

## **In the Basil II's Novel of 988 a forgery ?**

— A reconsideration of the imperial fiscal problems and monastic policies in the 10 th century Byzantine Empire—

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### **Abstract**

This paper reconsiders the Macedonian Novels concerning monastic properties issued in the second half of 10 th century, focusing especially on the Novel of 988 (supposedly issued by Basil II (976 - 1025)), which has been suspected as a forgery by several scholars including F. Dolger, G. Ostrogorsky, P. Lemerle, and N. Svoronos.

The “novel of 988 by Basil II” was to abolish the Legislation of Nicephorus II Phocas (963-969), which had prohibited the construction of new monasteries and charitable institutions, but ordained the rescue of existing facilities. This inconsonant novel was also in its contents, contrary to the one issued by Basil II himself in 996, which was also to restrain endowments of properties to ecclesiastical institutions.

After surveying the academic arguments and relating sources, the author concludes the possibility of authenticity of the “novel of 988”, following P. Charanis, J. Ph. Thomas and so on, although it might be Basil II's fugitive action in his difficult period.