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Cardinal Virtues in the Basil of Caesarea's Writings. Philological and Historical Aspect

The term “virtue” itself requires a comment, if its meaning in Hellenism is to be compared with that given to it by Christianity. Thus, the problem arises already at the point of departure. For here the question appears, whether the Greek term ἀρετή can be rendered by the word “virtue”. The latter is currently significantly burdened with the sense given to it throughout centuries by Christianity. However, this article will not analyze this issue in the theological aspect, but from the philological and historical point of view. The ancient Greeks expressed with the notion ἀρετή the perfection of human soul, above all manifested in the counsel and fight². The Romans, in turn, used the term *virtus*, the meaning of which significantly differed from the Greek word ἀρετή. Many studies were devoted to the analysis of these two ideas, because ἀρετή³ and *vir-*

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² Cf. T. Zieliński, *Idealy wychowawcze w starożytności i u nas*, “Oświata i Wychowanie” 1/3 (1929) p. 233; T. Sinko, *Doskonały Grek i Rzymianin*, Grecja i Rzym 3, Lwów 1939, p. 9; A. Krokiewicz, *Moralność Homera i etyka Hezjoda*, Warszawa 1959, p. 60, 65 and 77; H. Armstrong – R.A. Markus, *Wiara chrześcijańska a filozofia grecka*, tr. H. Bednarek, Warszawa 1964, p. 119-120; R. Turasiewicz, *Studia nad pojęciem „kaloskagathos”*, ZN UJ. Prace Historyczno-Literackie 571/41, Warszawa – Kraków 1980, p. 13; M. Ossowska, *Etos rycerski i jego odmiany*, Logos, Warszawa 1986, p. 25.

³ Cf. E. Lange, *Die Bedeutung von aretē bei Thukydides*, “Jahrbücher für Classische Philologie” 38/145 (1892) p. 827-840; I. Ludwig, *Quae fuerit vocis aretē vis ac natura ante Demosthenis exitum*, Lipsiae 1906; A.W.H. Atkins, *Merit and Responsibility: A Study in Greek Values*, Oxford 1960; A.M. Frenkian, *La notion d'aretē et l'éthique d'Aristote*, “Helikon” 1 (1961) p. 439-448; D. MacDowell, *Aretē and Generosity*, “Mnemosyne” 4 series 16/2 (1963) p. 127-134; D. Butaye, *L'idéal de l'areté dans les tragedies*

*tus*⁴ are not identical notions. What is more, the shades of their meanings can be

de Sophocle, "Les Études Classiques" 32/2 (1964) p. 337-355; G. Aujac, *Sur la définition d'aretē*, "Revue des Études Grecques" 82 (1969) p. 390-403; A. Carramiñana Pérez, *Breve análisis de una virtud homérica: la arete*, in: *Dōrōi syn oligōi. Homenaje a Jose Alsina de sus discípulos en el décimo aniversario de su cátedra en la Universidad de Barcelona*, ed. C. Miralles, Barcelona 1969, p. 19-33; A.W.H. Atkins, *Moral Values and Political Behaviour in Ancient Greece from Homer to the End of the Fifth Century*, New York 1972, p. 35-37, 60-71, 126-139; A.A. Nascimento, "Aretē" *Sofística, uma Forma do Humanismo Grego*, "Euphrosyne" 5 (1972) p. 121-159; W. Wróblewski, *Pojęcie aristos i arete w poematach Homera*, "Eos" 60/1 (1972) p. 21-39; J.T. Hooker, *Charis and aretē in Thucydides*, "Hermes" 102/2 (1974) p. 164-169; A.E. Horner, *Ancient Values: Aretē and Virtus*, Ann Arbor 1975; L.F. Beeretz, *Aretē im Denken der Vorsokratiker. Ein Beitrag zum "Lexikon der Vorsokratiker"*, "Philosophia" 6-7 (1975-1976) p. 157-176; R. Turasiewicz, *Związek "arete" i "kallos" w greckiej poezji archaicznej*, "Meander" 34/3 (1979) p. 147-155; W. Wróblewski, *Pojęcie arete w II połowie V wieku p.n.e. Protagoras-Gorgiasz-Demokryt*, Toruń 1979; C. Spicq, *Note de lexicographie: aretē*, RB 89/2 (1982) p. 161-176; W. Wróblewski, *Le concept de areté chez Antistène*, in: *Études de philologie classique à la mémoire de Stefan Srebrny*, ed. Z. Abramowicz, tr. I. Woszczyk, Toruń 1983, p. 79-101; W. Wróblewski, *Die demokratische Auffassung der Arete-Begriffes in Platons "Politeia"*, "Studia Graeco-Latina" 1 (1988) p. 106-118; L. Hatzichronoglou, *Theognis and Arete*, in: *Human Virtue and Human Excellence*, ed. A.W.H. Adkins, New York – San Francisco 1991, p. 17-44; A. Melo, *A areté helénica nos jogos olímpicos*, "Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia" 52/1-4 (1996) p. 523-537; S. Wyszomirski, *Pojęcie "arete" w etyce Stoi Starszej i Średniej*, Toruń 1997.

⁴ Cf. H. Haas, *Virtus Tacitea*, "Gymnasium" 49/5-6 (1938) p. 163-180; K. Büchner, *Altrömische und Horazische Virtus*, "Die Antike" 15 (1939) p. 145-164 (= K. Büchner, *Studien zur römischen Literatur*, Wiesbaden 1962, p. 1-22); G. Liebers, *Virtus bei Cicero*, Dresden 1942; R. Feger, *Virtus bei Tacitus*, Freiburg im Breisgau 1944; A.N. van Omme, "Virtus": *een semantiese Studie*, Utrecht 1946; K. Stawecka, *Spuren der philosophischen Virtus in den Komödien von Plautus*, "Eos" 57/2 (1967-1968) p. 211-218; K. Stawecka, *Virtus jako ideał życiowy w piśmiennictwie przedcycerońskim*, RH 16/3 (1968) p. 73-92; V. Hand, *Augustin und das klassisch römische Selbstverständnis. Eine Untersuchung über Gloria, Virtus, Iustitia und Res Publica in "De civitate Dei"*, Hamburger Philologische Studien 13, Hamburg 1970; W. Eisenhut, *Virtus Romana: ihre Stellung im römischen Wertesystem*, Studia et Testimonia Antiqua 13, München 1973; J. Korpanty, *De virtutis notione Sallustiana*, "Eos" 62/2 (1974) p. 255-265; H. Steinmeyer, *Der Virtus-Begriff bei Cicero und Seneca*, "Die altsprachliche Unterricht" 17 (1974) p. 50-59; P.D. Johnson, *Virtus: Transition from Classical Latin to the "De civitate Dei"*, AugSt 6 (1975) p. 117-124; J. Korpanty, *Studia nad łacińską terminologią polityczno-socjalną okresu republiki rzymskiej*, Prace Komisji Filologii Klasycznej. Oddział w Krakowie 15, Kraków 1976, p. 7-29, 30-39, 103-106 and 116-123; J. Sarsila, *Some Aspects of the Concept of "Virtus" in Roman Literature until Livy*, Studia Philologica Jyväskyläensia 16, Jyväskylä 1982; S. Wyszomirski, *Der Virtus-Begriff in den philosophischen Schriften von*

different in the writings of particular Greek and Latin authors. In this case a lot depends on the time and place, as well as on the subject undertaken by them. It has to be added that the most general knowledge about virtues in antiquity can be found primarily in encyclopedic articles⁵.

The term ἀρετή, found in the vast majority of the writings by Basil of Caesarea, which already has quite a substantial bibliography⁶, requires cer-

L. Annaeus Seneca: ein semantisches Studium, tr. E. Michalik – E. Szwejkowska-Olsson, Toruń 1993; T. Wnętrzak, *Znaczenie pojęć filozoficzno-politycznych w "De civitate Dei" św. Augustyna*, Akademia Pedagogiczna im. KEN w Krakowie. Prace Monograficzne 322, Kraków 2002, p. 18-31; C. Balmaceda, "Virtus Romana" en el siglo I a. C., "Gerión" 25/1 (2007) p. 285-303; C. Balmaceda, *Virtus Romana: Politics and Morality in the Roman Historians*, Studies in the History of Greece and Rome, Chapel Hill 2017.

⁵ Cf. P. Wissowa, *Virtus*, in: *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, v. 6: *U – Z und Nachträge*, ed. W.H. Roscher, Leipzig – Berlin 1924-1937, c. 336, 39-347, 12; A. Michel, *Vertu*, in: *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, v. 15/2: *Trinité – Zwinglianisme*, ed. A. Vacant – E. Mangenot – E. Amann, Paris 1950, c. 2743-2748; O. Gigon, *Arete*, in: *Lexikon der Alten Welt*, Zürich – Stuttgart 1965, c. 292; O. Gigon, *Ethic*, in: *Lexikon der Alten Welt*, Zürich – Stuttgart 1965, c. 880-886; R. Cyrklaff – J. Wichrowicz, *Aretologia*, in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, v. 1: *A i Ω – Baptyści*, ed. F. Gryglewicz – R. Łukaszuk – Z. Sułowski, Lublin 1973, c. 903; W. Eisenhut, *Virtus*, in: *Real-Encyklopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft*, Supplementband XIV: *Aelius bis Zone*, ed. K. Ziegler – H. Gärtner, München 1974, c. 896, 49-910, 31; J.-M. Aubert, *Vertus*, in: *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité Ascétique et Mystique*, v. 16: *Ubalde d'Alençon – Zypaeus*, ed. M. Viller – A. Derville, Paris 1994, c. 486-487; P. Daubercies, *Vertu*, in: *Catholicisme hier, aujourd'hui, demain*, v. 15: *Tintoret – Zwingli*, ed. G. Jacquement – G.-H. Baudry – G. Mathon, Paris 2000, c. 934-944; J. Porter, *Tugend*, in: *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, v. 34: *Trappisten/Trappistinnen – Vernunft II*, ed. G. Müller – H. Balz – G. Krause, Berlin – New York 2002, p. 184-186; F. Renger, *Tugend*, in: *Der Neue Pauly*, v. 12/1: *Tam – Vel*, Stuttgart – Weimer 2002, c. 894-896; M. Forschner, *Tugend I: Philosophisch*, in: *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, v. 10: *Thomaschriften bis Zytomyr*, ed. W. Kasper, Freiburg – Basel – Wien 2006, c. 293-296. Cf. also K. Wernicke, *Aretē*, in: *Real-Encyklopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft*, v. 3: *Apollon – Artemis*, ed. A.F. Pauly – G. Wissowa – W. Kroll, Stuttgart 1895, c. 678, 13-54; J.Ch. Baldy, *Arete I*, in: *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, t. 2/1: *Aphrodisias – Athena*, Zürich – München 1984, p. 581-582.

⁶ Cf. Th.L. Shear, *The Influence of Plato on Saint Basil*, Baltimore 1906, p. 12-21; S. Olejnik, *Cnota chrześcijańska: struktura i rozwój cnotliwego życia*, STV 13/1 (1975) p. 58; E. Rusu, *Justice et charité chez saint Basile le Grand, thèse de 3e cycle* [Strasbourg] 1985; E. Cavalcanti, *Dall'etica classica all'etica cristiana: il commento al prologo del libro dei Proverbi di Basilio di Cesarea*, SMSR 56/1-2 (1990) p. 353-378 (= *Leggere il padre dopo il concilio: studi di letteratura cristiana antica di E. Cavalcanti*, ed. A. D'Anna – C. Lo Cicero – C. Noce, SEA 153, Roma 2017, p. 315-340); A. Holder, *Saint Basil the Great on Secular Education and Christian Virtue*, "Religious Education" 87/3

tain clarifications. They should be commenced with indicating the origin of that term. The Bishop of Caesarea saw the source of ἀρετή in human free will⁷. He reduced its significance, in turn, to avoiding evil and doing good⁸. What was important for Basil in this context was also the ability to forgive, combined with forgetting the suffered wrongdoings⁹. Thus, for him “to forgive”, meant, “to forget”. However, here Basil did not mean the sporadic acts of good and forgiveness, but that such an attitude should remain with the human throughout his or her whole life¹⁰. To do good and to forgive was not in fact the postulate of the Bishop of Caesarea, but the basic idea of Christ’s teachings, clearly presented on the cards of Gospel. Here Basil was only a faithful disciple of his Master. He also emphasized that one comes to understand the essence of virtue not only by getting to know Christ’s teachings, but also by natural recognition¹¹. He regarded both these ways as difficult¹² and that is why he demanded strict self-discipline from those who wished to achieve ἀρετή¹³. Basil realized that by writing about ἀρετή he entered an

(1992) p. 395-415; J. Leemans, *Preaching Christian Virtue. Basil of Caesarea’s Panegyric Sermon on Julitta*, in: *Virtutis imago. Studies on the Conceptualisation and Transformation of an Ancient Ideal*, ed. G. Partoens – G. Roskam – T. Van Houdt, Collection d’Études Classiques 19, Louvain – Namur 2004, p. 259-284; I. Narewska, *Chrześcijański proces formacyjny na podstawie wybranych pism Ojców Kościoła*, “Studia Elbląskie” 20 (2019) p. 394-396. Cf. also M. Lech, *Znaczenie antycznej literatury greckiej w edukacji młodych chrześcijan (na podstawie “Mowy do młodych” Bazylego Wielkiego)*, “Meander” 52/2 (1997) p. 141-153; E. Szablewska, “Mowa do młodych” św. Bazylego Wielkiego. *Współczesne próby oceny, interpretacje oraz inspiracje zawartych w niej koncepcji pedagogicznych*, “Colloquia Litteraria” 8-9/1-2 (2010) p. 107-121; S. Longosz, *Wstęp i komentarz*, in: *Święty Bazyli Wielki – “Do młodzieńców o korzyściach z czytania ksiąg pogańskich”*, tr. R. Andrzejewski, VoxP 57 (2012) p. 895-904.

⁷ Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia: Quod Deus non est auctor malorum* 7, PG 31, 345B. Cf. Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia in Psalmum XXXIII*, 5, PG 29, 361B.

⁸ Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia XIII: Exhortatoria ad sanctum baptismum* 5, PG 31, 436B-C.

⁹ Basilius Caesariensis, *Homiliae IX in Hexaemeron VIII* 1, ed. S. Giet, SCh 26bis, Paris 1968, p. 434 (= PG 29, 165D).

¹⁰ Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia I in Psalmum XIV*, 3, PG 29, 256A. Cf. Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia XIII: Exhortatoria ad sanctum baptismum* 5, PG 31, 436B.

¹¹ Basilius Caesariensis, *Commentarius in Isaiam prophetam* (dubium) I 44, PG 30, 204B.

¹² Cf. Basilius Caesariensis, *Adversus Eunomium* I 27, 23-26, v. 1, ed. B. Sesboüé, SCh 299, Paris 1982, p. 268 (= PG 29, 572B).

¹³ Cf. Basilius Caesariensis, *Commentarius in Isaiam prophetam* (dubium) VIII 213, PG 30, 488A.

area of ethical and moral issues that was very close both to Christianity and Hellenism¹⁴. As far as Hellenism was quite relative in this field¹⁵, in the ethics based on Gospel, however, it was unthinkable¹⁶. The Bishop of Caesarea did not recognize any compromise in this respect. Evil was lack of good for him¹⁷. Therefore Basil repeated Plotinus's (c. 205-270 CE) thesis on the essence of evil¹⁸. In this manner he indirectly rejected the thesis of Stoics, who believed that god was the reason for both good and evil¹⁹. It also has to be noted that Basil connected evil with imperfection of human free choice. Consequently, evil was, in his view, organically combined with the issue of free will²⁰. Sin was for him, in turn, the apogee of evil, manifesting itself in words and deeds²¹. However, the Bishop of Caesarea believed that the ethic and moral attitudes of every person were verified not by their words, but acts²². Acts are, in turn, simultaneously choices that were to be made in

¹⁴ Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia: Ad adolescentes* V 1-4, ed. F. Boulanger, Paris 1935, p. 46 (= PG 31, 569D-572A).

¹⁵ Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia: Ad adolescentes* IV 24-31, ed. Boulanger, p. 45 (= PG 31, 569A-B). Cf. M.A. Krąpiec, *Dlaczego zło. Rozważania filozoficzne*, Biblioteka "Więzi", Kraków 1962, p. 45-58. Cf. also L. Bouyer, *Le problème du mal dans le christianisme antique*, "Dieu Vivant" 6 (1946) p. 17-42; P. Siniscalco, *Człowiek wobec świata: Aspekty religijne, etyczne i społeczne u pisarzy chrześcijańskich IV wieku*, tr. E. Zwolski, RTK 27/4 (1980) p. 176.

¹⁶ Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia in Psalmum XLIV* 8, PG 29, 405D.

¹⁷ Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia: Quod Deus non est auctor malorum* 5, PG 31, 341B.

¹⁸ Plotinus, *Enneades* I 8, 11, ed. P. Henry – H.-R. Schwyzer, in: Plotinus, *Opera*, t. 1: *Porphyrii Vita Plotini, Enneades I-III*, Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis, Oxonii 1964, p. 120-121. Cf. M. Barbotin, *La connaissance de Dieu chez saint Basile de Césarée: source chrétiennes et profanes de la doctrine*, Paris 1945, p. 72. Cf. also H. Wistuba, *Teoria zła w Enneadach Plotyna*, RF 10/1 (1962) p. 161-171.

¹⁹ Cf. Y. Courtonne, *Saint Basile et l'hellénisme: Étude sur la rencontre de la pensée chrétienne avec la sagesse antique dans l'Hexaméron de Basile le Grand*, Paris 1934, p. 140-142. Cf. also P. Scazzoso, *L'umanesimo di Basilio*, "Augustinianum" 12/2 (1972) p. 393-394; A. Krokiewicz, *Stoicyzm*, "Meander" 33/5 (1976) p. 233; L. Małunowiczówna, *Stosunek wczesnego chrześcijaństwa do kultury i filozofii pogańskiej*, AK 71/93 (1979) p. 7; M. Żywczyński, *Kościół i społeczeństwo pierwszych wieków*, Warszawa 1985, p. 68-70.

²⁰ Cf. Basilius Caesariensis, *Homiliae in Hexaemeron* II 5, ed. Giet, SCh 26bis, p. 160-162 (= PG 29, 40B); Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia: Quod Deus non est auctor malorum* 5, PG 31, 337D-340A.

²¹ Cf. Basilius Caesariensis, *Commentarius in Isaiam prophetam* (dubium) III 114, PG 30, 304B; Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia: Quod Deus non est auctor malorum* 5, PG 31, 337D.

²² Basilius Caesariensis, *Epistulae* 302, 54, ed. Y. Courtonne III, Paris 1966, p. 181 (= PG 32, 1052C).

the perspective of ἀρετή, because, from the Christian point of view, only such an attitude could guarantee the biggest benefits to men²³. On the other hand, Basil, also following Plotinus, treated evil as the illness of soul²⁴. For not evil, but z ἀρετή should have the absolute power over the soul²⁵, for this is what makes the soul become beautiful²⁶, filling itself up with purity and sanctity²⁷. Only such a soul can maintain bonds with its Creator. In this way ἀρετή becomes the supplier of the most important goods and the guardian of human life²⁸ in its deepest, spiritual dimension. For Basil it was like a gown for the one who accepted it²⁹, and, simultaneously, it was becoming a source of spiritual strength for him³⁰.

A more meticulous overview of the opinions in this matter presented by the Cappadocian Father of Church should be commenced with saying that he understood ἀρετή as μεσότης, or even συμμετρία. He illustrated his understanding of these two latter terms on the example of bravery as a virtue. It is something between bravado (θρασύτης) and cowardice (δειλία)³¹. Somewhere else, in turn, he wrote in more general terms that ἀρετή is something between excess (ὑπερβολή) and insufficiency (ἔλλειψις)³². In both the examples quoted we can clearly hear Aristotle's view, according to which μεσότης ἐστὶν ἡ ἀρετή³³.

²³ Basilius Caesariensis, *Epistulae* 277, 26-27, ed. Courtonne III, p. 150 (= PG 32, 1013B).

²⁴ Basilius Caesariensis, *Homiliae in Hexaemeron* IX 4, ed. Giet, SCh 26bis, p. 496 (= PG 29, 196C).

²⁵ Basilius Caesariensis, *Commentarius in Isaiam prophetam* (dubium) I 34, PG 30, 188A.

²⁶ Cf. Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia: Attende tibi ipsi* 3, PG 31, 204B. Cf. also Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia: "Destruam horrea mea"* 6, PG 31, 273A.

²⁷ Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia XII: In principium Proverbiorum* 14, PG 31, 416A.

²⁸ Basilius Caesariensis, *Commentarius in Isaiam prophetam* (dubium) VIII 214, PG 30, 488C.

²⁹ Basilius Caesariensis, *Commentarius in Isaiam prophetam* (dubium) VIII 204, PG 30, 472A-B.

³⁰ Basilius Caesariensis, *Commentarius in Isaiam prophetam* (dubium) III 99, PG 30, 280B.

³¹ Basilius Caesariensis, *Commentarius in Isaiam prophetam* (dubium) V 174, PG 30, 409C. Cf. Basilius Caesariensis, *Commentarius in Isaiam prophetam* (dubium) X 231, PG 30, 524B.

³² Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia in Psalmum VII* 7, PG 29, 244D.

³³ Aristoteles, *Ethica Nicomachea* II 6, ed. E. Bekker, in: *Aristoteles graece*, v. 2, ed. E. Bekker, Berolini 1831, p. 1107 a 7. Cf. Aristoteles, *Ethica Nicomachea* II 6, p. 1106 b 36-1107 a 7. Cf. also H. Schilling, *Das Ethos der Mesotes: Eine Studie zur Nikoma-*

However, the basis for the Basilian idea of ἀρετή was the theory of four cardinal virtues, whose origin went back at least to Socrates (c. 470-399 BC), Plato (428/427-348/347 BC), Aristotle (384-322 BC) and the stoical school. Besides these authorities, Plotinus affected Basil quite significantly in this respect³⁴. As it is universally known, these virtues are: prudence (φρόνησις), moderation (σωφροσύνη), justice (δικαιοσύνη), and bravery (ἀνδρεία)³⁵. A lot has been already written on the subject, both in the world's³⁶ and Polish

chischen Ethik des Aristoteles, Abhandlungen zur Philosophie und ihrer Geschichte 22, Tübingen 1930; W.F.R. Hardie, *Aristotle's Doctrine that Virtue is a "Mean"*, "Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society" N.S. 65 (1964-1965) p. 183-204; L. Brown, *What is "the mean relative to us" in Aristotle's "Ethics"*, "Phronesis" 42/1 (1997) p. 77-93; D. Zagórski, *Recepcja Arystotelesowskiego idealu mesotēs w doktrynie Klemensa Aleksandryjskiego. Problem definicji*, RT 51/4 (2004) p. 5-42; U. Wolf, *The Sens of Aristotle's Doctrine of the Mean (Book II)*, in: *Aristotle's "Nicomachean Ethics"*, ed. O. Höffe, tr. D. Fernbach, Leiden – Boston 2010, p. 69-88; M. Szram, *Cnota pokory w nauczaniu greckich Ojców Kościoła IV wieku*, Lublin 2014, p. 15-16.

³⁴ Cf. A. Krokiewicz, *Nauka Plotyna*, "Meander" 4/1-2 (1949) p. 43; A. Krokiewicz, *Arystoteles, Pirron i Plotyn*, Warszawa 1974, p. 261-262; W.K. Szymański, *Problematyka dobra w Enneadach*, RF 11/2 (1963) p. 12; P. Hadot, *Plotin ou la simplicité du regard*, La Recherche de l'Absolu 10, Paris 1963, p. 93-99.

³⁵ Basilus Caesariensis, *Homilia in Psalmum XXIX* 5, PG 29, 316C.

³⁶ Cf. O. Kunsemüller, *Die Herkunft der Platonischen Kardinaltugenden*, Erlangen 1935; M. Spanneut, *Le stoïcisme des Pères de l'Église de Clément de Rome à Clément d'Alexandrie*, Paris 1957; H.J. Krämer, *Arete bei Platon und Aristoteles: zum Wesen und zur Geschichte der Platonischen Ontologie*, Abhandlungen der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-Historische Klasse 1959/6, Heidelberg 1959; P. Aubenque, *La prudence chez Aristote*, Bibliothèque de Philosophie Contemporaine, Paris 1963; H. North, *Sophrosyne. Self-Knowledge and Self-Restraint in Greek Literature*, Ithaca – New York 1966; J. Kube, *Technē und Aretē: sophistisches und Platonisches Tugendwissen*, Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Philosophie 12, Berlin 1969; A. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Emperor and His Virtues*, "Historia" 30/3 (1981) p. 298-323; O. Gignon, *Die Wege zur aretē bei Platon und Aristoteles*, "Museum Helveticum" 42 (1985) p. 133-150; D.S. Hutchinson, *The Virtues of Aristotle*, London – New York 1986; D. Carr, *The Cardinal Virtues and Platon's Moral Psychology*, "The Philosophical Quarterly" 38/1 (1988) p. 186-200; R. Elm, *Klugheit und Erfahrung bei Aristoteles*, Paderborn 1996; *Andreia. Studies in Manliness and Courage in Classical Antiquity*, ed. R.M. Rosen – I. Sluiter, Mnemosyne. Bibliotheca Classica Batavia. Supplementum 238, Leiden – Boston 2003; A. Motte, *L'invention de la phronēsis par Démocrite*, in: *Le jugement pratique. Autour de la notion de phronēsis*, ed. D. Lorries – L. Rizzerio, Paris 2008, p. 75-104; M.A. McDonnell, *Roman Manliness: Virtus and the Roman Republic*, New York 2009; J.A. Martínez García, *Virtud (areté) y vocación a ser persona en la tradición clásica griega*, "Facies Domini" 1 (2009) p. 217-232; M. Schofield, *Republican Virtues*, in: *A Com-*

literature³⁷. Besides Greek and Roman literature, the issue also appears in

panion to Greek and Roman Political Thought, ed. R.K. Balot, Malden – Oxford 2009, p. 199-213; H.J. Curzer, *Aristotle and the Virtues*, Oxford 2012; M. Schofield, *Cardinal Virtues: A Contested Socratic Inheritance*, in: *Plato and the Stoics*, ed. A.G. Long, Cambridge 2013, p. 11-28. Cf. also R. Fears, *The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology*, in: *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, v. 17/2: *Religion*, ed. W. Haase, Berlin – New York 1981, p. 827-948; E. Forbis, *Municipal Virtues in the Roman Empire. The Evidence of Italian Honorary Inscriptions*, Stuttgart – Leipzig 1996.

³⁷ Cf. A. Usowicz, *Układ cnót i wad w związku z życiem uczuciowo-popędowym u Arystotelesa i św. Tomasza z Akwinu*, Studia Instytutu Teologicznego Księży Misjonarzy 1, Kraków 1939; W. Wróblewski, *Z problematyki arete w "Politei" Platonskiej*, "Ruch Filozoficzny" 27 (1969) p. 152-153; E. Heza, *Kryzys arystokratycznego pojęcia "aretē"*. Z badań nad historią myśli greckiej, "Etyka" 10 (1972) p. 61-85; R. Turasiewicz, *Związek "arete" i "kallos" w greckiej poezji archaicznej*, "Meander" 34/3 (1979) p. 147-155; J. Czerwińska, *Koncepcja arete w ujęciu sofistów i Tukidydesa*, "Meander" 41/6 (1986) p. 211-223; A. Swoboda, *Stoicka koncepcja cnoty*, "Symbolae Philologorum Posnaniensium Graecae et Latinae" 12 (1988) p. 31-41; R. Bzdak – E. Podrez, *O potrzebie cnót, czy o potrzebie etyki*, "Studia Philosophiae Christianae" 31/2 (1995) p. 77-90; A.C. MacIntyre, *Dziedzictwo cnoty: studium z teorii moralności*, tr. A. Chmielewski, Biblioteka Współczesnych Filozofów, Warszawa 1996; J. Sowa, *Czy przyjaźń jest cnotą? (Philia i arete u Platona i Arystotelesa)*, "Meander" 54/2 (1999) p. 125-133; Z. Pańpuch, *Areté*, in: *Powszechna Encyklopedia Filozofii*, t. 1: A-B, ed. A. Krąpiec – A. Maryniarczyk – P. Jaroszyński, Lublin 2000, p. 318-325; Z. Pańpuch, *Cnoty i wady*, in: *Powszechna Encyklopedia Filozofii*, t. 2: C-D, ed. A. Krąpiec – A. Maryniarczyk – P. Jaroszyński, Lublin 2001, c. 222-229; T. Irwin, *Cnoty w filozofii greckiej*, in: *Etyka i charakter*, tr. J. Jaśtał, Kraków 2004, p. 65-84; J. Jaśtał, *Arystoteles o sprawiedliwości*, in: *Czy sprawiedliwość jest możliwa?*, ed. D. Probučka, Kraków 2008, p. 139-145; J. Jaśtał, *Natura cnoty. Problematyka emocji w neoarystotelesowskiej etyce cnót*, Kraków 2009, p. 79-194; J. Sowa, *Między Erossem a Arete: przyjaźń w etyce Platona i Arystotelesa*, Łódź 2009; A. Szudra-Barszcz, *Czy cnoty można się nauczyć?*, "Ethos" 32/4 (2010) p. 108-118; B. Zgraja, *ARETH w przekazach przedchrześcijańskich. Zarys zagadnienia*, VoxP 55 (2010) p. 767-787; Z. Pańpuch, *Początki rozumienia autorytetu w starożytności*, "Człowiek w Kulturze" 22 (2011-2012) p. 167-206; M.A. Wesoly, *"Phronesis" – roztropność jako racjonalność praktyczna według Arystotelesa*, in: *Filozofia a sfera publiczna*, red. P. Orlik – K. Przybyszewski, Poznań 2012, p. 229-251; D. Budzanowska, *Cztery cnoty władcy w "De clementia" Seneki Młodszego*, Florilegium 2, Warszawa 2013, p. 119-176 and 191-369; J. Grzybowski, *Obywatelskość i cnota – niepodważalny związek polityki i etyki w starożytnej Grecji*, "Kwartalnik Filozoficzny" 43/4 (2015) p. 132-142; Z. Pańpuch, *Szczęście a polityka: aretologiczne podstawy politologii Platona i Arystotelesa*, Scripta Philosophiae Classicae, Lublin 2015; M.J. Gondek, *"Partes integrales" jako podstawa tłumaczenia cnoty roztropności w tradycji perypatetyckiej*, ZNKUL 59/1 (2016) p. 41-57; Z. Pańpuch, *Aretologia Arystotelesa – podstawą budowania etyki i polityki*, in: *O metafizyce Arysto-*

the New Testament³⁸. On the basis of ancient and New Testament sources, in turn, the reflection on virtues became an important element in the writings of Fathers of the Church³⁹. Basil listed them all a few times in his writings, one next to another, sometimes adding their more extensive characteristics by indicating the aim, which they served. And so, prudence is the virtue that serves solving the matters of choice between good and evil. Moderation is helpful in recognizing what should be chosen and what should be omitted. Justice instructs that it is necessary to give everyone what they rightly deserve. Finally, bravery enables us to distinguish things one should be afraid of from those that do not cause fear⁴⁰. Somewhere else the Bishop of Caesarea emphasized the grandness (τὸ μεγαλοπρεπές) of bravery, the unshaken exactness and impartiality (τὸ ἀκριβές) of justice, venerability (τὸ σεμνόν)

tolesesa. U podstaw filozofowania realistycznego, red. A. Maryniarczyk – N. Kunat – Z. Pańpuch, *Zadania Współczesnej Metafizyki* 19, Lublin 2017, p. 317-327; M.A. Wesoły, *Księga Arystotelesa o dyspozycjach dianoetycznych (intelektualnych)*, “*Etyka Nikomachejska*” VI, “*Filozofia Publiczna i Edukacja Demokratyczna*” 7-8/1 (2018-2019) p. 6-17.

³⁸ Cf. F.W. Horn, *Paulus und die Kardinaltugenden*, in: *Paulus – Werk und Wirkung: Festschrift für Andreas Lindemann zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. P.-G. Klumbies – D.S. du Toit, Tübingen 2013, p. 351-370.

³⁹ Cf. O. Zöckler, *Die Tugendlehre des Christentums geschichtlich dargestellt in der Entwicklung ihrer Lehrformen*, Gütersloh 1904; E. Konstantinou, *Die Tugendlehre Gregors von Nyssa im Verhältnis zu der antik-philosophischen und jüdischchristlichen Tradition*, Das östliche Christentum N.F. 17, Würzburg 1966; S. Mähl, *Quadrige virtutum. Die Kardinaltugenden in der Geistesgeschichte der Karolingerzeit*, Beihefte zum Archiv für Kulturgeschichte 9, Köln 1969; J. Préaux, *Les quatre vertus païennes et chrétiennes: apothéose et ascension*, in: *Hommages à Marcel Renard*, v. 1: *Langues, littératures, droit*, ed. J. Bibauw, Collection Latomus 101, Bruxelles 1969, p. 639-657; H. Borok, “*Prudentia*” oder “*sapientia*”? : ein Beitrag zur Reception der ersten platonischen Kardinaltugend in die christliche Ethik, *ThG* 75/4 (1985) p. 435-446 (= *Ethik der Tugenden: menschliche Grundhaltungen als unverzichtbarer Bestandteil moralischen Handelns*, *Festschrift für Joachim Piegsa zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. C. Breuer, *Moraltheologische Studien. Systematische Abteilung* 26, St. Ottilien 2000, p. 489-499); M. Becker, *Die Kardinaltugenden bei Cicero und Ambrosius: De Officiis*, *Chrêsis* 4, Basel 1994; E. Cavalcanti, *Etica cristiana nei secoli III e IV: principali elementi di strutturazione*, in: *L'etica cristiana nei secoli III e IV: eredità e confronti, XXIV Incontro di Studiosi dell'Antichità Cristiana (Roma, 4-6 maggio 1995)*, SEA 53, Roma 1996, p. 11-38 (= *Leggere i padre dopo il concilio*, p. 451-480); K. Kaoka, *Aretologia Dydyma Aleksandryjskiego*, Dissertation, Catholic University of Lublin 2014, esp. chap. I and III; D.L. White, *Evagrius of Pontus on Exodus and the Virtues*, *VigCh* 73/5 (2019) p. 516-530.

⁴⁰ Basiliius Caesariensis, *Homilia in Psalmum XXIX* 5, PG 29, 316C.

of temperance and perfection (τὸ τέλειον) of prudence⁴¹. At the same time he indicated the fact that ἀρετή can be taught⁴². In a form of encouraging to practice of ἀρετή, Basil seemed to strengthen these four virtues with different lofty epithets⁴³. The purpose of these virtues' existence is on one hand to assist men with fulfilling their life duties⁴⁴, while on the other they are first of all helpful in achieving the highest good by a human being⁴⁵. Thus the Bishop of Caesarea understood virtues as means to achieve the final purpose of human life – salvation.

Among the cardinal virtues it was prudence that Basil ascribed the most important role. It should be the driving force of all human actions, because without it all that seems to be apt, quickly reveals its true face and turns out to be evil⁴⁶. Prudence is also the virtue thanks to which people can not only tell good things from bad ones, but also recognize worthless things⁴⁷. Thus, true prudence is the knowledge that especially improves human action⁴⁸. For everything that was performed in accordance with its principles turns out to be praiseworthy, and therefore prudent acts contribute to the health of soul⁴⁹. Basil even believed that this influence went so far that in the case of a person who had already achieved perfection in

⁴¹ Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia in Psalmum I 2*, PG 29, 213A-B.

⁴² Cf. Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia in Psalmum I 2*, PG 29, 213A-B. Cf. Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia XII: In principium Proverbiorum* 14, PG 31, 417A.

⁴³ Basilius Caesariensis, *Homiliae in Hexaemeron IX 4*, ed. Giet, SCh 26bis, p. 498 (= PG 29, 196C).

⁴⁴ Basilius Caesariensis, *Epistulae* 2, 2, 67-71, ed. Courtonne I, p. 8 (= PG 32, 228B).

⁴⁵ Basilius Caesariensis, *De hominis structura. Oratio II 2*, PG 30, 44A.

⁴⁶ Cf. Basilius Caesariensis, *Epistulae* 82, 9-10, ed. Courtonne I, p. 184 (= PG 32, 460A); Basilius Caesariensis, *Epistula* 89, 2, 22, ed. Courtonne I, p. 193 (= PG 32, 472B); Basilius Caesariensis, *Epistulae* 138, 2, 6, ed. Courtonne II, p. 55 (= PG 32, 580B); Basilius Caesariensis, *Epistulae* 141, 1, 2, ed. Courtonne II, p. 62 (= PG 32, 589B); Basilius Caesariensis, *Epistulae* 142, 6, ed. Courtonne II, p. 64 (= PG 32, 592B); Basilius Caesariensis, *Epistulae* 156, 1, 18, ed. Courtonne II, p. 82 (= PG 32, 616A); Basilius Caesariensis, *Epistulae* 237, 2, 23, ed. Courtonne III, p. 56 (= PG 32, 888B); Basilius Caesariensis, *Epistulae* 263, 5, 18, ed. Courtonne III, p. 125 (= PG 32, 981B); Basilius Caesariensis, *Epistulae* 269, 1, 15, ed. Courtonne III, p. 139 (= PG 32, 1000B).

⁴⁷ Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia XII: In principium Proverbiorum* 6, PG 31, 397C.

⁴⁸ Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia XII: In principium Proverbiorum* 6, PG 31, 400A.

⁴⁹ Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia in Psalmum XXXVII 3*, PG 30, 92D. There are some doubts about the authenticity of this homily. The Maurists found it inauthentic. However, P. Humbertclaude (*La doctrine ascétique de saint Basile de Césarée, Études de Théologie Historiques*, Paris 1932, p. 2) did not take the matter so radically. Therefore it seems appropriate to recognize the authorship of the bishop of Caesarea.

prudence, we could talk about some kind of spiritual superiority over the others⁵⁰. Here, it is noteworthy that already Aristotle ranked that virtue high⁵¹. The Bishop of Caesarea, who, in this respect, undoubtedly drew abundantly from the achievements of the philosopher of Stagira, but he gave to his divagations on the subject a different orientation than Aristotle's. for as a representative of the Church, and, first of all, as a biblical theologian, Basil gave to prudence, just like to other cardinal virtues, the rank of a means to achieve the perfection of soul and therefore the tool to achieve salvation⁵². In this way christocentrism is constantly present in his lecture on cardinal virtues.

Basil also devoted a lot of attention to moderation. He regarded them as the driving force of authentic cognition (the truth), which is at the bottom of the soul and neutralizes low instincts lying dormant in it⁵³. That is why man should never cross the borders outlined for him by sense of moderation⁵⁴. Like prudence, also the virtue of temperance is manifested to the fullest in action⁵⁵. What can disturb man in developing it is licentiousness (ἀκολασία) and love for sensual pleasures (φιληδονία)⁵⁶. Basil juxtaposed temperance with abstinence (ἐγκράτεια), which he mainly referred to self-control in eating and drinking⁵⁷. Through self-control, according to the Bishop of Caesarea, man removes the sources of sin, frees himself from passions and makes his soul die for physical temptations. In this sense ἐγκράτεια constitutes the basic principle ordering the spiritual life and becoming a sort of promoter of spiritual goods⁵⁸.

⁵⁰ Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia XII: In principium Proverbiorum* 13, PG 31, 413A.

⁵¹ Aristoteles, *Ethica Nicomachea* VI, v. 2, ed. E. Bekker, p. 1138 b 17-1145 a 11.

⁵² Cf. Basilius Caesariensis, *Regulae brevius tractatae* 239, PG 31, 1241C; Basilius Caesariensis, *Regulae brevius tractatae* 260, PG 31, 1256B.

⁵³ Basilius Caesariensis, *Commentarius in Isaiam prophetam* (dubium) I 34, PG 30, 188B.

⁵⁴ Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia de gratiarum actione* 7, PG 31, 236A.

⁵⁵ Cf. Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia X: Adversus eos qui irascuntur* 4, PG 31, 364A.

⁵⁶ Basilius Caesariensis, *Commentarius in Isaiam prophetam* (dubium) V 174, PG 30, 412A. Cf. Basilius Caesariensis, *Commentarius in Isaiam prophetam* (dubium) I 19, PG 30, 149A.

⁵⁷ Basilius Caesariensis, *Epistulae* 366, 21-22, ed. Coutonne III, p. 228 (= PG 32, 1112B). Cf. Basilius Caesariensis, *Commentarius in Isaiam prophetam* (dubium) II 90, PG 30, 265C; Basilius Caesariensis, *Epistulae* 22, 1, 44-46, ed. Courtonne I, p. 54 (= PG 32, 289B).

⁵⁸ Basilius Caesariensis, *Regulae fusius tractatae* 17, 2, PG 31, 964B. Cf. Basilius Caesariensis, *Epistulae* 2, 6, 25-27, ed. Courtonne I, p. 12 (= PG 32, 232C); Basilius Caesariensis, *Epistulae* 22, 1, 44-46, ed. Courtonne I, p. 54 (= PG 32, 289B).

Abstinence understood in this way is therefore the basis of temperance, being its mother, as Basil wrote⁵⁹. For this reason that virtue is especially useful in youth, for it then plays the role of a bit, restraining the still unshaped personality⁶⁰. However, even when we are mature, we cannot overestimate its significance⁶¹. Basil also mentioned what Hellenic thinkers wrote about abstinence. But, according to him they practiced that virtue verbally only, while their acts stood in total opposition to it⁶². He was also definitely against those who as late as on the threshold of old age started to remember about ἐγκράτεια. For he claimed that practicing it in the old age was not the effect of ethical choice, but the result of general debilitation of organism, and therefore lack of physical strength to continue leading immoral life. Continuing this divagation, Basil added, in a form of a specific motto the thought that there could not be a wreath for a corpse and nobody could be regarded as a righteous man only because they were deprived of the possibility to do wrong⁶³. The opinions of the Bishop of Caesarea about the virtue of moderation and temperance acquire a certain polemical shade, if they are juxtaposed with the views of Encratites, whom he condemned. In this context the basic condition for regarding a given manner of living as virtuous appears to be weighing the proportions in the aspect of moderation and temperance. Even though Basil charged Encratites with a certain imbalance of proportions, he accused the Hellenic thinkers of as much as verbalism and ethical formalism. In this way even the loftiest rules of moral life were losing their value.

Justice, often referred to both in the books of Old and New Testament, as well as in the works of Greek and Roman authors, so it could not be omitted by the Bishop of Caesarea. And it was not accidental that Basil referred that virtue mostly to God⁶⁴. It was Him who was for Basil the minister of true justice. However, to come to this conclusion one must enter the essence of that virtue⁶⁵. And generally man is far from such a deep reflec-

⁵⁹ Basilius Caesariensis, *Regulae fusius tractatae* 18, PG 31, 965C.

⁶⁰ Basilius Caesariensis, *Regulae fusius tractatae* 16, 1, PG 31, 957B.

⁶¹ Cf. Basilius Caesariensis, *Regulae fusius tractatae* 16, 3, PG 31, 960B.

⁶² Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia I de jejuniis* 17, PG 31, 176B.

⁶³ Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia XIII: Exhortatoria ad sanctum baptismum* 5, PG 31, 436B.

⁶⁴ Cf. Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia in Psalmum VII* 5, PG 29, 241A; Basilius Caesariensis, *Commentarius in Isaiam prophetam* (dubium) III 119, PG 30, 309D-312B; Basilius Caesariensis, *Commentarius in Isaiam prophetam* (dubium) V 159, PG 30, 380B; Basilius Caesariensis, *Commentarius in Isaiam prophetam* (dubium) V 169, PG 30, 397B.

⁶⁵ Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia XII: In principium Proverbiorum* 9, PG 31, 404C.

tion, thus allowing himself to commit many misdemeanors, quite opposite to justice⁶⁶. Possibly that bitter reflection also echoed the wrongs that men of the Church suffered both from Hellenics and from heretics. These words could also have been dictated to Basil by reflection on human justice as such. And these opinions were based on reading the Bible and the sense of priestly duty. In fact for a Christian the path to real justice leads through suffering earthly injustices. Thus, justice is a reward that is obtained together with salvation of the soul.

Relatively the least of his writings did the Bishop of Caesarea devote to the virtue of bravery. Writing about martyrs, he focused on bravery of the soul (ψυχῆς ἀνδρεία)⁶⁷. Presenting their physical strength in enduring suffering, he used the notion σώματος ῥώμη – bodily strength in turn⁶⁸. The opposition between ψυχῆς ἀνδρεία and σώματος ῥώμη distinctly shows that for Basil the virtue of bravery as such was connected exclusively with the soul, whereas the body had nothing to do with it. Bodily strength, helpful with enduring suffering, has its source exclusively in the strength of soul. Basil considered the bravery of martyrs also against social background. A martyr was becoming a pattern, an example to follow for the remaining confessors of Christ⁶⁹. The Bishop of Caesarea addressed that incentive to follow the martyrs' footsteps first of all to monks⁷⁰. He also encouraged some addressees of his letters to practice that virtue⁷¹. The most important reason, however, why a Christian cannot get rid of bravery⁷², was the example of Christ himself⁷³. Thus, here the motif of christocentrically oriented aretology returns. In the times of Basil putting the matter in this way was probably not accidental. In the

⁶⁶ Cf. Basilus Caesariensis, *Homilia XII: In principium Proverbiorum* 8, PG 31, 401D.

⁶⁷ Basilus Caesariensis, *Homilia XVIII: In Gordium martyrem* 2, PG 31, 493C; Basilus Caesariensis, *Homilia XIX: In sanctos quadraginta martyres* 3, PG 31, 509C.

⁶⁸ Basilus Caesariensis, *Homilia XVIII: In Gordium martyrem* 2, PG 31, 493C.

⁶⁹ Basilus Caesariensis, *Homilia XVIII: In Gordium martyrem* 5, PG 31, 500C.

⁷⁰ Cf. Basilus Caesariensis, *Praevia institutio ascetica* 3, PG 31, 625B. CPG, p. 156-157 considers the authenticity of this treatise to be questionable. However, P. Humbertclaude (*La doctrine ascétique de Saint Basile*, p. 3) thought that it should be considered authentic.

⁷¹ Cf. Basilus Caesariensis, *Epistulae* 161, 2, 1-2, ed. Courtonne II, p. 93 (= PG 32, 629B); Basilus Caesariensis, *Epistulae* 269, 2, 32-33, ed. Courtonne III, p. 141 (= PG 32, 1001B).

⁷² Cf. Basilus Caesariensis, *Commentarius in Isaiam prophetam* (dubium) VIII 214, PG 30, 488C.

⁷³ Cf. Basilus Caesariensis, *Homilia in Psalmum XLV* 7, PG 29, 428B.

inter-church fights initiated by Arians, bravery was becoming an especially desirable virtue. For it allowed testifying by deed one's fidelity to orthodox theology of the Church.

Summing up the divagations of the Bishop of Caesarea on ἀρετή, we must agree that he took over the formal scheme of four cardinal virtues from the thoughts of Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus. However, he re-interpreted that scheme in the spirit of New Testament theology. Thus, it contents underwent radical changes. In this context it is also worth noticing the fact that Christian ethics was to play a significant role in the "Hellenic church" created by Julian the Apostate (331-26 June 363 CE; Roman emperor: 361-363). These ideas certainly have not been forgotten when the emperor died. This situation, besides the fight, referred to above, run by the Arians inside the Church, could have formed the basis of the thesis posed by Bishop of Caesarea, according to which the real virtue can only be found in the segment of the Church that remained faithful to the teachings of Christ. Thus, the Basilian aretology was of clearly christo-centric character and it was aimed at staying faithful to the teachings of the Master of Nazareth.

Cardinal Virtues in the Basil of Caesarea's Writings. Philological and Historical Aspect

(summary)

The four cardinal virtues (prudence, moderation, justice and bravery) are frequently mentioned in the writings by the Bishop of Caesarea. Basil, as a theologian, writes about them in the context of Christian ethic and moral principles. The cardinal virtues are to help human beings achieve salvation, which is the main aim in the life of every confessor of Christ. Thus, one can say that these virtues are christocentrically directed. Basil based his analyses mainly on the ethical ideas of Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus. However, as a Christian intellectual, he went far beyond the scheme of these four virtues suggested by the Greek thinkers. The article consists of two parts. The first part contains mainly bibliographical information on the meaning of two notions: ἀρετή and *virtus*. The second part is the analysis of cardinal virtues in Basil's writings and connections of Bishop of Caesarea's aretology with Greek philosophy. Also here a lot of space is devoted to bibliographical information contained in the footnotes. In this way the article fulfils two functions: on one hand it gives the reader a useful bibliography, while on the other it presents the idea of cardinal virtues on the basis of the writings by Basil of Caesarea.

Keywords: cardinal virtues; Basil of Caesarea; Plato; Aristotle; Plotinus

Cnoty kardynalne w pismach Bazylego z Cezarei. Aspekt filologiczno-historyczny

(streszczenie)

Cztery cnoty kardynalne (roztropność, umiarkowanie, sprawiedliwość i męstwo) są często wspomniane w pismach biskupa Cezarei. Bazyli jako teolog pisze o nich w kontekście chrześcijańskich zasad etyczno-moralnych. Cnoty kardynalne mają pomóc człowiekowi w osiągnięciu zbawienia, które jest głównym celem życia każdego wyznawcy Chrystusa. Można więc powiedzieć, że cnoty te są ukierunkowane chrystocentrycznie. Bazyli oparł swe analizy przede wszystkim na etycznych koncepcjach Platona, Arystotelesa i Plotyna. Jednak jako intelektualista chrześcijański wyszedł daleko poza schemat czterech cnót proponowany przez tych myślicieli greckich. Artykuł składa się z dwóch części. Część pierwsza zawiera głównie informacje bibliograficzne na temat znaczenia dwóch pojęć: ἀρετή i *virtus*. Druga część analizuje cnoty kardynalne w pismach Bazylego oraz związki aretologii biskupa Cezarei z filozofią grecką. Również i tutaj wiele miejsca poświęcono informacjom bibliograficznym, które umieszczono w przypisach. W ten sposób artykuł spełnia dwie funkcje: z jednej strony daje czytelnikowi użyteczną bibliografię, z drugiej zaś przedstawia koncepcję cnót kardynalnych na bazie pism Bazylego z Cezarei.

Słowa kluczowe: cnoty kardynalne; Bazyli z Cezarei; Platon; Arystoteles; Plotyn

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