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The Catalogue of Virtues in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Sozomen of Bethelia

Hermias Sozomen, dedicating his *Ecclesiastical History* to Emperor Theodosius II², argued in the preface of his work that the true adornment of imperial dignity is piety. Addressing the emperor directly, he pointed out: “But you, most powerful Emperor, had gathered together all the virtues, and had excelled every one in piety (εὐσέβεια), philanthropy (φιλανθρωπία), courage (ἀνδρεία), prudence (σωφροσύνη), justice (δικαιοσύνη), munificence (φιλοτιμία), and a magnanimity (μεγαλοψυχία) befitting royal dignity”³. He thus created his own catalogue of virtues, and the order in which they are listed seems to reflect their hierarchy. Whether this was the case I will try to present in this research.

Writing about virtues, Sozomen did not refer to the cardinal virtues already known at the time and formulated by Christian theologians⁴.

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² Peter Van Nuffelen (*Un héritage de paix et de piété. Étude sur les histoires ecclésiastiques de Socrate et Sozomène*, Leuven 2004, p. 54) regards the said dedication as a masterful encomion.

³ Sozomenus, *Historia ecclesiastica, Dedicatio* 15, tr. Ph. Schaff – H. Wace, Sozomenus, *Church History from A.D. 323-425*, NPNF2-02, New York 1890, p. 509.

⁴ The first of the Christian authors to use the concept of cardinal virtues (virtutes cardinales) was Ambrose of Milan (*De officiis ministrorum* 4, 15) including: prudentia, iustitia, temperantia i fortitudo. The virtues were also discussed by others, including Clement of Alexandria (*Pedagogus* II 4), who pointed out that the virtues proper to man are justice (δικαιοσύνη), reason (σωφροσύνη), fortitude (ἀνδρεία) and piety (εὐσέβεια). In his *Life of St. Anthony*, Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria also referred to the aforementioned virtues but in a different order: φρόνησις, δικαιοσύνη, σωφροσύνη, ἀνδρεία, and

This is all the more interesting because Socrates of Constantinople, on whose *Ecclesiastical History* Sozomen based his work, devoted considerable attention to them, although without using the term cardinal virtues. He included an extensive quotation from the work by Evagrius Ponticus entitled *The Gnostikos*⁵, where Evagrius wrote: “We have learned from Gregory the Just, that there are four virtues, having distinct characteristics: prudence and fortitude, temperance and justice” (φρόνησις και ἀνδρεία, σωφροσύνη και δικαιοσύνη)⁶. Evagrius explained that the property of prudence (φρόνησις) is to reflect on spiritual and holy powers based on the revelation of Divine Wisdom, and the expectation of fortitude (ἀνδρεία) is to persevere with the truth. Temperance (σωφροσύνη), on the other hand, is to persevere with the teachings of Christ (the First Farmer), while justice (δικαιοσύνη) commands adjusting one’s speech to the dignity of each interlocutor⁷.

supplemented them with the following σύνεσις, ἀγάπη, φιλοποχία, πίστις ἢ εἰς Χριστὸν, ἀοργησία, and φιλοξενία. See: Athanasius Alexandrinus, *Vita Antonii* 17. The monk Anthony supposedly asked: “Why not rather get those things which we can take away with us – to wit, prudence, justice, temperance, courage, understanding, love, kindness to the poor, faith in Christ, freedom from wrath, hospitality?” (tr. Ph.Schaff – H.Wace, Athanasius, *Select Works and Letters*, NPNF2-04, New York 1892, p. 423).

⁵ Evagrius is considered the most important theorist of monastic life in antiquity. See: D. Brakke, *Demons and the Making of the Monk: Spiritual Combat in Early Christianity*, Cambridge 2006, p. 48-77.

⁶ Socrates, *HE* IV 23, 61, tr. Ph. Schaff – H. Wace, Socrates, *Church History from A.D.305-439*, NPNF2-02, New York 1890, p. 257. See: Evagrius Ponticus, *Gnosticus* 44; Gregorius Nyssenus, *Orationes de beatitudinibus* 4, PG 44, 1232-1248. The Polish translator of the work by Socrates from Constantinople, Stefan Józef Kazikowski, identifies the aforementioned Gregory the Just with Gregory of Nazianzus (Sokrates Scholastyk, *Historia Kościoła*, Warszawa 1986, p. 364). Antoine and Claire Guillaumont (Evagre le Pontique, *Traité pratique ou Le moine*, SCh 171, Paris 1971, p. 680-689) identified him similarly. The reference to “Gregory the Just” may refer to Gregory Nazianzen, but an alternative reference to Gregory Nyssen cannot be ruled. According to Ilaria L.E. Ramelli (*Evagrius and Gregory: Nazianzen or Nyssen? Cappadocian (and Origenian) Influence on Evagrius Greek*, „Roman, and Byzantine Studies” 53 (2013) p. 130) it is more probable that Evagrius meant Gregory of Nyssa. See also: K. Corrigan, *Evagrius and Gregory. Mind, Soul and Body in the 4th Century*, London 2009.

⁷ According to Evagrius of Pontus (*Great letter* 51, in: A.M. Casiday, *Evagrius Ponticus*, London, New York 2006, p. 74): „As the body cannot live without nourishment, likewise the soul cannot live without virtues”. See: D.L. White, *Evagrius of Pontus on Exodus and the Virtues*, VigCh 73 (2019) p. 516-530.

The virtues presented by Evagrius corresponded to those defined by Plato in the fourth chapter of his *Republic* (σοφία, ἀνδρεία, σωφροσύνη, δικαιοσύνη)⁸. Socrates of Constantinople does not mention this, but, as an educated person, he must have known about it. In fact, he considered pagan philosophy to be of great use to Christians. Sozomen, on the other hand, viewed classical philosophy as useless⁹, but listed Plato among the leading authors of antiquity alongside Homer, Symonides, and Theopompus, who all enjoyed the patronage of their contemporary rulers¹⁰. Plato's teacher, Socrates of Athens, paid great attention to the virtues of justice (δικαιοσύνη), piety (εὐσέβεια), prudence-temperance (σωφροσύνη) and fortitude (ἀνδρεία). In doing so, he considered the first of these, justice, to be a more general category in relation to the other virtues, since, in his view, it encompassed all major moral behavior¹¹. According to Socrates of Athens, piety was closely related to justice¹². On the other hand, Plato's student Aristotle of Stagira considered the following as individual virtues: justice (δικαιοσύνη), fortitude (ἀνδρεία), prudence-temperance (σωφροσύνη), dignity (μεγαλοπρέπεια), magnanimity (μεγαλοψυχία), generosity (ἐλευθεριότης), prudence (φρόνησις) and wisdom (σοφία)¹³. He believed that the first two listed, justice (δικαιοσύνη) and fortitude (ἀνδρεία), were the greatest because they were most useful to others. Justice fulfills such a role in times of war and in times of peace, and fortitude in times of war¹⁴.

⁸ Plato, *Politeia* 427e-433c, New Standard Greek Text, Cambridge 2004, p. 112-119.

⁹ See: S. Bralewski, *Zagłada filozofów helleńskich w Imperium Romanum – obraz mędrców w relacji Sokratesa z Konstantynopola i Hermiasza Sozomena*, VoxP 80 (2021) p. 177-196.

¹⁰ Sozomenus, *Historia ecclesiastica Dedicatio* 5.

¹¹ Cf. R. Legutko, *Sokrates*, Poznań 2013, p. 410-415. Gregory of Nyssa (*Orationes de beatitudinibus* 4, PG 44, 1244) thought similarly, according to whom „every virtue is indicated by the name of justice”.

¹² Cf. Legutko, *Sokrates*, p. 415-420.

¹³ Aristoteles, *Reotorica* 1366b: μέρη δὲ ἀρετῆς δικαιοσύνη, ἀνδρεία, σωφροσύνη, μεγαλοπρέπεια, μεγαλοψυχία, ἐλευθεριότης, φρόνησις, σοφία.

¹⁴ Aristoteles, *Ethica Nicomachea*, passim. See: N.P. Metropoulos, *Oi kyries aretes kai e aristotelike ethike*, „Erkyna, Epitheorese Ekpaideutikon – Epistemonikon Thematou” 20 (2014) p. 76-86.

1. The Catalogue of Virtues created by Sozomen

1.1. Εὐσέβεια

The meaning of this term is quite broad, from devotion, a sense of duty in secular affairs to devotion to God, piety¹⁵. It was no accident that Sozomen listed piety first among all the virtues that Emperor Theodosius II was said to have embodied. It was the key to a proper relationship with God and guaranteed prosperity through His blessings, which suited the Roman mentality. In pagan Rome, *Pietas* (εὐσέβεια, εὐλάβεια)¹⁶ not only belonged to the core moral virtues¹⁷ and later became the cardinal virtue of emperors, but was also one of the most important ideas of the state¹⁸. It was believed to be essential to both the prosperity of the state and the ruler himself¹⁹.

¹⁵ *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, ed. G.W.H. Lampe, Oxford 1961, s.v. εὐσέβεια, p. 575.

¹⁶ J. Korpanty, *Studia nad łacińską terminologią polityczno-socjalną okresu republiki rzymskiej*, Wrocław – Warszawa – Kraków – Gdańsk 1976, p. 123n.

¹⁷ See: H. Waagenvoort, *Pietas*, in: *Pietas. Selected Studies in Roman Religion*, Leiden 1980, p. 1-20; J. Champeaux, „*Pietas*”: *piété personnelle et piété collective à Rome*, „Bulletin l'Association Guillaume Budé” 3 (1989) p. 263-279.

¹⁸ See: M.P. Charlesworth, *The Virtues of a Roman Emperor: Propaganda and the Creation of Belief*, „Proceedings of the British Academy” 23 (1937) p. 105-133; J.R. Fears, *The cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology*, „Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt” 17/2 (1981) p. 864n; A. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Emperor and His Virtues*, „Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte” 30/3 (1981) p. 298-323.

¹⁹ Its personifications were surrounded by divine worship even during the times of the republic. On the iconography of *pietas*, see: T. Mikocki, *Zgodna, pobożna, płodna, skromna, piękna... Propaganda cnót żeńskich w sztuce rzymskiej*, Wrocław 1997, p. 105-169. Since the reign of Octavian Augustus, it was linked to the figure of the ruler or the imperial court. See: Mikocki, *Zgodna*, p. 106. In its oldest layer of meaning, *pietas* referred to respect towards the spirits of deceased ancestors. See: J. Korpanty, *Rzeczpospolita potomków Romulusa. Ludzie – wydarzenia – idee*, Warszawa 1979, p. 196. Later, it was understood by Romans in the category of duties to gods (*pietas adversus deos*), homeland (*pietas erga patriam*), ancestors (*pietas erga maiores*), parents (*pietas erga parentes*), children (*pietas erga liberos*) and friends (*pietas erga amicos*). Cf. Waagenvoort, *Pietas*, p. 1-20; J. Korpanty, *Pietas Romana*, in: *Studia Archeologica. Prace dedykowane Profesorowi Januszowi A. Ostrowskiemu w sześćdziesięciolecie urodzin*, red. E. Papuci-Władyka – J. Śliwa, Kraków 2001, p. 189-196; A. Krauze, *Od antycznej Pietas do wczesnochrześcijańskich przedstawień orantów*, in: *Kultura cnoty-cnoty kultur. Materiały z konferencji naukowej. Gniezno 10-11 maja 2007*, red. T. Ewertowski – S. Krawczyk, Poznań 2010, p. 27-38. Christians, it seems, understood it similarly, since Ambrose of Milan wrote about *pietas* in the strict order: towards God, homeland and parents. Ambrosius,

According to Sozomen's views expressed in *Ecclesiastical History*, with the example of Emperor Theodosius II, God himself "showed that to those who exercise imperial power, piety alone suffices for full success, and without it, the armies are nothing, and the power of the empire and all of its inventory are nothing"²⁰. Sozomen was convinced that it was enough for an emperor to zealously worship God to retain power²¹, an example of which he also saw in the reign of Emperor Honorius, who fortuitously – as the historian argued – defeated all usurpers²². According to Sozomen, great

De officiis ministrorum I 127: „Iustitiae autem pietas est: prima in Deum, secunda in patriam tertia in parentes”. The piety and religiousness of the Romans were praised by Marcus Tullius Cicero (*De haruspicum responso* 19), among others, who argued that in this matter, they surpassed all peoples and nations (*omnes gentes, nationesque*). He believed that it was owed to the gods (*De natura deorum* I 116: “Est enim pietas iustitia adversum deos”). Similarly, Sallustius (*Bellum Catilinae* 12, 3) referred to the ancestors of the Romans as the most pious of men (*religiosissimi mortales*), while Polybius (VI 56, 7) thought that the Romans had reached the peak of this virtue, which – intertwined with private and public life – bound their state together. See: H. Dörrie, *Polybius über Pietas, Religio und Fides (Zu Buch 6, Kap. 56)*, in: *Mélanges de philosophie, de littérature et d'histoire ancienne offerts à P.Boyancé*, ed. J.-P. Boucher – R. Turcan – J.-P. Morel – P. Gros – H. Lavagne, Rome 1974, p. 251-172. Titus Livius, on the other hand, pointed out – in line with the ideas promoted by Octavian Augustus – that scrupulous observance of the rules of religious worship ensured the state's prosperity and growth in territory. Their disregard or neglect, according to him, were the cause of failures and disasters. See: W. Liebeschuetz, *The religious position of Livy's History*, JRS 57 (1967) p. 45-55; M. Jaczynowska, *Religie świata rzymskiego*, Warszawa 1987, p. 11; J. Linderski, *Roman religion in Livy*, in: *Livius: Aspekte seines Werkes*, ed. W. Schuller, Constance 1993, p. 53-70. *Pietas* was an attribute which allowed emperors to rule. They cultivated it by erecting temples, sacrificial altars, statues of gods, making sacrifices and votive offerings. See: F. Kolb, *Ideal późnoantycznego władcy. Ideologia i autoprezentacja*, tr. A. Gierlińska, Poznań 2009, p. 51. This application of the principle *do ut des* was also evident later in the conduct of Christian rulers. “An emperor devoted to God guaranteed the success of the Empire through God's blessing”. See: K. Ilski, *Idea jedności politycznej społecznej i religijnej w świetle pism Ambrożego z Mediolanu*, Poznań 2001, p. 71. In the legislation of Christian emperors, *pietas* came down to fulfilling duties to the Almighty. See: M. Stachura, *Wrogowie porządku rzymskiego. Studium zjawiska agresji językowej w Kodeksie Teodozjusza, Nowelach Postteodozjańskich i Konstytucjach Sirmondiańskich*, Kraków 2010, p. 140.

²⁰ Sozomenus, *HE* IX 1, 2: ἡ μοι δοκεῖ μάλιστα τὸν θεὸν ἐπιδειῖσαι μόνην εὐσέβειαν ἀρκεῖν πρὸς σωτηρίαν τοῖς βασιλεύουσιν, ἄνευ δὲ ταύτης μηδὲν εἶναι στρατεύματα καὶ βασιλείας ἰσχυρὰ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην παρασκευὴν.

²¹ Sozomenus, *HE* IX 16, 1: ὡς ἂν ἔχοιμεν εἰδέναι ἀρκεῖν βασιλεῖ πρὸς φυλακὴν τοῦ κράτους ἐπιμελῶς τὸ θεῖον πρεσβεῦειν, ὁποῖος καὶ οὐτοσί ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐγένετο.

²² Similarly, Augustine (*Epistulae* 185, 28) referred to Honorius as *religiosus imperator* in recognition of his merits against the Donatists.

piety and love for God (θεοφιλέξ)²³ characterized Emperor Constantine, who without God (ἄνευ θεοῦ) would not set about doing anything (οὐκ ἐπεχείρει)²⁴. This is best illustrated by a letter Constantine wrote at the end of his life to the Persian King Shapur II, paraphrased by Sozomen²⁵. In the letter, the ruler recapitulated his achievements, attributing them to Christ, the divine protector. Thus, he pointed out that thanks to his faith in Christ and His help, he united the Roman empire under his rule. Indeed, he was victorious in many wars against external enemies as well as usurpers. As Sozomen emphasized, he needed neither bloody sacrifices nor oracles for this. It was the sign of the cross, carried in front of the ranks of his own army, and prayer, free from blood and all filth, that brought him victory²⁶.

Elsewhere, Sozomen described God as a guide (ἡγεμόν) and ally (σύμμαχος) of Constantine in the battle against the enemies²⁷. As Sozomen wrote, having recognized Constantine “as a suitable servant of his will, [God] led him from the sea flowing around Britain to the territories of the East, to fortify the Christian faith”²⁸. Thus, the ruler carried out God’s plan that was associated with him. The favor of the Christian God was secured by Constantine with appropriate prayer and reference to the sign of the cross, which he made into a military banner, while renouncing blood sacrifices and pagan oracles. Thus, the ruler created a new model of religiousness and piety, and his successes proved the validity of the applied measures.

Sozomen also drew attention to the piety of Constantine’s mother, Empress Helena, who in Jerusalem did not shy away from serving tables to

²³ Sozomenus, *HE* II 3, 7.

²⁴ Sozomenus, *HE* II 34, 4.

²⁵ See: M.R. Vivian, *Eusebius and Constantine’s Letter to Shapur – Its Place in the Vita Constantini*, SP 29 (1997) p. 164-169; P.J. Leithart, *Defending Constantine. The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom*, Downers Grove 2010, p. 45-47; J. Bardill, *Constantine, Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age*, Cambridge 2011, p. 303-304.

²⁶ Sozomenus, *HE* II 15, 3-4. The indicated passage of Sozomen’s *Ecclesiastical History* was clearly based on the account of Eusebius of Caesarea, who quotes this letter, if not in its entirety, then at least significant portions of it (*Vita Constantini* IV 9-13). See also: Theodoretus, *HE* I 25.

²⁷ Sozomenus, *HE* I 4, 2: μόνον δὲ τοῦτον ἡγεῖσθαι θεόν, ὃν καὶ βασιλεὺς σέβει καὶ ἡγεμόνι καὶ συμμάχῳ χρῆται κατὰ τῶν πολεμίων.

²⁸ Sozomenus, *HE* I 8, 2: χάριν τε ὁμολογῶν, οὐ κομπάζων λέγειν ἰσχυρίζετο, ὡς ἐπιτήδειον ὑπῆρέτην ἀξιώσας αὐτὸν εἶναι ὁ θεὸς τῆς αὐτοῦ βουλήσεως ἀπὸ τῆς πρὸς Βρεττανοὺς θαλάσσης μέχρι τῶν ἐφῶν χωρίων προήγαγεν, ὅπως ἡ Χριστιανῶν ἀύξηθει θρησκεία.

maidens dedicated to divine service. She made votive offerings to churches, assisted the poor, and pardoned convicts²⁹. The historian even wrote about the piety shown by Julian the Apostate and his brother Gallus in their youth. It manifested as respect paid to priests and people of moral excellence and zeal for the faith, as well as frequent visits to the holy tabernacles (εὐκτηρίοις οἴκοις) and reverence shown to the tombs of martyrs³⁰.

According to Sozomen, God foresaw Theodosius II's far-reaching piety (ἐυσεβέστατον)³¹. Hence, when Theodosius was still a child, God assigned the future ruler's elder sister Pulcheria – distinguished by her God-inspired wisdom – to be the protector of his person and governance³². That wisdom helped her steer her brother on the path of piety. This virtue consisted primarily in fervent worship of God (πολλῶ τὸ θεῖον θρησκευούσα)³³ and constant prayer (συνεχῶς εὐχεσθαι)³⁴. It involved not only building new temples and endowing them with votive offerings and jewels, but also frequent visits to churches, erecting and maintaining asylums for the poor and pilgrims (καταγώγια πτωχῶν καὶ ξένων) and the monasteries (μοναστικάς συνοικίας)³⁵. Finally, piety required respect for priests and other noble people, as well as for ascetics passionate about Christian wisdom³⁶.

1.2. Φιλανθρωπία

Another virtue attributed to Emperor Theodosius II was philanthropy (φιλανθρωπία), understood as love toward men, clemency and mercy shown to others³⁷. In the aforementioned preface to *Ecclesiastical History*, Sozomen distinguished between the outward signs of imperial power – the royal purple and crown, as well as the true imperial garb adorning

²⁹ Sozomenus, *HE* II 2.

³⁰ Sozomenus, *HE* V 2, 11.

³¹ Sozomenus, *HE* IX 1, 2.

³² Sozomenus, *HE* IX 1, 3: σοφώτατον καὶ θεῖον ἔλαβεν νοῦν.

³³ Sozomenus, *HE* IX 1, 10.

³⁴ Sozomenus, *HE* IX 1, 8.

³⁵ Sozomenus, *HE* IX 1, 10.

³⁶ Cf. Sozomenus, *HE* IX 1, 8-9: οὐχ ἥκιστα δὲ εἰς εὐσεβειαν αὐτὸν ἦγε, συνεχῶς εὐχεσθαι καὶ ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις φοιτᾶν ἐθίζουσα καὶ ἀναθήμασι καὶ κειμηλίοις τοὺς εὐκτηρίους οἴκους γεραίρειν καὶ ἐν τιμῇ ἔχειν τοὺς ἱερέας καὶ ἄλλως ἀγαθοὺς ἄνδρας καὶ τοὺς νόμῳ Χριστιανῶν φιλοσοφοῦντας. Elsewhere, Sozomen (*HE* IX 3, 2) indicates that Pulcheria, along with her sisters, adored God day and night.

³⁷ *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, s.v. φιλανθρωπία, p. 1475-1476.

the interior of the ruler (ἔνδοθεν ἀεὶ τὸν ἀληθῆ κόσμον τῆς βασιλείας ἠμφίεσαι), which consisted of piety and philanthropy. Once again, the historian lists philanthropy immediately after piety. In this case, however, he treats it almost on a par with piety. In his *Ecclesiastical History*, Sozomen referred to this virtue several times, aligning it with mercy modeled after God's mercy. It is illustrated in his account of the proceedings of the Council of Nicaea (325), when the emperor reportedly set God's mercy as a model for the assembled people to follow in forgiving each other's offenses³⁸, or when he wrote about the Novatians' rejection of repentance and God's mercy on men (θεοῦ φιλανθρωπία)³⁹. However, most often, he mentioned philanthropy in the sense of a clement or affable attitude toward others⁴⁰, as well as in reference to love for people⁴¹, and charitable work⁴².

1.3. Ἄνδρεία

The third place among the virtues attributed to Theodosius by Sozomen was taken by ἀνδρεία, translated as courage⁴³. According to the historian, courage meant giving one's life for faith in Christ⁴⁴. Sozomen called courage the refusal of soldiers to offer sacrifice to the gods at the behest of Emperor Julian⁴⁵, or Apollo writing the treatise "In Defense of Truth", directed against Emperor Julian and pagan philosophers⁴⁶. Interestingly, out of ten examples of courage mentioned by him, the historian ascribed this virtue to as many as six women: a certain virgin consecrated to God⁴⁷; an unnamed resident of Edessa⁴⁸; a certain Nikareta from Bithynia⁴⁹; a deaconess of Olympias⁵⁰,

³⁸ Sozomenus, *HE* I 17, 4.

³⁹ Sozomenus, *HE* VIII 1, 14.

⁴⁰ Sozomenus, *HE* II 15, 2; II 27, 13; V 4, 7; V 9, 15; V 16, 6; V 16, 9; VII 23, 3; IX 5, 4.

⁴¹ Sozomenus, *HE* III 14, 16.

⁴² Sozomenus, *HE* V 16, 2.

⁴³ *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, s.v. ἀνδρεία, p. 129-130.

⁴⁴ Sozomenus, *HE* II 9, 13; V 4, 6.

⁴⁵ Sozomenus, *HE* V 17, 7-9.

⁴⁶ Sozomenus, *HE* V 18, 8.

⁴⁷ Sozomenus, *HE* V 6, 5.

⁴⁸ Sozomenus, *HE* VI 18, 7.

⁴⁹ Sozomenus, *HE* VIII 23, 5.

⁵⁰ Sozomenus, *HE* VIII 24, 4.

one of the residents of Rome besieged by Alaric⁵¹; and Nunechia, the wife of Gerontius, the best of the commanders of the usurper Constantine, who acted against Emperor Honorius⁵².

The first, distinguished by her beauty, gave refuge to the persecuted Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria⁵³. The second, aware of the danger, hurried with her child to where Orthodox Christians gathered to bear witness to the true faith⁵⁴. Nikareta and Olympias, on the other hand, were supporters of the dethroned bishop of Constantinople, John Chrysostom. According to Sozomen, Nikareta had been unjustly deprived of her wealth, yet she rose to the heights of moral strength, dignity and all other values, generously serving those in need⁵⁵. The affluent Olimpias brought before the prefect's court showed courage and dignity⁵⁶. The aforementioned Roman woman was ready to die in defense of her honor⁵⁷. Nunechia, on the other hand, being a Christian, showed courage, as Sozomen emphasized, worthy of her faith, accepting death at the hands of her husband, in a house surrounded by enemies⁵⁸. It seems that all the examples of courage given by Sozomen were related to faith in Christ and were linked to enduring suffering for Christ. The case of Nunechia appears the least obvious here, but the historian stressed that she was Christian, and the bravery she demonstrated was worthy of her faith.

1.4. Σωφροσύνη

In the fourth place of this catalogue of virtues, Sozomen listed σωφροσύνη, translated as soundness of mind, prudence, discretion, moderation, temperance, modesty or a moderate form of government⁵⁹. The term is difficult to translate into modern languages. For the Greeks, σωφροσύνη was the realization of the fullness of humanity. It implied a good discern-

⁵¹ Sozomenus, *HE IX* 10, 1.

⁵² Sozomenus, *HE IX* 13, 7.

⁵³ Sozomenus, *HE V* 6, 5.

⁵⁴ Sozomenus, *HE VI* 18, 7.

⁵⁵ Sozomenus, *HE VIII* 23, 5.

⁵⁶ Sozomenus, *HE VIII* 24, 4.

⁵⁷ Sozomenus, *HE IX* 10, 1.

⁵⁸ Sozomenus, *HE IX* 13, 7.

⁵⁹ *A Greek-English Lexicon*, ed. H.G. Liddell – R. Scott, Oxford 1996, s.v. σωφροσύνη, p.1751; *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, s.v. σωφροσύνη, p. 1370.

ment of the essence of man, which involved the realization of high moral criteria. It also meant discipline and self-restraint. It indicated the harmony and integration of man and his mastery over himself. For Socrates of Athens, σωφροσύνη was knowledge of the self and, simultaneously, knowledge of good and evil⁶⁰.

In his *Ecclesiastical History*, Sozomen used the term several times, most often when describing male-female relationships, as was the case with the speech of Paphnutius, one of the Egyptian bishops, at the Council of Nicea (325) in defense of the marriage of priests who had entered into it before ordination. Paphnutius referred to their communing with their wives as σωφροσύνη⁶¹, and thus considered it the same as the virtue of moderation. In Sozomen's account, Eustathius, Bishop of Sebaste, was said to have delivered a speech on the subject of moderation (περὶ σωφροσύνης λόγους), by means of which he wanted to convince a couple who had previously vowed virginity to renounce intercourse⁶². The aforementioned virgin consecrated to God, who gave refuge to Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, was distinguished not only by her beauty, but also by her modesty (σωφροσύνη)⁶³. Modesty also supposedly characterized the Egyptian ascetic Apelles. Put to the test by a demon manifesting itself in the form of a beautiful woman, Apelles burned its face with a kindling iron⁶⁴. Twice Sozomen mentioned σωφροσύνη in the case of the aforementioned Roman woman who defended her honor during the siege of Rome by Alaric's troops. The historian first announced he would describe an event illustrating the bravery of this woman in upholding her modesty⁶⁵. Then he emphasized the barbarian's admiration for her virtue in the face of the utter failure of his efforts to take the woman with measures that included threats to her life⁶⁶. It seems that the σωφροσύνη attributed by Sozomen to Emperor Theodosius II also applies to his sexual moderation, since in the dedication of his work addressed to Theodosius, the historian contrasted him with the biblical Solomon, pointing out that the latter had become a slave to pleasure and had not preserved his piety⁶⁷. The historian also employed it to the emperor's

⁶⁰ See: Legutko, *Sokrates*, p. 420-427.

⁶¹ Sozomenus, *HE I* 23, 3.

⁶² Sozomenus, *HE III* 14, 37.

⁶³ Sozomenus, *HE V* 6, 2.

⁶⁴ Sozomenus, *HE VI* 28, 7.

⁶⁵ Sozomenus, *HE XI* 10, 1.

⁶⁶ Sozomenus, *HE XI* 10, 4.

⁶⁷ Sozomenus, *HE Dedicatio* 10.

general attitude in life, remarking that the latter put temperate reason above the easiness of entertainment⁶⁸, and that his nature was to control himself (φύσιν ἔχειν νομίζῃ τὴν ἐγκράτειαν)⁶⁹. However, it seems that Sozomen used σωφροσύνη primarily in reference to the emperor's moderation in the way he exercised power.

1.5. Δικαιοσύνη

In the fifth place of the aforementioned catalogue, the historian ranked δικαιοσύνη, translated as justice or righteousness⁷⁰. In the entire *Ecclesiastical History*, Sozomen referred to this virtue only three times. The first time, when he attributed it to Theodosius II; the second time, when he wrote about the virtues of those who were devoted to a monastic lifestyle (μοναστικὴν πολιτείαν) and their curbing of iniquity with the virtue of righteousness (δικαιοσύνη δὲ τὴν ἀδικίαν κολάζει)⁷¹; and the third time when mentioning the death of Valentinian II. According to Sozomen, the latter's beauty and qualities of character made him unconditionally deserving of the dignity of emperor, and his justice (δικαιοσύνη) was superior to his father's Valentinian I⁷². It is puzzling why the historian placed the virtue of justice only in the fifth place, after all, δικαιοσύνη was extremely important to the ancient Greeks. They considered it the basic moral principle organizing the world, society and human life⁷³. Justice was also the most important virtue for Evagrius of Pontus and Gregory of Nyssa⁷⁴. Sozomen pointed out that Theodosius II spent his day mainly handling the affairs of his subjects either settling disputes in court and issuing appropriate laws, or reflecting alone or in public what moves should be made⁷⁵. He thus dealt with justice in practical terms. He also served it to his subjects by organizing literary

⁶⁸ Sozomenus, *HE Dedicatio* 11.

⁶⁹ Sozomenus, *HE Dedicatio* 12.

⁷⁰ *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, s.v. δικαιοσύνη, p. 369.

⁷¹ Sozomenus, *HE* I 12, 7.

⁷² Sozomenus, *HE* VII 22, 3.

⁷³ See: Legutko, *Sokrates*, p. 410.

⁷⁴ See: Evagrius Ponticus, *Practicus* 89, 4; Gregorius Nyssenus, *Orationes de beatitudinibus* 4, PG 44, 1232-1248; E.D. Moutsoulas, *Le Sens de la justice dans la quatrième Homélie sur les Béatitudes de Grégoire de Nysse*, in: Gregory of Nyssa, *Homilies on the Beatitudes*, ed. H.R. Drobner – A. Viciano, Leiden 2000, p. 389-396.

⁷⁵ Sozomenus, *HE Dedicatio* 8: καὶ τὰ τῶν ἀρχομένων διατάττειν πράγματα, δικάζοντά τε καὶ ἅ χρη γράφοντα, ἰδίᾳ τε καὶ κοινῇ τὰ πρακτέα διασκοποῦντα.

competitions where he was the judge (λόγων κριτής) offering pure and clear (εἰλικρινῶς βραβεύεις)⁷⁶ judgments.

1.6. Φιλοτιμία

Φιλοτιμία, understood as munificence⁷⁷, appeared in sixth place on the list by Sozomen. The historian referred to it several times in his *Ecclesiastical History*. He pointed out that the Cretans boasted of their generosity by rewarding Homer with the sum of a thousand coins and immortalizing this fact on a stone tablet⁷⁸. Emperor Severus stunned with his generosity by paying Oppian a piece of gold “for each line of mediocre poetry”⁷⁹. However, in Sozomen’s view, Emperor Theodosius II was not surpassed in generously rewarding literati in history to date⁸⁰. The historian also wrote about the imperial generosity with which Theodosius II reportedly rewarded a soldier for his concern when, during a heatwave, the warrior tried to offer him a goblet of cold drink⁸¹. In the historian’s account, Constantine generously decorated and furnished Constantinople⁸², which he founded, while its inhabitants showed their generosity to the poor⁸³. Similarly, the Iberians were said to have shown generosity in building a Christian temple⁸⁴, whereas the Caesars Galus and Julian outdid each other with largesse in erecting a temple at the tomb of the martyr Mamas⁸⁵. Emperor Julian, according to Sozomen, honored Apollo generously with votive offerings and animal sacrifices when he arrived at the deity’s oracle in Daphne⁸⁶. The sisters of Emperor Theodosius II supposedly competed in generosity for the benefit of pilgrims and the poor who needed support⁸⁷. Thus, Sozomen was referring to φιλοτιμία when he wanted to emphasize the generosity shown by rulers to their subjects, especially pilgrims and the

⁷⁶ Sozomenus, *HE Dedicatio* 4.

⁷⁷ *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, s.v. φιλοτιμία, p. 1484.

⁷⁸ Sozomenus, *HE Dedicatio* 6.

⁷⁹ Sozomenus, *HE Dedicatio* 6.

⁸⁰ Sozomenus, *HE Dedicatio* 7.

⁸¹ Sozomenus, *HE Dedicatio* 13.

⁸² Sozomenus, *HE* II 3, 5.

⁸³ Sozomenus, *HE* II 3, 7.

⁸⁴ Sozomenus, *HE* II 7, 9.

⁸⁵ Sozomenus, *HE* V 2, 9.

⁸⁶ Sozomenus, *HE* V 19, 16.

⁸⁷ Sozomenus, *HE* IX 3, 1.

poor, but also generosity toward the Church or traditional cults. In the dedication, he directly implied that Theodosius II emulated the heavenly King, who would send reviving rain on the righteous as well as the unrighteous, and gladden them with the sunrise and grant them countless other gifts⁸⁸.

1.7. Μεγαλοψυχία

Last among the virtues attributed to Theodosius II by Sozomen was μεγαλοψυχία, translated as greatness of soul, magnanimity, high-mindedness, lordliness, or generosity⁸⁹. For Aristotle, μεγαλοψυχία was an individual virtue that makes a person capable of great benevolence⁹⁰. Aside from Theodosius II, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, Sozomen applied the term only once in reference to Valentinian II, emphasizing that the latter surpassed his father Valentinian I in this virtue⁹¹. From the context of Sozomen's account, it appears that μεγαλοψυχία was among the character traits of a true ruler, testifying to his eminence predestining him to the dignity of emperor. Thus, it seems perfectly understandable that the historian placed it last among the virtues adorning Theodosius II.

1.8. Φρόνησις ἢ Σοφία

Sozomen did not include φρόνησις in his catalogue of virtues attributed to Theodosius II. On the other hand, the aforementioned Gregory the Just – cited by Evagrius Ponticus – listed it as first among the four cardinal virtues. Φρόνησις meant intellect, understanding, wisdom, or prudence⁹². Throughout his work, Sozomen referred to this virtue only once, commenting on the previously mentioned virgin who gave shelter to Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria. The historian noted that she took the clergyman in thanks to her bravery, and saved him thanks to φρόνησις⁹³. Interestingly, although Sozomen did not include either φρόνησις or σοφία in his compila-

⁸⁸ Sozomenus, *HE Dedicatio* 9.

⁸⁹ *A Greek-English Lexicon*, ed. H.G. Liddell – R. Scott, Oxford 1996, s.v. μεγαλοψυχία, p. 1088; *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, s.v. μεγαλοψυχία, p. 836.

⁹⁰ Aristoteles, *Rhetorica* 1366b.

⁹¹ Sozomenus, *HE* VII 22, 3.

⁹² *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, s.v. φρόνησις, p. 1490-1491.

⁹³ Sozomenus, *HE* V 6, 5.

tion of virtues, he did write about the extraordinary wisdom of Theodosius II. The historian pointed out that Theodosius' day was filled with various state duties, while at night the ruler avidly immersed himself in books. He remarked on the learnedness (πολυμάθεια) of Theodosius, who was said to have explored the nature of stones, the hidden powers of roots, and even the effects of medicines on par with Solomon, who was famous for his wisdom. Sozomen emphasized that the source of this wisdom, as well as Solomon's wealth, was their piety⁹⁴. A little further on, in the final part of the dedicatory speech addressed to the ruler, the historian equaled piety with wisdom. Complimenting Theodosius II, he indicated that the latter not only "knows all" (ὅ πάντα εἰδὼς), but also possesses "all virtue" (πᾶσαν ἀρετὴν ἔχων), of which first and foremost was piety (εὐσέβεια), called in the Bible the beginning of wisdom (σοφία)⁹⁵.

2. The best philosophy

This identification of piety with wisdom can be seen particularly clearly in Sozomen's writing when he introduced his readers to monastic ideas. For the historian, these Christian ascetics were the true philosophers, that is, those who loved true wisdom. The historian pointed to the birth of a new philosophy, which he called ecclesiastical philosophy (τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς φιλοσοφίας)⁹⁶ – a philosophy that conforms to the laws of the Church⁹⁷ – and which he considered the best philosophy (τῆς ἀρίστης φιλοσοφίας)⁹⁸. The historian identified it with monastic ideals, stressing that it had become a way of life for many (τοῦ βίου τὴν διαγωγὴν)⁹⁹. He saw it as a gift sent to the people by God¹⁰⁰. Considering disputes as completely useless, this philosophy did not develop debating skills. Its goal was striving for moral goodness (κάλως)¹⁰¹, and a simple and righteous life¹⁰², free from perversi-

⁹⁴ Sozomenus, *HE Dedicatio* 11.

⁹⁵ Ps 110,10. Sozomenus, *HE Dedicatio* 18.

⁹⁶ Sozomenus, *HE IV* 16, 11.

⁹⁷ Sozomenus, *HE VI* 18, 2 – Gregory of Nazianzus and Basil of Caesarea had φιλοσοφεῖν ἔγνωσαν κατὰ τὸν τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς νόμον.

⁹⁸ Sozomenus, *HE I* 12, 9.

⁹⁹ Sozomenus, *HE I* 13, 1; *IV* 10, 12: ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ ὁ βίος αὐτοῖς ἦν.

¹⁰⁰ Sozomenus, *HE I* 12, 1.

¹⁰¹ Sozomenus, *HE I* 12, 2.

¹⁰² Sozomenus, *HE I* 12, 2: πρὸς τὸ βιοῦν ὀρθῶς.

ty. It taught people to put virtue into practice, to face weakness of spirit and body¹⁰³, to renounce all passions, to exercise moderation in everything, and to give up material things. It commanded to care for those in need. At the same time, it was completely God-oriented. It encouraged one to live close to Him, to worship Him day and night. The task of Christian wisdom was to propitiate the Creator of all things with constant prayers. It taught that purity of spirit and the performance of good deeds were necessary for a worthy profession of faith. Its primary goal was to share in the joy of heaven, and it made mortal life a means to that end¹⁰⁴.

There are a number of virtues in this description. Practitioners of this philosophy breathed piety or godliness (εὐλάβεια)¹⁰⁵ constantly. Piety was thus the essence of the monks' lives, since their entire existence was oriented toward God. Similarly, σοφία was of the utmost importance to them, considering their love of wisdom (φιλοσοφία), based on the power of the mind deriving its strength from God (θείου δὲ νοῦ δύναμιν κεκτημένη)¹⁰⁶. Their wisdom, therefore, did not come from them, but was a gift from God – to whom they were completely devoted – and thus resulted from their piety. Referring to the severe asceticism they practiced, Sozomen attributed them with the virtue of fortitude (ἀνδρεία). It allowed them to face weakness of spirit, impotence of body or pressures from nature¹⁰⁷. Among the virtues imputed to them, Sozomen also included σωφροσύνη, which enabled them to overcome intemperance¹⁰⁸, directly followed by δικαιοσύνη, by means of which they curbed iniquity¹⁰⁹. In Sozomen's text on the aforementioned philosophy, one can also find the virtues φιланθρωπία and φιλοτιμία, not mentioned by name. The historian argues that the monks based the entire organization of their lives on harmony and unity with their neighbors, caring for friends and new-

¹⁰³ Sozomenus, *HE I* 12, 3: ἀνδρείως δὲ μάλα ἀνθισταμένη τοῖς πάθεσι τῆς ψυχῆς. Cf. also: Sozomenus, *HE I* 12, 7-8.

¹⁰⁴ Sozomenus, *HE I* 12, 6: ὡς ἐν παρόδῳ δὲ τῇ παρουσίᾳ βιοτῆς κεχηρημένη οὔτε περὶ κτήσιν πραγμάτων ἀσχολουμένη ἄγχεται οὔτε πέρα τῆς κατεπειγούσης χρείας τῶν παρόντων προνοεῖ, ἀεὶ δὲ τὸ λιτόν καὶ εὐζώνον τῆς ἐνταῦθα κατασκευῆς ἐπαινοῦσα καταδοκεῖ τὴν ἐκεῖθεν μακαριότητα καὶ συντέταται ἀεὶ πρὸς τὴν εὐδαίμονα λῆξιν.

¹⁰⁵ Sozomenus, *HE I* 12, 7: ἀναπνεύουσα δὲ διὰ παντὸς τὴν εἰς τὸ θεῖον εὐλάβειαν.

¹⁰⁶ Sozomenus, *HE I* 12, 3.

¹⁰⁷ Sozomenus, *HE I* 12, 3: ἀνδρείως δὲ μάλα ἀνθιστάμενη τοῖς πάθεσι τῆς ψυχῆς οὔτε ταῖς ἀνάγκαις τῆς φύσεως ὑπέικει οὔτε ταῖς τοῦ σώματος ὑποκατακλίνεται ἀσθενείαις.

¹⁰⁸ Sozomenus, *HE I* 12, 7: σωφροσύνη μὲν τῆς ἀκολασίας κρατεῖ.

¹⁰⁹ Sozomenus, *HE I* 12, 7: δικαιοσύνη δὲ τὴν ἀδικίαν κολάζει.

comers¹¹⁰. They were thus guided by the love of neighbor, that is, they practiced philanthropy. Sozomen further asserted that they gave away all their possessions for the common use of the poor¹¹¹, and thus the virtue of generosity was close to them. Only μεγαλοψυχία, virtue referring to the eminence of the ruler, is missing from the catalogue of virtues attributed to Emperor Theodosius, which is perfectly understandable in the case of monks.

3. Conclusion

On the one hand, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, Sozomen presented the qualities of the ruler he held in high esteem – Theodosius II; on the other, he listed characteristics of the ascetics he admired, the new sages, living – in his view – according to the principles of the best philosophy. Interestingly, in this presentation, he applied an almost identical set of virtues that he attributed to both rulers and monks. In both cases he equated piety with wisdom and made them the most important, leading virtues. They were the ones that conditioned the subsequent qualities. Thus, in Sozomen's account, one can trace the theory of the unity of virtues characteristic of Socrates of Athens. It claimed that one cannot possess a particle of virtue without possessing the whole, nor can one possess one specific virtue without possessing all of them¹¹².

It seems that the order of virtues used by Sozomen in the catalogue of virtues ascribed to Theodosius II is not accidental, and reflects their hierarchy: εὐσέβεια-σοφία φιλανθρωπία, ἀνδρεία, σωφροσύνη, δικαιοσύνη, φιλοτιμία, and μεγαλοψυχία. This hierarchy stems from the Christian values adopted by Sozomen. Thus, in the first place was piety identified with wisdom – the central virtues determining a person's character and the other virtues. Piety was the key to a proper relationship with God. In the second place was philanthropy – that is, love for people, or mercy, likened to God's mercy. Sozomen treated philanthropy almost on par with piety, and therefore with wisdom. In the third place the historian lists fortitude, which was

¹¹⁰ Sozomenus, *HE* I 12, 8: ἐν ὁμοιοία τε καὶ κοινωνία τῇ πρὸς τοὺς πέλας τὴν πολιτείαν καθίστησι προνοητικὴ φίλων καὶ ξένων.

¹¹¹ Sozomenus, *HE* I 12, 8.

¹¹² See: T. Irwin, *Plato's Ethics*, New York – Oxford 1995, p. 41-44, 80-85; Legutko, *Sokrates*, p. 406-447. See also: A. Radde-Gallwitz, *Gregory of Nyssa on the Reciprocity of the Virtues*, *JTS* NS 58 (2007) p. 537-552.

synonymous with enduring suffering for Christ, and in the fourth place was the virtue of temperance and self-control. It becomes obvious that the enumerated virtues – more than other ones – correspond to the Christian spirit. The last three places were taken by justice, generosity and dignity, which in Sozomen's interpretation, were related more to temporal life.

Translated: Katarzyna Szuster-Tardi

The Catalogue of Virtues in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Sozomen of Bethelia

(summary)

On the one hand, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, Sozomen presented the qualities of the ruler he held in high esteem – Theodosius II; on the other, he listed characteristics of the ascetics he admired, the new sages, living – in his view – according to the principles of the best philosophy. Interestingly, in this presentation, he applied an almost identical set of virtues that he attributed to both rulers and monks. In both cases he equated piety with wisdom and made them the most important, leading virtues. They were the ones that conditioned the subsequent qualities. Thus, in Sozomen's account, one can trace the theory of the unity of virtue characteristic of Socrates of Athens. It claimed that one cannot possess a particle of virtue without possessing the whole, nor can one possess one specific virtue without possessing all of them. It seems that the order of virtues used by Sozomen in the catalogue of virtues ascribed to Theodosius II is not accidental, and reflects their hierarchy: εὐσέβεια-σοφία φιλανθρωπία, ἀνδρεία, σωφροσύνη, δικαιοσύνη, φιλοτιμία, and μεγαλοψυχία. This hierarchy stems from the Christian values adopted by Sozomen.

Keywords: Sozomen; *Ecclesiastical History*; Cardinal Virtues

Katalog cnót w *Historii kościelnej* Sozomena z Bethelii

(streszczenie)

W swojej *Historii kościelnej* Sozomen przedstawił przymioty, z jednej strony władcy, którego obdarzał wielką estymą, a więc Teodozjusza II, a z drugiej podziwianych przez siebie ascetów, nowych mędrców, żyjących w jego przekonaniu według zasad najlepszej filozofii. Interesujące, że użył do tego niemal identyczny zestaw cnót, który przypisywał i władcy, i mnichom. W obydwu przypadkach pobożność utożsamiał z mądrością i czynił z nich najważniejsze, wiodące cnoty. To one warunkowały kolejne przymioty. Można zatem w przekazie Sozomena doszukiwać się teorii jedności cnót charakterystycznej już dla Sokratesa z Aten, wedle którego nie można posiadać części jakiejś cnoty, nie posiadając jej całości, ani posiadać jednej konkretnej cnoty, nie posiadając wszystkich. Wydaje się, że zastosowana przez Sozomena kolejność cnót w katalogu zalet przypisa-

nych Teodozjuszowi II nie jest przypadkowa, a oddaje ich hierarchię: εὐσέβεια-σοφία φιλανθρωπία, ἀνδρεία, σωφροσύνη, δικαιοσύνη, φιλοτιμία, μεγαλομυχία. Hierarchia ta wynika z chrześcijańskich wartości przyjętych przez Sozomena.

Słowa kluczowe: Sozomen; *Historia kościelna*; cnoty kardynalne

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