

A BYZANTINE LETTER IN SANKT GALLEN  
AND LAZARUS THE PAINTER.

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The present article deals with a Byzantine letter, written by a certain Lazaros to his anonymous "spiritual master" (πνευματικῶς δεσπότης). The letter was inserted by a late ninth century Western scribe into the manuscript St. Gall 902, on a blank page at the beginning of the volume.<sup>1</sup> The copy is incomplete, the text breaking off in the middle of a sentence.

The *Epistula Lazari* was first published in 1975, in Bernice Martha Kaczynski's Yale dissertation, Greek Learning in the Medieval West: A Study of St. Gall 816-1022. "Terse, and undeniably dramatic", she says, "the letter commands the attention of its readers. Yet without any knowledge of the context it is difficult to interpret" (p. 181). Its grammatical and orthographical irregularities point towards a date "some time after AD 400" (p.290) - though many of its corruptions and omissions must be attributed to the Carolingian scribe with his poor understanding of Greek (p.181).

It is, of course, absolutely correct that we do not *know* the original context of Lazaros's letter - nor, for that matter, the reason for its occurrence on p. 7 of cod. Sangallensis 902, or its 'life' between the unknown date of composition and the late ninth century.<sup>2</sup> But even so, our situation is far from being as hopeless as Bernice Kaczynski depicts it. In fact, the very beginning of the letter provides an important clue. Τῷ ἡσαγγέλῳ θεωδότητῳ θεοσκεπάζῳ νεοομολογητῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ πνευματικῷ

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1. My interest in Lazaros's letter goes back to the summer of 1972 where I visited St.Gallen and incidentally hit upon the following note in Gustav Scherrer, Verzeichniss der Handschriften der Stiftsbibliothek von St. Gallen, Halle 1875, p.316: "Auf der vordersten Seite (p.7) ein Bruchstück von 17 Zeilen in kleiner griechischer Uncial (über Lazarus, aber nicht aus den Evangelien)." The fragment is mentioned in Albert Bruckner, *Scriptoria medii ævi Helvetica*, III, 1938, p.122, without any details.

2. "What was the letter of a distressed Byzantine doing in a quiet Benedictine monastery north of the Alps? It had been found, perhaps, in one of the late-classical manuscripts from Italy, with which the library was so well-supplied. And - again, perhaps - a St. Gall teacher directed that it be included among the Greek materials assembled for classroom use in MS 902", Kaczynski, p.181.

μου δεσπότη ("To the equal of angels, God-guided, God-protected, new confessor of Christ, my spiritual master"): The addressee must be a highly ranked ecclesiastic - a bishop, at least<sup>3</sup> - who has suffered bravely for his faith, not long ago.<sup>4</sup>

In the letter Lazaros speaks of some hostility which has arisen "between me and the King". The most natural inference is that it was on behalf of his "spiritual master" that Lazaros had to do with the said king, in other words that Lazaros was an agent or envoy. Now, there happens to be at least one such Lazaros on record: Lazaros the Chazar, the famous painter, an ardent supporter of Ignatios the Patriarch, involved in missions to Rome in 855 and on one later occasion.<sup>5</sup>

Obviously, an identification of our Lazaros with the painter and of his master with Ignatios needs more support to become plausible. Also, the text needs a more careful work of emendation than could be applied to it in the *editio princeps* from 1975.

Let us begin with the text. Below (p.126) follows my reconstruction of Lazaros's original. To facilitate checking, I also print a sketch of what the letter looks like in Sangallensis 902. My reconstruction is based on four assumptions, the reasons for which will become clear in the following:

1. The letter cannot have been written earlier than 858.
2. There is no reason to assume intermediate copies between the letter and the St. Gall manuscript.
3. The Carolingian scribe did not understand what he was copying and was not familiar with Greek pronunciation - nor with the abbreviation system; he sometimes confused letters of similar shape.
4. Lazaros - and not the scribe of Sangallensis 902 - was responsible for the syntactical oddities and for the orthography.

3. DuCange, s.v. ἱσάγγελος. One of his references is to a letter from Theodore Studites to Pope Leo III (Migne, PG 99,1021: Τῷ ἱσαγγέλῳ μακαριωτάτῳ καὶ ἀποστολικῷ πατρὶ Λέοντι πάπῃ Ῥώμης).

4. The Greek ὁμολογητής is more restricted in meaning than its Latin counterpart *confessor*. "Le mot 'confesseur', ὁμολογητής, ne désigne pas, comme dans l'Eglise latine depuis le haut moyen âge, tous les saints non martyrs. C'est le terme réservé aux héros chrétiens qui ont souffert pour la foi sans mourir dans les tourments" (François Halkin, *Analecta Bollandiana* 85, 1967, 6, note 3).

5. Cf. the texts quoted below (Appendix B) and Cyril Mango's article in BZ 1954 (cf. below, note 15).

τῷ ἡσαγγέλω θεωδηγητῷ θεοσκεπασ-  
 τῷ νεοομολογητῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ πνευματικῷ μου  
 δεσπότη: Λάζαρος δοῦλος ἀνάξιος καὶ τοῖς ποσὶν  
 προσκείμενος τοῦ δεσπότου μου μετὰ πάσης ὁμολογίας  
 5 καὶ ταπεινότητος καὶ πίστεως, καὶ ἐλπίζων τελείως ἐπιτυχῆν  
 τῷ ἀγγελωμηνίτῳ εὐχῷ τοῦ δεσπότου μου· οἶδα γὰρ τὸ εὐσπλανον αὐτοῦ  
 καὶ τεκνοσυμπαθὲς καὶ φιλότεκνον, καὶ τὸ πρὸς Χριστὸν εὐπαρρισιαστόν.  
 Οὐκ ἄγνωῃν δὲ βούλομαι τὸν δεσπότην μου τὰ ἐν ἐμοὶ συμβάν-  
 τα ἅπαντα. ἀπὸ γὰρ τετάρτης ἡμέρας τοῦ Ἰανουαρίου μηνὸς - ἀφ' οὗ  
 10 τοῦ δεσπότου μου ἐχωρίσθην - γέγονα ἐν πικροτάτῃ λύπῃ διὰ  
 τὸ μεγάλην ἐχθρὰν θῆναι ὁ ἐκτὸς παντὸς ἀγαθοῦ καὶ ὁ παρὰ πᾶσι  
 τοῖς βαρβάροις καὶ γε ἡπεῖν καὶ παρ' ἐμοὶ καλούμενος Ἑβραῖος  
 Γεώργιος ἀναμέσον ἐμοῦ καὶ τοῦ ριγός. ὁμως δ' οὖν ἀναψυ-  
 χεῖν τὴν ἐκδοχὴν ποιούμενος τοῦ δεσπότου μου νομίζω αὐτὰ  
 15 ἐν τάχῃ γενέσθαι. Φθασάσις δὲ τῆς εἰκάδος πρώτης τοῦ αὐτοῦ  
 μηνὸς, ὥρας οὔσης τῆς νυκτὸς ὥσῃ τρίτης, καὶ ἀγωνιστῆς  
 ἐγγὺς πυρὸς καθεζόμενος καὶ τὴν ἐκδοχὴν - - - - -

("To the equal of angels,<sup>6</sup> God-guided, God-protected, new confessor<sup>7</sup> of  
 Christ, my spiritual master. (From) Lazaros, unworthy servant, lying at  
 my master's feet - respectfully, humbly, and trustfully<sup>8</sup> - and hoping for  
 the full benefit of my master's angel-imitating prayer; for I know that he  
 is merciful, that he is full of compassion and kindness towards his child-  
 ren, and that he has freedom of speech to Christ. Let my master not be  
 ignorant of all that has happened to me. For since the fourth day of the  
 month of January when I left my master, I have become bitterly distressed  
 because of great hostility between me and the King, caused by George, an  
 entirely bad person whom all the Barbarians - and I too, for that matter  
 - call a Jew.<sup>9</sup> However, I am seeking comfort in my master's ἐκδοχή and  
 suppose that these things will happen soon.<sup>10</sup> The twenty-first of the  
 same month having come, approximately at the third hour of the night, and  
 as a combattant<sup>11</sup> sitting at the fireside and (with) the ἐκδοχή<sup>12</sup> ....")

6. The "messenger" of Kaczynski's must be a lapsus.

7. Or 'new-confessor'. The compound word is otherwise unattested and should, perhaps, be considered a misspelling of νέφ ὁμολογητῇ. In post-medieval Greek, the expression νεομάρτυς has been coined as a technical term for martyrs from the period of the Turcocratia.

8. I am not sure that I have grasped the exact value of these words, especially that of πίστις.

9. George is an unusual name for a Jew. I take it, therefore, that Ἑβραῖ-

Τῷ ΗΣ ΑΓΓΕΛῶ ΘΕΩΔΗΓΗ Τῷ ΘΕΟΣΚΕΠΑΣ

ΤΩΝΕΟ ΟΜΟΛΟΓΗΤῆ ΧΥ Κ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙΚῷ ΜΟΥ

ΔΕΣΠΟΤΗ: ΛΑΖΑΡΟΣ ΔΛΟΣ ΑΝΑΞΙΟΣ Κ ΤΟΙΣ ΠΟΣΙΝ

ΠΡΟΣΚΕΙΜΕΝΟΣ ΤΔΕΣΠΟΤῆ Μ ΜΕΤΑΠΑΣΗΣ ΟΜΟΛΟΓῆ

5 Κ ΤΑΠΕΙΝΩΤΗΤΟΣ Κ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ Κ ΕΛΠΙΖΩΝ ΤΕΛΕΙΟΣ ΕΠΙΤΥΧΗΝ

Τῷ ΑΓΓΕΛΜΗΜΗΤῆ ΕΥΧῆ ΤΔΕΣΠΟΤῆ Μ ΟΙΔΑ ΓΑΡ ΤΟ ΕΥΣΠΛΑΝῶ ΑΥΤῆ

Κ ΤΕΚΝΟΣΥΜΠΑΘΕΣ Κ ΦΙΛΟΤΕΚΝΟΝ Κ Τῆ ΠΡΟΣ ΧΝ ΕΥΠΑΡΡΙΣΙῆ Τῶ

ΘΚΑΓῆΝΝΔΕ ΒΘΛΟΜΑΙ ΤΟΝΔΕΣΠΟΤΗΝ ΜΘ ΤΑΕΝΕΜΟΙ ΣΥΜΒΑῖ

ΤΑ ΑΠΑΝΤΑ ΑΠΟΓΑΡ ΤΕΤΑΡΤΗΣ ΗΜΕΡΟΣ Τῆ ΙΑΝΝΑΡΙῆ ΜῆΝΟΣ ΑΦΟΥ

10 ΓΘΔΕΣΠΟΤῆ Μ ΕΧῆΡΙΣΤῆΝ ΓΕΓΟΝΑ ΕΝ ΜΙΚΡΟΤΑΤΗ ΛΥΠΗ ΔΙΑ

ΤΟ ΜΕΓΑΛΕΧΘΡΑΝΘΗΝΑΙ ΟΕΚΤΟΣ ΠΑΝΤΟΣ ΑΓΑΘῆ Κ ΟΠΑΡΑΤΑΣΙ

ΤΟΙΣ ΒΑΡΒΑΡΟΙΣ Κ ΓΕΝΠΕΙΝ Κ ΠΑΡΕΜΟΙ ΚΑΛΟΥΜΕΝΟΣ ΕΒΡΑΙΟΣ

ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΣ ΑΝΑΜΕΣΟΝΕΜῆ Κ ΤΘΡΙΓΟΣ· ΟΜΩΣ ΔΟΥΝΑΝΑΨΥ

ΧΕΙΧΟΝ ΤΕΚΔΟΧῆ ΠΟΙΘΜΕΝΟΣ Τῆ ΔΕΣΠΟΤῆ Μ ΝΟΜΙΖῆ ΑΥΤῆ

15 ΕΝΤΑΧΗ ΓΕΝΕΣΘΑΙ ΦΘΑΣΑΪΣ ΔΕ ΤΗΣ ΕΙΚΑΔΟΣ ΠΡΩΤΗΣ Τῆ ΑΥΤῆ

ΜΙΝΟΣ ΩΡΑΣΘΗΣ Τῆ ΝΥΚΤΟΣΩ ΗΤΡΙΤΗΣ ΚΑΓΩΝΙΣΤΗΟ

ΕΓΓΥΣ ΠΥΡΟΣ ΚΑΘΕΖΟΜΕΝΟΣ· Κ ΤΕΚΔΟΧΗΝ

ος does not cover any ethnic or confessional reality, but is a nickname with a pejorative, antisemitic ring. Kaczynski's reference to "a Hebrew farmer" (p.181), is curious; there can be no doubt that Γεώργιος is a proper name.

10. The entire passage (lines 13-15) is far from being clear to me. I understand the adjective ἀναψυχικός (not known from elsewhere, as it seems) in the metaphorical sense of 'relief' (e.g. πόνων or κακῶν). Because of the widely different meanings of the word ἐκδοχή, I have preferred not to translate it; the most likely, perhaps, is that Lazaros refers to some written or oral instructions which he has brought with him or is expecting to receive. Kaczynski (p.181) takes the passage to imply that Lazaros "is impatient for his master's arrival".

Finally, the αὐτά is obscure. Can it be a vague reference to the contents of the instructions - deliberately phrased in such a way that no outsider will understand what Lazaros is talking about?

11. The reading of Sangallensis 902 (ΚΑΓΩΝΙΣΤΗΟ ΕΓΓΥΣ ΠΥΡΟΣ ΚΑΘΕΖΟΜΕΝΟΣ) can be palaeographically explained in various ways, none of which makes much sense. The first Kappa is more likely to be a copyist's error for an abbreviated καὶ than a crasis. Kaczynski suggests τῆ ἀγωνίστη ὁ ἐγγυς πυρὸς καθεζόμενος.

12. Lazaros must be the subject of the missing verb, τὴν ἐκδοχήν is probably the object.

For the peculiarities of orthography and syntax in the letter, see details below p.136, Appendix A.

To make our identifications plausible, we must compare the data and implications of this letter with the general historical context - the turbulent period after the restoration of Orthodoxy in 843. In our connection, the strife between the Constantinopolitan patriarchs and ex-patriarchs Ignatios and Photios and their supporters is, of course, the dominating feature of the period, a conflict in which successive popes were involved. As a by-product of the ups and downs of the Ignatian and Photian parties, many important sources have unfortunately disappeared or have been tampered with - and the surviving sources are so biased that scholars by and large disagree in their evaluation, and it remains unclear what really happened.

From the wording in lines 8-10 we learn that the letter was Lazaros's first report back to the Patriarch after his departure on January 4. It may very well be that the letter was actually written on the night of January 21 - 22 (cf. lines 15-17) - but since the letter breaks off, we do not know for sure how much longer a period it was intended to cover. As a first report, however, describing the difficulties Lazaros had met in his talk with the King, it cannot very well have been written much later than by the end of January. In which year? Hardly before 858; for until Ignatios was accused of high treason and banished to the island of Terebinthos in July 857, not even his most loyal partisan would probably think of calling him a νεομολογητής (line 2). As for the latest possible date, the cruel treatment to which Ignatios was submitted in 858, to make him 'spontaneously' resign, and also his subsequent banishment to Mytilene and Terebinthos, would sufficiently account for Lazaros's describing his master as "Christ's new confessor" at any time afterwards.<sup>13</sup>

Having thus, in accordance with our general hypothesis, established January 21, 858 as a *terminus post quem* for the letter, we turn to its *ante quem*. Ignatios died on October 23, 877, and Lazaros left his master "on January 4". Consequently, the letter cannot possibly have been written later than in the beginning of 877. And if Lazaros did not survive the Patriarch, the *terminus ante quem* must be the year in which Lazaros died - in all likelihood on November 17, the date of his commemoration in the liturgical Synaxarium.<sup>14</sup> Now, there seems to be a general agreement among scholars to place the death of Lazaros in the late 860s:

13. The pro-Ignatian documents bear ample witness to this attitude, see especially the *Vita Ignatii* and the *libellus* of Theoktistos (Migne, PG 105, 487 sqq. and 855 sqq.).

14. See below, p.137, Appendix B.

Cyril Mango<sup>15</sup>: "That his death occurred after 865 is proved by the famous latter of Pope Nicolas I to the emperor Michael, dated the 28th of September 865, in which it is requested that Lazarus be sent to Rome along with other legates to represent the claims of Ignatius.... The death of Lazarus occurred therefore *shortly after* 865."

Cyril Mango & Ernest Hawkins:<sup>16</sup> "Lazarus' second mission cannot be dated so accurately, except that it must have taken place after 865... Unless, therefore, the Pope was misinformed, Lazarus was still alive at the time. We do not know, however, when he set out for Rome or, indeed, whether he did so before or after the downfall of Photius (September 23, 867)."

Robin Cormack:<sup>17</sup> "He died while accompanying a second papal mission *soon after* September 865."

As far as I can see, the expressions "shortly after" and "soon after" 865 rest on pure guesswork. The only fact is that the Pope on September 28, 865 suggested that Lazaros and others be sent to Rome ("*mittantur*") - a suggestion which he certainly would not have made, if he knew that Lazaros had died. This, I suppose, is the only deduction which can safely be made from the only Papal letter in which Lazaros is mentioned by name.<sup>18</sup> Apparently, no embassy was sent to Rome at the time; more than one year later - on November 13, 866 - Nicolas wrote another letter to the Emperor, restating his request in somewhat different terms. In this letter of 866, however, the Pope did not give a list of those whom he wanted to receive,

15. Documentary Evidence on the Apse Mosaics of St. Sophia (Byzantinische Zeitschrift 47, 1954, p.397).

16. The Apse Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul (Dumbarton Oaks Papers 19, 1965, p.145).

17. Painting after Iconoclasm (Iconoclasm. Papers given at the Ninth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies. Birmingham, March 1975 (1977), p. 160).

18. MGH, Epistolae VI, 1925, p.482: Porro, si venire illi (*i.e.* Ignatios and Gregory of Syracuse) per se nequeunt, primo quidem ipsi, cuius rei causa venire non valeant, nobis per satisfactorias suas litteras indicent. Deinde veniant de his, qui cum Syracusano Gregorio sunt, quotquot voluerint, vices ceterorum tenentes, qui ipsius sunt partis. Mittantur etiam de parte Ignatii archiepiscopi quidem Antonius Cyzici, Basilius Thessalonicae, Constantinus Larissae, Theodorus Syracussianorum, Metrophanes Smyrnae et Paulus episcopus Ponti Heracliae; egumeni autem Niceta Chrysopoleos, Nicolaus Studii, Dositheus Osiidii *atque Lazarus presbyter et monachus qui dicitur Chazaris*..... Mittat nihilominus et Photius ex sua parte quos decreverit ..... Necnon et imperialis apex vester, si libet, suos e latere mittat aulicos...

but simply referred to the previous letter - of which a copy was included.<sup>19</sup> Thus, this piece of evidence is inconclusive for us - Lazaros may still be alive, or his death may not have been known in Rome, or not found worth mentioning in the actual context of the new letter.<sup>20</sup> However that may be, it is evident that 'soon after September 865' cannot be used as a *terminus ante quem* for Lazaros's letter.

More promising is a detail in the letter itself: Lazaros, it will be remembered, set out from his master on January 4, *i.e.* in winter-time. He must have travelled very fast; for less than three weeks later he seems to have had his unsuccessful talk with the King (τοῦ βασιλέως, line 13). Now, a βασις is most certainly a *Western* king (or emperor) - and of the possible candidates for an identification no one comes in more readily than Lewis II, King of Italy and Emperor of the Franks (+875). Let us now keep in mind that the letter - according to our hypothesis - was Lazaros's first message back to Ignatios. Running the risk of an interpretation *e silentio*, we notice that Lazaros does not speak about his talk with "the King" in words which suggest that their meeting was incidental; he writes in a matter-of-fact way which seems to imply that Ignatios *expected* that this meeting would take place. Now, nobody would start West with a message for Lewis II without having an idea of where to find him. In other words: If Lewis II is the βασις of the letter - and who else could one reach in so short a time? - Ignatios must have known where to dispatch Lazaros. We are thus led to infer that Lazaros's mission took place in a period when Lewis II was not moving around. The whole context presupposes a 'statio-

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19. Ibid., p. 510: Iam vero si epistola (*i.e.* the letter from 865) per eundem legatum vestrum aliquo vobis modo delata non est et tenorem vel ordinem, quo diximus praenominatas personas Romam fore venturas (see preceding note) scire cupitis, a praesentibus missis nostris exigit et hunc nosse plene valebitis. Siquidem illis exemplaria epistolarum, quas magnitudini vestrae vel Photio per Rhadoaldum et Zacchariam tunc episcopos direximus, scripta pro collatione cum authenticis faciendam tradidimus..... In ista (*scil.* epistola) ergo tenorem et ordinem, quo praeatas personas ad iterandum iudicium huc venire decrevimus, latius sagax industria vestra repperiet, quem nos in hac fastidium prolixitatis declinantes replicare refugimus.

20. On the same day (November 13, 866), the Pope dispatched a number of other letters to Constantinople. From the fate of these letters we can extract a useful *memento* against jumping to conclusions; for the Papal envoys never reached their destination. They were stopped at the Bulgaro-Byzantine frontier and had to return (cf. Nicolas's letter to Hincmar of Reims from October 23, 867, MHG Ep. VI, 603). The incident is vividly described in Fr. Dvornik, *The Photian Schism* (Cambridge 1948), pp. 115-117.

nary' Lewis, so to speak. From the *Annales Bertiniani* we learn that in 866 "Hludowicus, Italiae imperator, una cum uxore sua Ingelberga in Beneventum contra Sarracenos movit",<sup>21</sup> to be staying in Southern Italy for the next years, either in Benevent or at the siege of Bari; this Saracen stronghold withstood for several years, finally to surrender in February 871. The years 866-871 would thus give an excellent context for Lazaros's winter-mission to Lewis II.

Lazaros's voyage from Constantinople to Southern Italy took place in January. It must have been unusually fast - and possible only if the weather was favourable and the route was made as short as possible, with a short cut over the Corinthian Isthmus.<sup>22</sup> Lazaros's case seems to be one of the exceptions to the rule that sea traffic between Constantinople and Rome was usually suspended from October to March.<sup>23</sup> Also in more friendly seasons it was both difficult and perilous - and might take quite a long time - to exchange messages between the Old and the New Rome; we have contemporary evidence about that. To illustrate the situation a couple of examples will suffice:

(a) When Pope Nicolas wrote to Hincmar in October 867 (cf. above, note 20), he described how the envoys were sent off from Rome with the letters to Constantinople on November 13, 866: "Videbatur enim nobis iter navale *satis difficile* et propter eorundem Grecorum expertas insidias valde cavendum. Cum his itaque anxietatibus undique coartaremur et ingentibus premeremur angustiis, ecce subito legati iam fati regis Vulgarum (*i.e.* Boris) nobis adesse nuntiantur..." (follows a description of the Pope's happiness and its many reasons; the last reason is "quia per eorum regnum *facilem ac terrenum* missis nostris ad terram Grecorum accessum patere perspeximus").

(b) On December 11, 867 the Emperor Basil includes in his letter to the Pope a recapitulation of a previous letter, apparently written soon after the assassination of Michael III on September 24. He has good rea-

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21. Migne, PL 125, 1228A.

22. Liutprand's sea voyage from Venice to Constantinople in 949 took 24 days and nights. In Detlev Ellmers, *Frühmittelalterliche Handelsschiffahrt in Mittel- und Nordeuropa*. Neumünster 1972, p.250 it is measured to 1310 nautic miles (*i.e.* approximately 2400 km.).

23. This is a favourite element in Dvornik's chronological reasoning; examples can be found in *The Photian Schism*, pp.20, 139-40, 171. The waters of the Adriatic are rough and stormy. Cf. the fascinating Easter tempest of 775, as described by the Swedish novelist Eyvind Johnson in the first five chapters of *Hans Nâdes Tid*.



sons for doing so: "Nescientes autem, si sanctis vestris et (secundum Moysen) Deo gratissimis sit posita palmis - *multæ namque in longinquo itinere impediētes accidunt causæ* - necessarium conspeximus primum quæ in eadem continebantur epistola in brevi commemorare."<sup>24</sup>

On the strength of the circumstantial evidence and the observations put forward in the preceding, I consider the winter of 870/71 to be the most likely *terminus ante quem* for the letter. As to its *terminus post quem*, our first attempt must be corrected; for if the reasoning about 'the stationary Lewis II' is to be given any credit, the siege of Bari - or, more precisely: the knowledge of Lewis's difficulties in Southern Italy having reached Constantinople - would make the beginning of 867 its earliest date possible. Thus, Kaczynski's dating to "some time after AD 400" can be narrowed in to "between the end of January 867 and the end of February 871" - provided, evidently, that our identifications with Lazaros the Chazar, Ignatios, and Lewis II be accepted.

In our attempt to construct a plausible context for the *Epistula Lazari* we still have some loose ends - unsolved questions which it is much more easy to ask than to answer. What, for instance, was the subject of Lazaros's mission to Lewis II? And who was the evil-doer George, whose intervention made Lazaros so unhappy?

To begin with George, the very fact that he had access to Lewis II shows that he cannot have been a 'Mr. Nobody'. He had position. And what is more: From the way in which he is introduced in the letter (not Γεώργιος τις, but ὁ ἐκτὸς παντὸς ἀγαθοῦ...Γεώργιος) the most natural inference is

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24. In Dvornik's detailed treatment of the correspondance between Emperor and Pope in 867 and 868 (The Photian Schism, pp. 138-41) it is suggested that Basil's second letter was written on December 11, 868, a re-dating with great consequences for the understanding of the negotiations. As far as I can see, Dvornik's attempt to re-date the letter rests (mainly, at least) on a wrong interpretation of the passage which I have just quoted. The nescientes-clause implies no more than Basil's being aware of the possibility that the Pope will receive the letters in reverse order. But Dvornik makes it reveal details about Basil's feelings at the moment: "the Emperor sent a second letter to the Pope, *telling him of his fears concerning his first ambassador*, and wondering if his letter has reached the Pope, as the writer *had been waiting in vain for a reply*.... even if Basil had sent Euthymios to Rome by the end of September 867, there was no reason for him to be surprised at not getting an answer before 11 December of the same year." Thus, Dvornik reads fear, impatience, and surprise into a text which in my opinion simply shows that Basil knew how easily a letter might be delayed on its way from Constantinople to Rome. *Multæ namque in longinquo itinere impediētes accidunt causæ!*

that Lazaros expected Ignatios to know whom he was talking about. We need, in short, one George who is (a) of some position, (b) on friendly terms with Lewis II, (c) known in Constantinople. Without insisting upon the fact - which may be a mere coincidence - I shall only mention that there happens to be a George who seems to fit perfectly to the description: the *patricius* George, mentioned in the *Chronicon Salernitanum* as commander of a small Byzantine fleet which was assisting Lewis at Bari.<sup>25</sup> From a letter which Lewis addressed to the Byzantine Emperor in 871, we can see that Lewis admired this "*stratigus*": "Nam iste stratigus Georgius, licet sollerter invigilet et strenue pro suo posse decertare non tamen sufficiet obviare, si plures inimicorum naves ex parte qualibet apparuerint, non vide licet nisi pauca prorsus chelandia possidens."<sup>26</sup> Here, at least, we have a George of whom Ignatios *must* have known, and who is on friendly terms with the Latin Emperor. Unfortunately, we do not know when and for how long the *patricius/stratigus* carried out his naval operations in the waters of Bari.

The small fleet of George's is not the only Byzantine fleet to appear at Bari during the siege. In 869, before the month of June, Lewis and his counsellors were aware that more than two hundred Byzantine ships were on their way;<sup>27</sup> and when the fleet arrived - in late 869 - it had grown to more than 400 ships, under the command of the Great Drungarius Nicetas.<sup>28</sup> Nicetas had a double mission to take care of; for beside the strictly military job, he was to bring Lewis's daughter back to Constantinople to marry one of the Emperor's sons. But Nicetas soon left again - in anger - and "returned to Corinth" without the young lady.<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately, almost nothing is known about the negotiations which led, in 869, to the dispatch

25. MGH Scriptores III, 521 and 527.

26. Ibid. p. 527.

27. *Annales Bertiniani* (PL 125,1244C/D): cui (*i.e.* Hludowico imperatori) amplius quam ducentas naves rex Græcorum in auxilium contra eosdem Sarra-  
cenos festinato mittebat.

28. According to Jules Gay (*L'Italie Méridionale et l'Empire Byzantin*. Paris 1904, p.95) "c'est bien la flotte *impériale*, qu'il faut distinguer nettement des flottes provinciales, chargées de la défense particulière de tel ou tel thème".

29. *Annales Bertiniani* (PL 125,1251C): Qui (*i.e.* Basilius) patricium suum ad Bairam cum CCC navibus miserat, ut et Hludowico contra Sarra-  
cenos ferret suffragium, et filiam ipsius Hludowici a se desponsatam de eodem Hludowico susciperet et illi in conjugio sibi copulandam duceret. Sed quadam occasione interveniente, displicuit Hludowico dare filiam suam patricio; unde idem patricius molestus Corinthum rediit...

of Nicetas and his navy: they began, perhaps, already the preceding year<sup>30</sup> - and probably on Basil's initiative.<sup>31</sup> In addition to the campaign against the Saracens and the marriage proposal they may have touched yet another topic: the recognition of Lewis II's imperial status, originally formulated at the Constantinopolitan Synod of 867 (*i.e.* shortly before Photios was removed). In the following years, these three important items were still being discussed between the two Emperors and the Pope - and it is in this network of messages and missions that Lazaros and his letter seem to find their most logical place.

Depending on the view which we take on the evil George and his eventual identification with the *patricius* and *stratigus*, we might, at the end, venture some possibilities of placing Lazaros's winter-mission within the years in question:

(a) If the George of the letter is *not* the commander mentioned in Lewis's letter from 871, nothing prevents us from letting Lazaros join the embassy which Basil must have sent before Nicetas's expedition in 869. This is normally dated to 868 (*e.g.* by Gay and Jenkins)<sup>32</sup> - but a departure from Constantinople in the beginning of January 869, in order to fit the only exact reference in the *Epistula Lazari*, would not be impossible.

(b) If the said two Georges are one person, our reasoning will depend on the movements and whereabouts of the *patricius* George. From Lewis's letter and the *Chronicon Salernitanum* it is usually deduced that George's small fleet arrived at some later time, after Nicetas had already left the scene. This would exclude a dating of the *Epistula Lazari* to the beginning of 869 and *eo ipso* point towards the beginnings of 870 or 871. But, again, we do not know whether George had been operating in the area for some time already, or if he, perchance, had anything to do with the very ship which supposedly carried the envoys over the Adriatic in January 869.

30. Gay, p. 89.

31. Romilly Jenkins: *Byzantium, The Imperial Centuries*. New York 1966, pp. 186 ff. Cf. Constantinus Porphyrogen., *De imperio administrando*, cap. 29 (ed. Moravcik-Jenkins 1949, p.128): 'Ο οὖν βασιλεὺς (Basil) διὰ ταύτην τὴν αἰτίαν (the Saracens at Bari) ἀπέστειλεν πρὸς τε τὸν Λοδόλκον, τὸν ῥῆγα θραγγίας, καὶ τὸν πάπα Ῥώμης, ἵνα συνεπαμύνηται τῷ παρὰ τοῦ βασιλέως ἀποσταλέντι στρατῷ. Οἱ δὲ ὑπεύξαντες τῇ τοῦ βασιλέως αἰτήσσει, ὃ τε ῥῆξ καὶ ὁ πάπας, ἦλθον ἀμφότεροι μετὰ δυνάμεως πολλῆς, καὶ ἐνωθέντες τῷ παρὰ τοῦ βασιλέως ἀποσταλέντι στρατῷ... παρεκάθισαν τὸ κάστρον Βάρως καὶ ἐπόρθησαν αὐτό.

32. Cf. notes 30 and 31.

(c) One further consideration - the validity of which I cannot define - points rather towards 870. From October 5, 869 to February 28, 870 the Eighth Oecumenical Council held its ten sessions in Constantinople. The first seven meetings took place in October, the eighth on November 7 - but then there is a curiously long pause, and the ninth meeting is not held until February 12. Finally, the tenth session concludes the council on February 28 - and it is only at this last session that representatives for Lewis II are present.<sup>33</sup> Anastasius Bibliothecarius, one of the three representatives for the Western Emperor, states that his reason for being in Constantinople at precisely this time, was not the council, but the marriage negotiations.<sup>34</sup> As far as I know, it is nowhere said on what grounds the three men were allowed to partake in the concluding session. Now, I fail to see how Anastasius and his two companions could appear *informally*; their presence ought to imply that Basil had invited Lewis II to be represented at the meeting. Was that, maybe, the reason for the long pause after November 7? And can it be such last-minute negotiations with Lewis which made also the Patriarch send his envoy to Southern Italy?

There is no need to insist upon the hypothetical character of a dating of the *Epistula Lazari* to around February 1 in one of the years 869, 870, or 871. It rests on so many assumptions that it can hardly be termed more than a qualified guess. But there is no reason, I think, to deny that it would be absolutely in accord with the general historical context to let Ignatios, too, find it appropriate to approach the Western Emperor, and to entrust his message to the mutilated hands of the aged Lazaros.<sup>35</sup>

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33. Similiter consederunt in dextera parte gloriosissimi principes et apocrisiarii perspicui Ludovici imperatoris Italarum atque Francorum, videlicet Anastasius Deo amabilis bibliothecarius Romæ, Suppo primus gontfanonariorum (see the Latin DuCange s.v. GUNTFANO) et consobrinus uxoris eius, et Eurardus præpositus mensæ ipsius. (PL 129,147D-148B).

34. Igitur cum hæc celebraretur venerabilis synodus, accidit me famulum vestrum missum a Ludovico piissimo imperatore cum duobus aliis viris insignibus interesse, ferentem etiam legationem ab apostolicis meritis, decorato præsulato vestro, causa nuptialis commercii, quod efficiendum ex filio imperatoris Basilii, et genita præfati Dei cultoris Augusti, ab utraque parte sperabatur simul et parabatur. (PL 129, 17C)

35. The fate of Lazaros's hands is one of the gruesome details in his biography. See e.g. Theophanes Continuatus (PG 109, 117A-C).

## EPILOGUE:

Presumably, the letter in which Lazaros informed the Patriarch about his unsuccessful talk with Lewis II never reached its destination. Once in Constantinople, the text would not have been accessible for copying in St. Gallen within so short a span of years. It is much easier to imagine some accident to have happened during its long over-land transportation; *multae namque in longinquo itinere accidunt causae!*

As for Lazaros himself, he died on a mission to Rome; if the Synaxarium can be trusted, this happened περὶ τὰ μέσα του τῆς ὁδοῦ, in all likelihood on November 17. This implies one of two things, depending on how we understand the expression "approximately mid-way". For if this is taken to refer to the voyage *back from* Rome, it suggests that Lazaros continued from Southern Italy to Rome and stayed there until autumn. If, however, we read the notice in the Synaxarium ( see Appendix B ) without paying any attention to the *Epistula Lazari*, the natural inference of the Greek words is rather that he died on his way *to* Rome - in which case he must have returned alive from his winter-mission to Lewis II.

Anyhow, his dead body was carried back to Constantinople and buried in the Euandrou Monastery near the city, and he was given a modest place among the saints of the orthodox church, as one of the confessors from the last phase of the Second Iconoclasm.

## APPENDIX A: ORTHOGRAPHIC AND SYNTACTIC PECULIARITIES:

In my reconstruction of the *Epistula Lazari* (above, p.126) I have corrected the following typically Western misspellings and misreadings:

8 ΑΓ<sup>Ω</sup>ΝΝ 9 ΗΜΕΡΟC 10 Γ<sup>Ω</sup>, ΜΙΚΡΟΤΑΘ 11 ΜΕΓΑΛ (abbreviation symbol disregarded, cf. lines 14 and 17) 13-14 ΑΝΑΨΥΧΕΙΧΟΝ 14 ΤΕΚΛΟΧΗΝ  
16 ΚΑΤΩΝΙCΤΗΟ 17 ΤΕΚΛΟΧΗΝ.

Twice, the scribe corrected his own mistakes *in scribendo*: ΜΕΝΟC in line 9 and Ε<sup>Ω</sup>ΠΙCΤΗΝ in line 10 were properly corrected, evidently from the model.

I have retained the following spellings, considering them to be what might be expected from a Byzantine of the ninth century:

1 ησαγγελω, θεωδηγητω 5 ταπεινωτητος, τελειος επιτυχην 6 αγγελω-  
μημητω, ευσπλανον (for ευσπλαγγνον) 7 ευκαρρ<sup>Ω</sup>λισιαστον 8 αγνωην (a  
safe reconstruction from the meaningless ΑΓ<sup>Ω</sup>ΝΝ) 11 θ<sup>Ω</sup>νηαι 12 ηπειν

13 ριγος 13-14 αναφυχειλον 15 ταχη, φθασασις 16 μινος, ωση (for ωσεύ; the manuscript has Ω Η with a space between).

From a syntactical point of view, there is at least one 'blunder', the nominative construction in lines 10-13 (instead of accusative, as subject for θεινα). In line 6, the dative after ἐπιτυχεῖν is less strange than the word εὖχῃ (or εὖχῳ?) itself. Is it a miswritten εὖχει, or is it formed from an otherwise unknown εὖχός?

#### APPENDIX B: LAZAROS IN THE TRADITION OF THE CHURCH.

a) Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae (ed. H. Delehay) coll.231-234:

Τῇ αὐτῇ ἡμέρᾳ (i.e. November 17) μνήμη τοῦ ὁσίου καὶ ὁμολογητοῦ Λαζάρου τοῦ ζωγράφου. Οὗτος ὑπῆρχεν ἐπὶ τῆς βασιλείας τῶν εἰκονομάχων· ἔρωτι δὲ τῆς θείας τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀγάπης τρωθεὶς, ἡρετίσατο ἐκ καυδόμεν ὑπελθεὶν τὸν μονήρη βίον, χάριεν εἰπὼν πάσῃ ματαιότητι, ἀκτημοσύνην μετερχόμενος καὶ ἐλεημοσύνης ἐπιμελούμενος πρὸς τῇ σκληραγωγίᾳ καὶ ἐγκρατεῖα καὶ ἀγρυπνίᾳ. Ἐν τούτοις τοῖς μεγίστοις πλεονεκτημασι διαλάμπων, τοῦ τῆς ἱερωσύνης τετύχηκεν ἀξιώματος. Πλεῖστα δὲ κολαστήρια καθυπέμεινεν οὐ μόνον παρὰ τῶν τὰ Νεστορίου καὶ Εὐτυχοῦς καὶ Διοσκόρου φρονοῦντων, ὁμολογῶν τὸν Χριστὸν τέλειον θεὸν καὶ τέλειον ἄνθρωπον, ἀσυγχύτως, ἀτρέπτως, ἀναλλοιώτως, ἀλλὰ καὶ παρὰ τῶν βδελυκτῶν καὶ ἀνοσιῶν εἰκονοκαστῶν πολλαῖς κατηκίσθη πληγαῖς καὶ βασάνοις, διὰ τε τὸ σέβεσθαι καὶ προσκυνεῖν τὰ τῶν ἁγίων σεβάσματα ἐκτυπώματα διὰ τε τὸ εὐφυῶς ζωγραφεῖν ταῦτα οἰκειοχεύρως τοῖς πύναξιν καὶ οἷα βέλεσι τοὺς ἀλιτηρίους κατατοξεύειν. Οὗτος τὴν ἐπὶ τὴν πρεσβυτέραν Ῥώμην ὁδὸν στέλλεται ἀποστολικὴν ἐγκεχειρισμένος διακονίαν, τῶν πατρικῶν φημι καὶ ἀποστολικῶν δογμάτων καὶ παραδόσεων ἔνεκεν· καὶ αὖθις ἐντεῦθεν μεγαλοπρεπῶς ὑποστρέφει· πάλιν δὲ εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν πορείαν πεμφθεὶς τῶν αὐτῶν ἔνεκεν ὑποθέσεων, περὶ τὰ μέσα που τῆς ὁδοῦ τὴν τιμίαν αὐτοῦ ψυχὴν τῷ Κυρίῳ παρέθετο. Τὸ μέντοι ἱερώτατον αὐτοῦ σῶμα τοῖς ποθοῦσιν ἀνακομισθὲν ἐν τῇ βασιλίδι τῶν πόλεων κατετέθη πέραν τοῦ ἁστεος, ἐν τῇ μονῇ τῶν Εὐάνδρου.

b) Μηνάϊον τοῦ Νοεμβρίου (ed. Saliverou, Athens), under November 17:

Τῇ αὐτῇ ἡμέρᾳ, Μνήμη τοῦ Ὁσίου καὶ Ὁμολογητοῦ Λαζάρου τοῦ Ζωγράφου.

Στίχου.

Οὐ ζωγραφεῖ σε Λάζαρος καὶ νῦν Λόγε,

Ἄλλα βλέπει σε ζῶντα, μὴ ληπτὸν χροῖαις.

Οὗτος νηπιόθεν τὸν μονήρη βίον ὑπέρχεται, καὶ ζωγραφικὴν ἐπιστήμην ἐκπαίδεύεται, καὶ πρὸς τῇ σκληραγωγίᾳ καὶ ἐγκρατείᾳ, καὶ τῆς ἐλεημοσύνης ἐπεμελεῖτο· διὸ καὶ τὸ τῆς ἱερωσύνης ἄξιωμα δέχεται. Ἐντεῦθεν κατὰ πασῶν τῶν αἰρέσεων ἀποδύεται· καὶ τοσαύτας θλίψεις, οὐ μόνον παρὰ τῶν τὰ Εὐτυχοῦς καὶ Νεστορίου καὶ Διοσκόρου φρονούντων, ἀλλὰ καὶ παρὰ τῶν ἀθέων Εἰκονομάχων ὑπέμεινεν, ὅσας οὐδέ ἐστιν εἰπεῖν. Ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν πρεσβυτέραν Ῥώμην στέλλεται, τῶν Πατρικῶν καὶ Ἀποστολικῶν ὑπερμαχίμων δογμάτων. Καὶ μεγαλοπρεπῶς ὑποστρέφας, αὔθις τῶν αὐτῶν ἔνεκεν ὑποθέσεων ἐπὶ Ῥώμην ἀπέρει. Καὶ περὶ τὰ μέσα που τῆς ὁδοῦ, ἀνωμαλίας τινὸς αὐτῷ περὶ τὸ σῶμα γενομένης, τελευτᾷ ἐν Χριστῷ. Καὶ τὸ τίμιον αὐτοῦ σῶμα ἀνακομισθέν, ἐν τῇ μονῇ τοῦ Εὐάνδρου κατετέθη.