it. He leaves that task to the unnamed shepherd of the God's flock there (ὁ τῆς ἐκεῖ θείας ποίμνης ἀγελαρχῶν), the wisest of men (ἀνθρώπων σοφώτατος), competent to celebrate the emperor's benefaction. Lefort reads this as an expression of Michael's gratitude to Basil. Another hint is provided by the theological dispute among the deacons of the Great Church mentioned earlier. Basil's conduct during the affair leaves room for the interpretation that he was inclined to make the ordeal less severe for Michael and those connected with him.

⁸⁵ Lefort, Prooimion, 376.

⁸⁶ According to Lefort around 1143 (ibid., 382), according to Browning 1146. Michael looks back at his career in his inaugural address delivered upon being appointed to the post didaskalos of the Gospel. Lefort places the oration in 1153, Lefort, Prooimion, 382. Cf. Browning, The Patriarchal School, Byzantion 33, 13.

 $^{^{87}}$ Browning, The Patriarchal School, Byzantion 32, 171–172; Magdalino, The Reform Edict of 1107, 210–211.

⁸⁸ Eustathii Thessalonicensis exegesis, 1.96–101. Besides Michael (σοφὸς μεγαλοπολίτης, λευίτης άγιοσοφίτης Μιχαὴλ πρωτέκδικος), Eustathios names another gifted deacon-poet and chartophylax Σουμάνης, who was a local figure and may have been a Serb, see *Cesaretti*, Introduzione, 145*–147*.

⁸⁹ *Ermilov*, К вопросу об осуждении протэкдика Михаила, 71.

⁹⁰ Lefort thinks Michael became *protekdikos* in 1155, since by the Synod in January 1156, he was no longer *didaskalos* of the Gospel, Prooimion, 383. Cf. *Magdalino*, Empire of Manuel I, 301–302. On the duties of the *protekdikos* see *Ilić* – Šijaković, Писмо Св. Евстатија, 151–152 with cited literature.

⁹¹ Michael delivered three speeches to Manuel. Magdalino, Empire of Manuel I, 439, dates the two Epiphany orations to 1152–1153 (Michael Rhetor, Orationes, 131–152, on Epiphany; ibid. 165–182, a speech held a few days before the same Epiphany, in the imperial camp, probably in Pelagonia) and the third one (ibid., 152–165) on the feast of the Nativity 1155–1156.

⁹² Michael Rhetor, Orationes, 139.5-9.

However, the issue was a grave one. The dispute posed questions about the fundamental understanding of the nature of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, discussing whether Christ could be both the "offerer" and the "receiver" of the Sacrifice. On account of this debate, the Synod was convened in January 1156. Michael's faction⁹³ argued against it, deeming this view akin to Nestorian dyophysitism, but Michael recanted his views, and the adopted condemnation was formulated generally, covering anyone who would espouse such a view. Basil is not recorded among the attendees of the 1156 Synod.94 The matter became more menacing when Soterichos Panteugenos, who belonged to the camp that Michael had disowned, wrote a piece in the form of a Platonic dialogue in support of the condemned views. The Dialogue was widely circulated after the Synod of 1156 and admired for its literary merits if nothing else. 95 Hence, the Synod of 1157, convened at the Blachernae Palace by Emperor Manuel, revisited the issue and ruled against the supporters of the condemned doctrine by name. 96 The events included Emperor Manuel's debate with Panteugenos. When, during the first meeting of the Synod on May 12, it was time for the present bishops to give their concluding opinion, seven of them asked for more time and were allowed to deliberate till the following day. Among them were Basil and Eustathios, metropolitan of Dyrrachion, who was a member of Michael's circle and hesitant to reject their propositions in the Synod of 1156.97 At some point during these events, Michael presumably wrote his Confession,98 although he had already recanted his position a year earlier, when the Synod first weighed in on the matter. After all, Soterichos was not the one who had initiated the dispute. He rose to the forefront because of his sharp intellect and his decision to disseminate his unrelenting stance in writing despite being nominated as the patriarch of Antioch. Basil might have been concerned by the consequences that all involved would have to bear and wanted to buy time for backroom diplomacy.⁹⁹ The wording of Basil's subscription also stands out. In between beginning with the standard identification preceded by the humbling epithet (εὐτελής, here rendered as lowly) and ending with ὁρίσας ὑπέγραψα, a formula commonly used by subscribers with a decisive vote,

⁹³ The contrarian faction was also in the wrong, see *Gouillard*, Synodikon de l'Orthodoxie, 213.

⁹⁴ Vasiljevskij suggested that the phrase in the heading of an excerpt from a letter of Leo of Ohrid points to Basil as the one who prepared the testimony to be presented at the Synod (PG 140, 156_B). His suggestion is based on the mistaken second name 'Kalos', Василія Охридскаго неизданное надгробное слово, 69. On the heading of the excerpt see *Mercati*, Βασίλειος Άχριδηνός, 350; *Büttner*, Erzbischof Leon von Ohrid, 27 n. 31.

⁹⁵ Cf. Spingou, Platonising Dialogue.

 $^{^{96}}$ According to Choniates all involved were deposed, Historia, 211.90–14, but the events are not quite clear, see *Ermilov*, K вопросу об осуждении протэкдика Михаила, 60–63.

 $^{^{97}}$ Cf. PG 140, $152_{\scriptscriptstyle D}-153_{\scriptscriptstyle B}$, $193_{\scriptscriptstyle C\cdot D}$. Both Eustathios and Michael ended up in the *Synodikon* of Orthodoxy. Eustathios is recorded as adhering to the (later anathemized) doctrines which Michael and Nikephoros Basilakes introduced and propagated by word of mouth, Synodicon orthodoxiae, 424–434.

 $^{^{98}}$ See the text of his ѐξομολόγησις edited in Ermilov, K вопросу об осуждении протэкдика Михаила, 70.13-71.14; cf. ibid., 68-70.

⁹⁹ Lefort, Prooimion, 376; Messina, Epitafio, 46–47.

he adds quite a bit.¹⁰⁰ The elaborate wording might point to a need to conspicuously distance himself from the wrong teachings because of his close ties to the social circle in which these had originated.

Ο εὐτελὴς ἀρχιεπίσκοπος τῆς μητροπόλεως Θεσσαλονίκης Βασίλειος, οὕτω Θεοῦ χάριτι φρονήσας τε καὶ φρονῶν, διδάσκων καὶ διδάξας, καὶ ἄχρι τέλους τῆς ἐλεεινῆς μου ζωῆς φρονεῖν τε καὶ διδάσκειν κατατιθέμενος, ὡς ἐν τῷ παρόντι Τόμῳ διείληπται, ἀκολούθως καὶ αὐτὸς τοῖς ἄλλοις ὁρίσας ὑπέγραψα.

The lowly archbishop of the metropolitan see of Thessalonike, Basil, who, by the grace of God, has thus thought¹⁰¹ and thinks, has thus taught and teaches, and until the end of my pitiful life committed to thinking and teaching as defined in the present Tome, I myself have in concordance with others so determined and subscribed.

It is likewise important to note that the Dialogue of Soterichos went further than the initial debate. The protagonist of the Dialogue seems to hold that the Eucharistic rite is a symbolic reenactment, meaning that no actual sacrificial offering transpires during the liturgy. Therefore, the discussed emphasis on the Eucharistic sacrifice in Basil's later speech before the emperor might also suggest that he wished to distance himself from these theological circles. With all this being said, Basil's ties to Michael remain inconclusive. 104

We have two more traces of his activities as a metropolitan. The first indicates that he provided support for the works on the fortress of Thessalonike. An inscription on the fortress attributed to him reads as follows: Πόνημα τοῦτο Βασιλείου μητροπολίτου ἰνδικτιῶνος η΄ (This is the work of Basil the metropolitan in the 8^{th} indiction). In light of the discussion above, if the attribution to Basil is correct, the inscription should be dated to $1159{-}1160$. Some maintenance work on the fortification of the city seems indeed to fall in this period, since another inscription 106 on the

¹⁰⁰ Patmiakē Bibliothēkē, ed. Sakkelion, 328.

¹⁰¹ The coupled past and present forms may be explained by a hiatus between drafting the synodal tome and signing its final redaction. It seems that this intermission was brought about by the death of Patriarch Constantine. Patriarch Luke Chrysoberges subscribes the tome written under his predecessor, PG 140, 197,; cf. *Magdalino*, Empire of Manuel I, 281.

¹⁰² PG 140, 148. Cf. Synodicon orthodoxiae, 449–462.

¹⁰³ See supra 883–884. Cf. changes in twelfth-century iconographic programs of church sanctuaries as regards Eucharistic offering and their possible links with concurrent theological debates, *Babić*, Христолошке распре у XII веку; *Gerstel*, Beholding the Sacred Mysteries, 37–47.

¹⁰⁴ We cannot be sure that Basil was the metropolitan of Thessalonike that Michael was related to; theoretically, a predecessor of Basil might have been Michael's patron. For instance, Michael might very well be the unnamed episcopal nephew to whom Tzetzes sends his regards through his student in Thessalonike in Letter 61, around 1147. He might have stayed as a deacon in Thessalonike under his uncle, Metropolitan Constantine, for a while and composed noted iambic verses devoted to St. Demetrios (see supra 888 and n. 88) in between his junior teaching posts and that of the didaskalos of the Psalter in Constantinople.

¹⁰⁵ Kourkoutidou-Nikolaidou – Tourta, Wandering in Byzantine Thessaloniki, 21; Trichia, Επταπύργιο, 35–36.

 $^{^{106}}$ Ibid. Cf. PBW (2016), 'Andronikos La(m) pardas, sebastos and chartoularios', http://pbw2016.kdl.kcl. ac.uk/person/Andronikos/20118/.

fortress records the same type of involvement by Andronikos Lapardas, *sebastos* and *chartoularios*, whose military expertise was highly praised. The acts of the Synod held in Constantinople on March 2, 1166, note the presence of Andronikos, while Basil was not among the reported participants of any of the sessions. ¹⁰⁷ The second trace concerns his response to the *megas sakellarios* from the Metropolitanate of Dyrrachion, ¹⁰⁸ who enquired from Basil as to whether a legal obstacle in the case of certain marriage existed, given the marriage relationship of the couple's relatives. This text of Basil, the 'humble (archbishop) of Thessalonike', was likely written in September 1160¹⁰⁹, close in time to the oration for Eirene, in which he alludes to his old age and withering away. ¹¹⁰

Recapitulation

The following is a summary of the tentative conclusions that may prove useful for further research.

Basil came from Ohrid and harbored ties to the clergy of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, that once included the archbishops residing in Ohrid during Basil's early years. His life path crossed with that of John Tzetzes and Leo Charsianites, who went on to become the metropolitan of Dristra. It is possible that Leo and Basil served together as deacons in the patriarchal chancellery sometime between 1140 and 1145. Namely, Leo could have been a *hypomnematographos*, whereas Basil is known to have served as the *protonotarios*, probably under Patriarch Michael (1143–1146), formerly the *hegoumenos* of the monastery on the island of Oxeia. It might be that archbishops of Ohrid sent their protégés to this monastery, so Basil could have had ties to Oxeia. In any case, he was a person of broad erudition and formidable reputation who valued learning and eloquence and had a profound understanding of priestly ministry and Christian teachings. He followed Tzetzes' work with great admiration. His belief was that the Hellenic *paideia* had an indispensable role in honing one's language skills in order to grasp sublime concepts and represent Christian thought.

There is an indication that Basil entered monkhood and pledged his life to God irrespective of his anointment as archbishop. He became the metropolitan of Thessalonike before October 1154. The archbishop praised by Michael the Rhetor in an oration dated to 1153 might be Basil. The debate with Anselm of Havelberg,

¹⁰⁷ Erides kai synodoi, ed. Sakkos.

¹⁰⁸ According to Choniates, Eustathios, metropolitan of Dyrrachion, who was sympathetic to the faction of Michael *o tou Thessalonikēs*, was deposed following the Synod of 1156. The acts of the 1166 Synod record the involvement of Metropolitan Michael of Dyrrachion, Erides kai synodoi, 158.12; 179.15.

¹⁰⁹ Μηνὶ Σεπτεμβρίφ, ἐπινεμήσεως θ΄, Βασίλειος ὁ ταπεινὸς Θεσσαλονίκης, Responsio, ed. Migne, 936.7. The same letter in Syntagma V, edd. Rallēs – Potlēs, 389–390, does not contain the month, just the 9th indiction. There is also a confusion regarding Basil's reference to the law code Basilika (Migne, 933.26; Rallēs – Potlēs, 389), cf. Vasiljevskij, Βασιπίπ Οχριμματατο παμτροθησο εποβο, 73 n.1. For other editions, issues discussed in the response and Basil's understanding of civil and canon law see Pitsakes, Βασίλειος Άχριδηνός, 269–275. For some reason Beck, Kirche und theologische Literatur, 626, writes the document was intended for the bishop of Sirmium.

¹¹⁰ Oratio funebris, 46.482, cf. Messina, Epitafio, 171.

reflected in Basil's Dialogue with a Latin, took place in Thessalonike over two days – on October 2 and 3, 1154. It could be that Anselm recounted his impressions of Basil to Pope Hadrian IV, prompting the Pontiff's missive.

It seems probable that Michael the Rhetor was a nephew or protégé of Basil of Ohrid, although we cannot rule out that Michael's patron was one of Basil's predecessors on the Thessalonian throne. Basil's restraint in sanctioning those that induced the quarrel about the interpretation of the Sacrifice on the Cross and the Eucharist opens the question of his personal ties with Michael and his circle, because it does not seem likely that he subscribed to their views. In the synodal tome of 1157, Basil expanded the standard formula accompanying the signature of participants with a decisive vote, leaving no doubt that he concurred with the majority judgment. In the oration delivered before Emperor Manuel three years after the synodal events, in which the emperor had also participated, he chose to describe the Paschal Liturgy, explicitly centering on the realism of the Eucharistic sacrifice.

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ВАСИЛИЈЕ ОХРИЂАНИН И ЊЕГОВ КРУГ

У раду се преиспитују важеће претпоставке о биографији Василија Охриђанина, солунског митрополита током друге половине XII века. Он је из Охрида доспео у круг цариградских црквених достојанственика везаних за Свету Софију, којима су припадали и архиепископи који су столовали у Охриду током Василијевих раних година. Познавао је учењака Јована Цецеса и дристарског митрополита Лава Харсијанита. Лав и Василије су можда заједно службовали у патријаршијској канцеларији као ђакони.

Охриђанин је био патријаршијски протонотар после 1140. године, а пре 1146. године, вероватно у време патријарха Михаила (1143–1146), бившег игумана манастира на острву Оксија. Могуће је да су охридски архиепископи упућивали своје штићенике у тај манастир, те је можда и Василије био везан за Оксију. У сваком случају, стекао је одлично образовање. Као велики поштовалац Цецесовог изучавања древних писаца пратио је његов рад. Високо је ценио улогу хеленске паидеје у брушењу језика да би тај језик био у стању да изнесе неизрециво и изрази хришћанску мисао.

Неизвесно је да ли је монашење у Василијевом случају само претходило архиепископској хиротонији или је "завет живота по Богу" положио

независно од тога. Претпоставка да почетак његовог епископата треба везати за 1145. односно 1146. годину није вероватна. Остаје непознато када је тачно устоличен. Може се закључити да је то било пре октобра 1154. године, када је дошло до дебате са Анселмом Хавелбершким, на коју се наслања Василијев Дијалої са Лашином. Могуће је да је Анселмо пренео папи Хадријану IV утиске о солунском митрополиту и тако иницирао папину посланицу Охриђанину.

Михаило Ретор, који се у старијој литератури често погрешно именује као Михаило Солунски, 111 а који је у изворима означен као Михаило од Солунско $\bar{\iota}$ (архиепископа), могао је бити Василијев нећак или штићеник. У солунском митрополиту кога Михаило велича, у беседи датованој у 1153. годину, можда треба препознати Василија.

1156. године Михаило Ретор се заједно са својим истомишљеницима нашао у црквеном процесу који је проблематизовао схватање Христове крсне жртве и евхаристије. Спор се после првог сабора тим поводом у Цариграду није смирио, јер се појавило писано дело које је, између осталог, евхаристијску жртву на литургији објашњавало као присећање на крсну жртву, као фигуралну жртву, а не као једно са крсном жртвом. То је довело до сазивања сабора 1157. године, уз лично учешће у расправи цара Манојла I Комнина. Том сабору је присуствовао и Василије, а његова уздржаност у погледу кажњавања оних који су спор произвели намеће питање његових личних веза са Михаилом и Михаиловим кругом, јер се чини да му њихови аргументи нису могли бити блиски. Сам Василије проширује у саборском томосу стандардну формулу која прати потпис учесника с правом одлучивања и не оставља сумњу да је сагласан са већинским расуђивањем. Додатно је у том погледу интересантно да у беседи (у спомен упокојене царице Ирине) одржаној пред царем Манојлом три године после саборских догађаја бира да опише васкршњу литургију и приступање Светој тајни причешћа. При томе изричито приповеда о евхаристијској жртви и свештенослужењу као приношењу бескрвне жртве.

Међу сачуваним саставима овог Охриђанина налазе се дијалог са Латином, одговор на писмо папе Хадријана IV, посмртно слово царици Ирини, првој супрузи Манојла Комнина (1160) и одговор драчком великом сакеларију на питање о сродничким препрекама за брак. Уз то су сачувана четири писма упућена њему: два у збирци писама Јована Цецеса, писмо папе Хадријана IV и писмо непознатог аутора који је, чини се, Василија саветовао о тумачењу спорног места код Максима Исповедника. Сматра се да му припадају два печата која носе лик Светог Василија и легенду "Чувај имењака свог, служитеља Тесалијаца", срочену у молитвеном дванаестерцу. Приписује му се и натпис на једном делу тврђаве у Солуну који сведочи о његовом старању да се фортификација унапреди (1159–1160).

¹¹¹ Тако и ВИИНЈ IV, 186.

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93

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