

The Letters of Lazarus Against the Union: Arguments of Orthodox Resistance to the Union of Lyons (1274)

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I. The sources and their background: 1. Introduction; 2. Historical background; 3. The author, his letters and his correspondents; II. Arguments based on Christian morality; III. Arguments based on the consequences of piety and sin; IV. Conclusion.

I. The sources and their background

1. *Introduction*

The Union of Lyons (1274–1283) between the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Churches proved to be an ill-fated project, primarily because of the vehement rejection by the majority of contemporary Orthodox believers. Six extant letters, written by a certain monk Lazarus to influential Orthodox clerics, present a peculiar group of sources on the internal conflict of Byzantine society regarding the union. In this paper, after a brief description of the historical background and the introduction of Lazarus and his correspondents, I intend to present a close reading of the letters, analyzing their argumentation and their representation of the unionist debate.¹

1 The first edition of the texts was published in 1911 by the contemporary archbishop of Nicosia in Cyprus, Charilaos Papaïannou (Papaïoannou, Ch.: ΛΑΖΑΡΟΥ ΜΟΝΑΧΟΥ ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΑΙ. In Ἐκκλησιαστικός Κήρυξ 1, Larnaca, 1911, pp. 413–419, 443–449.). Unfortunately, this obscure edition does not provide any kind of apparatus criticus and occasionally its readings are erroneous. Therefore, I am using the scientific edition of Laurent and Darrouzès (Laurent,

2. *Historical background*

Michael VIII Palaeologus (1259–1282) received his acclamation as co-emperor on the side of the minor John IV Laskaris (1258–1261) of the Empire of Nicaea in January, when his empire was in a precarious situation, threatened by a coalition of organised by another successor state of the collapsed Byzantine Empire, the Despotate of Epirus, that forged an alliance with the Principality of Achaea and the Hohenstaufen Kingdom of Sicily.² Following his remarkable victories of defeating the hostile alliance at the Battle of Pelagonia in September 1259, and the recapture of Constantinople on 25th July 1261, Michael VIII usurped the throne and John IV was blinded on his orders. The emperor was declared illegitim and was excommunicated by Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos (1261–1265) as a response to his usurpation, but the resistance shown by him and his partisans, the so-called Arsenites, failed to undermine the power of the Palaiologan dynasty. Nonetheless, this politico-religious opposition finally provoked the emperor to convene a synod that deposed Arsenios and banished him to Prokonnesos in May 1265, although it did not lead to the end of the Arsenite opposition.³

Besides the domestic Arsenite opposition, the restored Byzantine Empire was threatened by powerful foreign enemies. The extant Latin states on Greek soil posed an insignificant danger in themselves. However, they were supported by Venice, the Holy See and, after 1267, the new king of Sicily, Charles I Anjou (1266–1285). The Treaty

V. – Darrouzès, J.: Dossier grec de l'union de Lyon (1273–1277). Archives de l'Orient chrétien 16. Paris, Institut Français d'Études Byzantines, 1976, pp. 538–553.).

2 Wirth, P: Die Begründung der Kaisermacht Michaels VIII Palaiologos. JÖB 10 (1961), pp. 85–91.

3 Angold, M.: A Byzantine Government in Exile: Government and Society Under the Laskarids of Nicaea (1204–1261) Oxford, University Press, 1975, pp. 82–93.

of Viterbo, mediated by Pope Clement IV (1265–1268) and ratified on 24th May 1267, made Charles I overlord of the Principality of Achaia, established a marital alliance between the House of Anjou and the deposed House of Courtenay of the Latin Empire, and the King of Sicily bound himself to wage war on Byzantium and support the reestablishment of the defunct Latin Empire of Constantinople.⁴ The possibility of a new Crusade against Byzantium became a major threat, forcing the imperial court to attempt an appeasement with the Holy See.

Michael VIII had already been in contact with the Holy See since 1261, attempting to ameliorate the strained relations between the two states. Following the Anjou takeover in Southern Italy, the Byzantine emperor began to propose the prospect of the union of the Catholic and the Orthodox Churches.⁵ As mere promises proved to be insufficient to satisfy the demands of the Holy See and convince it to prevent any crusader expeditions on the behalf of Charles I, Michael VIII eventually decided to establish church union, accepting the Catholics stance on all the debated subjects. The Byzantine delegation to the Second Council of Lyons (1272–1274) ratified the union on 6th July 1274.⁶

- 4 Longnon, J.: *The Frankish States in Greece, 1204–1311*. In Setton, K. M. (Gen. ed.): *A History of the Crusades*. Wolff, R. L. – Hazard, H. (Eds.): Volume II. *The Later Crusades, 1189–1311*. Madison – Milwaukee – London, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969. pp. 235–274, pp. 255–256.
- 5 Kolbaba, T. M.: *Repercussions of the Second Council of Lyon (1274): Theological Polemic and the Boundaries of Orthodoxy*. In Hinterberger, M. – Schabel, Ch. (Edd.): *Greeks, Latins and Intellectual History 1204–1500*. Leuven – Paris – Walpole, MA, Peeters, 2011. pp. 43–68, pp. 45–50.
- 6 Geanakoplos, D. J.: *Bonaventura, the Two Mendicant Orders, and the Greeks at the Council of Lyons (1274)*. In Geanakoplos, D. J.: *Constantinople and the West. Essays on the Late Byzantine (Palaeologan) and Italian Renaissances and the Byzantine and Roman Churches*. Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1989. pp. 195–223, pp. 213–216.

As it was expected by the emperor himself, the vast majority of the Byzantine population rejected the Union of Lyons and efforts were made to further the aim of abolishing the desisted bond with the hated Latins. One of the devices of the anti-unionist opposition was propaganda within the ranks of the Byzantine clergy, attempting to convince as many clerics about the Union being erroneous as it was possible. The six extant letters of Lazarus represent these activities.⁷

3. *The author and his correspondents*

Little information can be known about the monk Lazarus. His extant letters can be dated to the period of 1275–1277, with other words, to the first two years of the patriarchate of the unionist Patriarch John Bekkos (1275–1283), and make it clear that Lazarus vehemently opposed the union of the Churches. The addressee of the last letter in the collection cannot be determined, but the previous five letters were sent to the metropolitan of Larissa (probably archbishop Thomas), the metropolitan of Thessalonice (Ioannikos Kydones), the metropolitan of Naupactus (John Xeros) and Arsenios, abbot of the Akapniou Monastery⁸ in Thessalonice, with the open intent of convincing these influential unionists to reject the church union. It is possible that Lazarus is identical with another Lazarus, who died as a monk of the Akapniou Monastery in Thessalonica on 28th March 1277.⁹

7 Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J.: Dossier grec de l'union de Lyon (1273–1277). Archives de l'Orient chrétien 16. Paris, Institut Français d'Études Byzantines, 1976, p. 103.

8 The Monastery of Akapniou was one of the most important Orthodox monasteries in Byzantine Thessalonica, and even in the entire Byzantine Empire. After the forces of the Fourth Crusade captured Thessalonica, Pope Innocent III (1198–1216) placed it under papal protection due to its significance. Janin, R.: Les églises et les monastères de grands centres byzantins. Paris, Institut Français d'Études Byzantines, 1975, pp. 347–349.

9 PLP 14329

Unfortunately, the list of the archbishops of Larissa is far from being complete. The addressee of the letter sent to the Metropolitan of Larissa by Lazarus is maybe identical with Metropolitan Thomas, an important supporter of Michael VIII, who voted for the deposition of Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos in the Synod of 1265.¹⁰ Being a subject of John I Angelos Doukas Komnenos, sebastokrator of Thessaly (1266/67–1289), who served as a focal point for opponents of the union,¹¹ the unionist archbishop of Larissa had to be under intense political pressure when Lazarus wrote to him.

Ioannikos Kydones, member of one of the leading families of Thessalonica, was abbot of the Sysandron Monastery in Magnesia-on-Hermus from 1254 to 1260. In 1260, he was appointed metropolitan of Thessalonica, allegedly because Michael VIII Palaiologos demanded a talented and loyal cleric as chief pastor of the important city. The end of his tenure in this position is uncertain.¹²

John Xeros was bishop of Ezerus in Thessaly, before he became metropolitan of Naupactus between 1250–1252. It is possible, that his promotion was a result of his succesful diplomatic mission to John III Vatatzes (1222–1254), emperor of Nicaea, as a representant of his souverain, Michael II Angelos Doukas Komnenos (1231–1266/1267)¹³ In the synod of 1264, he voted for the deposition of Arsenios Autoreianos, and supported the Union of Lyons. He died as metropolitan of Thessalonice between 1275–1277. It cannot be ruled out, that

¹⁰ PLP 7786

¹¹ PLP 208; The sebastokrator went so far that he even organised an alternative synod in his domains in teh winter of 1276–1277 that declared the union null and void. Nicol, D.: *The Despotate of Epirus 1267–1479. A Contribution to the History of Greece in the Middle Ages.* Cambridge University Press, 1984, p. 20.

¹² PLP 13880

¹³ Michael II ruled Epirus and Thessaly, and was the first ruler of the two provinces who actually used the title despot since 1249. PLP 220

the unedited letters in Cod. Oxon. Bar. 130, attributed to a certain Metropolitan of Naupactus, are his works.¹⁴

Arsenios was abbot of the Akapniou Monastery in Thessalonica between 1270–1282, bearer of the title pneumatikos. If the epistolographer Lazarus is identical with the monk who died in the Akapniou on 28th March 1277, he addressed his direct superior in the person Arsenios,¹⁵ presenting his theological erudition through an abundance of biblical quotations. In the followings, I examine the arguments in his letters.

II. Arguments based on Christian morality

It is interesting that the author does not attack exact dogmatical differences between the two churches, like the filioque or azymes. Instead of abstract dogmatics, he seems to regard theological differences as already well known by his correspondents, concentrating on the moral imperatives he presents as being in contrast with unionism and the possible negative consequences.

The first main category of arguments made by Lazarus against the Union contains those reasonings that appeal to core Christian moral teachings, necessarily accepted by all pious Orthodox believers. Within this group, six subgroups can be identified, presenting a scale ranging from exhortations to righteous behaviour in everyday life to commands for critical situations, when serious sacrifices may be necessary to preserve moral integrity.

The monk underlines divine guidance behind Christian morality many times in his letters. In most cases, he quotes the words of Christ on his divine mission from the Gospel of John to support this concept. „Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do noth-

¹⁴ PLP 20921

¹⁵ PLP 1368

ing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise.”¹⁶

Similarly, „for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me”¹⁷ and „for I have not spoken on my own, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment about what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I speak, therefore, I speak just as the Father has told me.”¹⁸

A similar idea is expressed regarding the future arrival of the Spirit of Truth: „When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.”¹⁹ The only quotation that is not from the Gospel of John comes from I John, and expresses the roots of the authority of the Church: „We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us, and whoever is not from God does not listen to us. From this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.”²⁰

Another subgroup contains teachings on proper moral conduct.

- 16 Απεκρίνατο οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, οὐ δύναται ὁ υἱὸς ποιεῖν ἄφ’ ἑαυτοῦ οὐδὲν ἐὰν μὴ τι βλέπῃ τὸν πατέρα ποιοῦντα ἃ γὰρ ἂν ἐκεῖνος ποιῇ, ταῦτα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ὁμοίως ποιεῖ. John 5,19 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 551.
- 17 ὅτι καταβέβηκα ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ οὐχ ἵνα ποιῶ τὸ θέλημα τὸ ἐμὸν ἀλλὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με· John 6,38 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 552.
- 18 ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐξ ἑμαυτοῦ οὐκ ἐλάλησα, ἀλλ’ ὁ πέμψας με πατήρ αὐτός μοι ἐντολὴν δέδωκεν τί εἴπω καὶ τί λαλήσω. καὶ οἶδα ὅτι ἡ ἐντολὴ αὐτοῦ ζωὴ αἰώνιος ἐστίν. ἃ οὖν ἐγὼ λαλῶ, καθὼς εἶρηκέν μοι ὁ πατήρ, οὕτως λαλῶ. John 12,49-50 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 551.
- 19 ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ἐκεῖνος, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὁδηγήσει ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πάσῃ, οὐ γὰρ λαλήσει ἀφ’ ἑαυτοῦ, ἀλλ’ ὅσα ἀκούσει λαλήσει, καὶ τὰ ἐρχόμενα ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν. John 16,13 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 551.
- 20 ἡμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐσμεν ὁ γινώσκων τὸν θεὸν ἀκούει ἡμῶν, ὃς οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἀκούει ἡμῶν. ἐκ τούτου γινώσκομεν τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πλάνης. I John 4,6 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 550.

Lazarus, in accord with the obligation of monastic humility, excuses himself for disturbing his superiors both in his letter to Ioannikos Kydones, metropolitan of Thessalonica and in the one he sent to John Xeros, Metropolitan of Naupactus. But, as he justifies his actions with the words of the Scripture, there is „a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak”²¹

The Proverbs present the monk with the words for a darker tone, as he asks the metropolitan of Thessalonica: „Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of evildoers. Avoid it; do not go on it; turn away from it and pass on. For they cannot sleep unless they have done wrong; they are robbed of sleep unless they have made someone stumble. For they eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence.”²² However, sinners should be given the opportunity to mend their ways, just like the author states with Jeremiah: „You shall say to them, Thus says the Lord: When people fall, do they not get up again? If they go astray, do they not turn back?”²³

Therefore, the Christian attitude is to warn sinners to their failures, just like the Prophet Ezekiel declared it: „If I say to the wicked, “O wicked ones, you shall surely die,” and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but their blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the wick-

21 καιρὸς τοῦ ῥῆξαι καὶ καιρὸς τοῦ ῥάψαι, καιρὸς τοῦ σιγᾶν καὶ καιρὸς τοῦ λαλεῖν, Ecclesiastes 3,7 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J.: Dossier grec de l’union de Lyon (1273–1277). Archives de l’Orient chrétien 16. Paris, Institut Français d’Études Byzantines, 1976. p. 546, p. 549. In this study, I always quote the Holy Bible in English following the New Revised Standard Version. (NRSV)

22 ὁδοὺς ἀσεβῶν μὴ ἐπέλθῃς μηδὲ ζηλώσης ὁδοὺς παρανόμων· ἐν ᾧ ἂν τόπῳ στρατοπεδεύσωσιν, μὴ ἐπέλθῃς ἐκεῖ, ἔκκλινον δὲ ἀπ’ αὐτῶν καὶ παράλλαξον. οὐ γὰρ μὴ ὑπνώσωσιν, ἐὰν μὴ κακοποιήσωσιν· ἀφήρηται ὁ ὕπνος αὐτῶν, καὶ οὐ κοιμῶνται· οἶδε γὰρ σιτοῦνται σῖτα ἀσεβείας, οἶνῳ δὲ παρανόμῳ μεθύσκονται. Proverbs 4,14-17 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 547.

23 Ὅτι τὰδε λέγει κύριος Μὴ ὁ πίπτων οὐκ ἀνίσταται; ἢ ὁ ἀποστρέφων οὐκ ἐπιστρέφει; Jeremiah 8,4 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 547.

ed to turn from their ways, and they do not turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but you will have saved your life.”²⁴ But, as II Thessalonians states it, even Christian tolerance should have its limits: „Now we command you, beloved, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep away from believers who are living in idleness and not according to the tradition that they received from us.”²⁵ The Gospel of Matthew explains the adequate behaviour more precisely: „If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.”²⁶

The aforementioned attitude and method are illustrated by famous warnings from the Old Testament. Here the recipients can read the utilisation of ancestral shortcomings as a negative example from the Psalms: „and that they should not be like their ancestors, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God.”²⁷ Lazarus invokes the words of the Prophet Isaiah from the times of Assyrian conquest threatening the Holy Land: „I, I am He who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins. Accuse me, let us go

24 ἐν τῷ εἶπαί με τῷ ἁμαρτωλῷ Θανάτῳ θανατωθήσῃ, καὶ μὴ λαλήσης τοῦ φυλάσασθαι τὸν ἄσεβῃ ἀπὸ τῆς ὁδοῦ αὐτοῦ, αὐτὸς ὁ ἄνομος τῇ ἀνομίᾳ αὐτοῦ ἀποθανεῖται, τὸ δὲ αἷμα αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῆς χειρός σου ἐκζητήσω. σὺ δὲ ἐὰν προαπαγγείλῃς τῷ ἄσεβῃ τὴν ὁδὸν αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἀποστρέψαι ἀπ’ αὐτῆς, καὶ μὴ ἀποστρέψῃ ἀπὸ τῆς ὁδοῦ αὐτοῦ, οὗτος τῇ ἄσεβείᾳ αὐτοῦ ἀποθανεῖται, καὶ σὺ τὴν ψυχὴν σου αὐτοῦ ἐξήρησαι. Cf. Ezekiel 33, 8-9 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 547.

25 Παραγγέλλομεν δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ στέλλεσθαι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ παντὸς ἀδελφοῦ ἀτάκτως περιπατοῦντος καὶ μὴ κατὰ τὴν παράδοσιν ἣν παρελάβοσαν παρ’ ἡμῶν. Cf. II Thessalonians 3,6 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976; p. 553.

26 ἐὰν δὲ παρακούσῃ αὐτῶν, εἰπὸν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ· ἐὰν δὲ καὶ τῆς ἐκκλησίας παρακούσῃ, ἔστω σοι ὥσπερ ὁ ἐθνικὸς καὶ ὁ τελώνης. Matthew 18,17 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 552.

27 μὴ μνησθῇς ἡμῶν ἀνομῶν ἀρχαίων· ταχὺ προκαταλαβέτωσαν ἡμᾶς οἱ οἰκτιρμοὶ σου, ὅτι ἐπρωχέυσαμεν σφόδρα. Psalms 78,8 NRSV; p. 551

to trial; set forth your case, so that you may be proved right.”²⁸ He quotes the desperate warnings of the Prophet Jeremiah from the years of Babylonian expansion: „Why do you complain against me? You have all rebelled against me, says the Lord.”²⁹ besides „O Jerusalem, wash your heart clean of wickedness so that you may be saved. How long shall your evil schemes lodge within you?”³⁰ and „Do not trust in these deceptive words: “This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord.””³¹. Finally, he repeats the bitter words of Prophet Hosea: „You have plowed wickedness, you have reaped injustice, you have eaten the fruit of lies.”³²

Lazarus goes further from moral conduct to protection of the faith and rejection of heresies, quoting the Deuteronomy: „You must neither add anything to what I command you nor take away anything from it, but keep the commandments of the Lord your God with which I am charging you.”³³ Furthermore, a clear reference to the change of Orthodox dogmas and the acceptance of Catholic teach-

28 ἐγὼ εἰμι ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ἐξαλείφων τὰς ἀνομίας σου καὶ οὐ μὴ μνησθήσομαι. σὺ δὲ μνήσθητι καὶ κριθῶμεν· λέγε σὺ τὰς ἀνομίας σου πρῶτος, ἵνα δικαιωθῇς. Isaiah 43, 25-26 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 547.

29 ἵνα τί λαλεῖτε πρὸς με; πάντες ὑμεῖς ἡσεβήσατε καὶ πάντες ὑμεῖς ἠνομήσατε εἰς ἐμέ, λέγει κύριος. Jeremiah 2,29 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 546.

30 ἀπόπλυνε ἀπὸ κακίας τὴν καρδίαν σου, Ἱερουσαλημ, ἵνα σωθῇς· ἕως πότε ὑπάρξουσιν ἐν σοὶ διαλογισμοὶ πόνων σου; Jeremiah 4,14 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 546.

31 μὴ πεποιθήατε ἐφ’ ἑαυτοῖς ἐπὶ λόγοις ψευδέσιν, ὅτι τὸ παράπαν οὐκ ὠφελήσουσιν ὑμᾶς λέγοντες Ναὸς κυρίου ναὸς κυρίου ἐστίν. Jeremiah 7,4 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 546.

32 ἵνα τί παρεσιωπήσατε ἀσέβειαν καὶ τὰς ἀδικίας αὐτῆς ἐτρυγήσατε, ἐφάγετε καρπὸν ψευδῆ; ὅτι ἤλπισας ἐν τοῖς ἄρμασίν σου, ἐν πλήθει δυνάμεώς σου. Hosea 10,13 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 546.

33 οὐ προσθήσετε πρὸς τὸ ῥῆμα, ὃ ἐγὼ ἐντέλλομαι ὑμῖν, καὶ οὐκ ἀφελεῖτε ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ· φυλάσσεσθε τὰς ἐντολὰς κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ ὑμῶν, ὅσα ἐγὼ ἐντέλλομαι ὑμῖν σήμερον. Deuteronomy 4,2 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 552

ings is made with the words of Saint Paul to the Galatians, proclaiming an even stricter condemnation than in the previous case: „I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel – not that there is another gospel, but there are some who are confusing you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should proclaim to you a gospel contrary to what we proclaimed to you, let that one be accursed!”³⁴

The monk repeats the verdict, just like the Apostle did: „As we have said before, so now I repeat, if anyone proclaims to you a gospel contrary to what you received, let that one be accursed!”³⁵ For Lazarus, obviously, the Church means the Orthodox Church, and it is represented not by the hierarchy, filled with supporters of the Union, but the masses of pious believers, who reject it. This concept, that a good Orthodox Christian should not commune with unrepentant sinners and heretics, is presented in its most elaborated form not with the words of the Scripture, but with the thoughts of the Cappadocian Church Father, Saint Basil the Great. Lazarus borrows a detailed explanation from the *De baptismo* given by Basil to a question regarding the aforementioned problem. His conclusion is negative, drawing boundaries for tolerance against moral and dogmatical failures.³⁶

34 Θανμάζω ὅτι οὕτως ταχέως μετατίθεσθε ἀπὸ τοῦ καλέσαντος ὑμᾶς ἐν χάριτι Χριστοῦ εἰς ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον, ὃ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλο· εἰ μὴ τινές εἰσιν οἱ ταρασσόντες ὑμᾶς καὶ θέλοντες μεταστρέψαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ. ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐὰν ἡμεῖς ἢ ἄγγελος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ εὐαγγελίζηται ὑμῖν παρ’ ὃ εὐηγγελισάμεθα ὑμῖν, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω. Galatians 1,6-8 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 549.

35 ὥς προειρήκαμεν, καὶ ἄρτι πάλιν λέγω, εἴ τις ὑμᾶς εὐαγγελίζεται παρ’ ὃ παρελάβετε, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω. Galatians 1,9 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 545.

36 ΕΡΩΤΗΣΙΣ Θ΄. Εἰ χρηὶ συγκοινωνεῖν τοῖς παρανομοῦσιν, ἢ τοῖς ἀκάρποις ἔργοις τοῦ σκότους, κἂν μὴ ᾧσι τῶν ἐμοὶ πιστευθέντων οἱ τοιοῦτοι. ΑΠΟΚΡΙΣΙΣ. Παράνομος μὲν ἔστιν πᾶς ὁ μὴ ὀλόκληρον τὸν νόμον φυλάξας, ἢ καὶ ὁ μίαν ἐντολὴν παραβάς. Ἐν γὰρ τῇ ἐλλείψει καὶ τοῦ μικροῦ τὸ πᾶν κινδυνεύει. Τὸ γὰρ παρ’ ὀλίγον γεγονὸς οὐ γέγονεν. Ὡσπερ γὰρ ὁ παρ’ ὀλίγον ἀποθανὼν οὐκ ἀπέθανεν, ἀλλὰ ζῆ, καὶ ὁ παρ’ ὀλίγον ζήσας οὐ ζῆ, ἀλλὰ ἀπέθανε, καὶ ὁ παρ’ ὀλίγον εἰσελθὼν οὐκ εἰσῆλθεν, ὥς αἱ

The previous case is not the sole example of the author relying on the ideas of the Cappadocian Father in his reasoning. A chapter from another work of Saint Basil, the *De fide*, is quoted because it analyzes a wisdom of Christ from the Gospel of John. As Christ states: „The gate-keeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.”³⁷

This figure of speech can be used both as an argument for rejecting schismatics and heretics, and as a reference to the „foreign” Roman Church becoming a rejected pastor of Orthodox believers. Another paragraph of *De baptismo* of Saint Basil is borrowed by Lazarus, in which the Church Father gives a lengthy arguments for ostracizing both moral vices and heresies.³⁸

πέντε παρθένοι· οὕτως ὁ παρ' ὀλίγον φυλάξας τὸν νόμον οὐκ ἐφύλαξεν, ἀλλ' ἔστι παράνομος. Διὸ καὶ ἀναγκαῖον ἐπὶ τῶν παρανομούντων, κἂν γνήσιοι εἶναι δόξωσι, πείθεσθαι τῷ Ἀποστόλῳ εἰπόντι, ποτὲ μὲν, «Ἐάν τις ἀδελφὸς ὀνομαζόμενος, ἢ πόρνος, ἢ πλεονέκτης, ἢ μέθυσος, ἢ λοιδορός, ἢ ἄρπαξ, τῷ τοιούτῳ μηδὲ συνεσθίειν» παρατηρητέον δὲ ἐνταῦθα, ὅτι οὐχὶ τὸν τὰ πάντα ὄντα ἀφώρισε καὶ αὐτῆς τῆς κοινῆς διαίτης, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν ἐν τῷ ὄντι ἐκ πάντων, ἐν τῷ μὴ εἰπεῖν, «Τούτῳ,» ἀλλὰ, «Τῷ τοιούτῳ» ποτὲ δὲ, «Νεκρώσατε τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, πορνείαν, ἀκαθαρσίαν, πάθος, ἐπιθυμίαν κακὴν, καὶ τὴν πλεονεξίαν, ἥτις ἐστὶν εἰδωλολατρεία· δι' ἧς ἔρχεται ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ Θεοῦ (καὶ γὰρ καθολικώτερον ἐπήγαγεν) ἐπὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς τῆς ἀπειθείας. Μὴ οὖν γίνεσθε συμμέτοχοι αὐτῶν» καὶ πάλιν· «Στέλλεσθαι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ παντὸς ἀδελφοῦ ἀτάκτως περιπατοῦντος, καὶ μὴ κατὰ τὴν παράδοσιν, ἣν παρέλαβον παρ' ἡμῶν» Saint Basil the Great: *De baptismo* II, 9. PG 31, 1612. (the whole first paragraph); Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 553.

37 καὶ ὑπερφανίας κατηγορία, ἡ ἀθετεῖν τι τῶν γεγραμμένων, ἡ ἐπεισάγειν τῶν μὴ γεγραμμένων, τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰπόντος· Τὰ ἐμὰ πρόβατα τῆς ἐμῆς φωνῆς ἀκούει καὶ πρὸ τούτου δὲ εἰρηκότος· Ἀλλοτρίῳ δὲ οὐ μὴ ἀκολουθήσωσιν, ἀλλὰ φεύξονται ἀπ' αὐτοῦ· ὅτι οὐκ οἶδασιν τῶν ἀλλοτρίων τὴν φωνήν Saint Basil the Great: Prologus 8: *De fide* (PG 31, 680); Cf. John 10, 3-5 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 551.

38 Μνημονεύων οὖν ἐν μὲν ταῖς Παροιμίαις τοῦ, «Ἐλθὲ μεθ' ἡμῶν, κοινωνήσωμεν αἵματος,» παρὰ δὲ τῷ Ἀποστόλῳ τοῦ, «Συγκοινωνοὺς μου τῆς χάριτος πάντας

The most audacious and most autonomous ideas appear in the letter sent to the metropolitan of Larissa. Lazarus claims that he does not know the opinion of the inhabitants of Larissa, but he is unwilling to obey the Italians, and surrender God to the Latins, who do not compensate Orthodox believers for their crimes against them, but were anathematised by the Orthodox Church and were utterly defeated by Byzantine armies. He asks the metropolitan to remember the story of Samson, who believed to the beautiful Delilah and suffered a tragic fate.³⁹ On the first hand, it is easy to see a parallel between Samson and the archbishop, and Delilah and the Union. On the other hand, it is a clever metaphor to express his opinion on the actions of the addressee, while not necessarily offending him, as Samson was pious and fell only because of his gullability.

The author does not deny the fact that resistance to the Union is tantamount to opposing the emperor, Michael VIII. Nonetheless, he agrees with the Acts: „But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must

ὡμᾶς ὄντας,» καὶ, «Συγκοινωνήσαντές μου τῇ θλίψει» καὶ, «Κοινωνεῖτω δὲ ὁ κατηχούμενος τὸν λόγον τῷ κατηχοῦντι ἐν πᾶσιν ἀγαθοῖς» καὶ τοῦ, «Εἰ ἐθεώρεις κλέπτην, συνέτρεχες αὐτῷ, καὶ μετὰ μοιχῶν τὴν μερίδα σου ἐτίθεις» καὶ τοῦ, «Ἐλεγμῷ ἐλέγξεις τὸν ἀδελφόν σου, καὶ οὐ λήψῃ δι' αὐτὸν ἁμαρτίαν» καὶ τοῦ, «Ταῦτα ἐποίησας, καὶ ἐσίγησα· ὑπέλαβες ἀνομίαν, ὅτι ἔσομαί σοι ὁμοιος· ἐλέγξω σε καὶ παραστήσω κατὰ πρόσωπόν σου,» καὶ τῶν τοιούτων, κοινωνίαν ἡγοῦμαι κατὰ τὸ ἔργον, ὅταν ἀλλήλοις ἐπὶ τῷ αὐτῷ σκοπῷ συλλαμβάνονται πρὸς τὴν ἐνέργειαν· κατὰ δὲ γνώμην, ὅταν συγκατάθῃται τις τῇ διαθέσει τοῦ ποιοῦντος, καὶ συναρעסθῇ. Ἐτέρα δὲ κοινωνία τοὺς πολλοὺς λανθάνουσα ἐμφαίνεται τῇ ἀκριβολογίᾳ τῆς θεοπνεύστου Γραφῆς· ὅταν μῆτε συνεργασάμενος, μῆτε συγκαταθέμενος τῇ διαθέσει, γνούς δὲ τὴν κακίαν τῆς γνώμης ἀφ' ἧς ποιεῖ, ἐφησυχάσῃ, καὶ μὴ ἐλέγξῃ, κατὰ τε τὰ ἀνωτέρω γεγραμμένα, καὶ κατὰ τὸ ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἀποστόλου εἰρημένον τοῖς Κορινθίοις, ὅτι «Οὐκ ἐπενθήσατε ἵνα ἐξαρθῇ ἐκ μέσου ὑμῶν ὁ τὸ ἔργον τοῦτο ποιήσας;» οἷς ἐπήγαγεν· «Μικρὰ ζύμη ὅλον τὸ φύραμα δολοῖ.» Φοβηθῶμεν οὖν καὶ ἀνασχώμεθα αὐτοῦ λέγοντος· «Ἐκκαθάρατε τὴν παλαιὰν ζύμην, ἵνα ἦτε νέον φύραμα.» Saint Basil the Great: De baptismo II, 9. PG 31, 1616-1617 (paragraph 4); Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 553.

³⁹ Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 544.

obey God rather than any human authority.”⁴⁰ Concerning the sanctions for disloyalty, Lazarus turns to the teachings of the Proverbs: „Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering.”⁴¹ Furthermore, other pious believers would not only share the same ill fortune, but „kinsfolk are born to share adversity,”⁴² promising solidarity and help provided by others, persecuted for their opposition to the Union.

Even if it comes to offering the ultimate sacrifice through suffering martyrdom, each correspondent should be aware that „the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”⁴³, stressing that they are responsible with their lives for protecting their flocks from eternal damnation. The letters present a number of examples for accepting martyrdom. First of all, the monk invokes the bravery of the Prophet Daniel: „If our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire and out of your hand, O king, let him deliver us. Or If our God whom we serve is able to deliver us, he will deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire and out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods and we will not worship the golden statue that you have set up.”⁴⁴

40 ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ Πέτρος καὶ οἱ ἀπόστολοι εἶπαν Πειθαρχεῖν δεῖ θεῷ μᾶλλον ἢ ἀνθρώποις. Cf. Acts 5,29 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 550.

41 ὃ ἀντίστητε στερεοὶ τῇ πίστει, εἰδότες τὰ αὐτὰ τῶν παθημάτων τῇ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ὑμῶν ἀδελφότητι ἐπιτελεῖσθαι. I Peter 5,9 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 549.

42 καὶ οὐ πληθυνεῖ ἑαυτῷ γυναῖκα, οὐδὲ μεταστήσεται αὐτοῦ ἡ καρδία· καὶ ἀργύριον καὶ χρυσίον οὐ πληθυνεῖ ἑαυτῷ σφόδρα. Proverbs 17,17 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 547.

43 Ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλὸς ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλὸς τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ τίθησιν ὑπὲρ τῶν προβάτων· John 10,11 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 543.

44 ἔστι γὰρ θεὸς ἐν οὐρανοῖς εἷς κύριος ἡμῶν, ὃν φοβούμεθα, ὃς ἐστι δυνατὸς ἐξελέσθαι ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς καμίνου τοῦ πυρός, καὶ ἐκ τῶν χειρῶν σου, βασιλεῦ, ἐξελεῖται ἡμᾶς· καὶ τότε φανερόν σοι ἔσται, ὅτι οὔτε τῷ εἰδώλῳ σου λατρεύομεν

Another role model is presented through a reference to II Maccabees: „While she was still speaking, the young man said, “What are you waiting for? I will not obey the king’s command, but I obey the command of the law that was given to our ancestors through Moses.””⁴⁵ Similarly, the contemporaries have martyrs to imitate from the Christian Era in resisting tyrants who promote heresies. Lazarus mentions two notable heroes, who showed such behaviour: Saint Peter, martyred during the persecution of Nero, and Saint James Inter-cisus of Persia, a victim of another infamous persecutor of Christians, the Persian king Bahram V (420–438).⁴⁶ Furthermore, a simple reference to the Iconoclast emperors invokes the memory of the faithful martyred by them.⁴⁷

III. Arguments based on the consequences of piety and sin

The author does not only focuses on moral imperatives, but deals in detail with the rewards bestowed upon pious Christians and the punishments suffered by sinners too, with a clear intent of convincing his correspondents. Happiness in general appears, supported by the Psalms: „O taste and see that the Lord is good; happy are those who take refuge in him”⁴⁸, while the gifts of longevity and prosperity are

οὔτε τῇ εἰκόνι σου τῇ χρυσῇ, ἣν ἔστησας, προσκυνούμεν. Daniel 3,17-18 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 547.

45 Ἐτι δὲ ταύτης καταληγούσης ὁ νεανίας εἶπεν Τίνα μένετε; οὐχ ὑπακούω τοῦ προστάγματος τοῦ βασιλέως, τοῦ δὲ προστάγματος ἀκούω τοῦ νόμου τοῦ δοθέντος τοῖς πατράσιν ἡμῶν διὰ Μωυσέως. Cf. II. Maccabees 7,30 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 547.

46 The systematical persecution of Christians carried out on the orders of Bahram became the casus belli of the Eastern Roman – Sassanid War of 421–422. Greatrex, G. B. – Lieu, S. N. C.: The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars. Part II AD 363–630. London – New York, 2002, pp. 36-43.

47 Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 545.

48 ἐλθέτω αὐτοῖς παγίς, ἣν οὐ γινώσκουσιν, καὶ ἡ θήρα, ἣν ἔκρυσαν, συλλαβέτω

the key concepts in a passage from Ephesians: “so that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”⁴⁹

As accepting the opinion of the monk would lead to a bitter conflict with imperial authorities, the rewards of fighting for the true faith are important in his reasoning. He borrows from Matthew and Timothy in illustrating the ultimate gift of salvation: “Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven”⁵⁰ and „Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called and for which you confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”⁵¹

But Lazarus is not hesitant to encourage his superiors with the promises given to Saint Peter and the other Apostles by Christ about the victory of their true cause from Matthew and Luke: „And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it”⁵² „See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you.”⁵³

αὐτούς, καὶ ἐν τῇ παγίδι πεσοῦνται ἐν αὐτῇ. Psalms 34,8 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 546.

49 ἵνα εὖ σοι γένηται καὶ ἔσῃ μακροχρόνιος ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. Ephesians 6,3 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 550.

50 Πᾶς οὖν ὅστις ὁμολογήσῃ ἐν ἐμοὶ ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὁμολογήσω καὶ ἐγὼ ἐν αὐτῷ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ πατρὸς μου τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς. Cf. Matthew 10,32 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 545.

51 ἀγωνίζου τὸν καλὸν ἀγῶνα τῆς πίστεως, ἐπιλαβοῦ τῆς αἰωνίου ζωῆς, εἰς ἣν ἐκλήθης καὶ ὁμολόγησας τὴν καλὴν ὁμολογίαν ἐνώπιον πολλῶν μαρτύρων. I Timothy 6,12 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 545.

52 καὶ ἐγὼ δέ σοι λέγω ὅτι σὺ εἶ Πέτρος, καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, καὶ πύλαι ᾧδου οὐ κατισχύσουσιν αὐτῆς Matthew 16,18 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 546.

53 ἰδοὺ δέδωκα ὑμῖν τὴν ἐξουσίαν τοῦ πατεῖν ἐπάνω ὄφεων καὶ σκορπίων, καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ ἐχθροῦ, καὶ οὐδὲν ὑμᾶς οὐ μὴ ἀδικήσῃ. Luke 10,19 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 543.

Nonetheless, as good deeds lead to blessings, evil deeds provoke divine punishments., and similarly to gifts, torments can be earthly and heavenly too. Visions of utter destruction appear through passages from the Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel: „The Lord has made himself known, he has executed judgment; the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands”⁵⁴ besides „And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down”⁵⁵ respectively „Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, look around and take note! Search its squares and see if you can find one person who acts justly and seeks truth so that I may pardon Jerusalem.”⁵⁶ and finally „you shall be profaned through you in the sight of the nations; and you shall know that I am the Lord.”⁵⁷

However, the worst fate is presented by the horror of eternal damnation. Job and the Book of Wisdom summon the images of lost souls: „So we also, as soon as we were born, ceased to be, and we had

54 ἐνεπάγησαν ἔθνη ἐν διαφθορᾷ, ἣ ἐποίησαν, ἐν παγίδι ταύτη, ἣ ἔκρυψαν, συνελήμφθη ὁ πούς αὐτῶν. Psalms 9,16 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 546.

55 οὐαὶ οἱ λέγοντες τὸ πονηρὸν καλὸν καὶ τὸ καλὸν πονηρὸν, οἱ τιθέντες τὸ σκότος φῶς καὶ τὸ φῶς σκότος, οἱ τιθέντες τὸ πικρὸν γλυκὺ καὶ τὸ γλυκὺ πικρὸν. Isaiah 5,20 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 550.

56 Περιδράμετε ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς Ἱερουσαλημ καὶ ἴδετε καὶ γνῶτε καὶ ζητήσατε ἐν ταῖς πλατεαῖαις αὐτῆς, ἐὰν εὑρητε ἄνδρα, εἰ ἔστιν ποιῶν κρίμα καὶ ζητῶν πίστιν, καὶ ἵλεως ἔσομαι αὐτοῖς, λέγει κύριος. Jeremiah 5,1 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 546.

57 καὶ κατακληρονομήσω ἐν σοὶ κατ’ ὀφθαλμοὺς τῶν ἐθνῶν· καὶ γνώσεσθε διότι ἐγὼ κύριος. Ezekiel 22,16 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 552. The abundance of parallels drawn between the trials of ancient Israel and 13th-century Byzantium can be traced back to the tendency among Byzantines after 1204 to see their own people as the equivalents of the exiled children of Israel. Angold, M.: Byzantine ‘Nationalism’ and the Nicean Empire. In BMGS 1 (1975), pp. 49-70; pp. 53-55.

no sign of virtue to show, but were consumed in our wickedness.”⁵⁸ „they will perish forever like their own dung; those who have seen them will say, „Where are they?””⁵⁹. Finally, passages from Romans and II Corinthians are utilised for a more vivid representation of the Last Judgement: „on the day when, according to my gospel, God, through Jesus Christ, will judge the secret thoughts of all.”⁶⁰ „For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.”⁶¹

IV. Conclusion

The letters of Lazarus the monk present us with a special collection of sources. They may seem excessively partisan and emotional, containing little information on the historical developments. However, they offer a unique insight into the erudition of a Byzantine monk in an influential monastery in the second half of the 13th century, and preserve what he saw as the most effective way of convincing his superiors about his right in a situation when his most precious value seemed to be in danger: his Orthodox faith.

58 οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς γεννηθέντες ἐξελίπομεν καὶ ἀρετῆς μὲν σημεῖον οὐδὲν ἔσχομεν δεῖξαι, ἐν δὲ τῇ κακίᾳ ἡμῶν κατεδαπανήθημεν. Book of Wisdom 5,13 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 547.

59 ὅταν γὰρ δοκῇ ἡδη κατεστηρίχθαι, τότε εἰς τέλος ἀπολείται· οἱ δὲ ἰδόντες αὐτὸν ἐροῦσιν Ποῦ ἐστιν; Job 20,7 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 546.

60 ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὅτε κρίνει ὁ θεὸς τὰ κρυπτὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου διὰ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ. Romans 2,16 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 546.

61 τοὺς γὰρ πάντας ἡμᾶς φανερωθῆναι δεῖ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ βήματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἵνα κομίσῃται ἕκαστος τὰ διὰ τοῦ σώματος πρὸς ᾧ ἔπραξεν, εἴτε ἀγαθὸν εἴτε φαῦλον. II Corinthians 5,10 NRSV; Laurent, V. – Darrouzès, J. 1976, p. 546.