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## Shaky Foundations: Opposition, Conflict and Subterfuge in the Creation of the Holy Mountain of Galesion

One day, in the summer of 1053, what may most politely be described as a lively discussion broke out at the monastery of the Resurrection high on the barren mountain of Galesion, a few kilometres north-east of Ephesos. Lazaros, the founder and superior of the community, had just received an unwelcome letter from one of his monks who had been sent to Constantinople to see the emperor, Constantine IX Monomachos. Much to Lazaros's dismay, the letter revealed that the monk had proved at best to be a poor negotiator, at worst an outright traitor to his cause, for he brusquely informed his superior that he was receiving an imperial order to move, lock, stock, barrel and brothers, off the mountain and down to Bessai, a subsidiary monastery of the community. The emperor was upholding the legal claim on Galesion by the metropolitan of Ephesos, while reminding Lazaros that he had himself donated the land for the other establishment<sup>1</sup>. Far off in Constantinople the solution might appear painfully obvious and straightforward, but this was not how Lazaros saw things, and his response was a flat refusal. His monks were aghast. Many, perhaps most of them, were fed up with the rigours of life on the barren mountain, fed up with what they saw as Lazaros's mismanagement and intransigence, fed up with being threatened and bullied by the metropolitan's men. There might be fewer spiritual rewards to be found at the other monastery and it might be less tranquil in physical terms, but life there could hardly be more unsettled than it had been recently on the mountain and it would have to be much less emotionally disturbing.

Clearly unable to bear the prospect of this awful situation continuing, one of the monks told his superior exactly what he thought: Galesion might be known as a monastery as long as Lazaros was alive but, as soon as he was dead, it would be forgotten. At this the good father lost his temper and retorted that, while God would soon erase memory of the monk's name, that of Galesion would live on. Now the steward got into it and told Lazaros not to be angry with the monk because everyone who knew anything, including the bishop of Tralles (who held an important office in the metropolitanate of Ephesos), was saying the same thing. Lazaros rounded on him (and I quote directly now) "Neither the bishop of Tralles, nor his metropolitan <can do this>. And even if <all> the metropolitans and emperors in the world get together, they won't have the strength to obliterate the name of Galesion, because God founded it, and so no <mere> man can obliterate it! I tell you, even if people come into it and steal everything the monastery has, they still won't be able to destroy it." Determined to have the last word another brother asked rather sulkily why, in that case, Lazaros had founded the other monastery, a question his superior appears to have dodged rather artlessly<sup>2</sup>.

Things were obviously not looking good for the future on Galesion in the summer of 1053, a few months before Lazaros's death, and some of the monks who participated in this and similar arguments at the time would undoubtedly have been surprised to learn not only that their monastery was to survive for another two hundred and fifty years, but that it would still be the subject of discussion almost a thousand years later.

Three facts make Galesion particularly interesting in the context of an examination of Byzantine holy mountains. The first is that, despite all the immediate indications to the contrary, the community on Galesion *did* survive and, eventually, flourish again, enjoying a period of considerable renown as one of the premier

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<sup>1</sup> Vita S. Lazari 245 (ed. H. DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 584; trans. R. P. H. GREENFIELD, *The Life of Lazaros of Mt. Galesion: An Eleventh Century Pillar Saint*. Washington, D. C. 2000, 346–348).

<sup>2</sup> V. Laz. 245 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 584–585; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 348–349). On this passage see now also, M. KAPLAN, *L'économie des monastères à travers les Vies de saints byzantines des xi<sup>e</sup>-xiii<sup>e</sup> siècles*, in: *Monastères, images, pouvoirs et société à Byzance* (ed. M. KAPLAN). Paris 2006, 35. See also A. RIGO, *Il monte Galesion (Alaman Dağ) e i suoi monasteri: da S. Lazzaro (m. 1053) alla conquista turca (ottobre 1304)*. *Cristianesimo nella storia* 16 (1995) 28–29.

holy mountains in the Byzantine world in the later part of the thirteenth century. The second is that, in incidents like the one I have described and more widely in the vivid, if at times blatantly partisan, irritatingly oblique and infuriatingly mangled, account of Lazaros's life by his disciple Gregory the Cellarer, we are able to learn a great deal about the difficult early days of the community. And the third is that Galesion ultimately failed to survive the arrival of the Ottomans in the early fourteenth century, so that the account of those early days was never overwritten to the same extent that it was in the case of other holy mountains, particularly those that have been preserved into modern times<sup>3</sup>. In the present context, of course, it goes without saying that the existence and function of holy mountains as centres of spiritual resource, of pilgrimage, and of endowment was one of the more characteristic features of orthodox Byzantine Christianity. But the iconic status they achieved in Byzantine times and the fact that this status has been perpetuated, most notably in the case of Athos, down to the present day, means that these places have become rather thickly coated with what may be described as the varnish of orthodoxy. The very success of those communities that survived long enough to leave a significant record in the sources, means that the construction of an orthodox ideal in later times has tended to overwrite the memory of any earlier problems, and the production of a triumphalist narrative to drown out dissenting voices. As Byzantine holy mountains came to be seen, on the one hand, as new gardens of Eden in the gushing prose of their later literary admirers who were usually at some considerable distance from the sweat and suffering of the original residents, so, on the other, their establishment and development came to be seen, from the viewpoint of the orthodoxy established by most hagiography, as being primarily accomplished through the ability of founders and monks to overcome the wild and inhospitable terrain of these mountains and to tame the demonic forces that were believed to inhabit them, through their spiritual conviction, courage, and prowess, used in accordance with the will of God<sup>4</sup>. For the more down-to-earth and perhaps cynical historian, the consequence of such accretions and interpretations is that it is rather hard to assess the real place of these holy mountains in the religious world in which they were created and to avoid the temptation of assuming that they were always viewed with the same high regard and valuation they achieved in later times<sup>5</sup>. In fact, I would suggest that establishing these mountain communities and ensuring

<sup>3</sup> On the sources for the foundation of Galesion and its later history, see GREENFIELD, Lazaros 49–70. In addition to the *vita* by Gregory the Cellarer, the principal sources are a reworking of the life by Gregory of Cyprus in the later-thirteenth century, also published by DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 588–606, and a passage in the lives of Barnabas and Sophronios, the founders of the Soumela monastery near Trebizond, by Akakios Sabbaites who visited Galesion in the early thirteenth century, see O. LAMPIDES, Ἀνέκδοτον κείμενον περί τοῦ Ἁγίου Λαζάρου Γαλησιώτου. *Theologia*, 53.1 (1982) 158–177. Other sources are very brief or consist of scattered references. The version of the *vita* by Gregory of Cyprus illustrates clearly the process of accretion and the establishment of 'orthodoxy' at work two centuries after the death of its subject and at a time when Galesion had again become a major holy mountain.

<sup>4</sup> On the development of the idea of the holy mountain as a *locus amoenus* in Byzantine literature, following Psellos, see H.-V. BEYER, Der „Heilige Berg“ in der byzantinischen Literatur. *JÖB* 30 (1981) 171–205. Beyer's argument is summarised and taken up by A.-M. TALBOT, Les saintes montagnes à Byzance, in: *Le sacré et son inscription dans l'espace à Byzance et en occident: études comparées* (ed. M. KAPLAN) [Byzantina Sorbonensia 18]. Paris 2001, 274–275. In the same concluding section, Talbot also discusses the idea of the holy mountain in hagiography in the terms I use here. In this context it is perhaps worth noting the title of a recent, laudatory and lauded, book on Athos: G. SPEAKE, *Mount Athos, Renewal in Paradise*. New Haven and London 2002. As lyrically as his Byzantine predecessors, Speake suggests (17) that the pilgrim to Athos (or reader of his book) "must prepare himself to leave this world and to enter a world where.... he will experience a foretaste of paradise, a world known to its inhabitants as the Garden of the Mother of God." In doing so he echoes one of his more recent predecessors, Philip Sherrard, who concluded the poetic introduction to his own book on Athos, "To anyone who has sojourned on the Holy Mountain...: he knows that it is a beauty more than natural that transfigures this landscape, a care more than human that has overshadowed the monks through all their long generations on this Mountain; and he knows that it is not for nothing that Athos has been called, by one of its own poets, 'the Park and Garden of our Lady.'" P. SHERRARD, *Athos, the Mountain of Silence*. London 1960, 2. Also worth noting here, as a variation on the theme, is the ultimately negative account of R. HARPER, *Journey from Paradise: Mt. Athos and the Interior Life*. Beauport, Québec 1987.

<sup>5</sup> I have especially in mind here a point made by Alexander Kazhdan in the conclusion to his paper, Hermitic, Cenobitic, and Secular Ideals in Byzantine Hagiography of the Ninth–Twelfth Centuries. *GrOrThRev* 30 (1985) 487: "Byzantium in general and Byzantine hagiography in particular have been traditionally considered as uniform and subject to political monotony and religious orthodoxy. I am afraid that one must drive through the pitfalls of totalitarian propaganda in order to distinguish different voices under the unified surface." I would add Byzantine monasticism and the history of Athos in particular to Kazhdan's list and express the hope that my current paper pursues the same aim.

their survival may rarely, if ever, have been achieved with anything approaching orthodox simplicity. As with so much in the Byzantine world, while the idea of the holy mountain may have been enthusiastically accepted (whether as a place of spiritual struggle or ecstasy), its initial physical realisation seems often to have been highly problematic and uncomfortably mired in the mundane. It is here that the sources for the seriously conflicted and far from smooth early history of Galesion become so important, for they cast into new relief the fragmentary and more easily overlooked traces of similar problems that may be discerned in the early history of at least some of the other major Byzantine holy mountains and similar foundations<sup>6</sup>.

Galesion was, without any question, the product of the imagination, ferocious determination and extraordinary endurance of its founder, the holy man Lazaros. Born near Magnesia on the Meander, around 15 kilometres south-east of Ephesos, Lazaros grew up in the 970s in various nearby monastic establishments where he received some training as a notary. As a teenager, however, he left for the East where he spent lengthy periods of time in various monasteries including one at Attaleia and that of St. Sabas near Jerusalem. By the end of the first decade of the new millennium an atmosphere of growing religious tension, which culminated in the destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (probably in 1009) by Islamic militants under orders from the Fatimid Caliph al-Hakim (r. 996–1021), prompted him to abandoned the Holy Land. He made his way back home through northern Syria and across Anatolia arriving in the vicinity of Ephesos around 1010, over a quarter of a century after he had left. Now in his mid-forties he established himself as a stylite at the monastery of St. Marina just outside the town before moving, seven years later, onto the barren but attractively tranquil mountain of Galesion (modern Alamandağ) a few kilometres up and across the Caystros (now the Küçük Menderes) river valley. There, over the next thirty and more years until his death in November 1053, he founded monasteries around each of the three pillars on which he lived, gradually moving higher up the mountain and establishing an increasingly large and permanent monastic presence on it. These three monasteries, of the Savior, the Theotokos, and the Resurrection, formed the core of Lazaros's community but, towards the end of his life, he also set up another, larger community somewhere down below the mountain, that of the Theotokos at Bessai, as well as establishing a number of other lesser houses, including one for female relatives of his monks<sup>7</sup>.

What Lazaros was trying to do, or at least ended up doing, at Galesion was not, of course, anything new in the Byzantine world. He is thus clearly to be seen, both in the style he adopted and location he chose, as part of a broad picture of monastic foundation across the tenth and eleventh centuries, a period when many

<sup>6</sup> The most obvious example is surely that referred to in the 'Tragos,' the *typikon* of the emperor John Tzimiskes for Athos which dates to 971–72. Reference is made there, principally in the preface to the document, to a whole series of disputes among the monks, at different levels from the broadly factional to the individual: ed. D. PAPACHRYSSANTHOU, *Actes du Prôtaton* [Archives de l'Athos 7]. Paris 1975, 209–210; trans. G. DENNIS, in: *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents 1* (ed. J. P. THOMAS – A. HERO). Washington D. C. 2000, 235–236. For recent discussion and a summary of the literature on the subject, see THOMAS and HERO, *BMFD* 1 232–234; cf. R. MORRIS, The origins of Athos, in: *Mount Athos and Byzantine Monasticism* (ed. A. BRYER – M. CUNNINGHAM). Aldershot 1996, 37–46. Compare also the factional problems encountered by Christodoulos as he attempted to establish his community on Patmos: *Rule of Christodoulos for the Monastery of St. John the Theologian on Patmos* (ed. F. MIKLOSICH – F. MÜLLER, *Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi sacra et profana*, 6). Vienna 1890, 66; trans., P. KARLIN-HAYTER, in: THOMAS – HERO, *BMFD* 2 583–584.

<sup>7</sup> For a detailed account of Lazaros's life, see GREENFIELD, Lazaros 5–14; on his foundations, see 28–48. Another, shorter and slightly different, account is provided in THOMAS – HERO, *BMFD* 1 148–149. When I prepared my own introduction and translation I was sadly unaware (as evidently were Thomas and Hero) of the excellent study of Galesion, from its foundation to its demise in the early fourteenth century, by RIGO, *Il monte Galesion* 11–43. Fortunately Rigo's account and conclusions do not differ significantly from my own somewhat fuller consideration, but I would note that he provides a particularly interesting discussion of the evidence for the design and situation of Lazaros's column, as of the later history of the mountain. On Galesion as a holy mountain and on the theme of the establishment of such a place as one of severe ascetic struggle both against the supernatural forces of evil and the hostile environment, see TALBOT, *Les saintes montagnes* 271–274; see also R. MORRIS, *Monks and Laymen in Byzantium*, 843–1118. Cambridge 1995, 40–42; A.-M. TALBOT, Galesios, Mount, in: *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*. New York – Oxford 1991, 817; R. JANIN, *Les églises et les monastères des grands centres byzantins*. Paris 1975, 241–250. On Bessai see E. MALAMUT, A propos de Bessai d'Éphèse. *REB* 43 (1985) 243–251.

tried, as he did, to blend elements of the eremitic lavriote or individual style of monasticism with the communal or cenobitic<sup>8</sup>, and when holy mountains seem to have enjoyed something of a vogue.

During Lazaros formative years in the late tenth century, Bithynian Olympos and Athos were unquestionably the most important Byzantine monastic mountains. Of the two, Olympos was the older but its star was beginning to wane as that of Athos rose<sup>9</sup>. By the middle of the century Athos was clearly established as a 'spiritual estate' with recognised geographical boundaries and consistent imperial patronage, although there seems to have been little organisation at that time and it was populated with individual hermits and small monastic groups. But this picture of relatively isolated spiritual endeavour was already changing by the time the 'founder' of Athos, Athanasios the Athonite, arrived from another holy mountain, Kyminas, around 958 and established the monastery of the Great Lavra with the imperial support of Nikephoros Phokas. Other monastic houses began to develop rapidly either from earlier establishments or as entirely new enterprises so that, even by the early 970s when Lazaros was a little boy, no less than 47 heads of monastic communities signed the *tragos* – the typikon of the emperor John Tzimiskes which set the initial community rules for the mountain<sup>10</sup>. During the next ten years as Lazaros was growing up in a series of monastic communities near Ephesos, stories of what was happening on Athos would certainly have been in circulation and, by the time he was working on his own project at Galesion, Athos was already a dominant and quite heavily developed holy mountain<sup>11</sup>.

While Athos and Olympos form the general backdrop in considering what Lazaros was trying to do on Galesion, the holy mountains of Latros, Mykale and the Wondrous Mountain are probably of more immediate importance. Latros (in the Beşparmak Dağı range) and Mykale or Barachios (Samsun Dağ, on which the site of ancient Priene is situated) were geographically the closest examples of established holy mountains to Galesion and closer still to the area of Magnesia on the Meander where Lazaros was born and received his early monastic training. Latros lay less than a hundred kilometres to the south of Galesion and Mykale around forty, with Magnesia some twenty kilometres closer to both. Of the two, Latros was the most developed, including at least four major monasteries at this time, one of which (the Stylos) had formed around the hermit Paul the Younger (or Paul of Latros) who had established himself in a cave in a rock pinnacle in imitation of the stylites of old on their real columns. Paul had died in 955, only eleven or twelve years before Lazaros was born, so the memory of his activity was surely still alive in the monasteries of the region when Lazaros was a boy<sup>12</sup>. The recollections of Christodoulos of Patmos, who was hegoumenos of the Stylos a century later in the 1070s before going on to found the well known island monastic community of Patmos, show that the same sort of monastery as Lazaros tried to establish on Galesion, practising a mixture of lavriote and cenobitic monasticism, still existed there twenty years after Lazaros's death<sup>13</sup>. Much less is known about Mykale. It was perhaps founded, or at least developed, by another alumnus of the Stylos on Latros, Nikephoros. Since this man spent some time as a monk there under Paul the Younger's successor Symeon, it

<sup>8</sup> For a detailed discussion of Lazaros as a monastic leader in the eleventh-century context, see GREENFIELD, Lazaros 24–28. Cf. THOMAS – HERO, *BMFD* 1 151–153.

<sup>9</sup> On Olympos see especially the paper by K. BELKE in this volume. See also MORRIS, Monks and Laymen 35–37; A.-M. TALBOT, Olympos, in: *ODB* 1525; R. JANIN, Églises et monastères 127–192; B. MENTHON, Une terre de légende. L'Olympe de Bithynie. Paris 1935.

<sup>10</sup> On the early history of Athos see especially, R. MORRIS, Origins of Athos 37–46. See also A.-M. TALBOT and A. KAZHDAN, Athos, Mount, in: *ODB* 224–225; and MORRIS, Monks and Laymen 43–47.

<sup>11</sup> There appears to be a single reference to Athos in the *vita* of Lazaros, V. Laz. 93 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 537; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 183). On Athos in the eleventh century see D. KRAUSMÜLLER, The Athonite monastic tradition during the eleventh and early twelfth centuries, in: BRYER – CUNNINGHAM, Mount Athos 57–65; also P. BURRIDGE, Eleventh- and twelfth-century monasteries on Mt Athos and their architectural development, in: *Work and worship at the Theotokos Evergetis 1050-1200* (ed. M. MULLETT and A. KIRBY). Belfast 1997, 78–89.

<sup>12</sup> On Latros see especially A. KIRBY and Z. MERCANGÖZ, The monasteries of Mt Latros and their architectural development, in: MULLETT – KIRBY, *Work and Worship* 51–77. Also see MORRIS, Monks and Laymen 37–39; A.-M. TALBOT – A. J. WHARTON, Latros, in: *ODB* 1188–89; R. JANIN, Églises et monastères 216–240, 441–454; P.A. VOKOTPOULOS, Latros. *EEBS* 35 (1966–67) 69–106; A. PESCHLOW-BINDOKAT, *Der Latros: eine unbekannte Gebirgslandschaft an der türkischen Westküste*. Mainz am Rhein 1996. On Paul, see especially THOMAS – HERO, *BMFD* 1 135–147; A. KAZHDAN, Paul of Latros, in: *ODB* 1608.

<sup>13</sup> Christodoulos, *Rule* [A3-4] (MIKLOSICH – MÜLLER, *Acta et diplomata graeca* 6, 60–61); THOMAS – HERO, *BMFD* 2 579–580.

is likely that the emergence of Mykale, with its two major monasteries of Erebinthos and Hiera-Xerochoraphion, dates to the period of Lazaros's boyhood. By the middle of the eleventh century, when Galesion was at its peak under Lazaros, Mykale appears to have been very similar in size, with extensive estates and some three hundred monks<sup>14</sup>. The 'Wondrous Mountain' (Saman Dağı), which lies towards the sea to the south-west of Antioch on the river Orontes, was very far away from the region of Galesion, but Lazaros had himself visited it some time in the late fall or winter of 1009–1010 as he fled back northward from the holy land<sup>15</sup>. By the time he stayed there, the Wondrous Mountain had been a major pilgrimage site devoted to the veneration of Symeon the Stylite the Younger for almost five hundred years, although it appears that it had been re-founded during the previous fifty by Greek and Georgian monks after a period of decline<sup>16</sup>. The fact that this Holy Mountain had originally developed around a pillar saint is particularly important, given the career upon which Lazaros was shortly about to embark at Ephesos and on Galesion, and it seems unquestionable that his visit to the site made a deep impression upon him and to some extent influenced his life from that point on. Lazaros's biographer, Gregory, almost certainly makes reference to this Symeon when he describes Lazaros's first tentative adoption of life on a pillar as being "in imitation of the wondrous Symeon," and it is quite likely that he is reflecting Lazaros's own interpretation of what he was doing<sup>17</sup>.

There is thus no sense that Lazaros was trying to do something unique on Galesion. Rather he was following in the steps of many other monastic founders of his period, steps that would in turn be followed by many others<sup>18</sup>. What is unique, however, and of value for the purposes of this paper is, as I have said, the amount we know about the first uncertain years of Galesion and hence what this may tell us about the difficulties inherent in setting up a holy mountain in the Byzantine period. In this connection, the rest of my paper will examine three particular strands in the narrative of the mountain's early years: first, the opposition to its creation which was fostered by the local ecclesiastical authorities in Ephesos; second, the development of conflicting factions within the monastic community on Galesion itself; and, third, the defensive strategies, sometimes distinctly underhand, that were employed, in the face of hostility and threat, by the founder himself and those loyal to him and his dream.

First, then, it is clear that, while some in the area of Ephesos were happy, indeed enthusiastic, to have a new stylite living near the town, others were not. Lazaros might be tolerated, even supported, as long as he did not become a rival to the established pilgrimage centre of St. John and the Theotokos or pose a threat to agricultural and other revenues but, the moment this became a possibility, he became the target of the ecclesiastical authorities. The metropolitan of Ephesos thus opposed his initial move onto Galesion itself in 1018 or 1019, and it was only by taking advantage of this man's absence in Constantinople that Lazaros was able to establish himself permanently on the mountain<sup>19</sup>. A dynamic of hostility and opposition was created from the start, one that would continue, and worsen over the next thirty years.

Most of the problems seem to have been prompted by the metropolitanate's legal claim to Galesion and its insistence that Lazaros and his communities had no rights there<sup>20</sup>, but they seem to have been fuelled by

<sup>14</sup> For this possible reconstruction of the history of Mykale/Barachios see MORRIS, *Monks and Laymen* 39–40. For Nikephoros's involvement with the monasteries of Erebinthos and Hiera-Xerochoraphion, see Chs. 16–18 of his *vita*: H. DELEHAYE, *Vita sancti Nicephori episcopi Milesii, saeculo X. AB 14* (1895) 129–166.

<sup>15</sup> V. Laz. 25 (DELEHAYE, *AASS Nov.* 3 517B; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 109). On Lazaros's visits to other holy mountains during his return trip see TALBOT, *Saintes montagnes* 272.

<sup>16</sup> See W. DJOBADZE, *Archaeological Investigations in the Region West of Antioch on-the-Orontes*. Stuttgart, 1986, 57–115; also M. M. MANGO, *Wondrous mountain*, in: *ODB* 2204; and P. VAN DEN VEN, *La Vie ancienne de S. Syméon Stylite le Jeune*. Brussels, 1962.

<sup>17</sup> V. Laz. 31 (DELEHAYE, *AASS Nov.* 3 519D; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 118). It is also possible that Lazaros later took to distributing lead pilgrimage tokens of a type most commonly associated in the archaeological record with Symeon the Younger and the Wondrous Mountain. V. Laz. 75 (DELEHAYE, *AASS Nov.* 3 532–33; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 162–165) and n. 342; cf. V. Laz. 113 (DELEHAYE, *AASS Nov.* 3 542D; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 203).

<sup>18</sup> V. Laz. 187 (DELEHAYE, *AASS Nov.* 3 565; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 279), refers to Lazaros's reputation as a source of information on rules, regulations and advice for those wishing to set up monasteries of their own. This chapter is also translated by P. KARLIN-HAYTER, in: THOMAS – HERO, *BMFD* 1 160.

<sup>19</sup> V. Laz. 53 (DELEHAYE, *AASS Nov.* 3 526A–B; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 140).

<sup>20</sup> V. Laz. 245 (DELEHAYE, *AASS Nov.* 3 584E; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 346–348).

growth in Lazaros's reputation and power of attraction, which thus provided a worrying alternative to the major pilgrimage sites (and revenues) of Ephesos, and by the foundation of his third, much larger, and thus threateningly permanent monastery of the Resurrection, perhaps in 1042<sup>21</sup>. The fight was not a pleasant one. The metropolitanate was evidently involved in vicious attacks on Lazaros's reputation as it attempted to discredit him and so deter pilgrims from making the trek up the mountain<sup>22</sup>. It appears also to have regularly engaged in threatening behaviour, including verbal abuse and physical harassment, towards the Galesiote monks as it tried to unsettle them and so force them off the mountain<sup>23</sup>.

In this connection there is evidence that a number of distinguished visitors or local dignitaries were suborned to make surprise visits to the mountain in Lazaros's later years, ask difficult questions of the monks, and conduct searching physical examinations of the holy man's pillar and even of his clothing in an attempt to prove that he was a fraud. A chapter relatively early in the *vita* recounts how a distinguished Georgian ascetic, who had lived for many years in Palestine, learns about Lazaros from the metropolitan of Ephesos and decides to visit him. When he has mounted the column he asks permission from Lazaros to examine his living conditions and actually touch his body beneath his robe. He is duly amazed at the evidence of austerity he discovers and, when he returns to Ephesos, tells the metropolitan that he has never ever seen anyone live like Lazaros in all his long and varied experience of ascetic practice<sup>24</sup>. At this point in the *vita* the story seems like a simple device employed by the hagiographer to illustrate Lazaros's remarkable endurance and life-style, but it takes on a new and more sinister light when read with two subsequent chapters. There, despite a lacuna at the start of the section in which those chapters appear<sup>25</sup>, the *vita* makes clear that, on at least two other occasions, respected local ecclesiastics were sent up the mountain by the metropolitan and his people at unexpected times in an attempt to catch Lazaros out and so prove true the derogatory and damaging rumours that were in circulation concerning him. On both occasions a careful examination of Lazaros's column is said to have revealed nothing untoward to the investigators who report back to Ephesos that they have been unable to find what they have been sent to look for. In neither case, however, is the report believed<sup>26</sup>.

At the same time the *vita* records clearly how the monks themselves lost confidence in the future viability of the mountain as a result of this unrelenting hostility and bullying by the ecclesiastical authorities in Ephesos. "But since those wicked and spiteful men would not stop inciting the metropolitan and his entourage every day to expel the father from the mountain," Gregory the Cellarer recalls, "the brothers realized that these people would not let them live in peace, for they used to mistreat them in various ways and would make fun of them and hurl abuse when they met them."<sup>27</sup> The anxieties of the brothers resulted in the foundation, with imperial endowment, of the 'alternative' monastery of the Theotokos at Bessai, somewhere on the plain and across the river below Galesion, although a clear indication of how far the situation had deteriorated is provided by the fact that the initial delegation sent from the mountain to Constantinople to seek imperial approval and funding was betrayed to the authorities by one of Lazaros's own monks and mugged by

<sup>21</sup> On the dating of this foundation see GREENFIELD, Lazaros 13 and n. 40; on difficulties surrounding it, 41–48.

<sup>22</sup> Compare the damaging criticism of Lazaros heard by a monk at a monastery in the region while on his way to visit Galesion, V. Laz. 84 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 535A–B; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 173–174). Other indications of such rumours and their nature are found in V. Laz. 78, 82, 202, 218, 248 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 533E, 534E–F, 570B–C, 574E, 586C–D; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 167–168, 172, 296, 311–312, 356).

<sup>23</sup> V. Laz. 141 and 238 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 549E, 582B–C; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 226 (Cf. THOMAS – HERO, *BMFD* 1 157), 338); cf. V. Laz. 239 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 582D; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 339).

<sup>24</sup> V. Laz. 114 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 542D–543A; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 203–205).

<sup>25</sup> On this and other significant lacunae in the *vita*, and the likelihood that they are deliberate rather than accidental, see GREENFIELD, Lazaros 49–51.

<sup>26</sup> V. Laz. 237 (the visit of the delegation led by the *hegoumenos* Michael) and 238 (the visit of Nicholas, later steward to the Bishop of Batheia), (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 581F–582C, GREENFIELD, Lazaros 336–338).

<sup>27</sup> V. Laz. 238 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 582B–C; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 338). See also V. Laz. 141 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 549E; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 226 (cf. THOMAS – HERO, *BMFD* 1 157)), which recounts how the brothers expected the communities of Galesion to collapse after Lazaros's death "because we would be harassed every day by the people from the metropolis [Ephesos] into moving from the mountain;" and V. Laz. 245 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 584; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 348), cited at the start of this paper, where it is evident that the opinion of those in Ephesos, as well as among a substantial number on the mountain, is that Galesion may last as long as Lazaros himself, but no longer. Further see n. 43 below.

the metropolitan's agents within a few hours of setting out<sup>28</sup>. The *vita* of Lazaros thus reveals, beyond any doubt, that the future holy mountain of Galesion was created only in the face of determined and very unpleasant opposition from the local 'orthodox' ecclesiastical authorities and most certainly not with their blessing, let alone support<sup>29</sup>.

I now turn to the second problematic strand evident in the early years of Galesion: the development of conflicting factions within the actual monastic community itself. Here the mountain's history demonstrates, perhaps more clearly than any other Byzantine example, just how split and lacking in common vision the nucleus of a future holy mountain might be and how these conflicted internal relationships could bring a community to the brink of failure.

Lazaros was frequently lauded by his loyal hagiographer, Gregory, for his gift of *diakrisis* or good judgement<sup>30</sup>. He certainly needed this gift, for the *vita* makes clear that, however much he may have longed for the ideal tranquillity of the solitary ascetic (something he periodically did his best to restore by moving to a new column) he was, perforce, deeply involved in the day to day running of his communities, dealing as best he could with issues that ranged from the trivial to the life-threatening<sup>31</sup>. Inevitably, however, in the harsh conditions and close confines of such an isolated community, some people were bound to be upset by their superior's decisions and become critical of his management. Here even relatively trivial problems could become disruptive and damaging.

At Galesion one particular flash point came over the possession of private property and money, between what might almost be termed 'capitalist' and 'socialist' visions of monasticism. Lazaros evidently subscribed to a vision of a truly communal life, in which all were pretty much equal and everything possible was shared, but many of his flock seem to have disagreed with him. He thus clearly did his best to discourage his monks from clinging to personal possessions, going as far as to allow impoverished visitors to search the monastery's cells for spare clothing or demanding that brothers turn over coins they had stashed away in order to provide alms for beggars<sup>32</sup>. He also attempted to impose a ban on private financial resources and on personal possessions in cells, whether these were to be used for handicrafts (such as a folding worktable used by the shoemaker)<sup>33</sup>, comfort (such as a bed or cloak)<sup>34</sup>, or even religious devotion (such as a personal icon)<sup>35</sup>. To make his points Lazaros seems to have regularly reminded his flock, with vivid illustrations drawn from

<sup>28</sup> V. Laz. 239 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 582C–F; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 339). Further on the monastery of Bessai, see below.

<sup>29</sup> The dispute did not end with Lazaros's death, indeed it was evidently still continuing two hundred years later; see GREENFIELD, Lazaros, 61–63, 65; THOMAS – HERO, *BMFD* 1 149–150. In general on such problems of disputed control between lay or monastic founders and local bishops or other ecclesiastical authorities, see MORRIS, *Monks and Laymen* 148–154. Cf. J. P. THOMAS, *Private Religious Foundations in the Byzantine Empire*. Washington, D. C. 1987, 156–157 and n. 30. Later, 217, Thomas claims that V. Laz. 238 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 582A–C; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 337–338) provides evidence that some founders, like Lazaros "continued to try to follow the old principle of Chalcedon by subordinating their monasteries to local episcopal control, but they found that individual jealousies and the meddlesomeness of the bishops made cooperation impossible." While the latter point is certainly born out in the *vita*, there appears to be no evidence, either in 238 or elsewhere, that Lazaros was ever willing to subordinate his monastery to the control of the metropolitan of Ephesos. In fact, quite the opposite seems to have been true.

<sup>30</sup> See GREENFIELD, Lazaros 23.

<sup>31</sup> See GREENFIELD, Lazaros 25 and n. 136. As I point out there, my interpretation of Lazaros's role differs from that of MORRIS, *Monks and Laymen* 42, and of THOMAS – HERO, *BMFD*, but accords more with that of A. KAZHDAN, *Hermitic Ideals* 476. Cf., also here, D. PAPACHRYSSANTHOU, *La vie monastique dans les campagnes byzantines du VIIIe au XIe siècle*. *Byzantion* 43 (1973) 164.

<sup>32</sup> V. Laz. 88–89, 143 and 145 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 536C, E–F, 550C, 551C–D; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 179–180, 229, 232–233). Note that Ch. 27 of the influential *Typikon* of Timothy for the Monastery of the Mother of God *Evergetis*, composed shortly after Lazaros's death, stipulates that the superior is to visit the brothers' cells once a month and remove items he deems surplus to their requirements, depositing them in the communal storehouse or giving them to those in need, P. GAUTIER, *Le typikon de la Théotokos Évergétis*. *REB* 40 (1982) 68–69; THOMAS – HERO, *BMFD* 2 491. An identical or similar provision is repeated in the regulations for at least seven other later Byzantine monasteries, see THOMAS – HERO, *BMFD* 2 823, 3 925, 1009, 1066, 1156; 4 1364, 1658.

<sup>33</sup> V. Laz. 148, cf. 149 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 551F–552B, E; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 234–237).

<sup>34</sup> V. Laz. 162, cf. 168, for the absence of beds, even for the sick; 148 (again) for the confiscation of a cloak and pouch (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 557C–D, 559B, 552B; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 253–234, 259–260, 236).

<sup>35</sup> V. Laz. 138 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 548; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 224–225 (cf. THOMAS – HERO, *BMFD* 1 156)).

biblical and monastic history as well as from the experiences of their own brethren, of the evils that trade and the possession of money posed for monks. For example, a venerable member of the community lying on his death bed, who was still in possession of a few small coins he had recently been given, was said by Lazaros to have been unable to die in peace until these had been removed from his pillow<sup>36</sup>, and the decline of the Skete in Egypt (blamed on a deliberate modification of its harsh environment) was held up as a warning to a monk who wished to move off the mountain to the monastery of Bessai, a place that Lazaros held to be suited more for trade than spiritual edification<sup>37</sup>. But some, perhaps many, members of his flock had other ideas. When the shoemaker, Kerykos, who was evidently a repeat offender, had his work table taken away, he was far from contrite and accused Lazaros of making an example of him while playing favourites. Other monks in the monastery immediately sprang to his defence, citing the situation in contemporary monasteries which, they said, were thriving centres of business and where the monks had lots of money and even servants<sup>38</sup>. This sort of attitude is surely behind the lament by Gregory the Cellarer that a noticeable decline in standards had taken place after Lazaros had founded his third, larger monastery, the Resurrection. No longer was everything held in common, no longer was everyone treated equally, he complained, and the root of this trouble lay in the fact that some new recruits refused to part completely with their money or demanded special privileges for themselves.

“These people”, he says, “acting more cleverly, as they thought, decided to retain some of their money for themselves, but eventually their ill-advised possession and use of this <money> caused them to come to an unhappy end. Others again appeared to have renounced all <possessions> but, by forcing the father to rule that they should be given certain necessities by the monastery, they also fell short of the true objective <of the monastic life> without being noticed. For they introduced a great many problems into the monastery as a result and dragged the rest <of the monks> in the same direction; for evil is more desirable than virtue and it is easier for someone to partake of the former than of the latter.”<sup>39</sup>

To prove his point, Gregory is prepared to cite some concrete examples. On two separate occasions monks fell fatally sick while away from the monastery, stubbornly insisting on practising their own almsgiving with money and possessions they had retained<sup>40</sup>. Another, who started out as a paragon of virtue and developed into a leading fund-raiser for the community, succumbed to the temptation posed by all the money he collected, as well as his regular involvement in the world beyond the mountain, embezzling donations and thence falling into the sin of fornication while abandoning confession<sup>41</sup>. A number of other stories make clear that, although they were perhaps not so brazen in their opposition to Lazaros’s policy as these individuals, other monks were more inclined to hang on to money that came their way than give it up to their superior’s management<sup>42</sup>.

On Galesion internal disagreements were further fuelled by external factors such as the illegalities in the original foundation, as I have mentioned, and uncertainties about the community’s economic viability. They were also exacerbated by the hostile or supportive intervention of major outside players, notably the metropolitan of Ephesos and the emperor Constantine IX and members of his entourage. In this context disputes about trivial matters of daily routine turned into major fights within the community over the location and future of the monastery. Faced with these external pressures and by the unpleasantly uncertain and discordant atmosphere within the community, the majority of the inmates evidently began to lose their confidence

<sup>36</sup> V. Laz. 163–164 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 557F–558A; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 255–56).

<sup>37</sup> V. Laz. 216, cf. 148 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 574B–C, 552A–B; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 309–310, 234–235).

<sup>38</sup> V. Laz. 148–149 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 552B–C; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 236–237).

<sup>39</sup> V. Laz. 191–192 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 566B–D; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 282–83 (cf. THOMAS – HERO, *BMFD* 1 161–162)).

<sup>40</sup> V. Laz. 193, 202 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 566D, 570D–E; GREENFIELD, Lazaros, 282–83, 297).

<sup>41</sup> V. Laz. 197–200, cf. 204 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 568D–569C, 571B–C; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 290–92, 298–99).

<sup>42</sup> V. Laz. 88–89, 108, 163 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 536B–F, 541D–E, 557E–F; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 178–180, 200–201, 255–256. For a general statement of Lazaros’s discouragement of possessions, see V. Laz. 180 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 562F; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 271 (cf. THOMAS – HERO, *BMFD* 1 158–159)). For further commentary on these aspects of Lazaros’s regime and resistance to it, see THOMAS – HERO, *BMFD* 1 151–152; and J. P. THOMAS, Documentary evidence from the Byzantine monastic *typika* for the history of the Evergetine Reform Movement, in: *The Theotokos Evergetis and eleventh-century monasticism* (ed. M. MULLETT – A. KIRBY). Belfast 1994, 249–251.



and their resolve. While some were prepared to stick it out as long as their superior and founder was around to protect and encourage them, most started making other plans as they anticipated the demise of the community after his death. To Lazaros's opponents and doubters it was clear that his determination to persevere on the mountain in the face of opposition from the local villagers, from the regional ecclesiastical authorities, and, eventually, from the emperor himself, was not wisdom but utter folly<sup>43</sup>.

As the atmosphere soured, Lazaros's policy on all sorts of matters was openly and frequently criticized by his monks, and this criticism in turn brought his judgement into question. In addition to the problems that arose over property and money discussed above, issue was taken, for example, with his willingness to accept apparently unsuitable candidates for the monastic life<sup>44</sup>, to readmit brothers who had left the community after proving themselves troublesome or lax<sup>45</sup>, to thwart the ambitions of monks who wished to determine the course of their own spiritual career and rise above what they perceived as the constraints and mediocrity of the cenobitic life exercised in constant obedience to their superior's judgement<sup>46</sup>, and to expend scarce resources on visitors or allow them to disrupt the life of the monastery<sup>47</sup>.

From here it was only a short step to questioning Lazaros's credentials in other respects. The *vita* thus makes clear that doubts were circulating about his spiritual abilities and ascetic practices not only outside the monastery but even among some members of the community itself. At one point Gregory the Cellarer launches into an astounded (and in another *vita* perhaps astounding) lament in which he complains of the monks' lack of belief not only in the miraculous powers of their superior but even in the genuineness of his asceticism.

"There are," he says, "however, some people, not only among those outside <Galesion>, but even among those of our own flock, who are sick with disbelief. Some of these do not believe in the miracles because Lazaros did not accomplish them openly but in secret, since he shunned acclaim of men, as I have said many times. Others <do not believe> in the grace (which he received from God on account of his unsullied existence and irreproachable way of life) of foreseeing and foretelling to some people the secret things of their hearts and of speaking about future or anticipated affairs. Others again have acquired such disbelief, or rather wickedness, from <their own> wickedness, that, just as the Jews once <did> to the Lord, they disparage Lazaros as a glutton and a wine drinker. Indeed, what is even worse, <and> I shudder to say it, they also find fault with his partaking of the undefiled sacraments, stirring a blasphemous tongue against him, and saying that he ordered the priests to put larger portions into the chalice which was being given to him, not in order

<sup>43</sup> V. Laz. 109, 141, 170, 217, 239, 245, 247, 249 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 541E–F, 549D–E, 559F–560A, 574D, 582D, 584F–585A, 586A–B, 587A; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 201–202, 226–227 and n. 540 (cf. THOMAS – HERO, *BMFD* 1 157), 261, 311, 339, 347–349, 354–355 and n. 1021 (cf. THOMAS – HERO, *BMFD* 1 165), 359). As is revealed in these passages, not only rank and file monks but some of the most senior members of the community, including Gregory the Cellarer himself, thought seriously about leaving either before or shortly after Lazaros's death.

<sup>44</sup> V. Laz. 143, 152, 227–228, 231–232, 239 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 550C–D, 553D–F, 577C–578A, 579C–580A, 582C–D; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 229, 240–241, 320–323, 329–331, 339).

<sup>45</sup> V. Laz. 239–240, 242, cf. 202, 230 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 582E–583A, 583C–D, 570B–E, 579A; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 339–341, 342, 296–297, 327). Lazaros was also criticised for allowing a monk to leave the community too easily, V. Laz. 99 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 539A–B; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 188–189).

<sup>46</sup> Gregory the Cellarer comments, that, while some followed Lazaros's guidelines, others "who reckoned that they were being harmed (<at least> as it appeared to them) by <too> much comfort and for this <reason> were longing for greater <challenges>, persuaded *him*, and were <thus> allowed to travel the more difficult path. As a result, just as the father said, many <of them> were unable to finish what they had started; they thus turned back and <in doing so> destroyed twice or even three times over what they had previously built up." V. Laz. 197 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 568A–B; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 289; cf. V. Laz. 196 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 567B; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 286 (cf. THOMAS – HERO, *BMFD* 1 162)). Gregory goes on to cite a number of cautionary examples in the following chapters of the *vita*, 198–204 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 568D–571C; GREENFIELD, Lazaros, 290–299. In general on the conflicted traditions apparent in this opposition see PAPACHRYSSANTHOU, *Vie monastique*; KAZHDAN, *Hermitic Ideals*, and MORRIS, *Monks and Laymen*, especially the chapter *Groups, communities and solitaries*, 31–63.

<sup>47</sup> V. Laz. 57, 150–151 (cf. THOMAS – HERO, *BMFD* 1 158), cf. 146, and 241 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 527D–F, 552E–553D, 551D–F, 583A–C; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 145, 237–40, 233, 341).

for him to be blessed, but in order for him to have his fill. But may the Lord God be gracious to them and may the wicked Devil who sows these <ideas> in their <hearts> be set at nought<sup>48</sup>.”

Furthermore, towards the end of the *vita*, Gregory reveals that another disparaging rumour was circulating both outside and within the community to the effect that Lazaros was an avaricious man who kept for himself all the donations that were given to the monastery. “As a result,” he continues, “even some of the brothers of the monastery used to say that his pillar was stuffed full of *nomismata*.”<sup>49</sup>

In this atmosphere it is not surprising that attempts made by Lazaros to resolve some of the most troubling issues on Galesion were directly opposed by members of his flock. Hence the swift and deliberate betrayal of the mission to Constantinople that was intended to secure some form of imperial support that might be used to counter the constant harassment from Ephesos<sup>50</sup>. Hence, too, the support, referred to at the start of this paper, by the leading member of Lazaros’s team that did eventually reach the emperor, for a solution that ran directly counter to the one his superior wanted<sup>51</sup>. Finally, the grating personalities, the petty disagreements, the simmering antagonisms, the growing lack of respect for Lazaros as a superior seem to have boiled over into something even more serious. Open hostilities broke out and, at the time of Lazaros’s death, a notorious troublemaker among the monks tried to murder Ignatios, Lazaros’s younger brother and designated successor, by poisoning his wine<sup>52</sup>. Once again, then, the evidence here clearly shows how the future holy mountain of Galesion was created in spite of, and not because of, the attitude of a significant proportion of the monastic community itself.

Thirdly, and finally, the *vita* of Lazaros provides some fascinating, if more fragmentary, evidence of the sort of strategies, attractive and defensive, that were employed on Galesion by the founder and his supporters as they struggled with their external and internal opponents.

Some, as one would expect, were quite straightforward. There is thus evidence that a determined attempt was made to create a positive impression on visitors<sup>53</sup>, indeed, on a number of occasions, the cynical reader of the *vita* may be suspicious that some deliberate manipulation occurred when visits by particularly important people took place. In this context the biggest asset that the community possessed was, without question, the presence of Lazaros himself. The *vita* shows that this card seems to have been played to maximum effect, certainly by the time the monastery of the Resurrection had been established towards the end of Lazaros’s life. Visitors arrived at the monastery exhausted but with their expectations heightened by the tough journey from Ephesos across the river, up the mountain, and past Lazaros’s earlier communities. Then, as they came into the monastery courtyard, there before them on his pillar stood the living holy man they had come to see, an icon from a past age sprung to life. The experience could be dramatic. On one occasion, for instance, a layman fell to the ground head first as if he had been shot when he first caught sight of Lazaros and was so overcome by his emotions that he soaked the ground with his tears<sup>54</sup>. On another occasion a woman stood there weeping so copiously that her dress was soaked through, and so long that she missed lunch<sup>55</sup>.

As this last point indicates, the positive experience of visitors seems to have been frequently enhanced by the provision of a meal when they arrived at the monastery. Here was some consolation for the long and ar-

<sup>48</sup> V. Laz. 78 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 533D–E; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 167–168). See also V. Laz. 82–83 on the rumours concerning Lazaros’s “gluttonous” consumption of the sacraments (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 534E–535A; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 172–73); cf. V. Laz. 84 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 535B; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 174).

<sup>49</sup> V. Laz. 248 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 586C–D; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 356).

<sup>50</sup> V. Laz. 238–239 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 582C–D; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 338–339).

<sup>51</sup> V. Laz. 245 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 584D–E; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 346–347).

<sup>52</sup> V. Laz. 202 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 570C–D; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 296. Cf. V. Laz. 193 and 221 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 566D–E, 575D–576A; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 283–284 and n. 742, 314–16) (cf. THOMAS – HERO, *BMTD* 1 158).

<sup>53</sup> For a comprehensive study of visitors to Lazaros see R. GREENFIELD, *Drawn to the Blazing Beacon: Visitors and Pilgrims to the Living Holy Man and the Case of Lazaros of Mt. Galesion*. *DOP* 56 (2002) 213–241.

<sup>54</sup> V. Laz. 116 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 543B; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 205–206).

<sup>55</sup> V. Laz. 117 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 543B–C; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 206). For the impression made simply by the sight of Lazaros, see also V. Laz. 56, 84, 112–113, 115 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 527A–B, 535B, 542C–D, 543A; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 143, 174, 203, 205).

duous ascent up the mountain and an encouragement to visit in times of shortage<sup>56</sup>. More generally too, the *vita* makes clear that the community had developed a reputation in the region for its generous treatment of those who came to it in need<sup>57</sup>. Indeed, Lazaros insists on several occasions, to members of his community who doubt the wisdom of his sometimes seemingly excessive generosity, that his foundation is only there and flourishing because of the role it plays as a charitable institution<sup>58</sup>. Those who were seeking spiritual rather than physical sustenance were also sometimes (perhaps regularly) given a token to take away with them, something that not only was thought to possess and carry with it all the power of Lazaros's blessing but that also acted as a souvenir and doubtless reinforced over time the visitor's fond recollections of his or her visit to the mountain<sup>59</sup>. Such tokens and phylacteries must also have served as good advertising, assisting in the development of Galesion's reputation that was spread, principally by word of mouth, around the Byzantine world by impressed visitors<sup>60</sup>.

While the sight of Lazaros was in itself moving and the broader experience in the monastery rewarding, it was however, the interview with the holy man that was surely most important in establishing the reputation of Galesion as a holy mountain. Visitors waited their turn expectantly in the courtyard at the foot of the pillar and then mounted a ladder to the platform where they communicated with the holy man through a little window<sup>61</sup>. Here Lazaros's spiritual and earthly wisdom, his insight, foresight, good advice, and trustworthiness, seem to have been enormously impressive and it was his words, delivered up-close and personally, that stayed with people for the rest of their lives. He clearly knew exactly what to say and when to say it<sup>62</sup>.

Inevitably, however, things did not always go so well as they might and Lazaros could be difficult if he felt he was not getting the right attitude from a visitor. Thus in one episode recounted in the *vita* an important military official visits Lazaros but insists on talking to him about "wars and other worldly affairs," only to find that he is being completely ignored. "When the man got no response to his words," Gregory continues, "he took it badly; he got up, made obeisance, and then went <straight> down from the mountain, and did not <even> want to be given a meal according to the prevailing custom in the monastery." It is interesting in this context to hear that some of the monks, to whom the man had evidently complained on his way out, immediately went up to seek an explanation from Lazaros for his behaviour, doubtless aware of the problems that could be caused, in the hostile environment that surrounded Galesion, by even one dissatisfied visitor, let

<sup>56</sup> V. Laz. 95, 105, 117, 118, 238 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 538B, 540E, 543C, 543D, 582A–B; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 185 and n. 422, 197, 206, 207, 337).

<sup>57</sup> See, e.g., V. Laz. 146, 150–151, 161 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 551D–F, 552E–553D, 557A; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 233, 237–240, 252).

<sup>58</sup> V. Laz. 151, 210–211, 213 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 553D, 572F–573B, 573E–F; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 240, 304–306, 308). Further on Lazaros's reputation for generosity, see GREENFIELD, Pilgrimage 228–229. (cf. THOMAS – HERO, *BMFD* 1 158)

<sup>59</sup> See above, n. 17. Note, too, evidence for the production of holy oil in the monastery which was evidently taken away and used quite widely, in conjunction with Lazaros's name and blessing, as a curative, V. Laz. 76 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov.3 533B; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 165 and n. 348).

<sup>60</sup> See, e.g., the story in V. Laz. 75 (cited in the previous note). There we are told that someone who had evidently visited Galesion and been impressed by Lazaros was once a passenger on a ship that was in danger of sinking. When all appeared to be lost he invoked Lazaros's name and blessing, thereby saving both crew and passengers. Impressed in turn but ignorant of who Lazaros was, one of the sailors subsequently asked the passenger about him. Then, when he was next in Phygela (the port of Ephesos), he made the trip to Galesion himself. Years later, we discover, he is still regularly visiting and making donations to the community as well as telling everyone he meets there, including Gregory the Cellarer who is at the time still a layman, how wonderful Lazaros is. A number of passages, like this one, also reveal how the proximity of Galesion to the busy port of Phygela, as well as the major pilgrimage centre of Ephesos, assisted in the spread of the mountain's reputation. For a more deliberate spreading of Lazaros's reputation, however, see the story of the anonymous monk of Chs. 228–30 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 578A–579C; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 323–328) (cf. THOMAS – HERO, *BMFD* 1 158). This man travels as far as Bulgaria claiming to be on a mission from Lazaros who, he asserts, has passed on to him his amazing prophetic powers. It appears that it was also this man who was responsible for bringing Lazaros's reputation to the attention of Constantine Monomachos.

<sup>61</sup> On these arrangements see GREENFIELD, Lazaros 17–20; GREENFIELD, Pilgrimage 217–218; RIGO, *Il monte*, 24–27.

<sup>62</sup> See especially, V. Laz. 123 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 544F–545B; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 211–212). See also, e.g., V. Laz. 36, 63, 118, 126, 194 (DELEHAYE, *AASS*, Nov. 3 520D, 529B–E, 543F, 545F–546B 566E–5676A; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 123, 150–152, 207–208, 214–215, 284–285 and n. 745). On what was said in these interviews by Lazaros, see more fully, GREENFIELD, Pilgrimage 224–226.

alone one who commanded such influence. Fortunately the man soon ran into the steward of the monastery, whom he knew, down in Ephesos and some damage control was swiftly carried out. The steward persuaded the man to return to the monastery and there, in a second interview, he was deeply affected by his conversation with Lazaros which concluded with an evidently cathartic confession<sup>63</sup>.

Given the situation with Ephesos and in light of the obvious scepticism and hostility that existed there, the monastery had indeed to be careful. While there was thus an understandable eagerness to spread positive stories concerning Lazaros, it was also important to avoid those that might reflect negatively on him and assist those who wished to discredit both his reputation and, with it, that of the developing holy mountain. There is thus evidence of careful monitoring and even restraint of monks from the mountain, as well as of visitors, whose inappropriate behaviour and opinions might strengthen the metropolitan's hand, should they get loose in the town. In one episode an older monk, who has started seeing demonic visions and has become so conceited that he believes he is inspired, claims, among other things, that he has been told by the Holy Spirit to go "down to the <church of the> Theologian [in Ephesos] to instruct the metropolitan and all the clergy not to mingle water with the unity of the holy mysteries, but to allow only unadulterated wine <to be used>." Lazaros is evidently horrified by the prospect of such a contentious theological issue being raised with the metropolitan by an obviously deranged monk from his community and does his best to dissuade him. Then, when the monk slips out of the monastery at night and does go down to Ephesos, Lazaros immediately sends some other monks after him who arrest him, tie him up, and bring him back to the monastery where he is kept in shackles and put to hard labour on bread and water<sup>64</sup>. Clearly having this monk on the loose in Ephesos would have provided the metropolitan with just the sort of ammunition he needed to damage the reputation of Lazaros and Galesion. Indeed, the same sort of concern may perhaps be detected in another episode in which a man, who claims that his paralysed hand was healed by Lazaros, tells his story to the metropolitan despite being cautioned not to do so. The way in which this interaction is described in the *vita*, as well as Lazaros's distinctly brusque refusal to take credit for it, may suggest that more damage control was taking place<sup>65</sup>.

In the Byzantine world popularity, simple weight of numbers, counted for relatively little in comparison to the effect that could be produced by the support (or hostility) of one well connected and powerful individual. Ordinary people came to Lazaros in the hope of gaining the support of someone who could give them a voice, however indirectly, at the heavenly court, and thus give them a chance at having their problems solved, their hopes supported, their prayers quite literally answered, in a situation where they felt powerless to achieve anything at all by themselves. In the same way, if someone at the earthly, imperial court could be convinced that a holy man was genuine, that his foundation was worthy of support, then his community would be far more likely to succeed during his lifetime and subsequently be preserved for posterity. In the case of the establishment of Galesion, Lazaros did indeed manage to secure such patronage in the form of the emperor Constantine Monomachos and some other very influential members of his entourage. Good fortune or, as Gregory and Lazaros saw it, divine providence, probably played a part in obtaining this support, but it is, however, interesting in the context of this paper to note that the *vita* also raises the possibility that chance and the will of God received some help from distinctly human agency.

How Constantine first got to hear about Lazaros and was convinced of his holiness is described in one of the more difficult passages of the *vita*, but it is clear that, with or without his superior's involvement, one of the monks, who had left Galesion and travelled far and wide in the Byzantine world proclaiming Lazaros (and himself) as a prophet, somehow learnt of Constantine's impending elevation while he was in Smyrna and managed to slip across to Mitylene, where Constantine was in exile. There he 'predicted' to him, in Lazaros's name, that he would soon become emperor. When this did indeed happen, Lazaros's reputation

<sup>63</sup> V. Laz. Ch. 118 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 543D–544A; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 206–208).

<sup>64</sup> V. Laz. 49 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 524D–525B; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 135–137).

<sup>65</sup> V. Laz. 71–72 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 531A–F; GREENFIELD, Lazaros 157–160 and n. 332). The man is said to have told his story "rather carelessly and not very accurately."

was immediately established at the imperial court and material benefits at once began to flow to Galesion<sup>66</sup>. Some time later, although the *vita* does not establish a clear sequence of events, Romanos Skleros (the brother of the emperor's mistress), who seems to have held the very powerful position of *strategos* of the Thrakesion theme in which Ephesos lay, paid a visit to Galesion. It is tempting to say that his visit seems to have gone suspiciously well.

"When he was about to go up to Lazaros," Gregory reports, "but had only mounted the first rung of the ladder, the father put his head out of his little window. <Skleros> turned back as though he had been pushed by someone and stood holding his head with his hand and bending down towards the ground. Then, after shaking off the faintness which had come over him, he went up to the father. After he had come down from there, he was asked by the brothers what had suddenly made him lurch backward. He replied, 'Believe me, brothers and fathers, I'm telling you the truth <when I say> that I saw the father <appear> like fire as soon as he put his head out of the door, and I could not bear the sight; I felt faint, as you saw, and turned back involuntarily. I think,' he continued, 'that the holy father has as much (and perhaps far more) familiarity with the heavenly emperor, as I myself currently have with the earthly one.'<sup>67</sup>

And just how important making such an impression on someone of Romanos's standing could be is shown by the fact that, as a result of enthusiasm generated by the account given by her brother of this visit, and perhaps others, his sister, Maria Skleraina, made a very substantial donation which paid for the majority of the construction of one of Galesion's subsidiary monasteries<sup>68</sup>.

But the support of people like these, who wielded so much power and influence, could be a double edged sword. The relationship, once established, had to be carefully managed and maintained if it was not to turn back on those who had sought and secured it. Here, the *vita* again provides some indications of the sort of skilful and very delicate picking and choosing of dangerous or beneficial political associations that might be required if a monastic founder was not to end up falling out of favour with the rich and powerful as swiftly as he had entered it. Lazaros was thus approached on one occasion by a political opponent of Monomachos. This man, Constantine Barys, probably having in mind the way Lazaros was supposed to have predicted Monomachos's own rise to power, sent a letter asking the holy man to tell him if a coup he was plotting would succeed. Lazaros on this occasion refused to have anything to do with the matter, claiming ignorance of the future and sending back the evidently substantial donation (or bribe) that had accompanied the request. The fact that Barys's coup failed shortly afterwards and he had his tongue cut out provides an indication of just how dangerous was the situation into which someone in Lazaros's position was being put by such a request for 'endorsement.' Presumably, had he encouraged Barys, imperial support for Galesion would have been immediately withdrawn and the consequences might have been even more dire<sup>69</sup>.

The problems of such high level patronage are also illustrated by the episode at the end of Lazaros's life with which I introduced this paper. When it looked as though Lazaros's dream for Galesion was finally going to be shattered by the opposition from Ephesos, the time came to call on the friends he had made at the imperial court. By sending his monks to seek Constantine IX's backing, Lazaros had evidently hoped to thwart, once and for all, the claims of the metropolitan over Galesion and prevent his attempts to shut down

<sup>66</sup> V. Laz. 230 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 579A–C; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 327–328). On the monk's prior activities, see V. Laz. 228–229 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 578A–579A; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 323–326). Further on this episode and its importance in understanding both the history of Galesion and, perhaps, the manipulation of imperial support, see below.

<sup>67</sup> V. Laz. 87 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 536A–B; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 177–178).

<sup>68</sup> V. Laz. 245 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 584E; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 347, cf. 34–35).

<sup>69</sup> V. Laz. 105 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 540D–541A; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 196–198), and see J.-C. CHEYNET, *Pouvior et contestations à Byzance (963–1210)*. Paris 1996, 64–65, 161–162. Compare also here the episodes, evidently from a slightly earlier period, in which "the man called Makrembolites" visits Galesion, possibly while in political exile and asks for Lazaros's prayers that he may once more enter Constantinople, V. Laz. 101 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 539E; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 191–192); and in which Lazaros sends a cryptic warning to a very powerful man in the imperial administration, Nikephoros Kampanes, who was evidently a friend of Galesion, concerning the uprising which removed Michael V Kalaphates from the throne in 1042, V. Laz. 102 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 539E–540A; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 192–194). The dangers inherent in getting involved with a political exile are also stressed in V. Laz. 106 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 541A–B; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 198–199). See further here, R. MORRIS, *The Political Saint of the Eleventh Century*, in: *The Byzantine Saint* (ed. S. HACKEL). London 1981, 49.

the foundation before it could become a permanent establishment. But the seriously divided situation that had developed within the community itself now did most damage, for one of the monks on the delegation succeeded in securing imperial endorsement of the very solution that the metropolitan wanted and that Lazaros and his supporters so vehemently opposed. For the monks loyal to Lazaros it looked as if the plan had blown up in their faces. How could they possibly remain on the mountain when opposed not only by the metropolitan but now by the emperor himself as well<sup>70</sup>?

Here, however, in the impossible situation that had developed on the mountain and the desperate reactions that it provoked, the *vita* raises some of the most fascinating, if tantalisingly obscure, indications of the sort of shady manipulation, indeed skulduggery, that may have been involved in the final establishment and survival of the holy mountain of Galesion. Some evidence to this effect may be found in what is said concerning the foundation of the community of the Theotokos at Bessai<sup>71</sup>. Despite the prosperity and success this ‘rival’ community eventually came to possess, the impetus to found the new monastery may in fact have had little to do with any spiritual motivation on Lazaros’s part. Rather, it seems possible that it was primarily a ruse to deflect the claims and discontentments of his external and internal opponents<sup>72</sup>, something which explains why, once established, Bessai became for him, and seemingly for Gregory, a place of despicable spiritual value, well suited to those who could not tolerate the harsh realities of life on the mountain or whose disagreements with him made their presence undesirable<sup>73</sup>. As has just been noted, however, it also became a liability, for, having been founded with imperial patronage and thus being perfectly legitimate in a way the monasteries on the mountain never were, it became the obvious solution to the problem from the point of view first of the ecclesiastical authorities in Ephesos, then, as I have just suggested, with some persuasion, of the emperor himself<sup>74</sup>. Hence, presumably, the evidence that, after the project was underway, there was considerable foot dragging in its completion, since the absence of a finished church there provided a good excuse for stalling the metropolitan’s land claim and refusing an imperial directive to move off the mountain<sup>75</sup>. Hence, too, the evidence that Lazaros was determined Bessai should remain economically subservient to Galesion after his death<sup>76</sup>.

It is conceivable that the slow pace of the work on Bessai may also have been due to the fact that substantial imperial funds donated specifically for its construction were instead being spent on the third and largest community on the mountain, that of the Resurrection. Here one moves into the realm of the definitely conjectural but nevertheless rather intriguing interpretation of a number of passages in the *vita* which may be taken to indicate that Lazaros and his followers engaged in a long series of risky and distinctly dubious tactics in establishing and developing the monastery of the Resurrection and then fighting for the very survival of Galesion as a monastic mountain. Thus, in addition to spending imperial money on purposes for which it was never intended, it is possible to suggest that this group may have deliberately hidden a substantial portion of these funds from the opposing (pro-Bessai) faction within the monastic community at the time of Lazaros’s death, only to make them reappear again sometime afterwards when they were back in control. Furthermore, they may have fabricated and eventually had authenticated a claim that the monastery of the Resurrection was an imperial foundation. And they may have either forged Lazaros’s signature on the crucial *diatyposis*, which cut the community of Bessai out of his spiritual and material inheritance and ultimately

<sup>70</sup> V. Laz. 245 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 584D–585B; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 346–349).

<sup>71</sup> For a more detailed discussion of Bessai in this context and the issues mentioned below, see GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 34–41. See also MALAMUT, *Bessai*. *REB* 43 (1985) 243–251 and RIGO, *Il monte Galesion* 28–30.

<sup>72</sup> V. Laz. 239, cf. 245 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 582D, 584D–585B; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 339, 348).

<sup>73</sup> V. Laz. 216–218, cf. 202, 221 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 574A–575A, 570D–E, 575E; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 309–312, 296–297, 315).

<sup>74</sup> V. Laz. 245 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 584D–585B; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 346–349); cf. here V. Laz. 223 with its cryptic comment, which apparently refers to a time after Lazaros’s death, about the place of the first born having been usurped by the second born, (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 576C; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 317 and n. 886).

<sup>75</sup> V. Laz. 217 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 574D; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 311).

<sup>76</sup> V. Laz. 246–247 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 585C–586B; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 350–355). The footnotes to those pages indicate how other commentators understand these crucial passages in ways that differ from my own interpretation of them; see also now KAPLAN, *L’économie des monastères* 33–36.

discounted the claims of the metropolitanate, or at least heavily manipulated to the same end the account of what happened in the days and hours surrounding his death when this document was created and signed. Finally they may have been responsible for the even more exaggerated claim, which finds its way into the sources for Lazaros's life written after Gregory's *vita*, that the foundation of the Resurrection was not only imperially approved and endowed but was actually built in accordance with divine inspiration and at a location indicated by the hand of God himself<sup>77</sup>.

Even if the majority of the suggestions made immediately above might be dismissed as somewhat far fetched, I believe enough hard evidence has been adduced here and in the previous two sections of my paper to show what a fascinating glimpse Galesion may provide into the bitterly contested, unpleasantly murky and very human context in which a Byzantine holy mountain came into existence. At one point in the *vita* Gregory the Cellarer declares:

“<As for> the miracles, what needs to be said? For it is <surely enough> by itself for someone to bear in mind how, although he came up alone onto this mountain, without shelter, without shoes, and with only one little leather tunic and the irons which he wore to crush his body, Lazaros was yet able to found the three monasteries <on Galesion> and in addition to construct the monastery at Bessai, to gather some three hundred monks in them, to provide everything they needed, and moreover to maintain so many guests, then as now, in the monastery every day. If someone bears these <facts> in mind, as I have said, I do not think he will find anything superior as far as a miracle is concerned, considering the extent to which Lazaros <lacked> ancestral treasures or inheritances <when> he founded these <monasteries>, <and that he did this> with <only> the help and assistance of some of his relatives and friends.”<sup>78</sup>

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If the physical, economic, political, and personal difficulties that had to be overcome in the establishment of Galesion may be taken as even approaching the typical, the fact that any Byzantine holy mountains survived long enough for the patina of orthodoxy to mask the harsh realities of their foundation and development may, indeed, be taken as something approaching the miraculous.

<sup>77</sup> This admittedly hypothetical construction of these events and activities depends primarily on passages found in V. Laz. 221, 223, 230, 246, 248, and 250 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 575D–576D, 579A–C, 585C, 586C, 587A–B; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 315–317, 327–328, 349, 355–356, 359). For a fuller consideration of this evidence and its possible implications, see GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 41–48 and 58–61; cf., MALAMUT, *Bessai* 246–247.

<sup>78</sup> V. Laz. 79 (DELEHAYE, *AASS* Nov. 3 533F–534A; GREENFIELD, *Lazaros* 168–169).

