CONCERNING THE DATES OF ST. MAKARIOS OF PELEKETE’S LIFE AND THE DATING OF HIS VITA

The Vita of St. Makarios of Peleketē,1 one of the members of the Orthodox resistance in the second period of Byzantine Iconoclasm, does not contain the exact dates of his birth or death. In the Dumbarton Oaks Hagiography Database,2 the years of Makarios’s life are defined as 760–840, but there are no sufficient grounds for such a precise dating in the sources.

The attempts to move the date of Makarios’ birth to 7523 is based on an unfortunate misprint in the publication of the Greek text of the Vita: the passage of the Vita concerning the ordination of the saint by Patriarch Tarasios reads as τὴν τοῦ διαβόλου χειροτονίαν instead of διακόνου.4 On the basis of this phrase, the authors of the German Prosopography built a whole theory, according to which Makarios entered a monastery and even managed to become an abbot there and get ordained before 787, thus instead of “diabolical ordination” that he had received from the iconoclasts, Patriarch Tarasios gave him the Orthodox ordination — hence, the birth date of the saint should be pushed back to the 750s. However, this is based on a mis-


(3) Prosopographie der Mittelbyzantinischen Zeit, pp. 120–121.

(4) MAG, p. 149.15.
understanding: already Ch. Van de Vorst noticed this error and pointed out that the manuscript contains the correct διακόνου. The authors of the *Prosopography* disagreed with Ch. Van de Vorst assuming that he had in mind the text of the *Vita*, published in the *Analecta Bollandiana* when he spoke about the manuscript, but the phrase: “Dans le texte s’est glissée une faute d’impression assez déconcertante <...>, au lieu de διαβόλον il faut lire διακόνον, que porte d’ailleurs le manuscrit,” does not make such an interpretation possible: the word “que porte d’ailleurs le manuscrit” undoubtedly refer to “διακόνον.” Apparently, Ch. Van de Vorst consulted the manuscript, according to which the *Vita* was published. Moreover, the Iconophiles at the Second Council of Nicaea even recognized the ordinations of the Iconoclastic bishops of the first period, not to mention the clergy, thus even if Makarios was ordained by the heretics, the Patriarch would not re-ordain him.

According to the *Vita*, having become the leader of the Pelekeite’s monastery, Makarios began to perform miraculous healings. Gradually the rumors about him reached the Patriarch. Tarasios summoned him and ordained deacon; immediately after deacon’s ordination Makarios was ordained priest. It is difficult to say exactly in which part of Tarasios’ Patriarchal tenure (784–806) this happened, but Makarios had to be at least thirty years of age, and given the fact that he had already been an abbot for some time, he rather had to be about forty years old. If so, the date of Makarios’ birth had to be no later than 766. Apparently Makarios was the same age or slightly older than St. Theodore the Studite. Thus, the date of Makarios’ birth can tentatively be considered to happen in late 750s.

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(6) As may be understood from *MAG*, p. 149.17–18.

(7) This was the minimum age for being ordained a priest according to the canon law (14th canon of the Sixth Ecumenical Council).

(8) C. Mango and I. Ševčenko suggested that Makarios was significantly older than Theodore, since Theodore in his letters addressed Makarios with great respect and called Makarios his father and himself the son (five letters of Theodore to Makarios have survived from the period of the second Iconoclasm) (C. Mango and I. Ševčenko, “Some Churches and Monasteries on the Southern Shore of the Sea of Marmara,” *DOP*, 27 (1973), p. 245). However, it should be noted that such addressing may not be the indication of age but rather of great respect to the addressee. Thus, from one letter of Theodore to