

THE ECCLESIASTICAL PROVINCE OF MOESIA SECUNDA IN THE MID-5TH CENTURY AD

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ABSTRACT

In this article, the author outlines the organization of the Church in Moesia Secunda in the decade following the Hunnic invasion of AD 447/448. He refutes the hypothesis that Abritus (now Razgrad, Bulgaria) assumed the function of the metropolis of Moesia Secunda and that its bishop took over the ecclesiastical leadership of the province after the destruction of Marcianopolis (now Devnya, Bulgaria) during this period. While the temporary relocation of the administrative headquarters from Marcianopolis to another city within the province is conceivable, there is no clear evidence that it specifically moved to Abritus. However, the bishop of this latter city presided over the extraordinary session of the provincial synod in 457/458 following the death of Metropolitan Valerian. Historical sources from the mid-5th century confirm that the see of Marcianopolis maintained its metropolitan status permanently, with its suffragan bishoprics being Abritus, Appiaria (now Riakhovo, Bulgaria), Durostorum (now Silistra, Bulgaria), Nicopolis ad Istrum (now Nikiup, Bulgaria), and Novae (now Svishtov, Bulgaria). In contrast, the ordinary bishopric of Odessus (now Varna, Bulgaria) was subordinated to the metropolitan see of Tomi (now Constanța, Romania) within the ecclesiastical province of Scythia at that time.

Keywords: *Moesia Secunda; Marcianopolis (Devnya); Abritus (Razgrad); Appiaria (Riakhovo); Durostorum (Silistra); Nicopolis ad Istrum (Nikiup); Novae (Svishtov);*

INTRODUCTION

Towards the end of AD 457, Emperor Leo I (r. 457–474) initiated a comprehensive investigation into religious matters carried out in most provinces of the Eastern Roman Empire. Those questioned—hierarchs and monks—were asked to express their opinions on three major issues: 1. The appropriateness of convening a new ecumenical council; 2. The validity of the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon (451); and 3. The canonicity of the election of Timothy Aelurus (457–460, 475–477) as the patriarch of Alexandria in Egypt. In specialized studies, this investigation and its outcome are known by the generic term of *Encyclia*.¹ The documents surrounding this inquiry, partially preserved in *Codex Encyclius*, provide numerous pieces of information regarding the ecclesiastical organization in the Eastern Roman Empire at that time. In some instances, however, this information is not

¹ On *Encyclia*, see Ionuț Holubeanu, *Christianity in Roman Scythia—Ecclesiastical Organization and Monasticism (4th to 7th Centuries)*, coll. *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450*, vol. 90, Brill, Leiden/Boston, 2024, pp. 44–45 ff.

sufficiently clear, leaving room for interpretations. This situation also applies to the two Roman provinces along the Lower Danube—Scythia and Moesia Secunda.²

The episcopal structure of the province of Moesia Secunda, as presented in the *Encyclia*, has prompted questions among scholars. One of these concerns the status of the see of Odessos (now Varna, Bulgaria). The question arises from the bishop of this city using the name ‘Scythia’ in his signature: “*Dizza, episcopus ciuitatis Odissae Scythiae similiter*” [“Dizza bishop of the city of Odessos in Scythia, similarly (i.e., I have confirmed and subscribed)”].³ According to the most recent interpretation, through this term, Dizza indicated that his see, although located in a city within the territory of civil Moesia Secunda, was a suffragan of the metropolitan see of Tomi within the ecclesiastical province of Scythia.⁴

Another aspect of Moesia Secunda that raises questions pertains to the hierarch who held the ecclesiastical leadership in the province at that time. G. Siebigs proposed the hypothesis that Abritus temporarily assumed the function of the metropolis of Moesia Secunda beginning in 447. Concurrently, the bishop of Abritus took over the ecclesiastical leadership of the province.⁵ Siebigs supported his statement with four observations: 1. Marcianopolis was conquered and destroyed by the Huns in 447; 2. Although the bishop of Marcianopolis, Valerian, is mentioned in the list of addressees in the *Encyclia*, his name and signature do not appear in the response letter from the hierarchs of Moesia Secunda addressed to the emperor; 3. The bishop of Abritus is mentioned and signed first in the letter; and 4. Valerian’s successor in the see of Marcianopolis, Paul, is attested in the year 460 in Constantinople.⁶

Based on these observations, Siebigs concluded that the see of Marcianopolis continued to exist and have a bishop even after the city’s destruction by the Huns. However, due to Marcianopolis remaining in ruins, its bishops relocated their residence to Constantinople. In this context, the bishop of Abritus became the ecclesiastical leader of Moesia Secunda.⁷ Until Siebigs’s work was published in 2010, scholars had not considered such a possibility.⁸ Nevertheless, we believe that examining the hypothesis and accurately

² On the data concerning Roman Scythia in the *Encyclia*, see I. Holubeanu, *Christianity in Roman Scythia*, pp. 46–58.

³ *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* (hereafter cited as *ACO*), vol. II/5, Eduard Schwartz (ed.), De Gruyter, Berlin/Leipzig, 1936, p. 32³¹.

⁴ See I. Holubeanu, *Christianity in Roman Scythia*, pp. 46–51.

⁵ See Gereon Siebigs, *Kaiser Leo I. Das oströmische Reich in den ersten drei Jahren seiner Regierung (457–460 n. Chr.)*, De Gruyter, Berlin/New York, 2010, pp. 358 (n. 323) and 627–628.

⁶ Siebigs [*Kaiser Leo I*, pp. 358 (n. 323), 522 (n. 147), and 826 (n. 5)] refers there to the Home Synod from 458/459, which he dated to 460. On this synod, see below, section “The Home Synod of AD 458/459.”

⁷ G. Siebigs (*Kaiser Leo I*, p. 627) assumes that the city of Abritus, situated in a more secluded mountainous area, suffered less from the Hunnic invasion around the year 447. However, other scholars argue that Abritus was also affected by the Hunnic invasion during that time—see Andrew Poulter, *Nicopolis ad Istrum. A Roman, Late Roman and Early Byzantine City. Excavations 1985–1992*, coll. *Journal of Roman Studies Monograph*, vol. 8, Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, London, 1995, p. 35; Rumen Ivanov, *Roman cities in Bulgaria*, vol. 1, Academic Publishing House, Sofia, 2012, p. 171. The relocation to Constantinople of Metropolitan Valerian of Marcianopolis is also accepted by Alexander Minchev, “Marcianopolis in the 2nd–6th Centuries AD. From a Roman City to a Late Antique Capital,” in *Roman Provincial Capitals under Transition. Proceedings of the International Conference Held in Plovdiv 04.–07. November 2019*, Milena Raycheva and Martin Steskal (eds.), coll. *Österreichisches Archäologisches Institut. Sonderschriften*, vol. 61, Holzhausen, Vienna, 2021, p. 275.

⁸ See Michael le Quien, *Oriens christianus*, vol. 1, Ex typographia regia, Paris, 1740, col. 1217–1220; Johann Elieser Theodor Wiltsch, *Handbook of the Geography and Statistics of the Church*, vol. 1, trans. John Leitch,

identifying the episcopal structure of the province in the mid-5th century, based on the available documentary information, would be valuable for understanding the ecclesiastical organization of Moesia Secunda in the decade following the Hunnic invasion of AD 447/448.

1. METROPOLITAN SATURNINUS OF MARCIANOPOLIS (431–c.449)

The known archaeological data does not provide clear clues to resolve the issue of the relocation of the metropolitan of Marcianopolis to Constantinople following the destruction of this city in 447. Currently, it is known that large areas of the city remained uninhabited after the destruction in that year. A few churches were reconstructed in the late 5th or early 6th century, and it is presumed that a new and much smaller fortress was erected next to the city's amphitheatre during this time.⁹ However, based on this evidence, it is difficult to determine whether the metropolitans resided in the city or had relocated to Constantinople between the years 447 and 459.

Bosworth & Harrison, London, 1859, p. 185; Heinrich Gelzer, "Zur Zeitbestimmung der griechischen Notitiae Episcopatum," in *Jahrbücher für protestantische Theologie*, XII (1886), no. 3, pp. 340–342 and 345; Vasile Pârvan, *Contribuții epigrafice la istoria creștinismului daco-roman/ Epigraphic Contributions to the History of Daco-Roman Christianity*, SOCEC & Co., Bucharest, 1911, p. 59; Dimităr Tsukhlev, *Istoriia na Bŭlgarskata tšurkva/ History of the Bulgarian Church*, vol. 1, Sofia, 1911, III.d. Available at http://www.pravoslavieto.com/history/BPC_history_864-1186_Tsouhlev.htm. Accessed 2022 May 9; Ernst Gerland, "Rezension: J. Weiss, *Die Dobrudscha im Altertum*," in *Berliner Philologische Wochenschrift*, 32 (1912), no. 30, col. 946–947; Raymund Netzhammer, *Die christlichen Altertümer der Dobrudscha*, SOCEC & Co., Bucharest, 1918, p. 56; Jacques Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes dans les provinces danubiennes de l'empire romain*, E. de Boccard, Paris, 1918, pp. 164–165, 361–362, and 600; Henri Leclercq, "Mésie," in *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie chrétienne et de Liturgie*, vol. XI/1, Fernand Cabrol and Henri Leclercq (eds.), Librairie Letouzey et Ané, Paris, 1933, col. 507; Eduard Schwartz, "Praefatio," in *ACO*, II/5, p. XIII; Hans-Georg Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich*, coll. *Byzantinisches Handbuch im Rahmen des Handbuchs de Altertumswissenschaft*, vol. II/1, Beck, Munich, 1959, p. 175; Raymond Janin, "La hiérarchie ecclésiastique dans le diocèse de Thrace," in *Revue des études byzantines*, 17 (1959), pp. 140–141; Lili Gajdova, "Zum Problem über die Einbeziehung der Odesser Kirchengemeinde in die Rangliste der autokephalen Archiepiskopate," in *Pulpudeva*, 4 (1983), pp. 297–298; Kazimierz Ilski, "Biskupstwo w Novae a zagadnienie chrystianizacji Mezji Dolnej"/ "The Bishopric of Novae and the Issue of the Christianization of Lower Moesia," in *Balcanica Poznaniensia*, 1 (1984), p. 307; Kazimierz Ilski, "Korespondencja biskupów Mezyjskich"/ "The Correspondence of the Moesian Bishops," in *Studia Moesiaca*, Leszek Mrozewicz and Kazimierz Ilski (eds.), VIS, Poznań, 1994, pp. 134–135; Alexander Minchev, "Rannoto khristiianstvo v Odesos i okolnostite mu"/ "Early Christianity in and around Odessos," in *Izvestiia na narodniia muzei Varna*, 22 (1986), pp. 41–42; Alexander Minchev, "Marcianopolis Christiana," in *Miscellanea Bulgarica*, 5 (1987), pp. 298–299 and 303; A. Minchev, "Marcianopolis in the 2nd–6th Centuries AD," p. 275; Giorgio Fedalto, *Hierarchia Ecclesiastica Orientalis*, vol. 1, Messaggero, Padova, 1988, p. 341; Bistra Nikolova, "The Church of Odessos-Varna between Byzantium, the Bulgarian Tsardom and the Patriarchate of Constantinople," in *Études Balkaniques*, 34 (1998), nos. 1–2, pp. 94–95 and 97; Andrzej Bolesław Biernacki, "A City of Christians: Novae in the 5th and 6th C AD," in *Archaeologia Bulgarica*, 9 (2005), no. 1, p. 1; Georgi Atanasov, *Khristiianskiat Durostorum-Drŭstŭr/ The Christian Durostorum-Drastar*, Zograf, Veliko Tarnovo, 2007, pp. 86–89; Georgi Atanasov, "Christianity along the Lower Danube Limes in the Roman Provinces of Dacia Ripensis, Moesia Secunda and Scythia Minor (4th–6th c. AD)," in *The Lower Danube Roman Limes (1st–6th C. AD)*, Lyudmil Vagalinski, Nikolay Sharankov, and Sergey Torbatov (eds.), NIAM-BAS, Sofia, 2012, pp. 358–363; Nelu Zugravu, *Erezii și schisme la Dunărea Mijlocie și de Jos în mileniul I/ Heresies and Schisms on the Middle and Lower Danube in the First Millennium*, Presa Bună, Iași, 1999, p. 98; Nelu Zugravu, "Studiu introductiv, notițe bibliografice, note și comentarii"/ "Introductory Study, Bibliographical Notes, Footnotes, and Comments," in *Fontes Historiae Daco-Romanae Christianitatis* (hereafter cited as *FHDRCh*), Nelu Zugravu (ed.), Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza," Iași, 2008, pp. 93 and 121–122.

⁹ A. Minchev, "Marcianopolis in the 2nd–6th Centuries AD," pp. 277–282.

More valuable in this regard are the attendance and signature lists of the synods held during this time span. The first of these is the signature list of the Home Synod during Patriarch Flavian I of Constantinople (446–449) on 22 November 448.¹⁰ In its contents appears the signature of Saturninus of Marcianopolis: “Σατορνίνος ἐπίσκοπος Μαρκιανουπόλεως ὀρίσας ὑπέγραψα” (“Saturninus bishop of Marcianopolis, I have given my sentence and signed”).¹¹ It proves that at that time, the metropolitan of Moesia Secunda was in Constantinople.

It must be specified that the signatories respected the hierarchical principle. Specifically, metropolitans signed in the initial part, while ordinary bishops signed in the final part of the list.¹² Saturninus is the first among the metropolitans to sign the document, following Patriarch Flavian. This proves that he held the rank of metropolitan, and this was recognized by the ecclesiastical authorities in Constantinople.

Saturninus’s name also appears in the attendance list of the hearing in Constantinople on 8 April 449: “Σατορνίνου τοῦ εὐλαβεστάτου ἐπισκόπου τῆς Μαρκιανουπόλεως” (“Saturninus the most devout bishop of Marcianopolis”).¹³ The list is also compiled in accordance with the hierarchical principle, with Saturninus’ name appearing among the group of metropolitans—the fifth out of nine. In the group of ordinary bishops, Secundinus of Novae in Moesia Secunda is also mentioned.¹⁴

Most likely, Saturninus was in the capital of the empire throughout the interval 22 November 448 to 8 April 449. Therefore, the assumption that the metropolitan of Marcianopolis sought refuge in Constantinople in 447 could be correct. In the attendance list at the hearing in Constantinople on 13 April 449, Saturninus is no longer mentioned.¹⁵ Only the name of his suffragan from Novae, Secundinus, appears.¹⁶

On 30 March 449, while Saturninus was in Constantinople, Emperor Theodosius II (408–450) ordered the convening of the Second Council of Ephesus (449). Certainly, the official notification was also directed to the metropolitan of Moesia Secunda. The imperial letter specified the start date of the council—August 449. However, no hierarch from Moesia Secunda participated in the council. The non-participation of Saturninus could be attributed either to his absence from Constantinople in July-August 449 or to his inability to travel to Ephesus (possibly due to medical reasons or his death?). Otherwise, it would have been expected for him (or his successor) to accompany Patriarch Flavian to the council.

Similarly, at the Council of Chalcedon (451), the see of Marcianopolis was not represented. Once again, if the metropolitan of Moesia Secunda (whoever he may have been, Secundinus or Valerian, his successor) had been in Constantinople, it would have been

¹⁰ The case of the Constantinopolitan archimandrite Eutyches, accused of heresy, was debated at this Home Synod—see Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. I/2, 2nd ed., trans. John Bowden, John Knox Press, Atlanta, 1975, pp. 523–525.

¹¹ *ACO*, vol. II/1.1, Eduard Schwartz (ed.), De Gruyter, Berlin/Leipzig, 1933, p. 145²¹; *ACO*, vol. II/2.1, Eduard Schwartz (ed.), De Gruyter, Berlin/Leipzig, 1932, p. 19¹⁰; *ACO*, vol. II/3.1, Eduard Schwartz (ed.), De Gruyter, Berlin/Leipzig, 1935, p. 129². See also *ACO*, II/1.1, p. 118^{16–19}; *ACO*, II/3.1, p. 98^{14–17}; *ACO*, II/2.1, pp. 52^{30–31}.

¹² The case of Metropolitan Dorotheus of Neocaesarea, who signed the document alongside the suffragan bishops, is the only exception to the hierarchical criterion in the list.

¹³ *ACO*, II/1.1, p. 150⁸; *ACO*, II/3.1, p. 134³.

¹⁴ *ACO*, II/1.1, p. 150²³: “Σεκουνδίνου τοῦ εὐλαβεστάτου ἐπισκόπου τῆς Νοβησίων πόλεως” (“Secundinus the most devout bishop of the city of Novae”).

¹⁵ See *ACO*, II/1.1, pp. 148⁴–149²⁰.

¹⁶ *ACO*, II/1.1, p. 149⁴: “Σεκουνδίνου τοῦ εὐλαβεστάτου ἐπισκόπου τῆς Νοβησίων πόλεως” (“Secundinus the most devout bishop of the city of Novae”).

expected for him to attend this important council alongside the delegation of Patriarch Anatolius (449–458). It is worth noting that Chalcedon was situated across the straits from Constantinople, making travel there relatively easy.

From the previously mentioned, it is evident that between April 449 and November 451 (when the Council of Chalcedon concluded), that is, for almost two and a half years, the metropolitan of Marcianopolis is no longer documented in Constantinople.

It is difficult to say what happened to Metropolitan Saturninus between 8 and 13 April. His absence from the hearing on 13 April could be explained in two ways: 1. Either he urgently returned to Moesia Secunda to address a more serious issue; 2. Or he fell ill or even died. The first explanation seems unlikely. Saturninus's departure from the imperial capital during a hearing aimed at clarifying accusations against Patriarch Flavian and his staff appears improbable.¹⁷ It would have been a lack of gratitude towards Flavian, who had hosted him during the two years of refuge (between 447 and 449). Furthermore, as far as it is known, from 447 until 477, Moesia experienced a peaceful period, and the occurrence of an event of exceptional gravity seems improbable.¹⁸ In such a case, on the one hand, it would have been expected for the bishop of Novae to leave the imperial capital as well. On the other hand, it should be noted that Saturninus sought refuge in Constantinople precisely because of a serious event (the Hunnic invasion), which could have endangered his life. Therefore, his return there in the midst of a similar situation must be ruled out.

The second hypothesis—his illness or death—is supported by Saturninus's advanced age. In 449, he had been a bishop for 18 years, and most likely, at the time of his election to lead the Church of Moesia Secunda, he did not appear to be very young. The context in which he became metropolitan also supports this latter assumption. More precisely, his election took place immediately after the First Council of Ephesus (431), against the backdrop of serious disturbances that occurred in Moesia Secunda during the Nestorian crisis. All the bishops of the province who participated in Ephesus were supporters of Nestorius, and Metropolitan Dorotheus, Saturninus's predecessor, was one of his most ardent advocates.¹⁹ Upon arriving in Marcianopolis in 431, Saturninus was initially expelled by the city's inhabitants, who remained loyal to Dorotheus and, most likely, to his theological opinions as well.²⁰ From this situation, it can be deduced that the imperial and ecclesiastical authorities in Constantinople wished to establish at Marcianopolis in 431 a theologian with experience and sufficient maturity to be able to assert himself against any potential local challengers.

Thus, it is possible that Saturninus died around the spring or the summer of 449, and Valerian was elected in his place. However, the available data presented above imply that the latter preferred to go to Marcianopolis. His absence from the Second Council of Ephesus and especially from the Council of Chalcedon suggests that he prioritized addressing the situation of his Church over the theological debates in the empire at that time.

This brief overview suggests that the metropolitan Saturninus of Marcianopolis sought refuge in Constantinople after the destruction of his city in 447, likely remaining

¹⁷ By ordering this hearing, Emperor Theodosius II responded to a plaint from the archimandrite Eutyches, who complained that the minutes of the Home Synod of November 448 had been falsified (see Richard Price and Michael Gaddis, *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 1, coll. *Translated Texts for Historians*, vol. 45, Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 2005, pp. 230–231). These accusations also affected Patriarch Flavian, who presided over that Home Synod.

¹⁸ A. Minchev, "Marcianopolis in the 2nd–6th Centuries AD," p. 281.

¹⁹ See I. Holubeanu, *Christianity in Roman Scythia*, pp. 56 and 318.

²⁰ See *ACO*, vol. I/4, Eduard Schwartz (ed.), De Gruyter, Berlin/Leipzig, 1922–1923, pp. 88–89.

there until the spring or the summer of 449. It appears that at that point, he died. There is no evidence to suggest that his successor, Valerian, lived in Constantinople during the period 449–457/458.

Regarding the assumption of leadership of the Church in Moesia Secunda by the bishop of Abritus between 447 and 449, during metropolitan Saturninus's stay in Constantinople, this topic will be examined in the final section of the present study.²¹

2. THE LIST OF RECIPIENTS IN THE *ENCYCLIA* (457–458)

Information about the province of Moesia Secunda appears in two documents in the *Encyclia*: 1. The list of recipients of the questionnaire letter sent by Emperor Leo I; and 2. The response letter from the hierarchs of Moesia Secunda to the emperor.

The list of recipients includes the names of those who were direct addressees of the questionnaire letter dispatched by Emperor Leo I.²² It is believed that it was compiled by the imperial chancery at the time of the investigation and was included in the original volume containing documents related to the inquiry.²³

Based on these considerations, it can be appreciated that the information contained in this list reflects the official standpoint of the most significant civil authority of the empire regarding the structure of the episcopal organization scheme within the Roman state. On the other hand, considering that the investigation was launched in the middle or in the second half of October 457, it can be surmized that the information in the list reflects the situation of this structure at that particular moment.²⁴

The recipients of the imperial letter in the list are arranged according to certain criteria. The first four positions in the list mention the pope of Rome (no. 1), the patriarch of Constantinople (no. 2), the patriarch of Antioch (no. 3), and the archbishop of Jerusalem (no. 4).²⁵ The remaining recipients are mostly grouped according to the civil dioceses to which their ecclesiastical sees belonged. The order of the dioceses is: Oriens (nos. 5–21),²⁶ Pontica (nos. 22–35),²⁷ Asiana (nos. 36–49),²⁸ Thrace (nos. 50–54),²⁹ and Illyricum (nos. 55–62).³⁰

²¹ See below, section “The order of signatures of the bishops from Moesia Secunda in the *Encyclia*.”

²² *ACO*, II/5, pp. 22³¹–24²⁸.

²³ See E. Schwartz, “Praefatio,” p. XV; G. Siebigs, *Kaiser Leo I*, pp. 826–829.

²⁴ On the onset of the investigation and its duration, see E. Schwartz, “Praefatio,” p. XII; Theodor Schnitzler, *Im Kampfe um Chalcedon. Geschichte und Inhalt des Codex Encyclius von 458*, coll. *Analecta Gregoriana*, vol. 16, Apud aedes Universitatis Gregoriana, Rome, 1938, pp. 19–20, 22–23, and 34–35; Ernst Honigmann, *Patristic Studies*, coll. *Studi e Testi*, vol. 173, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican, 1953, p. 184; G. Siebigs, *Kaiser Leo I*, pp. 357, 359–360, and 392; I. Holubeanu, *Christianity in Roman Scythia*, p. 45.

²⁵ *ACO*, II/5, p. 22^{32–35}. Patriarch Timothy Aelurus of Alexandria, who was under investigation, was not questioned. Additionally, the other hierarchs from the diocese of Aegyptus do not appear in the list of recipients. In their case, the emperor had previously received letters from both supporters and opponents of Timothy Aelurus, in which their views on the matters under investigation were presented (see *ACO*, II/5, pp. 11³⁵–17²⁰ and 21²⁴–22²¹).

²⁶ *ACO*, II/5, pp. 22³⁶–23¹⁵.

²⁷ *ACO*, II/5, p. 23^{16–29}.

²⁸ *ACO*, II/5, pp. 23³⁰–24¹¹.

²⁹ *ACO*, II/5, p. 24^{12–16}.

³⁰ *ACO*, II/5, p. 24^{17–24}. The hierarchs from Praevalitana, Moesia Prima, and Dacia Ripensis were not questioned due to the disorganization caused in these provinces by the attacks of the Huns (see J. Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes*, p. 361; G. Siebigs, *Kaiser Leo I*, pp. 358 and 827 (n. 14); Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil, *Crisis Management in Late Antiquity (410–590 CE). A Survey of the Evidence from Episcopal Letters*, coll. *Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae*, vol. 121, Brill, Leiden/Boston, 2013, p. 133).

After the sections dedicated to the dioceses, Bishop Julian of Cos in the Islands (no. 63),³¹ Titular Metropolitan Lucian of Bizye in Europa (no. 64),³² and Metropolitan Theotimus of Tomi in Scythia (no. 65)³³ are mentioned. Only the positioning of the last two hierarchs in the list appears unusual.³⁴

Within the sections dedicated to each diocese, the recipients are arranged according to another rule. First, the metropolitans of great metropoleis are mentioned, followed by titular metropolitans, ordinary bishops, and lastly, representatives of monasticism, where applicable.³⁵ For a better understanding of the topic, some clarifications are necessary here. At that time there were in existence two types of metropolitan sees: great metropoleis and titular metropolitan sees. The first ones were the sees of the urban settlements that were provincial capitals and had suffragan bishoprics. The second ones, also known as ‘autocephalous metropoleis’ or ‘autocephalous archbishoprics,’ were the sees of the cities that were granted the title of metropolises (not being provincial capitals). The titular metropolitan sees had not a province attached and suffragan bishoprics and ranked between the great metropoleis and the ordinary bishoprics.³⁶

In the preserved form of the list of recipients in the *Encyclia*, there are two omissions. These concern Metropolitan Euippus of Neocaesarea in Pontus Polemoniacus and Titular Metropolitan Sebastian of Beroe in Thrace.³⁷ Their absence from the list of recipients has been attributed to errors made by copyists.³⁸

Significant for the present investigation is the observation that the direct addressees of the emperor were the metropolitans—including titular ones—and not the ordinary bishops. The latter were, for the most part, indirect addressees of the inquiry. In his questionnaire letter, the emperor asked every metropolitan to call the provincial synod in order to inform their suffragans about the issues he raised, analyze them together, and then write a common answer.³⁹ However, the list also includes three ordinary bishops: Julian of Cos, Adelphius of Arabissus, and Julian of Tavium.⁴⁰ The direct questioning of Julian of Cos

³¹ *ACO*, II/5, p. 24²⁵.

³² *ACO*, II/5, p. 24²⁶.

³³ *ACO*, II/5, p. 24²⁷.

³⁴ On this issue, see I. Holubeanu, *Christianity in Roman Scythia*, pp. 57–58.

³⁵ Only in the section of the diocese of Oriens are the names of three renowned ascetics mentioned: Symeon Stylites, John of Cyrrhus, and Baradates—*ACO*, II/5, p. 23^{13–15}.

³⁶ See H.G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur*, pp. 67–68; Evangelos Chrysos, “Zur Entstehung der Institution der Autokephalen Erzbistümer,” in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 62 (1969), pp. 273–279; Richard Price and Michael Gaddis, *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 3, coll. *Translated Texts for Historians*, vol. 45, Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 2005, p. 208.

³⁷ Although their names are missing from the preserved form of the recipient list, their questioning by the emperor is certain, as their response letters have been preserved (see *ACO*, II/5, pp. 30–31 and 79–84).

³⁸ E. Schwartz, “Praefatio,” p. XIII; G. Siebigs, *Kaiser Leo I*, p. 826, n. 2.

³⁹ This request from the emperor can be inferred from certain response letters of the bishops—see *ACO*, II/5, pp. 29¹¹, 50^{18–20}, 64²⁵, 77^{28–31}, and 90¹⁴. It also emerges from the content of the letter addressed by the emperor to Patriarch Anatolius of Constantinople. In this letter—included in the *Codex Encyclius* as a specimen—the emperor asked the patriarch to analyze the topics raised by him within the Home Synod, not on a personal basis—see *ACO*, II/5, p. 11^{21–23}. On this issue, see also Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. II/1, trans. Pauline Allen and John Cawte, John Knox Press, Atlanta, 1987, pp. 196–197; G. Siebigs, *Kaiser Leo I*, pp. 349–350.

⁴⁰ Adelphius of Arabissus: *ACO*, II/5, p. 29²³ (no. 35); Julian of Tavium: *ACO*, II/5, p. 23²⁸ (no. 34). They are considered by most scholars to be ordinary bishops—see H. Gelzer, “Zur Zeitbestimmung,” p. 343; E. Honigmann, *Patristic Studies*, pp. 177–178; E. Chrysos, “Zur Entstehung der Institution,” p. 278, n. 76; Siebigs, *Kaiser Leo I*, pp. 521–522, 826 (n. 5), and 827 (n. 12); P. Allen and B. Neil, *Crisis Management*, p. 132; I. Holubeanu, *Organizarea bisericească*, p. 118, n. 21 (where an analysis of the data from the *Encyclia*

is attributed to his role as a papal representative in the East, while for the other two, it was due to their theological prestige. As for the positioning of the hierarch of Marcianopolis in the list, it raises no suspicion. ‘*Valeriano reuerentissimo episcopo Marcianopolis*’ (‘Valerian the most devout bishop of Marcianopolis’) appears in the Thrace diocese section (no. 53).⁴¹ His name is preceded by that of the metropolitan of the Haemimontus province, Gregory of Hadrianopolis (no. 52),⁴² and followed by that of the metropolitan of the Thrace province, Valentius of Philippopolis (no. 54).⁴³

All these pieces of evidence support the conclusion that, during that period, the imperial chancery acknowledged the hierarch of Marcianopolis as having the status of a metropolitan and serving as the official representative of the Moesia Secunda province. Furthermore, his positioning ahead of another metropolitan—the head of the Thrace province—suggests that his rank was not considered in any way inferior to that of the latter. If Valerian had been only a titular metropolitan, it would have been natural for his name to be placed in a lower position. In fact, considering the criterion used to arrange the recipients in the section of each diocese, his place would have been at the end of the Thrace diocese section, following the metropolitan of Philippopolis, and not ahead of him. Moreover, if the hierarch of Marcianopolis had been an ordinary bishop, he would not have been a direct recipient of the imperial letter.⁴⁴

As far as the name of the bishop of Abritus is concerned, it does not appear in the list of addressees. This absence suggests that the imperial authorities in Constantinople did not consider him a representative or holding any significant position within the Church of Moesia Secunda. It seems improbable that such an exceptional situation in Moesia Secunda would have remained unknown in the capital of the empire nearly ten years after its establishment, especially considering the presumed presence of the bishop of Marcianopolis there in October 457. Therefore, one would expect the name of the bishop of Abritus to be included in the list of addressees, alongside the names of the other three suffragan bishops questioned for specific reasons. As the (official) representative of the metropolitan of the province, he should have convened the provincial synod and informed the ordinary bishops about the topics raised by the emperor. On the other hand, the absence of any other hierarch of Moesia Secunda in the list of recipients also indicates that no bishopric of the province held the rank of titular metropolitan see at that time (October 457). Otherwise, its hierarch would have had to be, in turn, a direct addressee of the imperial letter, like all the other titular metropolitans.

In short, in its preserved form, the list of recipients in the *Encyclia* supports the conclusion that the see of Marcianopolis still held the rank of metropolitan within Moesia Secunda in October 457. Apart from this, all other ecclesiastical sees within the province had the status of ordinary bishoprics. Furthermore, the absence of the bishop of Abritus from the

concerning these two bishops is done). Only Eduard Schwartz (“Praefatio,” p. XIII) considers them titular metropolitans.

⁴¹ *ACO*, II/5, p. 24¹⁵.

⁴² *ACO*, II/5, p. 24¹⁴.

⁴³ *ACO*, II/5, p. 24¹⁶.

⁴⁴ The see of Marcianopolis is recorded with this status—of ordinary bishopric—in the *Notitia Episcopatum* 3 (according to the numbering by Jean Darrouzès)—see Jean Darrouzès, *Notitiae episcopatum ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae. Texte critique, introduction et notes*, coll. *Géographie ecclésiastique de l’empire Byzantin*, vol. 1, Institut français d’études byzantines, Paris, 1981, 3.36.607, p. 241. At that time, the rank of great metropolis of Moesia Secunda was held by the see of Odessos. This historical stage was inaugurated in May 536—see I. Holubeanu, *Christianity in Roman Scythia*, pp. 128–147.

contents of the list suggests that he was not recognized in Constantinople as holding a leadership position within the Church of Moesia Secunda. All these pieces of evidence, along with those analyzed in the previous section of this study, argue in favor of the fact that in October 457, the metropolitan of Marcianopolis was not in Constantinople.

3. THE RESPONSE LETTER OF THE BISHOPS OF MOESIA SECUNDA

There are two important pieces of information for the current investigation in the response letter of the bishops from Moesia Secunda: 1. The salutation formula at the opening of the letter; and 2. The signatures of the hierarchs at the end. Within the content of the letter, there is no information regarding the sending bishops.

The salutation formula mentions the names of six hierarchs: ‘*Marcianus, Martialis, Minofilus, Marcellus, Petrus et Dizas.*’ Their names are followed by the phrase ‘*episcopi secundae Mysiae*’ (‘bishops of Moesia Secunda’).⁴⁵ Based on this paragraph, the only certain conclusion that can be drawn is that all those mentioned were bishops, and their sees were located in the territory of Moesia Secunda.

As for the general title of ‘*episcopus*,’ it supports the previous conclusions, suggesting that none of these hierarchs held the rank of metropolitan (including titular). However, it does not constitute conclusive evidence in this regard, as the *Encyclia* presents numerous situations where metropolitans from other provinces identify themselves in the salutation formula as ‘*episcopus*’ without mentioning their metropolitan rank.⁴⁶

The names of the same hierarchs, in the same order, also appear at the end of the letter, in the signature section. This time, each of them mentioned his status as ‘*episcopus*’ and the name of the see they occupied, as follows:

Marcianus episcopus ciuitatis Abryti confirmaui et subscripsi

Martialis episcopus ciuitatis Appiariensis similiter

Minofilos episcopus ciuitatis Durostori similiter

Marcellus episcopus ciuitatis Nicopoleos similiter

Petrus episcopus ciuitatis Nouensis similiter

*Dizza episcopus ciuitatis Odissae Scythiae similiter.*⁴⁷

(Marcian bishop of the city of Abritus, I have confirmed and subscribed

Martialis bishop of the city of Appiaria, similarly

Minofilus bishop of the city of Durostorum, similarly

Marcellus bishop of the city of Nicopolis, similarly

Peter bishop of the city of Novae, similarly

Dizza bishop of the city of Odessos in Scythia, similarly).

Based on these signatures, the same conclusions can be drawn as in the case of the salutation formula. They suggest that none of these hierarchs held the rank of metropolitan. However, even in this case, the individual use of the title ‘*episcopus*’ does not entirely rule out the possibility that one of them might still have been a (titular) metropolitan. This is

⁴⁵ *ACO*, II/5, p. 32¹⁻².

⁴⁶ Twenty-three metropolitans with suffragans (see *ACO*, II/5, pp. 26²⁰, 28³⁸, 31¹²⁻¹³, 32³⁵⁻³⁶, 38³¹⁻³², 40⁹⁻¹⁰, 41¹¹⁻¹², 42⁴⁰⁻⁴¹, 44³¹⁻³³, 46¹³, 50¹²⁻¹³, 63³⁸⁻³⁹, 69¹³⁻¹⁴, 71¹¹, 75²²⁻²³, 77²¹⁻²³, 79²¹⁻²², 84¹³⁻¹⁴, 86¹⁰, 88², 90³⁻⁴, 93¹⁸, and 96³⁷⁻³⁸) and two titular metropolitans (see *ACO*, II/5, pp. 30¹¹ and 42⁴⁰⁻⁴¹) did not mention their ecclesiastical rank in the salutation formula. Additionally, Patriarch Anatolius of Constantinople referred to himself in the salutation formula as ‘*constantinopolitanus episcopus*’ (‘Constantinopolitan bishop’) (*ACO*, II/5, p. 24³²). The case of the metropolitan of Perge in Pamphylia province was not considered here (see below, n. 49).

⁴⁷ *ACO*, II/5, p. 32²⁶⁻³¹.

because, in the *Encyclia*, there are instances where certain metropolitans did not mention their rank when signing.⁴⁸

On the other hand, it can be observed that all six hierarchs categorized their city of residence as ‘*civitas*.’ None of them used the term ‘*metropolis*.’ The use of ‘*civitas*’ suggests that none of these cities held the rank of ‘*metropolis*’ (‘μητρόπολις’), and therefore, the ecclesiastical sees there did not have the metropolitan rank.

However, even the term ‘*civitas*’ does not entirely rule out the possibility that one of these cities might have had the actual status of a civil metropolis. This is because such a case also appears in the *Encyclia*. It concerns Metropolitan Epiphanius of Perga in Pamphylia. He designated his city of residence as ‘*ciuitas*,’ rather than ‘*metropolis*,’ as one would expect.⁴⁹

In conclusion, the letter of the hierarchs from Moesia Secunda does not provide any decisive argument in elucidating the topic under consideration here. However, it can be observed that none of the elements within this letter contradicts in any way the previous conclusion regarding the metropolitan rank of the see of Marcianopolis. Furthermore, the terms ‘*episcopus*’ and ‘*civitas*’ they used point to the conclusion that none of them held the rank of metropolitan (including titular metropolitan). The significance of the order in which the names of the six hierarchs are mentioned in the salutation formula and their signatures at the end, will be addressed below.⁵⁰

4. THE ABSENCE OF THE SIGNATURE OF METROPOLITAN VALERIAN OF MARCIANOPOLIS IN THE *ENCYCLIA*—POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS

Regarding the reason for the absence of the name of Metropolitan Valerian of Marcianopolis from the response letter sent from Moesia Secunda, three possible explanations could be put forward. One could be inferred from G. Siebigs’s hypothesis. If Valerian no longer resided in Marcianopolis but in Constantinople at that time, this could be a reason for his absence from the provincial synod where the issues presented by the

⁴⁸ Eleven metropolitans with suffragans (see *ACO*, II/5, pp. 28¹², 34³⁸, 40¹, 44²¹, 45³⁷, 50³³, 55³², 57¹⁷, 65³⁹, 96²⁸, and 97³¹) and one titular metropolitan (see *ACO*, II/5, p. 44²⁴) did not mention their rank in the signature. Taking into account the expressions used in the salutation formulas and those in the signatures, it can be noted that eight metropolitans with suffragans—from Europe (*ACO*, II/5, pp. 26²⁰ and 28¹²), Syria Prima (who was also the patriarch of Antioch) (*ACO*, II/5, pp. 32³⁵⁻³⁶ and 34³⁸), Syria Secunda (*ACO*, II/5, pp. 38³¹⁻³² and 40¹), Phoenice Prima (*ACO*, II/5, pp. 42⁴⁰⁻⁴¹ and 44²¹), Phoenice Secunda (*ACO*, II/5, pp. 44³¹⁻³³ and 45³⁷), Cilicia Prima (*ACO*, II/5, p. 50^{12-13, 33}), the Islands (*ACO*, II/5, pp. 63³⁸⁻³⁹ and 65³⁹), and Crete (*ACO*, II/5, pp. 96³⁷⁻³⁸ and 97³¹)—and one titular metropolitan—Eustathius of Berytus in Phoenice Prima (*ACO*, II/5, pp. 42⁴⁰⁻⁴¹ and 44²⁴)—did not mention their ecclesiastical rank in either of the two places. The metropolitan of Perge in Pamphylia (see below, n. 49) was not considered here, nor were those from Mesopotamia, Dardania, and Epirus Vetus. Although the latter three did not mention their rank as metropolitans in their signatures, they referred to themselves as bishops of the province: ‘*Maras episcopus uestrae Mesopotamiae*’ (‘Maras, bishop of your Mesopotamia’) (*ACO*, II/5, p. 42²⁷), ‘*Vrsilius episcopus Dardaniae*’ (‘Ursilius, bishop of Dardania’) (*ACO*, II/5, p. 88²⁶), ‘*Eugenius episcopus Epiri*’ (‘Eugenius, bishop of Epirus’) (*ACO*, II/5, p. 95⁴). Their signatures suggest that this formula [‘*episcopus provinciae*’/‘ἐπίσκοπος ἐπαρχίας’ (‘bishop of the province’)] was another way for a metropolitan to express his ecclesiastical rank.

⁴⁹ *ACO*, II/5, p. 60⁷: ‘*Epiphanius Pergenae ciuitatis episcopus*’ (‘Epiphanius, bishop of the city of Perge’). However, the rank of Epiphanius was subtly highlighted in the salutation formula of his province’s letter, where a distinction is made between him and his suffragan bishops: “*Epiphanius episcopus Pergensis et qui cum eo sunt reuerentissimi episcopi [...] Pamphyliae regionis*” (‘Epiphanius, bishop of Perge, and those who are with him the most devout bishops [...] in the region of Pamphylia’), *ACO*, II/5, p. 58^{1-2, 4}.

⁵⁰ See below, section “The order of signatures of the bishops from Moesia Secunda in the *Encyclia*.”

emperor were discussed.⁵¹ However, as already shown, the residence of the metropolitan of Marcianopolis in Constantinople at that time finds no support in any of the available documentary evidence. Moreover, even in such a situation, it would be hard to believe that Valerian, as the president of the local provincial synod and the sole hierarch from Moesia Secunda addressed in the imperial letter, would have overlooked the emperor's request by missing such a crucial synodal session.

The second possible explanation could be that Valerian responded on his own behalf to the emperor, but his letter did not survive. This explanation was put forth by E. Schwartz. Noting that Valerian's name does not appear in any of the preserved response letters in the *Encyclia*, the German scholar suggested that the response letter from Valerian might have been lost.⁵² However, later, considering the existence of the letter sent by the bishops of Moesia Secunda in *Codex Encyclius*, E. Schwartz abandoned this explanation.⁵³ Nevertheless, it was subsequently supported by other scholars.⁵⁴ It must be noted, however, that Valerian's mention in the list of recipients in *Encyclia* only certifies that the emperor sent him the questionnaire letter. It does not, however, support the assumption that Valerian actually responded to the emperor. Moreover, as will be seen below, the list of recipients also includes the names of two other metropolitans—Ibas of Edessa and Symeon of Amida—about whom it is known for certain that they did not respond to the emperor.

On the other hand, as previously mentioned, the emperor had requested the metropolitans to discuss the issues raised by him alongside their suffragans, within their provincial synod, rather than individually. Where the convening of the synod was possible,⁵⁵ all metropolitans complied with this request, responding to the emperor alongside their suffragans.⁵⁶ There is no exception in this regard in *Encyclia*. Moesia Secunda would be the

⁵¹ G. Siebigs does not put forward this explanation, but it can be formulated based on his assumption that the hierarchs of Marcianopolis relocated their residence to Constantinople after 447.

⁵² See *ACO*, II/5, p. 24, *apparatus* 15.

⁵³ See E. Schwartz, "Praefatio," p. XIII; Eduard Schwartz, "Corrigenda," in *ACO*, II/5, p. XXIII. On E. Schwartz's final explanation regarding the absence of the name of Valerian of Marcianopolis in the letter of Moesia Secunda, see below, paragraph with n. 57.

⁵⁴ K. Iłski, "Korespondencja biskupów," pp. 134–135; Kazimierz Iłski, *Biskupi Mezji i Scythii IV–VI w./ The Bishops of Moesia and Scythia: 4th–6th Centuries*, coll. *Moesia II et Scythia Minor*, vol. 2, *Prosopographia Moesiaca*, vol. 5, VIS, Poznań, 1995, pp. 45 and 66; B. Nikolova, "The Church of Odessos," p. 94; A.B. Biernacki, "A City of Christians," p. 1. G. Atanasov ["Belezhki i dopūlneniā kŭm tsŭrkovnata organizatsiā v Skitiā i Vtora Miziiā prez IV–VI v."]/ "Notes and Additions to the Church Organization in Scythia and Moesia Secunda during the 4th–6th Centuries," in *Acta Musei Varnensis*, VIII-1 (2008), pp. 304–305; "Christianity along," p. 359] wrongly claims that the signature of Valerian of Marcianopolis appears in the response letter addressed to the emperor. Similarly, N. Zugravu (*Erezii și schisme*, p. 100; "Studiu introductiv," pp. 121–122) argues that the metropolitan of Marcianopolis expressed his position "together with his suffragans" in favor of maintaining the creed established at Chalcedon and against Timothy Aelurus. In the latter work, Zugravu refers to the response letter of the hierarchs from Moesia Secunda in the *Encyclia* ("Studiu introductiv," p. 122, n. 838). However, as seen, Valerian's name does not appear there.

⁵⁵ The convening of the provincial synod was not possible in the Islands, Cappadocia Prima, and Scythia; on this issue, see Ionuț Holubeanu, "The Ecclesiastical Organization in Armenia Interior in the 5th Century AD," in *Revista Română de Studii Eurasiatice/ Romanian Review of Eurasian Studies*, 13 (2017), nos. 1–2, pp. 257–259; I. Holubeanu, *Christianity in Roman Scythia*, pp. 54–57.

⁵⁶ The titular metropolitans (autocephalous archbishops) represent a particular case. Although all of them received personal letters from the emperor, their responses varied. Some of them, such as Sebastian of Beroe in Thrace (*ACO*, II/5, pp. 30¹⁰–31¹¹) and Lucian of Bizye in Europa (*ACO*, II/5, p. 28^{17–35}), responded to the emperor individually. In contrast, Eustathius of Berytus in Phoenice Prima (*ACO*, II/5, p. 44²⁴) preferred to respond alongside the other members of his provincial synod. It is unknown how the other four titular metropolitans (Peter of Nicaea and Eleutherius of Chalcedon in Bithynia, Aetherichus of Smyrna in Asia, and

only province where the provincial synod and the metropolitan did not conform to the emperor's explicit request, sending him different response letters. Therefore, this explanation for Valerian's absence from his province's response letter is most likely incorrect.

Finally, other scholars have attributed Valerian's absence to his death.⁵⁷ This explanation finds support in two other similar cases from the *Encyclia*. One of these is that of Metropolitan Ibas of Edessa in Osrhoene. His name is mentioned in the list of recipients, just like Valerian's.⁵⁸ However, in the response letter from the hierarchs of Osrhoene, the name of his successor to the metropolitan see, Nonnus, appears.⁵⁹ The date of Ibas's death is also known (28 October 457). Based on these pieces of evidence, scholars have concluded that at the time of the dispatch of the official letters by the imperial chancellery, news of Ibas's death had not yet reached Constantinople.⁶⁰

The second case is that of Metropolitan Symeon of Amida in Mesopotamia. His name also appears in the list of recipients,⁶¹ but in the response letter sent by the hierarchs of the province, Maras is mentioned as the metropolitan.⁶²

The difference between these two cases and that of Valerian would consist of the fact that in Osrhoene and Mesopotamia, the successors of the deceased metropolitans had already been elected at the time of dispatching the response letters to the emperor by the hierarchs of these provinces, whereas in Moesia Secunda, the see of Marcianopolis was still vacant. Such a situation may be explained by the fact that Valerian had recently passed away, and the election of his successor [or at least his ordination in Constantinople, in accordance with the provisions of Canon 28 of the Council of Chalcedon (451)]⁶³ had not yet taken place when the hierarchs of Moesia Secunda dispatched their response letter to the emperor. Another argument supporting the hypothesis of the death of the metropolitan of Marcianopolis is provided by the signature list of the Home Synod in 458/459. As will be shown below,⁶⁴ at that time the metropolitan of Marcianopolis was no longer Valerian, but Paul.

5. THE ORDER OF SIGNATURES OF THE BISHOPS FROM MOESIA SECUNDA IN THE *ENCYCLIA*

Important for understanding the civil and ecclesiastical situation in the period 447–457 in Moesia Secunda is the principle that underpinned the establishment of the order in which the province's hierarchs signed their letter addressed to Emperor Leo I. As already mentioned, the bishop of Abritus (Marcian) appears first, followed by those of Appiaria (Martialis), Durostorum (Minofilus), Nicopolis ad Istrum (Marcellus), Novae (Peter), and

Philip of Hierapolis in Phrygia Pacatiana) questioned by the emperor (see *ACO*, II/5, pp. 23²⁶⁻²⁷ and 24¹⁰⁻¹¹) proceeded, as neither the letters from their provinces nor any personal response letter from any of them have been preserved.

⁵⁷ J. Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes*, pp. 165 (n. 7) and 362 (n. 1); E. Schwartz, "Praefatio," p. XIII; G. Siebigs, *Kaiser Leo I*, p. 956, n. 5. This possibility seems to be accepted by B. Nikolova as well ("The Church of Odessos," p. 94, n. 7).

⁵⁸ *ACO*, II/5, p. 23⁵.

⁵⁹ *ACO*, II/5, p. 41³.

⁶⁰ E. Schwartz, "Praefatio," p. XIII; T. Schnitzler, *Im Kampfe um Chalcedon*, pp. 54–55, n. 5; G. Siebigs, *Kaiser Leo I*, pp. 357 (n. 319), 412 ff.

⁶¹ *ACO*, II/5, p. 23⁶.

⁶² *ACO*, II/5, p. 42²⁷. For Maras's metropolitan rank, see also above, n. 48. Maras's metropolitan rank is affirmed by G. Fedalto as well (*Hierarchia Ecclesiastica Orientalis*, vol. 2, Messaggero, Padova, 1988, p. 823).

⁶³ Norman P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1, Sheed & Ward, London, 1990, pp. 99–100.

⁶⁴ See below, section "The Home Synod of AD 458/459."

Odessos (Dizza). In a study dedicated to this topic, it was concluded that the suffragans of Marcianopolis signed the document according to their seniority.⁶⁵ Specifically, Marcian is mentioned first in the salutation phrase and signed first at the end of the letter due to his lengthy tenure as a bishop, spanning at least 28 years by 457/458. The other signatories had shorter lengths of service. Hence, any other bishop from the province could have been mentioned first in the salutation phrase and could have been the first to sign the letter if he had a longer tenure in the episcopate than Marcian.

This is why Marcian chaired the special session of the provincial synod and assumed temporary leadership of the Church in Moesia Secunda—a role he took on following the death of Metropolitan Valerian and until the election of Paul as his successor. Therefore, the position of Marcian's signature does not indicate the transfer of the Church's leadership from Moesia to Abritus in 447, nor the relocation of the provincial administrative and military apparatus to this city.

Regarding the latter aspect, it is plausible that the administrative headquarters was temporarily moved to another city following the destruction of Marcianopolis in 447. Among all the cities of the province, Odessos was the most suitable choice for such a relocation. It was the closest geographically to Marcianopolis and the best protected against potential new barbarian attacks (see the map). Just taking this latter aspect into account, Emperor Justinian officially moved the capital of the province from Marcianopolis to Odessos approximately a century later (in 536).

6. THE HOME SYNOD OF AD 458/459

The Home Synod of AD 458/459 took place under Patriarch Gennadius of Constantinople. Its central theme was the approval of a circular letter drafted by the patriarch, which was aimed at condemning the practice of simony.⁶⁶ The documentation pertaining to this synod is significant, especially since it occurred in the context following the *Encyclia* investigation.

What is particularly interesting in the present investigation is the list of signatures attached to the circular letter. It contains the signatures of 81 hierarchs—metropolitans and bishops—who participated in the synod. Among them, at position 7, is the signature of Paul of Marcianopolis: “Παῦλος ἐπίσκοπος τῆς μητροπόλεως Μαρκιανουπόλεως ὑπέγραψα”⁶⁷ (“Paul, bishop of the metropolis of Marcianopolis, I have signed”).

The signature certifies that Valerian was no longer the metropolitan of Marcianopolis, confirming the previous conclusion regarding his death towards the end of 457 or the beginning of 458.⁶⁸ As for Paul, the successor in the see, he is also attested with

⁶⁵ See Ionuț Holubeanu, “Câteva considerații privind ordinea semnăturilor episcopilor din Moesia Secunda în *Encyclia* (457/8 p.Chr.)”/ “Some Remarks on the Sequence of Bishops' Signatures in the Letter of Moesia Secunda in *Encyclia* (AD 457/8),” in *Pontica*, 50 (2017), pp. 127–135. At the moment, we are preparing the English version of this study.

⁶⁶ See Venance Grumel, *Les registres des Actes du patriarcat de Constantinople. vol. I: Les actes des Patriarches, fasc. I: Les registres de 381 à 715*, Institut français d'études byzantines, 2nd ed., Paris, 1972, pp. 104–105 (with bibliography).

⁶⁷ Eduard Schwartz, *Publizistische sammlungen zum acacianischen schisma*, Beck, Munich, 1934, p. 176, n. 1 (no. 7).

⁶⁸ G. Fedalto (*Hierarchia*, 1, p. 341) does not mention Paul in the list of hierarchs from Marcianopolis. Based on the information provided by Fedalto and the list of recipients from the *Encyclia*, N. Zugravu (*FHDRCh*, p. 423, n. 2) considers that the mention of Paul as the metropolitan of Marcianopolis, rather than Valerian, in the signature list of 448/449, is a mistake. Conversely, E. Schwartz, publishing the critical edition of the list, makes no observation regarding Paul's signature. Furthermore, in his commentary on this document, Schwartz notes

the rank of metropolitan. As observed, he clearly stated the status of metropolis of his city of residence—‘τῆς μητροπόλεως Μαρκιανουπόλεως’ (‘of the metropolis of Marcianopolis’)—and, consequently, the metropolitan rank of his see. The same type of signature, in which the metropolitan status of the see is highlighted by mentioning the civil rank of the city of residence, also appears in the signatures of all the other 19 metropolitans (including titular ones) in the list.⁶⁹

It should also be noted that the civil status of a settlement was the basis for its ecclesiastical rank. This is clearly evident in the provisions of canon 12 of the Council of Chalcedon (451), which regulate the situation of the titular metropolitan sees (‘autocephalous metropoleis’ or ‘autocephalous archbishoprics’). The canon indicates that the bishoprics of the metropolises held the status of metropolitan sees.⁷⁰

On the other hand, analyzing the structure of the list, it can be observed that the signatories consciously followed the hierarchical principle. The first signature on the list is that of Patriarch Gennadius. The signatures of the metropolitans are found at positions 2–19, while those of the ordinary bishoprics are at positions 20–50 and 52–81. The only exception to the hierarchical principle is the signature of the titular metropolitan (autocephalous archbishop) Serenus of Maximianopolis in Rhodope, who appears in the group of suffragan bishops at position 51. The reason for this positioning is unknown. However, given the substantial number of participants (81 signatories), this exception does not fundamentally undermine the evidence supporting the hierarchical principle. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that no signature from any suffragan bishop appears within the group of metropolitans.⁷¹

Regarding Paul’s signature, it appears in the group of metropolitans in a prominent position—the seventh out of 19. This positioning provides additional evidence that the hierarch of Marcianopolis held the rank of metropolitan, and he was not considered in any way inferior among the other bishops with this rank participating in the synod.⁷²

However, the form of the signature and its position in the list do not allow for a clear conclusion regarding the specific type of this rank. More precisely, based on this evidence, it cannot be definitively established whether the see of Marcianopolis was a great metropolis (i.e., a metropolitan see with suffragan bishoprics) or merely a titular metropolitan see (i.e., a metropolitan see without suffragans). Both cases are possible. In fact, in the group of metropolitans, the signatures of those with suffragans—nos. 2–4, 6, 8–11, 13–14, and 16—are mixed with those of titular ones—nos. 5, 12, 15, and 17–19. Additionally, there are no distinctive elements in the signatures that would allow the identification of metropolitans with suffragans and titular metropolitans. Both groups defined their city of residence simply as ‘μητρόπολις’ (‘metropolis’) without any additional distinctive elements.⁷³ Noteworthy, though not conclusive in itself, is the observation that in

that in Marcianopolis, as well as in three other episcopal centers, the hierarch mentioned in the *Encyclia* had been replaced by another (E. Schwartz, *Publizistische sammlungen*, p. 177, n. 1). Paul’s tenure at Marcianopolis instead of Valerian is also accepted by B. Nikolova (“The Church of Odessos,” p. 94, n. 7) and G. Siebigs (*Kaiser Leo I*, p. 358, n. 323).

⁶⁹ See E. Schwartz, *Publizistische sammlungen*, p. 176, n. 1 (nos. 1–6, 8–19, and 51).

⁷⁰ See N.P. Tanner, *Decrees*, p. 93.

⁷¹ See E. Schwartz, *Publizistische sammlungen*, p. 176, n. 1; I. Holubeanu, *Organizarea bisericească*, annex 8, pp. 348–355.

⁷² H. Gelzer (“Zur Zeitbestimmung,” pp. 341 and 345) also sees in Paul of Marcianopolis’s signature a clear proof that, at that time, his see still held the rank of metropolitan within the province of Moesia Secunda.

⁷³ The only exception in this regard is the signature of Metropolitan Stephen of Hierapolis in Euphratensis. In his signature, the name of his city of residence is not mentioned; instead, the name of the province over which

the *Notitiae episcopatum*, the see of Marcianopolis is never recorded as an autocephalous archbishopric (i.e., a titular metropolitan see), but only as a great metropolis or ordinary bishopric.⁷⁴ However, given that the see of Marcianopolis is repeatedly attested as a great metropolis throughout the preceding decade, it can be concluded that it still held this rank in 458/459.

It is hard to say what prompted Paul's arrival in Constantinople. The analysis in the first part of this study rules out the possibility that he was a refugee there, like Saturninus.⁷⁵ His arrival could be seen in the context of his election as metropolitan following Valerian's death, to be ordained by the ecumenical patriarch in accordance with the provisions of Canon 12 of Chalcedon (451).⁷⁶ Another possible explanation might be his endeavor, as a freshly appointed metropolitan, to secure material support from the imperial authorities for his Church—like the allocation of funds for the building of the new metropolitan cathedral in Marcianopolis—or his province.

7. THE ROLE OF THE BISHOP OF ABRITUS DURING METROPOLITAN SATURNINUS'S REFUGE IN CONSTANTINOPLE, AD 447–449

In the following lines, we will briefly analyze the possibility that the bishop of Abritus officially assumed the leadership of the province of Moesia Secunda between the years 447 and 449, at the time when Metropolitan Saturninus was in Constantinople. For this, we will outline the main rights held by a metropolitan in an eastern province.

First and foremost, it is important to underscore that the hypothesis attributing metropolitan rights to the bishop of Abritus is based on Marcian's presidency of the provincial synod of 457/458. Nonetheless, as illustrated, this circumstance stemmed from the demise of Metropolitan Valerian. Hence, this occurrence ought to be viewed as exceptional and transient, lasting until the ascension of Paul, Valerian's successor.

Regarding the metropolitan's rights, one of these consisted of convening and presiding over provincial synods. According to the provisions of canon 5 of the First Council of Nicaea (325) and canon 20 of the Council of Antioch (c.341), ordinary synods were biennial, one being held in the spring and the other in the autumn.⁷⁷ Within them, primarily cases of disciplinary nature arising in the province were to be discussed. Canon 20 of Antioch also stipulated that ordinary provincial synods cannot be held without the metropolitan.

This last provision rules out the possibility of the bishop of Abritus convening and presiding over the provincial synods of Moesia Secunda between 447–449. It seems more likely that no such synod was held during that time, given the refuge of Metropolitan Secundinus in Constantinople, his advanced age, and the province's disarray caused by the

his see presided is indicated: 'Στέφανος ἐπίσκοπος τῆς μητροπόλεως Εὐφρατησίας ὑπέγραψα' ('Stephen, bishop of the metropolis of [the province of] Euphratensis, I have signed')—E. Schwartz, *Publizistische sammlungen*, p. 176, n. 1 (no. 13).

⁷⁴ As a great metropolis: J. Darrouzès, *Notitiae episcopatum*, 1.37, p. 205; 1.32.444, p. 213; 2.36, p. 217; 2.32.512, p. 227; 3.47 and 50, p. 231; 3.44.727, p. 244; 4.37, p. 249; 4.31.462, p. 260; 5.32, p. 265. As an ordinary bishopric: J. Darrouzès, *Notitiae episcopatum*, 3.36.607, p. 241.

⁷⁵ See above, section "Metropolitan Saturninus of Marcianopolis (431–c.449)."

⁷⁶ N.P. Tanner, *Decrees*, pp. 99–100.

⁷⁷ On canon 5 of Nicaea (325), see N.P. Tanner, *Decrees*, p. 8. On canon 20 of Antioch (c.341), see *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church. Their Canons and Dogmatic Decrees, Together with the Canons of All the Local Synods Which Have Received Ecumenical Acceptance*, Henry R. Percival (ed.), coll. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. II/14, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1971, p. 254.

Hunnish attack of 447/448. The non-convening of these synods would not have been unusual at that time. From the clarifications set forth in canon 19 of the Council of Chalcedon (451), it appears that provincial synods were not held in many provinces of the Eastern Empire. For this reason, the Chalcedonian canon reinstated the observance of this practice.⁷⁸

Very likely, however, Marcianus of Abritus was the one who convened the extraordinary provincial synod of 449, during which Secundinus's successor was elected. This is because he was senior in terms of ordination in Moesia Secunda. However, this is also an exceptional situation, motivated by the death of the metropolitan.

It is difficult to say who convened the extraordinary provincial synod prompted by the investigation of Emperor Leo I. If he was still alive, the convocation must have been made by Metropolitan Valerian. If he was already deceased upon the arrival of the imperial letter, then the task again fell to the bishop of Abritus. He also presided over the provincial synod during which Valerian's successor, Paul, was elected. It is possible that the latter was elected during the synod in which the issues raised by Emperor Leo I were discussed and the response letter to him was drafted. This was also an exceptional situation, motivated by the death of the metropolitan.

Another right of the metropolitan was to confirm the election of the new bishops in the province, according to canons 4 and 6 of the First Council of Nicaea.⁷⁹ The transfer of this right by Secundinus to the bishop of Abritus is also unlikely. However, there is no documentary evidence to establish whether any new bishop was elected in Moesia Secunda between 447 and 449. Peter of Novae, who had the shortest tenure in episcopacy among the bishops of the province in 457–458, must have been elected after the death of Saturninus, during the tenure of Valerian. This is because Secundinus of Novae, Peter's predecessor, is attested as bishop on 13 April 449 (see above). It is not known, however, when Bishop Marcellus of Nicopolis ad Istrum, who had a longer tenure in the episcopacy than Peter, became bishop.

Finally, the metropolitan served as an intermediary between central civil and ecclesiastical authorities and his suffragan bishops. This would involve announcing the convocation of the Second Council of Ephesus, the Council of Chalcedon, and the initiation of Emperor Leo I's religious investigation. Historical information analyzed within the scope of this study excludes the possibility that the intermediary between the emperor in Constantinople and the bishops of Moesia Secunda was anyone other than the metropolitan of Marcianopolis.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the investigation discussed above, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- After the destruction of Marcianopolis by the Huns in 447, its metropolitan, Saturninus, sought refuge in Constantinople, where he spent his last years (447–c.449). Most likely, however, he retained his metropolitan rights and responsibilities during his stay in the imperial capital;
- It is possible that the administrative headquarters of Moesia Secunda was temporarily moved to another city within the province after the destruction of

⁷⁸ N.P. Tanner, *Decrees*, p. 96: “Ἦλθεν εἰς τὰς ἡμετέρας ἀκοάς, ὡς ἐν ταῖς ἐπαρχίαις αἱ κεκανονισμέναι σύνοδοι τῶν ἐπισκόπων οὐ γίνονται” (“We have heard that in the provinces the synods of bishops prescribed by canon law are not taking place”).

⁷⁹ See N.P. Tanner, *Decrees*, pp. 7 and 8–9.

- Marcianopolis by the Huns in 447, but there is no unequivocal evidence that this city was Abritus. It seems more likely that it was moved to Odessos;
- The name of Metropolitan Valerian does not appear in the response letter of the hierarchs from Second Moesia because he had recently passed away. At the time of the provincial synod during which the issues raised by Emperor Leo I were discussed, the metropolitan see of Marcianopolis was vacant;
 - In October 457, none of the bishoprics within the ecclesiastical province of Moesia Secunda held the rank of titular metropolitan see;
 - At the time Emperor Leo I initiated his religious investigation (October 457), the ecclesiastical province of Moesia Secunda had the following episcopal structure: Marcianopolis (great metropolis), Abritus, Appiaria, Durostorum, Nicopolis ad Istrum, and Novae (ordinary bishoprics).

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Anexes: Map of the episcopal sees in the Roman province of Moesia Secunda in AD 457-458

