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MARK OF EPHESUS (1392-1444): REVISITING THE SOURCES ON HIS LIFE AND WORK

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Ewan Davies, Swansea

Abstract

Mark of Ephesus, or Mark Eugenikos (1392-1444), was a leading Byzantine theologian of the 15th century. He was a key figure on the Byzantine side at the Ecumenical Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438-1445), which attempted to bring about a reunion between the Latin and Greek Orthodox Churches after the schism of 1054. Initially sympathetic to the idea of reunion Mark became increasingly sceptical and in the end refused to sign the bull of union, *Laetentur Caeli*. He went on to become a leading voice in the Greek east opposing the union, which was declared on 6 July 1439 and then enforced by the Emperor, John VIII Palaiologos, until the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, or, in ecclesiastical terms, until its revocation by a Constantinopolitan Council sometime between 1482 and 1484.

Western scholars have tended to perceive Mark as a rather sad figure, beholden to Palamite Hesychasm, apophaticism and spiritual theology, an ascetic and monk, narrow in his outlook, philosophically and dialectically ill-equipped against the astute Latin scholastics, who led the debates at Florence and in most cases won the oratorical contests. The present article contends that this characterization is flawed. It accepts – prejudicially – the Latin approach to Council proceedings as standard and neglects the validity of Eastern concerns regarding, for example, the Latin tendency to brush aside Patristic and late-antique conciliar theology as irrelevant and to introduce flawed and even fake documents into debates to validate idiosyncratic doctrines.

A new look at the sources, as proposed by this article, reveals that Mark was in reality an exceedingly competent and observant conciliar theologian, whose knowledge of Patristic and conciliar theology was arguably superior to that of most of his Latin counterparts and who was very well able to understand and even formulate scholastic theological arguments, for example on the doctrine of predestination. Moreover, what has escaped many previous scholars almost entirely was Mark's key role as a leading Byzantine theologian and spiritual guide. Referred to once by Steven Runciman as "the conscience" of the Byzantine contingent at Ferrara-Florence his principled opposition against the bull of union was highly respected in the Greek east, and because he suffered attacks and repressions from dominant unionists, he was soon venerated as a martyr to the cause of Greek Orthodoxy, a role which was greatly amplified after the end of the imperial Church in 1453.

Finally, a renewed return to the sources of Mark's life, work and thought may also open up new theological perspectives to possibilities and limitations of efforts towards reunion between Latin and Orthodox Churches today. Keeping in mind the changed historical context, there are nevertheless lessons to be learnt from the example of Mark of Ephesus.

Keywords

Mark of Ephesus – Mark Eugenikos – Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438-1445) – *Laetentur Caeli* – John VIII Palaiologos – Greek Orthodoxy

Introduction

The Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438-45) marked the final attempt – in the context of a general Church Council – to reunify the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches following the so-called "Schism of 1054." It was successful. On 5 July 1439 most of the Latin and Byzantine Fathers in attendance at Florence formally signed the bull of union,

Laetentur Caeli, which was publicly proclaimed in both Latin and Greek the following day. Thereby the two bodies of Churches ostensibly resolved their long-standing disputes over matters such as the *filioque*, Papal Primacy, Purgatory and the nature and number of Sacraments. But there were opponents; and historical events occurred, which made sure that the triumph did not last. Those opposed had good reasons to be doubtful. One of them was Mark, the Metropolitan of Ephesus (1392-1444). He was one, indeed the leading one, of few Byzantine Fathers who refused to sign the bull of union that day, and he would go on to spearhead the campaign against reunion until his death. After his death a number of his disciples formed the *Ἱερά Σύναξις* and continued his cause until the Ottoman capture of Constantinople on 29 May 1453 – and beyond.

Following the demise of the Byzantine Empire and under Ottoman rule the Ecumenical Patriarchate was restructured in a way that frustrated any efforts for the Florentine reunion to be implemented in the Orthodox Church. The appointment of anti-unionist clergy to the principal offices of the Church in Constantinople, such as the elevation of Mark's student, Georgios Gennadios Scholarios, to the Patriarchate in January 1454, merely underlines this development.

In the end, at a synod held in Constantinople at some time between 1482 and 1484, the Eastern Orthodox Churches whose representatives were in attendance, formally repudiated the Florentine reunion and the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Churches have remained formally in schism ever since.¹

Given this background and the role of Mark of Ephesus as a key figure within these developments, this article aims to examine what information the available literary sources concerning Mark's life and work provide in order to glean why Mark initially rejected the reunion and why he led the subsequent opposition to it in the east. The article also poses the question whether Mark's framework of thought might contain anything that is useful for Roman Catholic as well as Eastern Orthodox ecumenists today to understand and work towards resolving doctrinal and practical divergences and edge towards greater unity and, perhaps, union.

Mark of Ephesus' Life, Work and Thought: *Status quaestionis*

Through the early-to-mid twentieth century several Western ecclesiastical historians and theologians concerned with late medieval Byzantium assessed Mark's personal abilities and intellectual framework rather unfavourably. For example, the French Assumptionist theologian, Louis Petit, who in 1923 published a critical edition of Mark's anti-unionist oeuvres, posited that Mark was led by an irrational anti-Latin antipathy when producing these writings.² Likewise, in his 1926 article on Mark's life, work and thought, Petit's fellow French Assumptionist, Venance Grumel, judged Mark as myopic in regard to the Pneumatology he upheld in the debates concerning the addition of the *filioque* clause to the Creed and the Spirit's *ad intra* procession at Ferrara-Florence.³ Yet another French Assumptionist theologian contemporaneous to Grumel and Petit, Martin Jugie, broadly accorded with Grumel's interpretation of Mark in the second of his five-volume oeuvre

¹ See *Concilium Constantinopolitanum*, a. 1484 (Paschalidis 2016: 225-8).

² Petit 1923: 309-35 at 309.

³ Grumel 1926: 448.

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Theologia dogmatica christianorum orientalium ab Ecclesia catholica dissidentium from 1933.⁴ While Jugie acknowledged that Mark's works could potentially fulfil the role of literary interlocutors to the Latin Church concerning the divisive question of the divine essence-energies distinction, he nonetheless held that throughout the Council of Ferrara-Florence Mark as well as the other Byzantine attendants were either totally incognizant of the Latin Patristic tradition, or they pusillanimously denounced such Latin literature as having been corrupted by the western reception.⁵

Building upon these earlier Roman Catholic studies, in 1959, the Jesuit Byzantinist, Joseph Gill, published what could be argued to be his magnum opus, *The History of the Council of Florence*. One of Gill's main intentions was to provide a new narrative of the history of Ferrara-Florence based on the then still recent publication of critical editions of key source material for the Council, including the *Acta Graeca*, the *Acta Latina*, and Sylvestros Syropoulos' *Memoirs*.⁶ Although his work was primarily a historical rather than theological endeavour, Gill nevertheless paid considerable attention to expositing the doctrines articulated by the various contingents that attended the Council and even to the contributions of individual participants. It was in this context that Gill negatively evaluated the cogency of Mark's overall theological framework. Thus, regarding Mark's contribution to the Florentine debates concerning the *filioque* held in winter 1438 Gill concludes that

Mark ... was unpersuaded [by the Latins] ... [he was] more than ever confirmed in his belief of the unassailability of the Greek position [regarding the *filioque*], convinced by his own eloquence.⁷

Regarding Mark's post-conciliar activity Gill describes how

[Mark] was active with voice and pen persuading the hesitant, confirming the persuaded and exciting the convinced to open and undying opposition to union. It was not a very difficult task, because the Greeks at large had long believed that the Latins were heretics. But Mark performed his task well. He wrote an encyclical letter "to all orthodox Christians everywhere and in the islands;" he composed an account of his action in the Council; he corresponded with various people. In the compositions he mingled deep reverence for tradition with scorn for the "innovators", ardent love of his Church and vulgar invective against the Latins and their Greek supporters (he never, however, wrote a

⁴ Jugie 1933: 141.

⁵ Jugie 1933: 402.

⁶ See Gill 1959: viii-xv; see also Gill 1953; Laurent 1971.

⁷ Gill 1959: 166. A somewhat fairer, though still quite unfavourable, assessment of Mark's role at the Council offers Runciman 1968. Runciman calls Mark on the one hand the "conscience" of the Byzantine contingent because of his honesty and loyalty to Orthodox doctrine, while otherwise "the Emperor could dominate his team at Florence unchallenged" (72). But on the other hand he deplores the fact that Mark was an "ineffectual debater" (108) because of his "loyalty to the apophatic tradition" (127 and 134-35). Runciman thus describes the Council from a Latin perspective. For him the meetings between Latins and Greeks were dialectical contests, in which the Latins inevitably gained the upper hand because of their superior philosophical debating skills. The fact that their knowledge of the Patristic and conciliar tradition was patchy and skewed counted for little under the circumstances (104-10). A reappraisal of the practice of referring to and arguing with these traditions in the conciliar proceedings as practised by Mark and his colleagues is therefore a desideratum.

disrespectful word about the Emperor), serious theological reasoning with the most blatant *argumenta ad hominem*. He was writing primarily, not for theologians, but for the mass of the Greeks, and he was clever enough to adapt his style and method to the educational level of the ignorant monks and the amorphous populace – very successfully.⁸

The importance of Mark's contribution to and later study of the Council of Ferrara-Florence and its aftermath is reflected by the state of veneration in which he was held in Eastern Orthodoxy in the proximate aftermath to his death. This is especially reflected in the manner in which Georgios-Gennadios Scholarios characterised him in his writings and speeches following the Council. Scholarios was born in Constantinople to a family from Thessaly and began his formative instruction under Mark during the latter's tenure as a schoolmaster in Constantinople in the 1410s.⁹ He then studied with John Chortasmenos, Joseph Bryennios, and Makarios Makres, all three of whom had been closely associated with Mark.¹⁰ During the 1430s he became *διδάσκαλος* of his own school of philosophy in Constantinople.¹¹ In this role he garnered such a strong reputation that in 1437 Emperor John VIII Palaiologos appointed him *καθολικὸς κριτὴς τῶν Ῥωμαίων*, which was one of the principal positions in the Byzantine jurisprudential system.¹² He also appointed him as adviser (*peritus*) to a body led by Mark of Ephesus commissioned to prepare for the doctrinal debates at the impending Council of Ferrara-Florence. As part of this research Mark and Scholarios paid particular attention to the Latin doctrine of Papal primacy, the divine essence-energies distinction, and the *filioque*.¹³

⁸ Gill 1964: 64.

⁹ Scholarios, *Lettre d'Envoi de l'Ouvrage précédent a Marc d'Éphèse* (Petit-Sidéridès-Jugie 1929-1935: 4.117-8: Mark his first instructor); Scholarios, *Éloge de Marc Eugénikos, archevêque d'Éphèse* (Jugie-Sidéridès-Petit 1929-1935: 1.248-9: He knew Mark before he became a monk, a fact that will be discussed below); see also Turner 1969: 420-23 for an overview of Scholarios' familial background and early life.

¹⁰ Scholarios, *Premier Dialogue sur la Procession du Saint-Esprit* (Jugie-Sidéridès-Petit 1929-1935: 3.7: Scholarios studied under Chortasmenos, Bryennios and Makres). It is also possible that Mark directed his former student to receiving some form of instruction under one of his own former teachers, Georgios Gemistos Plethon, while serving in Emperor John VIII's retinue during the Emperor's voyage to the Peloponnese ca. 1426 to 1428. This hypothesis is partly based on the fact that Scholarios referred to Plethon as "my master and my brother (Αὐθέντῃ μου, ἀδελφῇ μου);" Scholarios, *Lettre a Démétrius Raoul Kabakès (1450-1451)* (Petit-Sidéridès-Jugie 1929-1935: 3.457-8). Kappes 2018: 103-7 argues for this possibility.

¹¹ See the letter addressed to his students written during this period, explaining the enjoyment he gained from his teaching and research: Scholarios, *Lettre a ses élèves* (Petit-Sidéridès-Jugie 1929-1935: 4.403).

¹² Cf. Doukas, *Istoria turco-bizantină (1341-1462)* (Grecu 1958: 267).

¹³ Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires*, 3.10 (Laurent 1971: 170) reports that this preparatory commission made use of Neilos Kabasilas' *De primatu Papae*. See also Manuel of Corinth, *Manuelis Magni Rhetoris Liber de Marco* (Petit 1923: 520); Schmemmann 1957: 17. Monfasani (2011: 167-8) posits that by 1438 Mark had produced his *Capita Syllogistica adversus Latinos de Spiritu Sancti ex Solo Patre Processione* and Scholarios his *Réponse aux Syllogismes de Marc d'Éphèse sur la procession de la Saint-Esprit* (Jugie-Petit-Sidéridès 1929-1935: 3.476-538) as a result of their cooperation within this imperial study group, thus indicating the nature of their research material. Assuming the veracity of Monfasani's conclusion, Scholarios' references to Neilos Kabasilas' *De processione de Spiritu Sancto* within his *Réponse* suggests their use of this work within their pre-conciliar preparatory studies. See Scholarios' *Réponse* (Jugie-Petit-Sidéridès 1929-1935: 3.496, 497, 499, 500, 507) for his own references to this work. As Gill 1975: 387-8 elucidates, Bessarion explicitly referred to Neilos' doctrinal authority during the council. Jugie, "Avant-Propos" (Jugie-Petit-Sidéridès 1929-1935: 3.xlviii), who dates Scholarios' *Réponse* to c. 1440, claims that the work's tone suggests that it was produced in the context of Mark's refusal to sign *Laetentur Caeli*.

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It seems that Scholarios initially supported ecclesiastical reunion but became doubtful as the Council approached an agreement. This impression is supported by the observation that he likely left the council in June 1439 alongside Plethon and Demetrios Palaiologos, the Despot of the Morea, before the formal signing of the bull of union, *Laetentur Caeli*, on 6 July that year.¹⁴ But he was then not known yet as an outright opponent of the union. The events that took place in his life between his return to Constantinople in 1439 and the death of Mark of Ephesus in 1444 are not well accounted for in his own writings. In 1440 he wrote a letter to Mark in which he explained that he did not wish to engage in intra-Byzantine disputes regarding the reunion until he had fully studied the main points of controversy.¹⁵ Mark responded by criticising Scholarios for his – in his, Mark's, view – tacit support for the reunion. For Mark, Scholarios was beholden to the prestige of the imperial honours which he had received. He reminded his former student that there was no room for vacillation when it came to ecclesiastical matters and he also called in doubt the claim that the reunion was established for the Empire's political and military benefit. Ultimately, he implored Scholarios to resign from his prestigious imperial positions as member of the Byzantine imperial Senate and *καθολικὸς κριτής* and to support him in the authentic Christian cause against the Florentine reunion.¹⁶

Without explaining his motivations in any detail, by 1444 Scholarios at last declared openly his support for the anti-unionist movement. As a result, in spite of his previously ambivalent stance, Mark bestowed on him the leadership of the movement while on his death bed, and Scholarios wore this mantle up to and beyond the Fall of Constantinople in 1453.¹⁷ Scholarios' close relationship with Mark is reflected by the way he bolstered Mark's veneration, beginning with his funeral oration delivered at the Monastery of Saint George in Mangana. Marie-Hélène Blanchet has shown that Scholarios' oration includes many hagiographical elements. Above all it characterises Mark as having courageously defended the *δογματῶν ἀλήθειαν* against the affront as which the Florentine reunion was perceived by Eastern Orthodox Tradition because of some of its crucial clauses.¹⁸

Scholarios especially sought to bolster the characterization of Mark as a defender of Church Tradition, whose motivation behind his subsequent anti-unionism was his desire for the purity of doctrine to be retained. In a letter addressed to Demetrios Palaiologos, the Despot of the Morea, dated 1450 and intended to secure Demetrios' support for the anti-unionist cause, Scholarios appraised Mark thus:

Mark, the pastor of Ephesus, who proved himself excellent amongst his contemporaries in both his reasoning and his life. He knew well how to discern sophistry from true speech. He remained free from any deception and was wholly uninspired by any worldly pleasures. Therefore, he did not allow himself to make any compromise for temporal

¹⁴ See Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires* 9.25 (Laurent 1971: 460).

¹⁵ See Scholarios, *Lettre à Marc Eugenikos* (Jugie-Sidéridès-Petit 1929-1935: 4.445-9).

¹⁶ See Mark of Ephesus, *Marci Ephesii ad Georgium Scholarium epistola, qua in eum invenitur quod aliquam cum Latinis concordiam fieri posse existimasset* (Petit 1923: 460-4).

¹⁷ See *Marci Ephesii Oratio ad Amicorum Coetum ac Nomiantum ad Georgium Scholarium* (Petit 1923: 486, lines 14-489; line 10 for Mark's appointment of Scholarios as his successor); Blanchet 2008: 353-450 for Scholarios' gradual realignment with the anti-union cause and his subsequent appointment and activity as head of the movement opposed to the union.

¹⁸ See Scholarios, *Éloge de Marc Eugénikos, archevêque d'Éphèse* (Jugie-Sidéridès-Petit 1929-1935: 1.247-54 at 251); Sideras 1994: 367-70; Blanchet 2008: 396-400.

purposes. Conversely, inspired by his zeal for the teachings of the Church Fathers, he valiantly struggled and defended traditional teaching in the best way until his passing.¹⁹

In addition, as will be elucidated further below, shortly following his funeral, Mark's younger brother, John Eugenikos, composed a *Συναξάριον* (a collection of narratives) to commemorate his older brother's piety and adherence to Orthodox doctrine. Moreover, the Ecumenical Patriarch Maximos III, who governed the See of Constantinople between 1476 and 1482, commissioned the *μέγας ῥήτωρ* of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Manuel of Corinth, to produce a new *Ακολουθία* in Mark's honour which would be sung on the fifth Sunday of Lent. Ultimately, in 1499, Mark was also added to the list of saints to be commemorated in the *Synodikon of Orthodoxy*.²⁰

In his three-volume work *Celebration of Faith* Alexander Schmemmann has explained the significance of this liturgical expression of Mark's theological authority as typical for the Orthodox tradition. He writes,

One speaks, for example, of liturgical theology, or a liturgical "ressourcement" of theology. For some, this implies an almost radical rethinking of the very concept of theology, a complete change in its structure. The *leitourgia* – being the unique expression of the Church, of its faith and of its life – must become the basic source of theological thinking, a kind of *locus theologicus* par excellence.²¹

Attempts to bolster Mark's *cultus* within the Orthodox tradition continued through the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: In his 1698 work *Τόμος ἀγάπης* (*Tome of Love*) Dositheos II Notaras, Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem, defended Mark's venerated status within Orthodoxy.²² He sought to counteract the Jesuit François Richard, who in 1658 had published a work in Demotic Greek, his *Τάργα τῆς πίστεως τῆς Ρωμαϊκῆς Ἐκκλησίας εἰς τὴν διαφένδουσιν τῆς ὀρθοδοξίας* (*Shield of the Faith of the Roman Church for the Instruction of the Orthodox*), to support Roman Catholic missionaries who worked in Hellenophone regions.²³ In this work Richard evokes John Plousiadenos' *Responsio ad libellum Marci Eugenici, Ephesi metropolitae* claiming that Mark's agonizing death

¹⁹ Scholarios (Jugie-Sidéridès-Petit 1929-1935: 3.134): Μάρκος ὁ τῆς Ἐφέσου ποιμὴν, ἀνὴρ τῶν ἐφ' ἡμῶν ἀπάντων ἄριστος γεγονώς ἐν τε λόγοις καὶ βίῳ καὶ εἰδώς μὲν καλῶς διακρίναι σόφισμα καὶ λόγον ἀληθινόν, καὶ δι' ἐπιστήμην ἀνεξαπάτητος μείνας, ὑπὸ δὲ τῆς τῶν προσκαίρων ἐπιθυμίας μηδόλως παρυσυρεῖς ὥστε συγχωρήσαι τι τῶν σὺ καλῶν διὰ ταῦτα, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τὴν ὑπὲρ τοῦ πατρίου δόγματος ἐνστασιν ἄριστά γε καὶ οἰκείως τῶν πατέρων ἐκείνων ἐνδειξάμενος ζήλω καὶ λόγοις ὑπὲρ ταύτης ἡγωνισμένος ἕως ἐξῆν. The English translation is mine (ED).

²⁰ Papadopoulos-Kerameus 1902a: 60; Blanchet 2012: 106.

²¹ See Schmemmann 2001: 53.

²² Dositheos II Notaras, Patriarch of Jerusalem, *Τόμος ἀγάπης* (Iasi: Boeboda, 1698); see Palmieri 1909: 56-7 for an overview of the provenance of the work.

²³ See esp. Dositheos II, *Τόμος ἀγάπης, Προλεγόμενα*, p. 28, lines 36-40: "...ἔχοντες οὖν τοσοῦτον νέφος μαρτύρων διὰ τὴν ζωὴν καὶ τὴν αἰδίμῳ κοίμῃσιν τοῦ μακαρίου Μάρκου, περιφρονοῦμεν τῆς Τάργας τῆς βλασφημίας τὸν ἅγιον καὶ προσφερούσης τῶν βλασφημιῶν μάρτυρα Ἰωσήφ τὸν Μεθώνης ἄγνωστον ἄνθρωπον τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ καὶ ἀνατεθραμμένον εἰς τὸ σχίσμα, εἰς τοὺς νεωτερισμοὺς καὶ εἰς τὰς αἱρέσεις τῶν Λατίνων... (My English translation:) ...having seen a multitude of witnesses to the life and glorious repose of the blessed Mark, we despise the *Targa* of he who blasphemes the saint and puts forward the blasphemous witness, Joseph of Methone, an ignorant man in the Church and who ruptured into schism, to the Latins' novelties and heresies..."

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was a divine punishment for his opposition to the Florentine reunion.²⁴ On the other hand, in February 1734 the Ecumenical Patriarch, Seraphim I, presided over an assembly of the *Ἐνδημουσα Σύνοδος* which promulgated a decree that ratified Mark's canonisation.²⁵ This inspired Nikodemos the Hagiorite to produce his *Ἀκολουθία* in commemoration of Mark. It was likely completed by the late 1780s and formally published in 1834.²⁶

The high regard for Mark continued into the twentieth century: In his 1972 work *Ὁ Ἅγιος Μάρκος ὁ Εὐγενικός καὶ ἡ ἔνωσις τῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν* (*St. Markos Eugenikos and the Union of Churches*), Nikolaos P. Vasiliadis characterises Mark as one the foremost defenders of Orthodox doctrine in the aftermath of the Council of Florence, especially through his polemical activity against the imperial programme of ecclesial reunion. Vasiliadis' treatise suffers from the weakness, however, that it is apologetic and anachronistic in the way it truncates Mark's opposition to reunion by comparing coeval pro-unionists such as Bessarion and Isidore of Kiev with twentieth-century Orthodox ecumenists, whom Vasiliadis criticises for being preoccupied with non-doctrinal concerns.²⁷

This short overview could offer but a glimpse of Mark's continuous and consistent liturgical veneration since his passing in 1444, which underpins his role as the foremost literary authority on the Orthodox opposition to the union of 1439. It is the aim of this article to demonstrate that any modern-day attempt to reach some form of reconciliation between the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches over the various sources of doctrinal division such as the *filioque*, Purgatory, and Papal Primacy, needs to take Mark's framework of thought into consideration as a *locus theologicus*. The following sections will introduce some of the main sources on Mark's life and work, which should form the basis of such an engagement.

John Eugenikos' *Συναξάριον*.

The principal literary source for Mark of Ephesus' life prior to the Council of Ferrara-Florence is the *Συναξάριον* of his younger brother, John Eugenikos, composed shortly after Mark's death.²⁸ For John's date and location of birth there is no precise information. He was likely born around 1400, as he must have been of similar age to other students at

²⁴ See Richard, *Τάργα τῆς πίστεως...* (PL 159: 1023-1106 at 1088b): “εἰς τὴν ἐν Φλωρεντία ἀντιστάθῃ τῇ συνόδῳ ἓνας καὶ μόνος Μάρκος ὁ τῆς Ἐφέσου· ἀμὴ δὲν ἐπέρασε πολὺς καιρὸς, καὶ ἐπῆγε τοῦ κακοῦ, καὶ ἐχάθηκεν ὁ ταλαίπωρος. Ἄκουε τὸν θεοφιλέστατον ἐπίσκοπον τῆς Μεθώνης Ἰωσήφ, ὁποῦ κατ' ὄνομα, καὶ κατὰ πρόσωπον, καὶ κατὰ ταῖς αἰρέσεις ἐγνώρισε καλὰ τὸν Μάρκον ἐκεῖνον τὸν Ἐφέσιον· διὰ τοῦτο εἰς τὴν ἀπολογίαν τοῦ μιλῶντος μετ' αὐτὸν λέγει· «Μαρτυρεῖ τοῦτο πᾶσα ἡ πόλις...» (My English translation:) During the Council of Florence, [it was] the one and only Mark of Ephesus [who] opposed [it]; but not much time passed and bad things came upon him, and the poor man was lost. Listen to the most holy Bishop of Methone, Joseph, who was well familiar with Mark of Ephesus' name, person, and heresies; for this reason, in his *apologia*, [Joseph] addressed him saying, “The whole city [i.e., Constantinople] bears witness to this [story]...”

²⁵ Papadopoulos-Kerameus 1902a: 56.

²⁶ See Nikodemos the Hagiorite, *Ἀκολουθία τοῦ ἁγίου Πατρὸς ἡμῶν Μάρκου Εὐγενικοῦ Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Ἐφέσου* (Thessalonica: Orthodoxos Kipseli, 2010), 5-35. For the 1834 edition, Nikodemos the Hagiorite, *Ἀκολουθία τοῦ ἐν ἁγίοις πατρὸς ἡμῶν Μάρκου ἀρχιεπισκόπου Ἐφέσου τοῦ Εὐγενικοῦ* (Constantinople: Πατριαρχικὸν Τυπογραφεῖον, 1834). Cf. Manaphis-Arampatzis 2006: 529-44 for an overview of the background to Nikodemos' production of this *ἀκολουθία* and its redaction history.

²⁷ Vasiliadis 1972.

²⁸ For the date see Petrides 1910: 97.

his father's Georgios' and after that Mark's school in Constantinople, including Georgios Scholarios and Theodoros Agallianos, whose dates of birth are estimated by scholars to be in approximately the same year.²⁹ In contrast to Mark, who pursued a monastic vocation, John married and around 1421 moved with his family from Constantinople to the Despotate of the Morea, where he lived until 1431, when he returned to Constantinople. Why he left the Peloponnese is not clear. He was evidently highly respected in the Despotate. But there was his open support for the Despot, Theodoros Palaiologos, when he abdicated to pursue a monastic vocation. John came out on that occasion with a laudatory discourse praising the monastic life.³⁰ When, through the intervention of his inner circle, Theodoros rescinded his decision and remained in post, John again came out in support of the Despot,³¹ but then left Morea shortly after.

At any rate, upon his return to the capital John soon became a Patriarchal *νοτάριος* and was swiftly promoted to the higher office of *χαρτοφύλαξ*. Not long after he was appointed *νομοφύλαξ*.³² While holding these high offices he also taught. One of his students was Giovanni Tortelli, who worked under the alias Johannes Arretinus. He later served as Pope Nicholas I's librarian. He had travelled to Constantinople in 1435 to learn Greek. On 3 July 1435 John presented Tortelli with a copy of Thucydides, having been his instructor for two months.³³ It was likely in virtue of his position as *νομοφύλαξ*, and because of the fact that as Tortelli's former tutor he had some knowledge of Latin, that in 1437 John was selected as one of the Byzantine *periti* to journey to the Italian Peninsula to attend the Council of Ferrara. On this occasion he carried with him a letter from the Eastern Orthodox Patriarchs of Antioch and Jerusalem, whose supreme representative was none other than his brother, Mark of Ephesus.³⁴

Shortly after arriving in Ferrara, John – alongside other senior members of the imperial Byzantine contingent – was invited to a banquet hosted by Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini, Pope Eugenius IV's principal negotiator. Keen to establish amicable relations with the Byzantines, Cesarini invited not only John but also Mark of Ephesus and Metropolitan Dorotheos of Mytilene. While John did not hesitate to accept the invitation, Mark initially declined. This led John to persuade his brother to accompany himself and Dorotheos. By attending the banquet the delegation disregarded advice given – according to Syropoulos – by the Ecumenical Patriarch, Joseph II, not to accept invitations of this nature.³⁵ During the banquet, Cardinal Cesarini requested Mark to recite an encomium addressed to Pope Eugenius IV thanking him for convoking the Council.³⁶ Mark accepted the request and

²⁹ Cf. John's letter to Scholarios (Lambros 1912-1930: 1.159), wherein John alludes to the fact that the two were contemporaries.

³⁰ See John Eugenikos, *Υπόμνημα παραινετικὸν ἐπὶ διορθώσει βίου καὶ ἀρχῇ τῆς κατὰ Χριστὸν πολιτείας πρὸς τὸν δεσπότην κῆρ Θεόδωρον* (Lambros 1912-1930: 1.67-111).

³¹ See especially John's letter to Theodoros (Lambros 1912-1930: 1.115-6).

³² See Omont 1897: 10, 62 (*cod. Par. Gr.* 2075); Litjica 1909: 178.

³³ See Tortelli's subscription of this work in *Codex Basiliensis E. III. 4*, fol. 274^v (Cataldi Palau 2001: 19 n. 55): "Liber Johannis Arretini datus sibi dono a mag(istr)o suo papa Johanne efge eugeniko i(n) Constantinopoli: die III mensis iulij: Anno D(omi)ni M0. CCCC0. XXXV0 secundo scili(cet) me(n)se quo studioru(m) ca(usa) ad ea(m) ciuitate(m) applicui: una cu(m) fidelissimo socio Thomasio (com)patriota: et fra(tre) meo Laurentino."

³⁴ Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires*, 4.44 (Laurent 1971: 248).

³⁵ Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires* 5.3 (Laurent 1971: 258). Syropoulos does not say why Joseph advised this.

³⁶ See Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires* 5.3 (Laurent 1971: 258).

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used the occasion to express the wish that the Roman Church fulfil the reunification of the Latin and Byzantine Churches which it had so brilliantly begun.³⁷ In particular – he requested – she should excise the *filioque* from her version of the Creed and refrain from using azymes as Eucharistic matter. This would remove the causes of dissension amongst the fraternal Churches. Naturally, as Syropoulos points out, these requests were perceived as tactless and provocative. They also incurred the wrath of emperor John VIII, for whom reunion was a vital political goal to obtain aid from the west against the Ottomans.³⁸

After this, Gregorios the *Πρωτοσύγκελλος* suggested to John VIII that Mark and John be monitored on account of their supposed manoeuvres against ecclesial reunion.³⁹ This only helped to stoke tensions within the Byzantine contingent further. Refusing to offer support for ecclesial reunion, given his desire to remain faithful to Orthodox doctrine as well as his lack of trust in the promises of the Holy See to arrange military and financial support for the Byzantine Empire against the Ottomans, John made a request to emperor John VIII to allow him to depart from the Italian Peninsula alongside his brother Mark and Antonios, the Bishop of Herakleia, and return to Constantinople.

While John VIII initially granted them permission to return, he rescinded his decision again upon the intervention of Bessarion, the Metropolitan of Nicaea, who turned out to be a leading unionist. Bessarion argued that Mark's absence would substantially weaken the Byzantine position at the Council. The three were therefore stopped at Ancona by senior officials Alexios Laskaris Philanthropenos and Sylvestrios Syropoulos and escorted back to Ferrara.⁴⁰ For John this was not the last word, however. On 14 September 1438 he did leave Ferrara and set sail from Ancona. However, he was shipwrecked nearby and had to wait until 11 May 1439, before he could finally set off and leave the Italian Peninsula to sail to the east.⁴¹

He reached Constantinople at some point in time before 17 December 1439, when he can be placed in the city upon the passing of emperor John VIII's third wife, Maria Komnene, daughter of emperor Alexios IV of Trebizond; on which occasion he wrote a monody.⁴² He subsequently focused his attention on bolstering a campaign against those who on 5 July 1439 had signed *Laetentur Caeli*. Like his brother Mark and Antonios of Herakleia, who departed from the imperial capital on 14 May 1440, John declined to celebrate the Sacraments under the new Ecumenical Patriarch, Metrophanes II, who in his view had betrayed the Orthodox faith because of his support of the reunion.⁴³ At the same time he tried to restore to his cause those who had supported the reunion, while also providing encouragement to those who continued to adhere to Orthodoxy in the face of adversity. To this end he employed Mark's letters, forwarding this correspondence to prominent officials and clergy imploring them to repent their earlier signing of *Laetentur Caeli* as

³⁷ The encomium is extant as *Marci Ephesii Oratio ad Eugenium Papam Quartum* (Petit 1923: 336-41); *Acta Graeca* (Gill 1953: 28-34).

³⁸ Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires* 5.4 (Laurent 1971: 260).

³⁹ Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires*, 5.31 (Laurent 1971: 286).

⁴⁰ See Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires*, 6.16-7 (Laurent 1971: 306-8); John Eugenikos, *Λόγος Εὐχαριστήριος* (Lambros 1912-1930: 1.275-7) for the factors that influenced John's inability to support ecclesial reunion.

⁴¹ See *Λόγος Εὐχαριστήριος* (Lambros 1912-1930: 1.276-7).

⁴² Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires* 12.17 (Laurent 1971: 568); Sphrantzes, *Chronicon* 24 (Maisano 1990: 86); For Eugenikos' monody, see Lambros 1912-1930: 1.112-4.

⁴³ Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires* 12.10 (Laurent 1971: 556).

well as admonishing them in their idleness and prodding them to increase their efforts to restore harmony in the imperial Church.⁴⁴

Optimistic that the Hellenophone anti-unionist movement was gaining traction, John also journeyed to various Hellenophone regions such as the Empire of Trebizond, where he implored clergy and laity alike to remain steadfast in their opposition. He continued this campaign until 1441-2.⁴⁵ Around 1442 he returned to the Despotate of the Morea, joining the circle of anti-unionists who had sought refuge there including Serapion, the Bishop of Mantinea, Neilos the *Πρωτοσύγκελλος*, and Nikephoros Cheilas.⁴⁶ It was in this context that John may have been informed of his brother Mark's passing. Through the encouragement of an unnamed friend this seismic event in his life inspired him to produce what was arguably his theological magnum opus, the *Ἀντιρρητικὸς*, a point-by-point refutation of *Laetentur Caeli*. In it he utilised to a significant extent discourses of Mark's composed during the Council as well as later letters.⁴⁷ Following the Ottoman invasion of the Peloponnese in 1447 John returned to Constantinople and left his son, Georgios, to guard the family estate in the Peloponnese.⁴⁸ Back in Constantinople John tried to realign Loukas Notaras, *μεσάζων* to both John VIII and Konstantinos XI, with the anti-unionist movement. His approach was two-pronged. He explained to Notaras that only the Orthodox Church had authentically preserved the tradition of the Church Fathers, while he also insisted that the western promises of military aid would prove futile.⁴⁹ Importantly in the context of this article, John supported his arguments with consistent references to his brother Mark, whom he invoked as an authority, as one of the great doctors of the Church, in the company of none other than Gregory Palamas himself.⁵⁰

John also opposed emperor John VIII's successor, Konstantinos XI, who acceded as emperor in January 1449 and continued his predecessor's pro-unionist course.⁵¹ Along with other anti-unionists John declined to commemorate Konstantinos' name during the Divine Liturgy.⁵² But John's attempts to rally anti-unionist support were failing. Deeply

⁴⁴ Among John's correspondents are Konstantinos XI Palaiologos (following his accession as Byzantine Emperor), the *μεσάζων* to both Emperors John VIII and Konstantinos XI, Loukas Notaras, Georgios Amiroutzes, and Sylvestros Syropoulos. John's letters to them can be found in Lambros 1912-1930: 1.123-34, 137-46, 156-7, 191-5.

⁴⁵ John recounted this campaign in numerous letters to David Komnenos and Nikephoros Cheilas; see Lambros 1912-1930: 1.155-6, 166-7, 197-8, 203-4.

⁴⁶ See John's letters to Serapion and Neilos in Lambros 1912-1930: 1.162-3 and 205 respectively. For Nikephoros see Vogiatzides 1925: 197.201.

⁴⁷ See Rossidou-Koutsou 2003: xl-lv for an outline of the argument of the work and *ibid.* 1-5 for John's explanation in his *προοίμιον* of the factors that led to the production of the work.

⁴⁸ See John's letter to Nikephoros Cheilas in Lambros 1912-1930: 1.204.

⁴⁹ See Lambros 1912-1930: 1.137-46.

⁵⁰ See Lambros 1912-1930: 1.123-4.

⁵¹ This was despite the fact that the anti-unionist movement more broadly speaking offered a stringent reaction to this policy. Indeed, even Konstantinos' mother, Helena Dragaš, supported the movement at some point. Cf. John's two letters to Konstantinos XI, the first written in March 1449 following the latter's accession, and the second written in 1450, in Lambros 1912-1930: 59 and 123-5.

⁵² Within his letter to Konstantinos XI dated to March 1449 John explicitly stated that he would not commemorate him if he persisted in his support for the Florentine Reunion (Lambros 1912-1930: 1.123). Explaining his stance John insisted that this was a natural corollary of the fact that, for a decade, the anti-unionists had been declined entrance into Hagia Sophia, despite the fact that they had faithfully adhered to Orthodox doctrine (Lambros 1912-1930: 1.128). John concluded by pleading with his correspondent to return to the authentic Christian faith (Lambros 1912-1930: 1.134).

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disappointed by the ecclesio-political situation in Constantinople, John opted in 1450 to return to the Peloponnese to support his son Georgios in running his estate.⁵³ In 1452 Demetrios Palaiologos, the co-regnant Despot of the Morea, bestowed on John the governorship of the metropolis of Lacedaemonia, after the pro-unionist Metropolitan, also named John, had been deposed. John immediately tried to exploit this appointment by imploring Demetrios to enact this policy on the remaining four pro-unionist bishops subject to this Metropolitanate as well.⁵⁴ In the end, however, and despite all his efforts, John bitterly complained in a letter to Loukas Notaras that the anti-unionist movement continued to be “broken and dismembered (*διεσπάσθημεν καὶ ἐμερίσθημεν*).”⁵⁵ He visited Constantinople for one further period in the lead-up to the city’s capture by the Ottomans and indeed witnessed the conquest and was personally taken into captivity, as he describes in a letter to Antonios Malaspinas.⁵⁶ He was likely liberated from his captivity by the intercession of John IV Komnenos, the Emperor of Trebizond, and his son Alexios. After his liberation he transferred to the Empire of Trebizond, where John IV and Alexios provided him with shelter and monetary support.⁵⁷ Where, when and how he died remains unknown.

Contents of John’s *Συναξάριον*

Moving on now to examine the contents of John’s *Συναξάριον*. As John recounts, Mark was born as Manuel Eugenikos in Constantinople c. 1392-4 to the Trapezuntine deacon and *σακελλάριος* to the Byzantine Imperial treasury, Georgios Eugenikos, and his wife, Maria Loukas.⁵⁸ Georgios Eugenikos also operated his own school in Constantinople, where Mark received his initial instruction.⁵⁹ As Mark himself recalls in his *Ὁμολογία τῆς ὀρθῆς πίστεως*, composed between May and June 1439,⁶⁰ his family’s piety instilled in him his preoccupation with studying the historical doctrine of the Byzantine imperial Church and seeking a vocation within the Church.⁶¹

After Georgios Eugenikos’ death in 1405 Mark undertook studies with two renowned Constantinopolitan instructors, John Chortasmenos and Georgios-Gemistos Plethon.⁶² The

⁵³ See John’s letter to Nikephoros Cheilas in Lambros 1912-1930: 1.204-6.

⁵⁴ See John’s letter to Demetrios Palaiologos in Lambros 1912-1930: 1.176-82.

⁵⁵ See Lambros 1912-1930: 1.171.

⁵⁶ See Lambros 1912-1930: 1.208, lines 15-18. Shortly before the Ottoman conquest, in a letter to Scholarios, John referred to the “gross anomaly (*δεινὴ ἀνωμαλία*)”, likely evoking the Byzantine and Latin concelebration of the Divine Liturgy which took place in Hagia Sophia on 12 December 1452 (Lambros 1912-1930: 1.202).

⁵⁷ See John’s letter to John IV and Alexios, dated before John IV’s passing in April 1460 articulating his gratitude for their care and for providing him with a sense of hope (Lambros 1912-1930: 1.207, lines 5-8). John composed a lamentary *θρῆνος* on the occasion of the Fall of Constantinople (Lambros 1905).

⁵⁸ Cf. John Eugenikos, *Τοῦ αὐτοῦ νομοφύλακος τοῦ Εὐγενικοῦ τῇ Τραπεζουντίων πόλει ἐγκωμιαστικὴ ἔκφρασις* 18 (Tafel 1832: 370-3 at 373) for Georgios’ Trapezuntine heritage.

⁵⁹ John Eugenikos, *Synaxarion* (Petrides 1910: 99-100).

⁶⁰ On the date see Petit 1923: 316.

⁶¹ See especially *Marci Ephesii confesso fidei Florentiae scripta sed post absolutam synodum in lucem edita* (Petit 1923: 435). One of the measures used to gauge the degree of Georgios’ piety is the number of liturgical hymns he is reputed to have composed. Cf. Georgios Eugenikos, *Ἀκολουθία ψαλλομένη εἰς τὸν ἐν ἁγίοις Σπυρίδωνα: Ποίημα τοῦ τιμωτάτου σακελλίου τῆς Μεγάλης Ἐκκλησίας διακόνου κὺρ Γεωργίου τοῦ Εὐγενικοῦ* (ed. Pilavakis 1984).

⁶² John Eugenikos, *Synaxarion* (Petrides 1910: 100).

Palaiologan curriculum comprised grammar, logic, and rhetoric as well as mathematics, natural philosophy, and metaphysics. There was particular emphasis on rhetoric given the imperial court's need to employ appropriately equipped and articulate individuals for the state bureaucracy, not least for engaging in foreign diplomacy. The versatile nature of the Palaiologan curriculum was oriented towards the ultimate study of Theology, designed so as to begin by using natural knowledge to understand God *ad extra* through His Creation, before transitioning to the study of God *ad intra*, which was known strictly only through divine revelation in Scripture and the Apostolic tradition.⁶³

John Chortasmenos, in addition to serving from around 1391 to 1415 as a *νοτάριος* in the chancery of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, was a *διδάσκαλος* in Constantinople before following a monastic vocation in the Prodromos Monastery. He was known to possess a number of manuscripts of scholia on works by Aristotle, which he himself commented on. It is therefore likely that Mark developed his competence in syllogistic reasoning under Chortasmenos. He honed these skills in his theological work, particularly when engaging in the forensic debates which characterised Ferrara-Florence.⁶⁴ For example, during the discussions concerning Purgatory at Ferrara in June 1438, a contentious and much debated topic at the Council, which was ultimately rejected by the Orthodox contingent, Mark concluded his response to Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini's assertion that the truly penitent who died before undertaking satisfaction for their sins underwent post-mortem purification, the *Ἀντίρρησις τῶν λατινικῶν κεφαλαίων ὅπερ αὐτοῦ προέτεινον περὶ τοῦ περκατορίου πυρός* (*Antirrhetic of the Latin chapters which [Mark] presented concerning the Purgatorial Fire*), by presenting eleven syllogisms which undermined the logical foundation of this Latin doctrine.⁶⁵

After his studies with Chortasmenos, Mark, as his brother John continues to report in his *Synaxarion*, undertook more advanced studies in philosophy under Georgios Gemistos Plethon.⁶⁶ These studies are likely to have advanced also his skills as a Humanist, as can be seen in a work dating from that period, his *Μονωδία ἐπὶ τῇ ἀλώσει τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης* (*Monody on the Fall of Thessalonica*), written in the immediate aftermath of the Ottoman capture of Thessalonica in 1430. In it Mark describes the Ottomans in an epithetic style imitating Homer.⁶⁷ Already around 1410 he had taken over his late father's school. While in charge of the school he instructed several prominent Byzantine scholars and clerics, who would later all be delegates at the Council of Ferrara-Florence including Theodoros Agallianos, Scholarios, and, of course, his brother John.⁶⁸

⁶³ See Geanakoplos 1989: 6-7; Fuchs 1964: 41-5; Zervas-Rivera 2018: 119-30 at 120.

⁶⁴ See Hunger 1969: 14, 17; cf. Gamillscheg 1981: 52-7, who draws attention to the fact that at the time of writing thirty-two extant manuscripts were known to have contained Chortasmenos' autograph.

⁶⁵ Cf. *Marci Archiepiscopi Ephesii Oratio Prima De Igne Purgatorio* (Petit 1927: 39-60 at 56-60) for Mark's eleven syllogisms. See also Runciman 1968: 104-10 for the relevance of this topic at the Council of Florence and Mark's position on it.

⁶⁶ John Eugenikos, *Synaxarion* (Petrides 1910: 100).

⁶⁷ See Mark of Ephesus, *Εἰς τὴν Θεσσαλονίκην: Θρήνος γὰρ τὴν ἄλωση τοῦ 1430* (Pilavakis 1997: 66): οἱ ἀπηνεῖς καὶ αἰμοβόροι καὶ δόλιοι τῆς δουλίδος Ἄγαρ οἱ ἀπόγονοι...; "...the harsh and bloodthirsty and deceitful descendants of the slave Hagar..." (English translation mine, ED)

⁶⁸ John Eugenikos, *Synaxarion* (Petrides 1910: 100-1); Gregorios Melissenos, *Apologia contra Ephesii Confessionem* (PG 160: 13-204 at 16a); Scholarios, *Lettre d'envoi de l'ouvrage précédent à Marc d'Ephèse*, in Jugie-Petit-Sidérès (1929-1935: 4.116-8 at 117); Pilavakis 1987: 24.

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His spiritual development during this stage in his career was manifest, too. As John records, he conducted himself like a monk, even though he was still a layman. Thus, he daily attended the Divine Liturgy in Hagia Sophia and spent his nights meditating and bolstering his wisdom through intense study of the Sacred Scriptures, the writings of the Church Fathers and “secular wisdom (τῆς ἑξῶ σοφίας),” the latter probably referring to philosophy and the classics.⁶⁹ John also emphasizes that Mark was closely associated with several prominent Byzantine temporal and ecclesiastical leaders during his tenure as school head. For example, he was close to the Ecumenical Patriarch Euthymios, who reigned from 1410 to 1416. In 1416 he composed a hymn mourning Euthymios’ death, in which he mentioned that the Patriarch had appointed him as ἀναγνώστης.⁷⁰ Indeed it may have been his relationship to Euthymios which gained him access to the emperor, Manuel II, who sent him manuscripts of his writings to amend.⁷¹

Mark’s relationships with the imperial court, the ecumenical patriarchate, and highly reputed Constantinopolitan intellectuals including Chortasmenos would suggest that he was on the cusp of an illustrious career within the imperial capital. However, according to John Eugenikos, at the age of twenty-six, he joined an eremitic form of monasticism, to which he had long aspired. He settled in the Monastery of the Holy Transfiguration on the Isle of Antigone in the Sea of Marmara under the spiritual direction of a renowned hesychast monk named Symeon. His monastic life there was soon interrupted, however, when approximately two years later Ottomans began to raid the island. This led Mark in 1422 to transfer to the Monastery of St George in Mangana, Constantinople, where he had access to an extensive library. It is from this time onwards that we see him engage more closely with theology *per se*, no longer as a learned layman but as a zealous monk and soon-to-be member of the clergy.⁷²

Excursus: Mark of Ephesus’ Writings

To take this opportunity for a brief excursus: Mark’s extant literary production during the 1420s suggests that his stance towards Latin-Byzantine ecumenical relations was initially irenic. His only direct engagement with disputed topics, as far as can be ascertained, was in a letter written in 1422 to the Ecumenical Patriarch Joseph II, wherein he lauded Joseph for defending the invalidity of the addition of the *filioque* clause.⁷³ This praise was given against the background of the negotiations between the Latin and Byzantine Churches for the convocation of a new ecumenical council: On 19 October 1422, amidst the imperial proposals for a new ecumenical council, Pope Martin V sent a delegation led by Antonio da Massa to Constantinople to begin negotiations with Byzantine ecclesial representatives presided over by Joseph II in Hagia Sophia.⁷⁴ It is important not to mistake the fervour of wanting to bolster the Byzantine position in these negotiations as a sign of not being prepared to engage in negotiations and – by implication – seek a negotiated outcome.

The second broad phase in Mark’s career is demarcated by John VIII’s accession as sole emperor on 21 July 1425. John’s encouragement for ecclesial reunion amplified the

⁶⁹ John Eugenikos, *Synaxarion* (Petrides 1910: 100-1).

⁷⁰ See Μάρκου του ευγενικού εἰς Εὐθύμιον Πατριάρχην Κῶς Κανὼν (Diamantopoulos 1912: 133-5).

⁷¹ John Eugenikos, *Synaxarion* (Petrides 1910: 100).

⁷² John Eugenikos, *Synaxarion* (Petrides 1910: 101-2).

⁷³ *Marci Ephesii Epistula ad Patriarcham Constantinopolitanum* (Petit 1923: 337-8).

⁷⁴ See Laurent 1962: 36-47.

need for Byzantine scholars such as Mark to study the imperial Church's doctrine given the more frequent pre-conciliar negotiations which now occurred under the new regime. The significance of this event is exemplified by the fact that Mark wrote a thanksgiving hymn that was likely read aloud in the ceremony of John VIII's enthronement, wherein he petitioned God to provide John VIII with David's mildness, Solomon's wisdom, and the virtue of justice shared by both Biblical kings.⁷⁵ As the two were likely acquainted prior to John VIII's accession given Mark's closeness to Manuel II, Mark sought to bolster this acquaintance through composing an encomium to the Emperor, wherein he implored the new emperor to ensure that his interior disposition rendered him fit both to govern as temporal monarch and to prepare for the Heavenly Kingdom to come.⁷⁶

This second period was also informed by Mark's ordination to the priesthood shortly after 1426. John Eugenikos reports that Mark was ordained only after significant pressure was applied. This could have come from the Abbot of Mangana, Makarios Koronas, who may have regarded Mark a potential successor. Or it could have been applied by Patriarch Joseph II, given Mark's close ties to the Byzantine imperial and clerical hierarchy.⁷⁷ But while Mark's formidable educational background and his reputation for sanctity made him to be considered well suited for the role of conciliar *peritus*, he did not desire to be appointed as the principal Byzantine representative, nor be subsequently incardinated as the Metropolitan of Ephesus following the death of the incumbent Metropolitan, Joasaph.⁷⁸ Yet in 1437 Mark was further appointed as the procurator for Philotheos, the Patriarch of Alexandria, before being appointed by John VIII later that year as lead of a pre-conciliar preparatory commission.⁷⁹

Joseph Gill has claimed that John VIII appointed Mark to this pre-conciliar commission because he wanted to ensure that a spectrum of stances towards ecclesial reunion were represented, assuming that Mark's stance was already sceptical towards reunion at that time. In fact, however, Mark was during that period still cautiously receptive towards the possibility of a reunion and he was willing – and able! – to utilise Latin Scholastic axioms and literary methodologies within his body of work.⁸⁰

For example, Georgios-Gennadios Scholarios reports how Mark impressed John VIII with his treatise concerning predestination, *Πρὸς Ἰσίδωρον ἱερομόναχον περὶ ὁρῶν ζωῆς* (*To Hieromonk Isidore Concerning the Limits of Life*), when it was publicly read before the emperor prior to Mark's appointment to the imperial commission.⁸¹ The treatise had been written in direct response to a request by a fellow monk and was set out like a Latin

⁷⁵ See Lambros 1912-1930: 1.31-2.

⁷⁶ See Papadopoulos-Kerameus 1884: 100.

⁷⁷ John Eugenikos, *Synaxarion* (Petrides 1910: 102).

⁷⁸ See Mark's *Ἐκθεσις τίνι τρόπῳ ἐδέξατο τὸ τῆς ἀρχιερωσύνης ἀξίωμα, καὶ δήλωσις τῆς συνόδου τῆς ἐν Φλωρεντίᾳ γενομένης*, *Ekthesis on How He Accepted the Archiepiscopal Office and on the Synod of Florence* (Petit 1923: 443-9), written between June and July 1440 (for the date cf. Petit 1923: 316).

⁷⁹ Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires* 3.3, 3.8 (Laurent 1971: 164, 168). Scholarios, *Fausse doctrines sur la Prédestination* (Jugie-Petit-Sidéridès 1929-1935: 1.427-39 at 428). Cf. Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires*, 3.32, 4.43, 4.44 (Laurent 1971: 194, 244, 248), who highlighted that Mark was subsequently appointed as the procurator for the Eastern Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem later that year, before being ordained as the Eastern Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch's procurator following the Byzantine contingent's arrival within the Italian Peninsula.

⁸⁰ See esp. Gill 1964: 119-20.

⁸¹ Scholarios, *Fausse doctrines sur la Prédestination* (Jugie-Petit-Sidéridès 1929-1935: 1.427-39 at 428). Ewan Davies, "Mark of Ephesus (1392-1444): Revisiting the Sources on His Life and Work," *Journal for Late Antique Religion and Culture* 19.1 (2025) 18-54; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18573/jlarc.156>

scholastic *quaestio*. First, arguments and theological authorities were presented in support of the position that was eventually to be rejected, namely that the time of a person's death is predetermined by God. Then, arguments and authorities against that position were lined up. Thirdly, Mark set out his own doctrine, which was in accord with the arguments and authorities against, before analysing the rejected position's arguments in an attempt to "resolve them," that is to demonstrate by way of distinctions that the two positions are fundamentally reconcilable.⁸²

Therefore, the tendency in earlier scholarship to consider Mark – even from his early career and background – either an anti-unionist hardliner (Gill) or of limited theological competence (Petit, Grumel, Jugie) ought to be treated with scepticism. Rather, evidence suggests that he was spiritually as well as intellectually a highly impressive personality, who approached his emperor's concern for reunion with a great degree of humility and a considerable amount of good faith.

The *Acta Graeca* and Sylvestrios Syropoulos

Moving on now to examine Mark's participation at the Council of Ferrara-Florence, the two main sources for analysing Mark's role on this score are the *Acta Graeca Concilii Florentini* and Sylvestrios Syropoulos' *Απομνημονεύματα* (*Memoirs*). The *Acta Graeca* narrated the events from the arrival of the Byzantine contingent in Venice through to their departure from that city. Historically, scholars have regarded the *Acta Graeca* as the work of one author who actively participated in the Council and employed official documents composed in the course of the Council, though it is unclear to what extent and with what accuracy. Scholars such as Theodor Frommann and Adolf Warschauer studied the *Acta Graeca* from such a perspective and therefore held them to be a principally personal and partisan narrative of the conciliar proceedings.⁸³

However, as scholars such as Joseph Gill have shown, this hypothesis concerning the origins of the *Acta Graeca* lacks sufficient weight: Having analysed all of the then-known manuscripts of the conciliar *Practica* when producing his critical edition of the *Acta Graeca*, published in 1951, Gill concluded that they were not a composition in which one author utilised and adapted conciliar documents to meet his authorial intent, but is instead a compilation of three documents which should each be assessed in their own right:

Firstly, the discourses delivered in the Ferraran and Florentine sessions, which are the authentic protocol of these conciliar sessions, produced by three Byzantine notaries who compiled this protocol by conglomerating their distinct versions of the sessional orations which were written as they were delivered and comparing their versions to the analogous Latin *Practica*.⁸⁴ Secondly, the "Description," whose copyist, John Plousiadenos, added to the above source. This second source describes the course of events from the Byzantine contingent's arrival at Florence through to the first dogmatic session at Ferrara, the background to the translation of the Council from Ferrara to Florence, and a memoir-like

⁸² See Mark of Ephesus, *Πρὸς Ἰσίδωρον ἱερομόναχον περὶ ὁρῶν ζωῆς* (Boissonade 1844: 349-62). For an appraisal of Mark's teaching on predestination see also Runciman 1968: 125-6 and 280.

⁸³ Frommann 1871: 50; Warschauer 1881: 9-11.

⁸⁴ Cf. *Acta Graeca* (Gill 1953: 35, 87-8, 160, 389); Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires* 5.8 (Laurent 1971: 264) for references to the work of the Byzantine and Latin notaries.

narrative of the concluding conciliar events from 24 March 1439, through to the departure of the Byzantine contingent. According to Gill, this “Description” was potentially the work of Dorotheos, the Metropolitan of Mytilene. Thirdly, a succinct introduction and a small number of authentic conciliar documents interpolated in the first source produced by an anonymous scribe.⁸⁵ According to Gill, the first source:

...contain[s] matter characteristic of the *Acts* and, if they show any prejudice, it is for the Greeks and not the Latins... they correspond in content, even in what they omit, to the records at Constantinople that Syropoulos terms “Practica” and “minutes” and show verbal similarity with the text he consulted there. That text must have been written before 1444, the date of [the initial publication of] Syropoulos’s work...⁸⁶

Gill seems to contradict this claim of a tendential Greek prejudice in the *Acta Graeca* when he writes in another article published in his *Personalities of the Council of Florence* that “the ‘Acta’ are in favour of union and are conciliatory in tone to the Latins.”⁸⁷

On balance one can assume that the *Acta Graeca* provide for the most part a rather safe basis for analysing the record of the public Ferraran-Florentine sessions and Mark’s actions and his counterparts’ responses: The contents of the conciliar protocol are likely to correlate to a significant extent with Mark’s various public and private orations held during the Council. Moreover, both the second and third sources serve as a supplement and balance to the first layer and put his orations and his colleagues’ and counterparts’ responses in context.

Regarding Syropoulos’ *Memoirs*: Syropoulos functioned as the μέγας ἐκκλησιάρχης (grand ecclesiarch) and deacon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and was a member of the Byzantine imperial contingent.⁸⁸ The first recension of his *Memoirs* was likely completed around 1444, approximately five years after the contingent’s departure from Italy.⁸⁹ The opening passage of the work is not extant. Judging by the opening words of the preserved extracts it is likely – according to Joseph Gill – that it “dealt with a question of authority in the Eastern Church between the emperor and the hierarchy, included probably by the author because he considered that it had some connection with the Greek side of the Council.”⁹⁰ The remaining extant passages of the first recension deal firstly directly with the Council, beginning with the Latin-Byzantine negotiations that took place during Martin V’s and Eugenius IV’s Pontificates.⁹¹ The following part details the arrival of the Byzantine contingent on the Italian Peninsula and the proceedings at Ferrara-Florence.⁹²

⁸⁵ See Gill 1959: ix-x; Gill 1964: 131-43, 144-77. See also Gill 1951 for his critical edition.

⁸⁶ Gill 1964: 142. Cf. Tsirpanlis 1979: 33-4.

⁸⁷ Gill 1964: 144.

⁸⁸ See Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires* 3.14 (Laurent 1971: 176) for his appointment as μέγας ἐκκλησιάρχης. See *Cod. Par. Univ.* 190, fol. 255^v: “Ἐτελιώθη τῷ παρόν βιβλίον διὰ χειρὸς ἐμοῦ τοῦ διδασκάλου τοῦ εὐάγγεοιου διακονοῦ τοῦ Σιλιβέστρου τοῦ Σιρόπουλου ἐν ἔτει Ϟϣλξϣ, μῆνι ἰουλι(ί)ω ἰν(δικτιῶν)ος β^ας.” Quoted in Laurent 1971: 6-7, n. 10. My English translation: “This book was completed by my own hand, [that] of the teacher and holy deacon Sylvestros Syropoulos, in the 6932nd year of our Lord [i.e., 1424].”

⁸⁹ This date can be inferred from the fact that Syropoulos does not mention that Gregorios, who had previously functioned as the confessor to the emperor John VIII, was in 1445 elevated to the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

⁹⁰ Quoted from Gill 1959: xiv.

⁹¹ See Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires* 2.2-3.32 (Laurent 1971: 100-95).

⁹² See Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires* 4.1-10.29 (Laurent 1971: 196-521).

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Thirdly, Syropoulos narrates the Byzantines' return to their homeland and the Byzantine reception of the reunion.⁹³ Syropoulos details with considerable lucidity Mark's actions, relations, and struggles with his conciliar counterparts and colleagues and the reactions of the latter two parties. He provides for the most part summaries, unravelling in detail the intentions of the various Byzantine conciliar participants and the development of their relations to one another. One can infer that he intended to offer an account with a high degree of objectivity and veracity, as indicated by several passages within the *Memoirs*: For example, he proclaims that his authorial intent is to recount the events of Ferrara-Florence with the highest degree of accuracy and to make these events available for those who are interested in them in posterity.⁹⁴

One can glean Syropoulos' intent of offering a balanced account of the activities of the Byzantine imperial participants from another passage in the *Memoirs*, in which he makes explicit his disagreement with Mark during a Byzantine conference before emperor John VIII, in which the Byzantines worked out which topic should be chosen as the first to be addressed in their discussions with their Latin counterparts.⁹⁵ Indeed, at a later point within the *Memoirs*, Syropoulos refuted his own disagreement he had with Mark at that conference. He indicates that Syropoulos intended to accurately recount the mindsets and objectives of the competing factions amongst the Byzantine conciliar contingent.⁹⁶ Thus, one should exercise caution regarding Gill's preemptive conclusion that "the *Memoirs* are opposed to union and hostile to the Latins and to the Greek 'Latinizers'."⁹⁷

On the other hand, although caution is recommended regarding Gill's assessment, it must also be said that there are certain limitations to Syropoulos' account. For example, it will be shown below that he failed to provide sufficient information concerning the period following Mark's return from the Italian Peninsula, with his account of Mark's activity stopping at Mark's escape from Constantinople to Broussa and then to Ephesus. Thus, Syropoulos' *Memoirs* do not corroborate or challenge the information provided by authors such as John Eugenikos concerning Mark's role in the anti-unionist movement between 1440 and 1445.

Contents of Syropoulos' Memoirs

According to the *Acta Graeca*, at the start of the formal Ferraran discussions concerning Purgatory in October 1438, Mark showed a remarkably amicable disposition towards his Latin counterparts authentically addressing his interlocutors with respect and tact. Thus, after requesting in his initial *oratio* to Pope Eugenius IV the abolition of the *filioque* and of unleavened Eucharistic bread, he humbly excused himself at the beginning of the first public session at Ferrara on 6 October 1438 – that is in advance of the upcoming debates – for any language he may have used, which might be regarded as offensive, while making reference to the "the divine work of peace and unity of the Churches (τὸ θεῖον ἔργον τῆς

⁹³ See Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires* 11.1-12.18 (Laurent 1971: 522-75).

⁹⁴ Paraphrased from Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires* 10.29 (Laurent 1971: 520): ὡς προέβησαν μόνον γυνὰ ταῦτα ἐκθέσθαι καὶ δῆλα καταστήσαι τοῖς βουλομένοις καὶ παραπέμψαι τοῖς ἐφεξῆς.

⁹⁵ Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires* 6.21 (Laurent 1971: 316-8).

⁹⁶ Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires* 7.12 (Laurent 1971: 360-2).

⁹⁷ Quoted from Gill 1964: 144.

εἰρήνης καὶ ἐνώσεως τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν).’⁹⁸ According to Syropoulos, the Greek Dominican friar Andreas Chrysoberges (Andrew of Rhodes) seconded Mark’s speech, although he seems to have done so primarily as a formality to justify his interjection in the middle of Mark’s discourse. The *Acta Graeca* further record how Chrysoberges went on to attempt to wrongfoot Mark by pressing him on the spot to set out in detail the Byzantine Church’s problem with the *filioque*. Mark is recorded in turn as having politely responded to the request, upon which Andrew settled down and allowed his Byzantine opponent to speak.⁹⁹

The *Acta Graeca* report that Mark consistently evoked the theme of love, referring to the Latin and Byzantine Churches’ fraternal – or sororal – bond. He presented his requests framed in this theme of love, asking, for example, that the Church of Rome, as a loving sister to the Byzantine Church remove the *filioque* clause from its Creed so that each sister Church might cooperate with one another through divine love. Mark believed that if the *filioque* was the primary cause of scandal between the two Churches, then both Churches should quickly return to the common formula of the first Seven Ecumenical Councils, which he emphasized he and his Byzantine colleagues would embrace.¹⁰⁰

Andrew’s reply, as recorded by the *Acta Graeca*, reflect his annoyance with Mark’s attitude. He accused Mark of failing to sufficiently recount the Roman Church’s positive attributes, particularly its charity towards the Byzantine contingent. He stressed that the Byzantines should acknowledge that throughout the history of the Church it was from their Church that many forms of heresy emerged which did not ever affect the Church of Rome.¹⁰¹ Although this statement implicitly suggests that only the Roman Church could credibly claim Orthodoxy and that the Byzantine Church would have to subject itself to the Roman doctrine, Mark’s response was calm and polite: “The prior response, which was revealed by your reverence... is true and confessed by us.”¹⁰²

The *Acta Graeca* continue that in his response Mark acknowledged that the Church of Rome had displayed great charity towards the Byzantine Church amidst all its inner turbulence. From Mark’s point of view, while Chrysoberges’ recourse to the history of heresy within the Church was significant, it did not concern his fundamental claim that unilateral additions to the common Creed of the Church jeopardize the fraternal charity between the Churches. In his view, if the *filioque* clause was removed, no love between the Latin and Eastern Churches would be lost.

At the second public session at Ferrara on 13 October 1438, the *Acta Graeca* report, Mark and Andreas also clashed over Mark’s belief that the historical decrees of the first seven ecumenical councils should be publicly proclaimed to all in attendance so that all attendees should have a shared understanding of the fundamentals of the common faith between the Latin and Eastern Orthodox Churches. However, Andreas unambiguously sidelined any idea of these conciliar decrees being publicly recited.¹⁰³

Mark later indicated that the move by the Latin side to suppress the proclamation of the ecumenical conciliar decrees was a major factor in his own rejection of the claim of

⁹⁸ See *Acta Graeca*, (Gill 1953: 49).

⁹⁹ Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires*, 6.27, 6.29 (Laurent 1971: 326-8); Gill 1953: 50.

¹⁰⁰ See Gill 1953: 52.

¹⁰¹ Gill 1953: 54. Gill 1959: 145 concedes that Andrew’s interjections lacked rhetorical tact.

¹⁰² My English translation from Gill 1953: 56: Τὰ μὲν πρῶτα, ἅπερ ἀπελογήσατο ἡ σὴ αἰδεσιμότης... ἀληθῆ τέ εἰσιν καὶ ὁμολογούμενα παρ’ ἡμῖν.

¹⁰³ See Gill 1953: 56-8.

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Ferrara-Florence to ecumenicity and the canonicity of its definition, *Laetentur Caeli*.¹⁰⁴ As long as he could, Mark continued to demand his right to recite these decrees before the Council, while Chrysoberges consistently interjected his Byzantine interlocutor.¹⁰⁵ Both the *Acta Graeca* and Syropoulos report Mark's continued insistence.¹⁰⁶ The reason for the Latin refusal against having the decrees read out in public was probably the fear that this could have exposed the fact that past church councils repeatedly prohibited, under pain of anathema, any additions to the Creed. This could have affected the Latin insistence on the *filioque*. The Latin Fathers therefore preferred that these conciliar decrees be proclaimed in a private meeting in order to eschew a potential scandal.¹⁰⁷ Eventually, however, albeit reluctantly, the Byzantine side was being granted the right to publicly recite the decrees. This made Mark, as the *Acta Graeca* recount, politely address his Latin counterparts with the formula "most reverend fathers (πατέρες αἰδεσιμώτατοι)."¹⁰⁸

It was above all Chrysoberges' behaviour that diminished Mark's trust in the sincerity of the Latin Church's intentions for the Council. Syropoulos records a significant episode in the third session at Ferrara (16 October 1438) involving Mark and Chrysoberges: In a bold move Cardinal Cesarini presented a manuscript containing the *Acta* of the Second Council of Nicaea, in which the *Symbolum Fidei* included the *filioque*.¹⁰⁹ Syropoulos and Scholarios agree that it was Chrysoberges who pressed Cesarini to do this.¹¹⁰ However, the initiative did not have the desired effect of persuading the Byzantine Fathers' to accept the validity of the clause. Instead, an investigation was called into the authenticity of the cited passage. According to Syropoulos, when the Byzantine delegation examined the text in their private session, they mockingly pointed out that the claim was ultimately based on a single Latin manuscript with no known textual precedent in either the Latin or Hellenophone tradition. When Plethon then further suspected that the phrase had been interpolated, the Byzantine contingent angrily pressed Cardinal Cesarini to dismiss Chrysoberges, who subsequently retired from the public conciliar proceedings in a state of humiliation.¹¹¹

A further blow to Mark's confidence in the project of ecclesiastical reunion occurred during the second public session at Florence concerning the procession of the Spirit on 10 March 1439. At this session Giovanni Montenero, another Dominican friar, evoked a codex of *Liber III* of the *Adversus Eunomium* attributed to Basil the Great, which had significant textual variations to the work's Greek manuscript tradition. The following table offers a comparison of what was arguably the most controversial passage:

¹⁰⁴ See Mark of Ephesus, *Ἐκθεσις τίνι τρόπῳ ἐδέξατο τὸ τῆς ἀρχιερωσύνης ἀξίωμα* (Petit 1923: 444).

¹⁰⁵ See Gill 1953: 59-63. Indeed, Andreas' conciliar colleague and fellow Dominican, Giovanni Montenero, had to interject and remind Chrysoberges to show charity towards his Byzantine counterparts. See Gill 1953: 63-4.

¹⁰⁶ See Gill 1953: 59-63. Cf. Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires* 6.29 (Laurent 1971: 328).

¹⁰⁷ Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires* 6.31-3 (Laurent 1971: 330-4); *Acta Graeca* (Gill 1953: 65-6).

¹⁰⁸ See e.g. *Acta Graeca* (Gill 1953: 86); *ibid.* 216-7 for later examples of this same esteem on Mark's part during the thirteenth session at Ferrara. According to the *Acta Slavica* Mark was willing to abbreviate his reading of these conciliar decrees in to accommodate Cardinal Cesarini's request that Chrysoberges be given sufficient time to offer his response to this reading prior to the end of the daily session. See Krajcar 1976: 56.

¹⁰⁹ See Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires* 6.31 (Laurent 1971: 330-2).

¹¹⁰ See Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires* 6.31 (Laurent 1971: 330-2); Scholarios, *Examen de quelques passages des Pères Latins sur la procession du Saint-Esprit* (Jugie-Petit-Sidéridès 1929-1935: 3.52). Cf. Gill 1953: 85 for the interpolated Creeds utilised by Cesarini and Chrysoberges.

¹¹¹ See Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires* 6.31 (Laurent 1971: 330-2).

Mark's Edition

“Ἀξιώματι μὲν γὰρ δευτερεύειν τοῦ υἱοῦ
 παραδίδωσιν ἴσως ὁ τῆς εὐσεβείας
 λόγος... οὕτω δηλονότι καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ
 ἅγιον, εἰ καὶ ὑποβέβηκε τὸν υἱὸν τῇ τε
 τάξει καὶ τῷ ἀξιώματι...”

(My English translation:) For [the Spirit]
 is second to the Son in dignity is **possibly**
 handed down in blessed writings... and
 therefore in this way is the Holy Spirit
 below the Son in **both** order and in
 dignity...”

Montenero's Edition

“Ἀξιώματι μὲν γὰρ δεύτερον τοῦ υἱοῦ
παρ’ αὐτοῦ τὸ εἶναι ἔχον καὶ παρ’
αὐτοῦ λαμβάνον καὶ ἀναγγέλλον ἡμῖν,
καὶ ὅλως τῆς αἰτίας ἐκείνης ἐξημμένον
 παραδίδωσιν ὁ τῆς εὐσεβείας λόγος...
 οὕτω Δηλονότι καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον,
 εἰ καὶ ὑποβέβηκε τὸν υἱὸν τῇ τάξει καὶ
 τῷ ἀξιώματι...”

(My English translation:) For [the Spirit]
 is second to the Son in dignity, **having**
and receiving from Him His being and
declaring to us and was wholly
attached to Him as cause, [as] has been
 handed down in blessed writings... and
 therefore in this way is the Holy Spirit
 under the Son in order and in
 dignity...”¹¹²

The *Acta Graeca* record how, while Mark conceded that Constantinople contained a few codices which expounded Montenero's edition, he highlighted that many other codices, especially the most primitive, offered a different reading. Mark therefore claimed that Montenero's edition had been subsequently interpolated by *pro-filioquists*.¹¹³

Mark's suspicions towards Montenero's source material were justified, although he may have been wrong to attribute the source of the textual corruptions to the Latins. As modern scholars including Bernard Sesboüé have highlighted, Mark accurately posited that his edition was authentically Basil's, while inaccurately attributing the source of the interpolations in Montenero's edition, whose version circulated before the emergence of the East-West Schism in the eleventh century. According to Sesboüé, the interpolations in Montenero's edition were likely a subsequent conglomeration of literary excerpts from Eunomios and his circle added on to Basil's work.¹¹⁴ In light of what was discussed above, Mark evidently became overwhelmed and distressed by what he perceived to be dishonest methods employed by some of his Latin counterparts in the conciliar discussions and their underlying bad faith. He was thinking especially of Andreas Chrysoberges.

Connected to this may be his increasingly declining health, which caused him to stay away from the final sessions on 21 and 24 March. As he alludes to in his *Ἐκθεσις*, written

¹¹² See De Durand 1981: 37 for the quoted texts evoked by Montenero and by Mark of Ephesus during this debate with their differences highlighted, and Sesboüé 1983: 146 for an analysis of the of the various Greek and Latin editions of this text, wherein the editors argue that the former, as upheld by Mark, was that authentically composed by Basil.

¹¹³ *Acta Graeca* (Gill 1953: 296).

¹¹⁴ Sesboüé 1983: 146-7, n. 1. Cf. Van Parys 1967.

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between June and July 1440, he entered into seclusion during this period.¹¹⁵ Syropoulos notes in particular that he was absent for the initial discussions in June 1439 between the Byzantine contingent and Pope Eugenius about the remaining issues of divergence such as the questions concerning whether to use unleavened or leavened bread in the Eucharist and the nature and moment – or moments – of the Eucharistic consecration.¹¹⁶ Syropoulos also sheds light on the circumstances surrounding Mark's refusal to sign *Laetentur Caeli*, the bull effectuating ecclesial reunion, on 6 July 1439. After the public signing ceremony, in a private meeting, Pope Eugenius IV pressed the emperor, John VIII, to put Mark on a canonical trial for his refusal to sign the bull. His calculation was that this would lend the bull additional legitimacy, as Mark might either be persuaded to sign it after all, or be condemned.¹¹⁷ However, Syropoulos reports, John had already privately agreed to give Mark some form of immunity and the promise of safe passage back to Constantinople in virtue of Mark's earlier fidelity towards the Emperor's programme for reunion.¹¹⁸ Thus, the Emperor strictly agreed to Mark appearing before the Pope in an informal audience, while also guaranteeing that Mark would be subject to no judicial action as a result of this audience.¹¹⁹ Mark clearly put his trust in the emperor's promises and at some point after 12 July 1439 appeared before Pope Eugenius IV.

Syropoulos details how Mark entered the Pope's chambers, where he met Eugenius, who was flanked by six cardinals. He showed reverence towards the Pope according to the normal custom, but soon had to sit down given his weakness due to his deteriorated health. Eugenius laboriously attempted to persuade him to submit to *Laetentur Caeli*, positing that if he were adjudicated as a noncompliant, the consequences for him would be the same as those known from earlier Ecumenical Councils. Historical penalties for noncompliance were deposition from clerical office and being denounced as a heretic on the basis of preaching against an Ecumenical Council and its definitions. Essentially, he and his fellow non-signatories would be treated as a new brand of heretics.¹²⁰ Mark, in his response to the Pope, offered an alternative interpretation. He pointed out that the Ecumenical Councils had always condemned those who were not compliant as heretics in the sense that they preached a novel doctrine and instigated controversy within the Church. His own faith, however, was that which the Church had received and upheld from the Apostolic Age and which the Roman Church, too, had received and accepted in communion with the Eastern Churches prior to the "schism". Consequently, he asked, on what basis could he be condemned as a heretic?¹²¹

Thus, the Pope did not succeed in persuading Mark to sign and Mark returned to his homeland safely, as he had been promised by the emperor, to become a figurehead of the

¹¹⁵ See *Marci Ephesii Relatio de Rebus a Se in Synodo Florentina Gestis*, 2 (Petit 1923: 308, line 16): ...μη παρόντος ἐμοῦ διὰ τὴν ἀσθένειαν... Mark describes how his illness prevented him from engaging in these concluding public discussions. Moreover, as detailed in *Acta Slavica* (Krajcar 1976: 63-5), despite recovering from his illness, which had begun around March 1439, following the conclusion of the debates concerning papal primacy during late spring 1439, Mark continued to remain in seclusion through to the formal signing of *Laetentur Caeli* in July 1439. Cf. Gill 1959: 118.

¹¹⁶ See Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires*, 10.1-2 (Laurent 1971: 474, 476).

¹¹⁷ See Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires* 10.18 (Laurent 1971: 504).

¹¹⁸ Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires* 10.9 (Laurent 1971: 482, 484).

¹¹⁹ See Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires* 10.23 (Laurent 1971: 508).

¹²⁰ Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires* 10.23 (Laurent 1971: 508).

¹²¹ Paraphrased from Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires* 10.23 (Laurent 1971: 508, 510).

anti-unionist movement. What has been shown, however, by the episodes treated in this section, and by the accounts of the *Acta Graeca* and Syropoulos, is a reality that is more complex than that of a stubborn, narrowminded, Mark, who scuppered reunion through sheer intransigence. Several aspects stand out: 1) Mark was considered a key player, even by the Pope, and certainly by the Emperor. It was clear that for the project of reunion to succeed it needed Mark on its side. 2) Mark, loyal to the emperor and exceedingly learned and intellectually astute, was initially positively minded towards reunion believing that it was possible – and indeed desirable. He saw it also as a Christian duty, a labour of love, to work towards reunion, which would renew the Church of the Fathers. 3) Mark worked hard to hammer out, in fraternal conversation as well as in dialectical discussion with his Latin counterparts, a formula that could bring about reunion; but he was disillusioned by the disingenuous methods, as he perceived them, resorted to by some on the Latin side to entrench positions that had caused the schism in the first place. 4) To what degree Mark was honestly engaged can perhaps be gauged by the fact that during the proceedings his health increasingly deteriorated. This may not be solely due to the strain under which he found himself during the Council, but it could have been a contributing factor.

Mark of Ephesus' Life and Work Following the Council.

Moving on now to analyse the sources concerning Mark's post-conciliar activity and his inclusion within the Eastern Orthodox liturgy in the immediate aftermath of his passing. Having secured John VIII's assurance that he could return safely to the Imperial capital despite his refusal to sign *Laetentur Caeli*, Mark departed from the Italian Peninsula on 19 October 1439 and arrived in Constantinople with John VIII in February 1440.¹²²

According to Doukas' *Historia Turco-Byzantina*, composed on Lesbos c. 1462, many Eastern Orthodox *periti* who had signed *Laetentur Caeli* were now keen to assure the Constantinopolitan populace that they repudiated their earlier support for the Florentine reunion claiming that they had "sold their faith" for "fear of the Franks" and monetary privilege.¹²³ Officially, however, the empire was now committed to the reunion. Out of fear of an intra-Byzantine schism, Syropoulos reports, John VIII therefore commissioned several officials to persuade Mark to accept his installation to the Ecumenical Patriarchate. But Mark refused this elevation, as it would have entailed that he implemented *Laetentur Caeli* in accord with the emperor's policy.¹²⁴ Thus, John appointed the pro-unionist, Metrophanes, Bishop of Cyzicus, to become the Ecumenical Patriarch. He was formally installed on 4 May 1440. On the same day, Syropoulos reports, Mark left the imperial capital under pressure from the new Patriarch and departed for his new Metropolitanate of Ephesus, which was under Ottoman occupation.¹²⁵ In Ephesus, John Eugenikos reports, Mark made every effort to live up to his episcopal vocation. At the same time he continued to lead the Hellenophone opposition to the Florentine reunion, favoured by the circumstance that he was now outside the political realm of the empire. The two aspects are closely connected.

¹²² See Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires* 11.4, 11.23 (Laurent 1971: 524, 544).

¹²³ See Doukas, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium* XXXI.9 (Magoulias 1975: 181-2).

¹²⁴ Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires*, 12.4 (Laurent 1971: 548).

¹²⁵ Syropoulos, *Les Mémoires*, 12.10 (Laurent 1971: 556) detailed how Mark first journeyed to Prousa before arriving in Ephesus. Cf. *Marci Ephesii Epistola ad Theophanem Sacerdotem in Euboea Insula* (Petit 1923: 480), wherein Mark elucidates the reasoning behind his departure from Constantinople.

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John highlights that Mark visited many churches in his diocese, ordained many priests, and provided aid to those in need.¹²⁶ It was through these at a superficial glance apparently innocuous pastoral activities that he also promoted his church-political stance.

Beyond that he also strengthened the position of the Church under Ottoman rule, which naturally raised suspicions among the Ottoman authorities. All this only contributed to a further deterioration of his health. Thus, under pressure from many sides Mark decided to travel to Mount Athos. However, he did so without a commission from Metrophanes. He was therefore apprehended on his journey by Byzantine imperial authorities on Lemnos and placed under house arrest, probably also for his anti-unionist activities in Ephesus.¹²⁷ Pertinently, during his stay on Lemnos he composed his *Epistola Encyclica*, which he addressed universally to the Orthodox Christian populace. In it he begged his audience to uphold the true Orthodox faith and wholly refrain from cooperating with Latin Christians and Hellenophone pro-unionists. The *Epistola Encyclica*'s broader pertinence for Eastern Orthodox theology was noted by Kallistos Ware in his book *The Orthodox Church*. Ware regarded the letter as an archetypal delineation of Eastern Orthodox doctrine following the canons of the first seven ecumenical councils.¹²⁸ From such a perspective Mark could be regarded as a founder-figure of modern Greek Orthodox Christianity.

Mark remained on Lemnos until 4 August 1443 and then returned to Constantinople. According to John Eugenikos he was warmly received by the populace there as a “new confessor (νέος ὁμολογητής).”¹²⁹ While there is a lack of definitive evidence concerning his prosopography following his return to Constantinople, he nevertheless continued to bolster the anti-Florentine cause as the movement's *de facto* leader. For example, John Plousiadenos, whose accounts of Mark's life and thought are further examined below, details how Mark engaged in a number of discussions with Pope Eugenius' ambassador to the Byzantine Empire, Cristoforo Garatoni, the Bishop of Corone.¹³⁰

This lacuna in the textual evidence relating to Mark's prosopography following 1443 raises a further problem, namely, the date of Mark's death. Whether Mark passed away in 1444 or 1445 has long been a point of dispute among scholars, since John Eugenikos simply reveals that Mark passed away at fifty-one, and that his *Ἀκολουθία* was dated to June 23rd.¹³¹ However, one can glean the dating of Mark's death from the suggestions in some extant sources that Mark participated in the initial Latin-Byzantine discussions with the Papal legate to Constantinople, Bartolomeo Lapacci, immediately before his death. In Lapacci's eulogising obituary in Santa Maria Novella in Florence we read that he engaged in public discussions with Mark and triumphed over him. Following the disputation Mark supposedly died in ignominy, humiliated by the experience.¹³² Antoninus', the Archbishop

¹²⁶ See John Eugenikos, *Synaxarion* (Petrides 1910: 106).

¹²⁷ See John Eugenikos, *Synaxarion* (Petrides 1910: 106); Mark of Ephesus, *Epistola ad Theophanem* (Petit 1923: 480) for an elucidation of the reasons behind Mark's departure from Ephesus.

¹²⁸ See Ware 1983: 211.

¹²⁹ John Eugenikos, *Synaxarion* (Petrides 1910: 106).

¹³⁰ John Plousiadenos, *Canon in Octavum Synodum Florentiae Habitam* (PL 159, 1105b).

¹³¹ See John Eugenikos, *Synaxarion* (Petrides 1910: 106). Cf. e.g., Petit 1926a, who argued for Mark's death in 1444, while Mercati 1920: 134-43 and 1926: 122-6, Gill 1964: 222-32 and Blanchet 2008: 384-90 argue for 1445.

¹³² See Kaeppli 1939: 126: *cum Ephesino illo eruditissimo disputans, eum ita publice stravit, ut se vinctum asserens, mox lectu decumberet pauloque post e vita migraret. Turpe quidem existimavit, ut, qui eruditissimus omnium haberetur, post eam ignominiam superesse[t].*

of Florence's account in his *Chronicon partibus tribus distincta ab initio mundi ad MCCCLX* offers the same chain of events as Lapacci's eulogy.¹³³ Whether these accounts are true or not, they underline Mark's standing as an interlocutor in the ongoing debates about reunion even on the verge of his death.

John Eugenikos and Scholarios suggest that Latin-Byzantine theological discussions were underway shortly before or contemporaneous to Mark's death: John Eugenikos for example lauded his brother's long struggle against Latin dogma, "just as recently in his homeland in three discussions (ὥσπερ κὰν τῇ πατρίδι χθὲς καὶ πρώην ὕστερον ἐν τρισὶ διαλέξεσι)." ¹³⁴ Within his funeral oration for Mark, Scholarios indicated that a verbal interlocution between Mark and representatives of the Latin Church had very recently begun at the time the oration was delivered and suggested that, since Mark's death, these discussions had become more acerbic so that Scholarios himself began to receive violent attacks for his anti-unionism.¹³⁵

The Latin and Hellenophone accounts complement each other. They suggest that Mark engaged in at least three sessions of theological debate shortly before his death. Following his death the discussions continued without delay, now between Lapacci and Scholarios, who stood in for Mark. That Mark met Lapacci shortly before his death is a decisive factor which, in this author's view, enables the determination of the year of Mark's participation in these discussions and his death: Given that Mark's death is ascribed to June 23rd, one should plausibly date Mark's brief discussions with the Papal emissaries in early June that year, i.e., of 1444 or 1445. However, Thomas Kaepelli has also made reference to a record from the Papal archives which suggests that the Cardinal Legate, Francesco Condulmer, left Venice for Constantinople on 22 June 1444, arriving there in late summer 1444.¹³⁶ According to the above-mentioned excerpt from Archbishop Antoninus, Lapacci was with Condulmer. But even if Lapacci had arrived earlier than Condulmer, it is unlikely that the public discussions which John VIII had organised would have been held prior to the arrival of both emissaries. Thus, these discussions most likely took place in early June 1445.

While convincing, these arguments are ostensibly in violation of Scholarios' remark in his work *Against the Partisans of Gregorios Akindynos* (Ἀφ' ἧς οἱ Ἀκινδυνιασταὶ), which he wrote in 1445, sometime before August.¹³⁷ In this work Scholarios briefly conjures up the doctrine of the Spirit's procession and referred to two books he had written – in which he refuted the Latin doctrine of the dual procession – for further detail.¹³⁸ Scholars such as Louis Petit have concluded that these "two books" correspond to the *First and Second*

¹³³ See Morçay 1913: 64-5: *cum cardinalis Venetus destinatus legatus in regionem illam, Constantino-poli moram traheret et in eius societate esset venerabilis episcopus Coronensis, dominus Bartholomeus de Florentia, sacre theologie professor egregius et greci idiomatis non ignarus, placuit eidem imperatori Gregorum et proceribus eius, ut fieret publica concertatio inter episcopum Ephesinum prefatum et Coronensem episcopum, iam fama ibi celebrem. Quo facto Ephesinus prefatus iterum ab eo superatus et confusus est, tanta ex eo absorptus tristitia, ut infra paucos dies expiraverit cum sua perfidia.*

¹³⁴ See Eugenikos, *Synaxarion* (Petrides 1910: 103).

¹³⁵ See Scholarios, *Éloge de Marc Eugénikos* (Jugie-Petit-Sidéridès 1929-1935: 1.250, lines 29-251 at line 2. Cf. also Darkó 1927: 69, esp. lines 17-23; Plousiadenos, *Canon in Octavum Synodum Florentinae Habitum* (PL 159, 1101-6 [1105b]), who verify these earlier sources' claims.

¹³⁶ Cf. Kaepelli 1939: 96.

¹³⁷ Scholarios, *Contre les partisans d'Acindyne* (Jugie-Petit-Sidéridès 1929-1935: 3.204-28) and Jugie, "Introduction," in Jugie-Petit-Sidéridès 1929-1935: 3.xvii-xix on the date. See also Zisis 1988: 277-8.

¹³⁸ Scholarios, *Contre les partisans d'Acindyne* (Jugie-Petit-Sidéridès 1929-1935: 3.210, lines 23-7. Ewan Davies, "Mark of Ephesus (1392-1444): Revisiting the Sources on His Life and Work," *Journal for Late Antique Religion and Culture* 19.1 (2025) 18-54; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18573/jlarc.156>

Treatises on the Procession of the Holy Spirit.¹³⁹ However, it is very likely that Scholarios had composed some versions of these two treatises following his debates with Lapacci given that – as he alludes to in the second of these treatises – there was much within the work that he believed should not be revealed to his opponents – i. e. those in communion with the Latin Church – in the event that these opponents sought to reopen any discussions with him.¹⁴⁰

This statement suggests that Scholarios had already personally debated with Lapacci when completing *Against the Partisans of Gregorios Akindynos*. If, as Scholarios ostensibly suggests in this work, these two long Pneumatological treatises had been completed by c. August 1445, the discussions which took place in Xylala Palace prior to their composition could not have occurred during the summer of 1445, being too substantive for Scholarios to have had time to compose the two works between June and August 1445. Thus, Petit concluded that the talks between Scholarios and Lapacci must have occurred at the beginning of the year 1445 or even in late 1444.¹⁴¹ However, Petit's dating calls into question Georgios Sphrantzes' dating of Gregorios III's elevation as Ecumenical Patriarch to the summer of 1445, given that it is also reported by Scholarios that the new Patriarch attended the Latin-Byzantine discussions in Xylala.¹⁴²

Otto Kresten tried to resolve these apparent contradictions by interpreting Scholarios' references to "two books" as references to drafts, which have – as such – perished. He speculated that Scholarios conglomerated Patristic and other historical conciliar textual references into florilegia, as evinced by the numerous quotations these treatises contain, which he would have used during the debates with the Papal emissaries and which he then utilised as a basis for the final redaction of his Pneumatological treatises.¹⁴³

This theory seems plausible, particularly in the light of information about the dates of composition of the two Pneumatological treatises provided by one of Scholarios' marginal autograph notes in the *MS Athous Pantocratorinus* 127. This note stipulates that the first treatise was composed eight years prior to the Fall of Constantinople. Now, according to the Byzantine calendar the Fall took place in the year 6961 (= September 1452 – August 1453).¹⁴⁴ Eight years prior to that was the year 6953 (= September 1444 – August 1445). Is it possible that this first treatise was already completed when Scholarios wrote *Against the Partisans of Gregorios Akindynos*? In other words, Scholarios could have begun the work early in 1445 and completed it after his discussions with Lapacci, but before August 1445.¹⁴⁵ One could therefore plausibly surmise, in agreement with Gill,

¹³⁹ See Petit 1923: 323-4.

¹⁴⁰ See Scholarios, *Deuxieme traité sur la procession du Saint-Esprit* (Jugie-Petit-Sidéridès 1929-1935: 2.270-1).

¹⁴¹ See Petit 1923: 324-8.

¹⁴² See Sphrantzes, *Chronicon minus* (Bekker 1838: 195-8); Scholarios, *Premier traité sur la procession du Saint-Esprit* (Jugie-Petit-Sidéridès 1929-1935: 2.1-2); Gill 1964: 223-5 for a discussion of Sphrantzes' account.

¹⁴³ Kresten 1976: 33-4.

¹⁴⁴ See Scholarios, *Premier traité sur la procession du Saint-Esprit* (Jugie-Petit-Sidéridès 1929-1935: 2.2 apparatus): συνεφράφη τοῦτο ὁκτὼ ἔτεσι πρὸ τῆς ἀλώσεως.

¹⁴⁵ This hypothesis would nonetheless not apply to the second Pneumatological treatise. According to Scholarios this work was produced in response to a request by the Emperor of Trebizond, after the latter became aware of the first treatise. See for this Scholarios, *Deuxieme traité sur la procession du Saint-Esprit* (Jugie-Petit-Sidéridès 1929-1935: 2.270-1).

that Gregorios III's elevation would have taken place in early June 1445. Shortly afterwards, on 23 June 1445, the Latin-Byzantine discussions with Lapacci would have started. While these were going on, Mark died.¹⁴⁶

Mark was the principal anti-unionist representative. His death at a crucial moment in the history of the Byzantine Empire and its Church would have had a tremendous impact. The meetings arranged at the Imperial Palace between the Papal envoys and anti-unionist Byzantine representatives had promised the latter a new opportunity to debate the terms of *Laetentur Caeli*, in a context which was much more favourable to the Greeks than the Council of Ferrara-Florence had been. The talks were now not held in the Papal state but in the imperial capital. Furthermore, a shift had occurred in the balance of power between Christians and Ottomans. The defeat of the "Crusade of Varna" in November 1444 had led to a rapprochement between Byzantines and Ottomans.¹⁴⁷ John VIII had signed a peace treaty with Murad II, which acknowledged the fact that he was now unable to rely on any further military assistance from Latin powers.¹⁴⁸ Subsequently, theological questions could be examined almost independently of their political stakes. This helps to account for why, as Scholarios recounted, the Emperor "gave us leave to meet in the palace called the palace of Xylala many times, and to see an answer concerning the objection of this [Papal] legate [i.e., Lapacci]."¹⁴⁹ For Mark this would have been a prime opportunity to legitimise his movement further and bring it to the forefront of the Byzantine ecclesial-political sphere. However, his sudden illness and death to some extent undermined this opportunity for the anti-unionists to oppose their Latin counterparts. However, once more, even in his illness and death he comes across as a key figure both in the dialogue between the Greek and Latin Churches, which offered the only realistic path to reunion, and in the birth of a modern Greek Orthodoxy from the ashes of the Byzantine imperial church following the Ottoman sacking of Constantinople on 29 May 1453. This is also recognised by Steven Runciman in his classic *The Great Church in Captivity: A study of the Patriarchate of Constantinople from the eve of the Turkish conquest to the Greek War of Independence*, when he concedes that after he was forced to abdicate Mark "was treated as a martyr by almost the whole body of the Greek Church."¹⁵⁰

Theodoros Agallianos

In what remains of this article we will look at a few further sources relating to Mark's life and work found in the writings of some of Mark's contemporaries and associates. We begin with Theodoros Agallianos, whose account relating to the circumstances of Mark's death offers some additional information. Patrinelis and others have identified Agallianos

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Gill 1964: 230-2.

¹⁴⁷ See Gill 1959: 15, 23, 28-32, 34-6, 52-60 for various instances of this intention for the Council to be held in Constantinople brought to light in the pre-conciliar negotiations. Imber 2006 for a variety of contemporaneous Hellenophone, Latin Christian, and Ottoman literary sources concerning this crusade and its consequences. For more information relating to this Crusade and its aftermath, see Chasin 1989: 276-310; Fine 548-54; Halecki 1943; Imber 2006: 1-39.

¹⁴⁸ Đurić 1996: 351-2.

¹⁴⁹ My translation from Scholarios, *Brève apologie des antiunionistes* (Jugie-Petit-Sidérédès 1929-1935: 3.99, lines 27-9): δέδωκεν ἡμῖν ἄδειαν ἐν τῷ τοῦ Ξυλαλα λεγομένῳ παλατίῳ πολλάκις συνελθεῖν, καὶ δοῦναι ἀποκρισιν περὶ τῆς ἐνστάσεως παρόντος τοῦ λεγάτου.

¹⁵⁰ Runciman 1968: 109.

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with Theodoros, the bishop of Media, who studied under Mark during his brief tenure as a schoolmaster in Constantinople.¹⁵¹ As a result of Agallianos' record Mark's last testament is known, which he issued on his deathbed to his various lay and clerical disciples including Scholarios and Agallianos himself.¹⁵² This final address is pertinent for the purpose of this article, as it elucidates Mark's and Scholarios' personal relations as well as Mark's intentions and factors behind his struggle with the unionist movement. In it Mark also delineates his stance towards ecclesial reunion: He claims that he did not accept the doctrinal definitions of *Laetentur Caeli* because of his intention to remain in tune with those Church Fathers who throughout history upheld Orthodox doctrine.¹⁵³ As a result he refused to allow any pro-unionists to concelebrate at his funeral given that they were in his view no longer in unity with the truth and therefore no longer in communion with himself and his supporters. They would remain in this state until God established *διόρθωσις* ("reformation") and *εἰρήνη* ("peace") in His Church.¹⁵⁴ Based upon Mark's admonitions, his disciples, under Scholarios' leadership, subsequently formed the *Τερά Σύναξις* to continue opposing the terms of the Florentine Reunion.¹⁵⁵

John Plousiadenos

Another, slightly later, source is John Plousiadenos. Likely born between 1427 and 1430 in the Latin kingdom of Candia (Crete), Plousiadenos describes how he was raised in an anti-Latin milieu.¹⁵⁶ During his youth, while in Constantinople, he became embroiled in the disputes concerning the Florentine Reunion. He first rejected any accommodation of the Latin Church but was eventually persuaded that the Council of Florence's doctrinal definitions were commensurate with the Patristic witness.¹⁵⁷ He was ordained priest c. 1451 and upheld a pro-unionist stance in his vast and multifaceted literary productions which included theological writings, orations, and liturgical music.¹⁵⁸ His support for ecclesial

¹⁵¹ Cf. Patrinelis 1966: 14-27.

¹⁵² Agallianos' account has been critically edited by Petit 1923: 484-91; cf. Patrinelis 1966: 51.

¹⁵³ Paraphrased from Mark of Ephesus, *Oratio ad amicorum coetum ac nominatum ad Georgium Scholarium* (Petit 1923: 485, lines 21-31): ὥσπερ οὐδὲ τὴν γενουνίαν ἔνωσιν καὶ τὰ δόγματα τὰ λατινικά, ἅπερ ἐδέξατο αὐτὸς τε καὶ οἱ μετ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ ὑπὲρ τοῦ δεφενδεύειν ταῦτα καὶ τὴν προστασίαν ταύτην ἐμνηστευσάτο ἐπὶ καταστροφῇ τῶν ὀρθῶν τῆς ἐκκλησίας δογμάτων. Πέπεισμαι γὰρ ἀκριβῶς, ὅτι ὅσον ἀποδάσταιμι τούτου καὶ τῶν τοιούτων, ἐγγίζω τῷ Θεῷ καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ἁγίοις, καὶ ὥσπερ τούτων χωρίζομαι, οὕτως ἐνοῦμαι τῇ ἀληθείᾳ καὶ τοῖς ἁγίοις πατράσι, τοῖς θεολόγοις τῆς ἐκκλησίας...

¹⁵⁴ Paraphrased from Mark of Ephesus, *Oratio ad amicorum coetum* (Petit 1923: 485, lines 34-486 at line 5 and 486, lines 9-11: Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο λέγω, ὥσπερ παρὰ πᾶσαν μου τὴν ζωὴν ἡμὴν κεχωρισμένος ἀπ' αὐτῶν, οὕτω καὶ ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τῆς ἐδόξου μου, καὶ ἔτι καὶ μετὰ τὴν ἐμὴν ἀποβίωσιν ἀποστρέφομαι, τὴν αὐτῶν κοινωνίαν καὶ ἔνωσιν, καὶ ἐξορκῶν ἐντέλλομαι, ἵνα μηδεὶς ἐξ αὐτῶν προσεγγίσῃ ἢ ἐν τῇ ἐμῇ κηδεῖᾳ ἢ τοῖς μνημοσύνοις μου... Δεῖ δὲ παντάπασιν ἐκείνους εἶνασαι κεχωρισμένους ἡμῶν, μέχρις ἂν δῶ ὁ Θεὸς τὴν καλὴν διόρθωσιν καὶ εἰρήμην τῆς ἐκκλησίας αὐτοῦ.

¹⁵⁵ See Mark of Ephesus, *Oratio ad amicorum coetum* (Petit 1923: 486, lines 14-489 at line 10), for Mark's appointment of Scholarios as his successor.

¹⁵⁶ See Plousiadenos, *De differentiis inter graecos et latinos, et de sacrosancta synodo Florentina* (PG 159, 1017d), where Plousiadenos also states that he was not yet ten years old in the time of the Council of Florence, i.e., between 1437 and 1439; Cf. Yost 2018: 44..

¹⁵⁷ See Plousiadenos' description of his attack on Gregorios III and his realignment with the pro-unionist movement in his *Disceptatio* (PG 159, 1017a-20b). Yost 2018: 44 for Plousiadenos' early life and literary oeuvres.

¹⁵⁸ See Despotakis 2016: 134-5 for the date of Plousiadenos' sacerdotal ordination. Cf. Yost 2018: 44-5, nn. 5, 7, for Plousiadenos' literary oeuvres.

reunion provoked the antipathy of Hellenophone anti-unionist clergy who, as John reports, persuaded the laity to avoid participation in any Church services led by unionist clergy, also to deprive the latter of financial support. However, Plousiadenos secured such support for the pro-unionist movement through the mediations of the Papal Curia and the Venetian Republic.¹⁵⁹ In 1491, he was elevated – by the Papacy – to the Metropolitanate of Methoni in the Peloponnese, which was still under Venetian occupation. He assumed the episcopal name of Joseph. He died in Methoni in 1500 amidst the Ottoman conquest of the area.¹⁶⁰

John attests that the antipathy towards the unionist cause was influenced by Mark's leadership of the anti-unionist movement following the Council of Ferrara-Florence. For example, within his *De Differentiis Inter Grecos et Latinos, et de Sacrosancta Synodo Florentina*, which was likely composed during the 1460s, John details how – upon his return to the Byzantine imperial capital in early 1440 – a crowd of Constantinopolitans glorified Mark because of his refusal to sign *Laetentur Caeli* and prostrated before him as though he were a new Moses and Aaron, proclaiming him to be blessed and holy.¹⁶¹ Plousiadenos supplements some lacunae in John Eugenikos' prosopography of Mark for the time after his return to Constantinople in 1443. For example, he describes how Mark engaged in several discussions with Pope Eugenius IV's delegate, Cristoforo Garatoni, the Bishop of Corone,¹⁶² and – in his *Expositio pro sancta et œcumenica synodo Florentina* – how after Mark's death many coeval Byzantine Rite Orthodox venerated him together with Gregorios Palamas, having icons written of them both.¹⁶³

To put Mark's leadership of the anti-unionist movement into perspective, within his *Epistula Encyclica* referred to above, Mark put forward a direct assault on the unionist movement.¹⁶⁴ Therein, Mark graphically describes the “Greco-Latin ((Γραικολατῖνοι)”) and “Latin-minded (Λατινόφρονες)” pro-unionists as being “half-bred” like centaurs in the sense that they, on the one hand, profess the Pneumatic procession from the Son and partake of azymes in the Eucharist when with the Latins, while professing that the Spirit proceeds from the Father, and refusing to receive azymes when with the Greeks.¹⁶⁵

Underlying Mark's arguments was a deeper concern: Like the Florentine Reunion itself the unionists instantiated in Mark's view the failure to provide any authentic Latin-Orthodox ecclesial reconciliation; for concerning their basis the two Churches continued

¹⁵⁹ See esp. Plousiadenos, *Discrepatio* (PG 159, 1005d-8a); H. D. Saffrey 1979: 41-4 ; Yost 2018: 45.

¹⁶⁰ See Manoussacas 1959: 48-51 and Yost 2018: 45 for Plousiadenos' archiepiscopal career and his passing.

¹⁶¹ Paraphrased from John Plousiadenos, *De Differentiis Inter Grecos et Latinos, et de Sacrosancta Synodo Florentina* (PG 159, 992): ‘Ο Ἐφέσου [i.e., Mark] εἶδε τὸ πλήθος δοξάζον αὐτὸν, ὥς μὴ ὑπογράψαντα, καὶ προσεκύνουν αὐτῷ οἱ ὄχλοι καθάπερ Μωϋσεῖ καὶ Ἀαρὼν, καὶ εὐφήμουν αὐτὸν καὶ ἅγιον ἀπεκάλουν.

¹⁶² See John Plousiadenos, *Canon in Octavum Synodum Florentiae Habitam* (PG 159, 1105b).

¹⁶³ Plousiadenos, *Expositio pro sancta et œcumenica synodo Florentina* (PGraeca 159, 1199-1394 at 1357b): ὥσπερ πολλοὺς μὲν ἄλλους καὶ τὸν καλούμενον Παλαμᾶν, καὶ τὸν Ἐφέσου Μάρκον· ἀνθρώπους οὗτ' ἄλλως φρεμήρεις, ἀλλὰ καὶ δοξοσοφίας ἐμπεπλησμένους· μηδεμίαν ἀρετὴν ἢ ἀγιωσύνην ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἔχοντας, μόνον διὰ τὸ λέγειν καὶ συγγράφειν κατὰ Λατίνων, δοξάζετε καὶ ὑμνεῖτε, καὶ εἰκόνας ἐγκοσμεῖτε αὐτοῖς, καὶ πανηγυρίζοντες, στέργετε αὐτοὺς ὡς ἁγίους καὶ προσκυνεῖτε...

¹⁶⁴ *Marci Ephesii Epistula Encyclica* (Petit 1923: 449-59).

¹⁶⁵ Paraphrased from *Marci Ephesii Epistula Encyclica* (Petit 1923: 450): ...καὶ διὰ τοῦτ' ἂν δικαίως κληθέντες Γραικολατῖνοι, καλούμενοι δ' οὖν ὑπὸ τῶν πολλῶν Λατινόφρονες. Οὗτοι τοίνυν οἱ μιζόθηρες ἄνθρωποι κατὰ τοὺς ἐν μύθοις ἱποκενταύρους μετὰ τῶν Λατίνων μὲν ὁμολογοῦσι τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Υἱοῦ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐκπορεύεσθαι... μεθ' ἡμῶν δὲ τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεσθαι λέγουσι... καὶ μετ' ἐκείνων μὲν τὸ ἄζυμον σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ λέγουσι, μεθ' ἡμῶν δὲ αὐτοῦ μεταλαμβάνειν οὐκ ἂν τολμήσαιεν.

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to be separated from one another. There was in reality no union. In particular, though they proclaim the supposedly erroneous doctrines of the Latin Church when in the company of those continuing to uphold the Byzantine Rite, the pro-unionists pretend that there is a status quo, despite the fact that both Churches, Latin and Byzantine rite, have retained their respective, separate, liturgical practices. A real reunion, for Mark, would only come about when there was unity between the Churches in all areas.¹⁶⁶

Mark also imputed the pro-unionists with professing Latin doctrines which were at odds with their self-proclaimed adherence to the ancient faith of the Eastern Churches. Mark's rhetorical question to them was what *via media* there exists between those who follow the Latin Church and its definition in *Laetentur Caeli* that the Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son, and those who follow what in his view is the Patristic consensus that the Spirit proceeds solely from the Father.¹⁶⁷ Thus, from Mark's view, a rupture still pertained between the Latin and Eastern Orthodox Churches which could not be coherently amended by those who supported the Florentine reunion. It was to views such as this that Plousiadenos was inspired to issue a response. One can glean from his work that while in his perspective ecclesial reunion did entail being in communion with the Latin Church, this union was not confined to acknowledging the fraternal bond between Latin and Eastern Christians but had as its object the universal nature of the Christian faith transcending both the Latins and Byzantine-Rite Churches. This view was particularly exemplified in his *Refutatio Marci Ephesini* in the context of defending the controversial doctrine of the *filioque*, which the Council of Florence had formally approved in *Laetentur Caeli*.¹⁶⁸ Therein, Plousiadenos expounded excerpts from an unidentified anti-unionist text ascribed to Mark before offering his own objections. In one extract ascribed to Mark, the author putatively exhibited that the “novel Latin dogma (τοῦ καινοῦ τῶν Λατίνων δόγματος)” of the Spirit's dual procession had been unambiguously prohibited by the Apostles and their episcopal successors in the context of the Ecumenical Councils.¹⁶⁹ Plousiadenos responded by (erroneously) claiming that this “novel” doctrine had in fact been sung within the Creed by the Roman Church from the time of the First Council of Constantinople of 381, while at the same time claiming that the doctrine is not solely “Latin” as the Fathers of the Church, Latin and Greek, were united in the same faith. As a result, the *filioque*, being a part of this universal faith, did not solely pertain to the Latin Church but was in fact a dogma binding the whole Church to submission.¹⁷⁰

Plousiadenos made this same point concerning the catholicity of the Christian faith in his treatise *Expositio pro sancta et oecumenica synodo Florentina*. In it Plousiadenos upheld

¹⁶⁶ Paraphrased from *Marci Ephesii Epistula Encyclica* (Petit 1923: 453-5).

¹⁶⁷ Paraphrased from *Marci Ephesii Epistula Encyclica* (Petit 1923: 455-7). Cf. Yost 2018: 47.

¹⁶⁸ See Plousiadenos, *Refutatio Marci Ephesini* (PG 159, 1023-1106).

¹⁶⁹ Plousiadenos, *Refutatio Marci Ephesini* (PG 159, 1060c): Παρὰ μὲν τῶν εὐαγγελικῶν ἀρξάμενος λόγων διὰ δὲ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ τῶν διαδισσαμένων αὐτοὺς κατελθὼν ἄχρι καὶ τῆς οἰκουμενικῆς τρίτης συνόδου, κατὰ μέρος τε ἐξεργαζόμενος ἕκαστον τῶν ῥητῶν, καὶ συλλογιζόμενος ἐφ' ἑκάστῳ, καὶ συμπεραίνων ὑπὲρ ἀποδεικνύειν προκειμένον εἶχον, ὡς πανταχοῦ τοῦ καινοῦ τῶν Λατίνων δόγματος ἀπηγορευμένου.

¹⁷⁰ See Plousiadenos, *Refutatio Marci Ephesini* (PG 159, 1061b-c): Καινὸν δὲ καὶ ἀπηγορευμένον τὸ τῶν Λατίνων δόγμα οὔτε μὴν ἐδείξας οὔτε δείξεις ποτέ, οὔτε σὺ οὔτ' ἄλλος τις ὑψηλότερός σου καὶ λογιώτερος· ὅτι οὐ καινὸν τοῦτο τὸ δόγμα ὑπάρχει, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τῆς δευτέρας συνόδου ἐστὶ τε καὶ ψάλλεται ἐν τῇ Ῥωμαϊκῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ· οὐδὲ Λατινικόν ἐστι ἢ Γραικικόν, οὐ γὰρ ἐν μέρει ἡ πίστις, ἀλλὰ Χριστιανικόν· πάντες γὰρ οἱ διδάσκαλοι Γραικοὶ καὶ Λατῖνοι τὸ αὐτὸ φρονοῦσιν· εἰ μὴ τοσοῦτον ἀτοπώτατος βούλει φανῆναι, ὥστε καὶ τοὺς ἀνατολικούς ἀγίους καὶ διδασκάλους Λατίνους ἀποκαλεῖν. Yost 2018: 52-3.

the use of unleavened Eucharistic bread. He began with a quotation of *Laetentur Caeli* and continued by invoking the witness of both Scripture and the Church Fathers to support his position that the one Church shares the same Sacrament of the Eucharist, although some use leavened bread while others used unleavened bread. In Plousiadenos' view the truth that the Eucharistic bread is transmuted into Christ's Body exceeds any customary divergences in the Eucharistic matter used by different local Churches.¹⁷¹ With this view he fundamentally diverts from Mark, who held that a plurality of liturgical *praxeis* was in contradiction to ecclesiastical union.

These examples elucidate further the principal source of contention between Mark and pro-unionists such as Plousiadenos, namely the authentic basis of Latin-Byzantine ecclesiastical reunion. As has been shown, for Mark, ecclesiastical reunion could only genuinely be put into effect if there was unity in liturgical praxis. Plousiadenos' stance in contrast was undergirded by the principle that ecclesiastical union was characterised by the one universal faith confessed throughout the whole Church, which transcended any customary discrepancies which might exist between various local Churches.

Manuel of Corinth.

In terms of discerning the life and work of Mark of Ephesus within the available near-contemporary sources, one should also take into consideration the *Λόγος* produced by Manuel of Corinth. As its full title indicates,¹⁷² the work was composed principally in order to refute Plethon's *Antirrhetic to the Treatise in Support of the Latin Doctrine of the Procession of the Spirit*, which – according to C. M. Woodhouse – “was Plethon's most important contribution to pure theology.”¹⁷³

As one of the most important and prolific Hellenophone Orthodox theologians of the post-Byzantine period Mark wrote theological treatises, hagiographies, orations, letters and liturgical music.¹⁷⁴ After the Fall of Constantinople the Ecumenical Patriarchate functioned as the chief guardian of Byzantine Orthodox doctrine in virtue of the fact that, having been appointed as the *milletbashi* of all Eastern Orthodox Christians under the Ottoman Empire, it assumed a higher degree of spiritual, canonical, civil legislative, and financial

¹⁷¹ See esp. Plousiadenos, *Expositio* (PG 159, 1192a): ...ἵνα δειχθῇ διὰ πάντων, ὅτι τὴν εἰρήνην καὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν ζητοῦμεν, καὶ οὐ βουλόμεθα τὸν ἕνα Χριστὸν διαιρεῖν, ὥστε τὸν μὲν λέγειν Γραικὸν, τὸν δὲ Λατῖνον· ἀλλ' οὐδὲ τὸ μυστήριον τῆς Νέας Διαθήκης, τὸ τῆς ἱερᾶς τελετῆς διττὸν λέγομεν· ὥστε αὐτὸ τὸ σῶμα Κυρίου μερίζειν εἰς δύο· καὶ τὸ μὲν ἔνζυμον λέγειν, τὸ δ' ἄζυμον· ἀλλ' ἐκάτερον τούτων, σῶμα Χριστοῦ ὁμολογοῦμεν, καὶ σῶμα Χριστοῦ κηρύττομεν, ἓν καὶ ταυτὸ λογιζόμενοι, εἰ καὶ διαφόρως τελεῖται ἐν ἀμφοτέροις τοῖς μέρεσιν. Yost 2018: 53-4.

¹⁷² The full title of Manuel's work is *Τοῦ κτρ Μανουὴλ τοῦ Μεγάλου ρήτορος λόγος περὶ Μάρκου τοῦ ἀγιωτάτου μητροπολίτου Ἐφέσου καὶ τῆς ἐν Φλωρεντίας συνόδου καὶ κατὰ Γεμιστοῦ καὶ Βησσαρίωνος καὶ ἀνατροπῇ τῶν δυσσεβῶν συγγραμμάτων αὐτῶν*. The first critical edition (with an accompanying Russian translation) was provided by the Russian Imperial Orthodox Bishop Arsenius Ivashchenko (1866: 102-62). In 1923, Louis Petit provided a critical edition in *Patrologia Orientalis*, Vol. 17, 491-522 as part of his critical edition of Mark's 'anti-unionist' oeuvres (Petit 1923).

¹⁷³ Quoted from Woodhouse 1986: 273. Plethon's work has been preserved under the title *πρὸς τὸ ὑπὲρ Λατίνων τοῦ Νικαίας Βιβλίον, καὶ τοῦ Νικαίας ἀπολογίῳ καὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ Πληθωνος ἐπὶ τῷ τέλει ἀντιρρήσις*. See Leo Allatius, “Notitia” (PG 160, 789-92). While the treatise which Plethon was responding to was traditionally attributed to Bessarion, scholars such as Spyridon Lambros and Francis Masai have instead helped to identify this work as that of John Argyropoulos: Lambros 1910: 107-28; Masai 1956: 390-1.

¹⁷⁴ For a list of Manuel's works, see Papadopoulos-Kerameus 1902b: 80-9.

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authority over these bodies of Christians than it had possessed under the Byzantine emperors.¹⁷⁵ This background helps to explicate why Manuel's body of work, especially his theological treatises, is broadly marked by his authorial attempt to sustain and proliferate the Byzantine Church's theological and literary traditions, particularly in the face of the pro-unionists. Moreover, the production of his various *ἀκολουθίαι* for coeval saints directly contributed to the canonisation and expansion of the veneration of new saints under the Ottoman Empire.

It was in this context that, during the Patriarchate of Maximos III between 1476 and 1482, Manuel was commissioned by Maximos to produce a new *Ἀκολουθία* in Mark's honour to be sung on the Fifth Sunday of Lent.¹⁷⁶ This work offers valuable information about Mark's pre-conciliar background that helps to verify the details provided by other sources such as John Eugenikos' *Συναξάριον*.¹⁷⁷ For example, Manuel reports that Mark was born and raised in Constantinople and was given an all-encompassing education by his parents, which allowed him to quickly grow in wisdom, knowledge and piety. Mark, Manuel continues, subsequently worked in the chancery of the Ecumenical Patriarchate under Euthymios II before pursuing his monastic vocation at Mangana, where he soon became renowned as one of the foremost hesychasts. Manuel describes how Mark was dedicated to studying Sacred Scripture and the teachings of the Apostles and Fathers of the Church while also producing a panoply of theological oeuvres of his own, which Manuel suggests were still well-known at his time of writing. It was in Mangana that Mark was ordained to the priesthood.¹⁷⁸

Manuel's *Λόγος* further elucidates the intra-Byzantine political and ecclesiastical milieu up to and during the Byzantine imperial participation in the Council of Ferrara-

¹⁷⁵ See Apostolopoulos 2021 and Païzi-Apostolopoulou 2021 for overviews of these developments.

¹⁷⁶ Manuel's *Ἀκολουθία* was edited and published by Papadopoulos-Kerameus 1902b: 90-102. Cf. Petit 1926b: 136-9. The critical edition of the *Ἀκολουθία* specifies when it was to be sung when it stated: ψαλλόμενα τῇ πέμπτῃ Κυριακῇ τῶν ἁγίων νηστειῶν... Quoted from Papadopoulos-Kerameus 1902b: 90.

¹⁷⁷ See esp. Petit 1923: 491-5.

¹⁷⁸ Paraphrased from Petit 1923: 491-2: Ἐπειδὴ μετὰ γε τῶν ἄλλων τῶν τῇ πρὸς ἡμᾶς σου ἐμπεριελιγμένων ἐπιστολῇ καὶ τοῦτο μοι γράφων προσετηξίους φίλων ἄριστε τὸ ἐν κεφαλῇ σοι ἐκθέσθαι καὶ τὰ κατὰ τὸν μακάριον Μάρκον τὸν τῶν Ἐφεσίων ἀρχιερατικὸν ἐπικοσμήσαντα θρόνον, ὅθεν τε ὥρμητο καὶ ὅπως ἐν τῇ κατ' Ἰταλίαν συστάσῃ ὁγδόῃ διατεθεὶς φαίνεται συνόδῳ, τίσι τε τῶν τῆνικαῦτα προσδιαλεγόμενων συντεταγμένους ἦν, καὶ εἴ γε κατὰ σκοπὸν ἀκριβῆ τοῖς ἁγίοις θεολόγοις διηγορευμένος τυγχάνει τελῶν, καὶ τίνες αὐτῷ ἀσυμφώνως διαμεμενηκότες, τῇ τῆς σφετέρας γνώμης συγκεκρημένοι στρεβλότητι καὶ ἐτέροις τῆς ὀρθῆς καὶ εὐθείας ἀπογενέσθαι κατέστησαν αἴτιοι, ἥδη σοι τὸν τοιοῦτον ἀφοσιούμενος πόθον, συνεπτυγμένως πως, ὡς οἶον τε, ταῦτ' ἐπελθεῖν πειράσομαι, ἵν' εἴης ἔχων ἀναλεγόμενος εἰς τε μίμησιν τοῦ κατ' ἀρετὴν καλοῦ καὶ τῆς πρὸς σὲ ἡμετέρας ἀκραιβνοῦς φιλίας ὑπόμνημα. Οὗτος τοιγαροῦν ὁ ἱερώτατος Μάρκος αὐτῆς τῆς βασιλίδος τῶν πόλεων γέννημα καὶ θρέμμα ἦν ἐκ πρώτης δὲ τριχὸς ὡς εἶπεῖν ὑπὸ τῶν αὐτῷ γονέων τὴν ἐγκύκλιον ἐκπαιδεύεσθαι σοφίαν ἐκδέδοται ἦν ἐν βραχεῖ καιρῷ πτηνός τις καθάπερ διελθὼν πάντων συμμαθητῶν καὶ ἡλικῶν ἐκράτει. Ἐπειτα δὲ τῷ ἱερῷ τῆς μεγάλης ἐκκλησίας ἐγκαταλεγείς κλήρῳ σφραγίδι καὶ εὐλογίᾳ τοῦ ἁγιοτάτου ἐν πατριάρχαις καὶ σοφωτάτου Εὐθυμίου ἐκείνου, ὅλον ἑαυτὸν τῇ θεοπνεύστῳ γραφῇ ἐκδίδωσιν· εἶτα τὸ μοναχικὸν ἀμφιέννυται σχῆμα ἐν τῇ ἱερᾷ καὶ μεγάλῃ τῶν Μαγγάνων μονῇ καὶ ὅλος τῆς ἡσυχίας γίνεται· τοσοῦτον δὲ τῆς μονῆς καὶ τῆς ἰδίας κέλλης ἀπρόιτος ἐτύγχανεν ὧν ἐφέσει δῆπου τῆς κατ' αὐτὸν ἡσυχίας, ὡς καὶ γνωστοῖς καὶ φίλοις καὶ αὐτοῖς τοῖς κατ' αἷμα συγγενέσι μηδὲ εἰς ὅψιν ἐλθεῖν ἀνεχόμενος μόνον δὲ αὐτῷ νύκτωρ καὶ μεθ' ἡμέραν ἔργον ἦν ἀκατάταυστον ἢ τῶν θείων μελέτη γραφῶν. ἔνθεν τοι καὶ νοημάτων ἐπλούτησε πέλαγος, ὡς τὰ αὐτῷ πονηθέντα συγγράματα δείκνυσιν. Ἐξῆς δὲ καὶ τῶν θείων τῆς ἱεροσύνης ζυγὸν ἐπαυχενίζεται καὶ μετ' οὐ πολὺ ἀρχιερεὺς τῶν Ἐφεσίων ὑπὸ τῆς μεγάλης καὶ ἁγιοτάτης καθίσταται ἐκκλησίας, οὐκ ἐθελοντὴς ἴσως, πολλῶν δ' ἀξιώσει τῶν συνήθων, καὶ οὕτω τὸν τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀγῶνα ἑαυτῷ μᾶλλον ἐπηύξησέ τε καὶ κατ' ἰσχὺν ἐπέτεινε.

Florence. For example, Manuel describes how Emperor John VIII was a significant force behind Mark's ascendancy during the 1430s and 1440s. According to Manuel, John VIII was acutely worried by the threat of the "tribe of Hagar" and was thereby highly receptive to the overtures of "those in Italy" who were making overtures of ecclesial reunion with the promise of helping to secure the Empire. Manuel links these concerns to his own motivation for writing his *Λόγος* claiming that the question of the procession of the Spirit was one of the main issues of contention between the Latin and Byzantine Churches that the Council sought to resolve. He describes how John VIII sent a contingent which included Mark as well as Plethon and Bessarion to Ferrara-Florence and disingenuously links Plethon's alleged polytheism with the apparent willingness of some in the Byzantine contingent to accept riches and honours from the Latin Church and to betray in exchange the Orthodox opposition to the *filioque*.¹⁷⁹

Conclusions

The full story of the Council of Ferrara-Florence has thus been far from told. One of the principal intentions of this article has been to detail that Mark of Ephesus' life and work, particularly within the context of the Council itself, was underpinned by a considerable degree of sincerity and learning. Mark's intellectual contributions to the debates before, during, and after the Council were marked by a notable sense of erudition and desire for both himself and the Church universal to remain in continuity with the traditions passed on through Scripture, the Church Fathers, and the Church's common Councils. Such a fundamentally positive interpretation of Mark's contribution stands in stark contrast to

¹⁷⁹ Paraphrased from Petit 1923: 492-4: Τῶν κατ' αὐτὸν τοίνυν ταύτη τοι τὴν θεῖαν προκοπὴν καθ' ἐκάστην ἐπιδιδόντων, ὁ κατ' ἐκεῖνο καιροῦ τὴν τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἐθνῶν σκηπτουχίαν Ἰωάννης δ' ὁ αἰοίδιμος βασιλεὺς οὗτος ἦν, ὃς ἔκτος ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου τῶν Παλαιολόγων ἐτύγχανε γεγονώς, τὸ τῆς Ἀγαρ φύλον καθ' ἐκάστην ὁρῶν ὑπαυξάνον, τὸ δ' ἡμέτερον στενοῦμενον πανταχόθεν καὶ εἰς ἔκλειψιν συνωθούμενον ὡς εἰπεῖν παντελῆ, κάντεῦθεν δεδιὼς μὴ κατὰ βραχὺ τὰ περίξ τῆς τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἀρχῆς ληϊζόμενον, καὶ αὐτὴν ὑποποιήσεται τὴν τῶν πόλεων βασιλίδα, καθάπερ δῆτα καὶ ἐσύτερον οἱμοὶ γέγονε, δεῖν ἔγνω συμμαχοὺς ἑαυτῷ τοὺς ἐν τῇ Ἰταλίᾳ προσεπικτήσασθαι. τοῦτο δὲ ἄρ' οὐκ ἦν ἂν ἀσφαλῶς γενέσθαι, εἰ μὴ σύνοδον συγκροτήσῃ καὶ τὰ πρὸς τὴν καθ' ἡμᾶς θεολογίαν προσάντη τελοῦντα κεφάλαια, ἅπερ ἐκεῖνοι καινοτομήσαντες τοῖς ὀρθοδόξοις προσπαρενείραντο δόγμασι, σπουδάσει παση δυνάμει ἢ διευθετηθῇσιν ἢ ἐκ μέσου πως γενέσθαι· τὰ δὲ ἦν, τὸ τε καὶ ἐκ τοῦ Ὑιοῦ τὸ πανάγιον πρεσβεῦεν Πνεῦμα καὶ τὸ περὶ τὴν θεῖαν οὐσίαν καὶ ἐνέργειαν ταυτὸν, ἅπερ δὴ καὶ νομίζων ἦν, ὡς εἶγε συνοδικῶς καὶ δογματικῶς ὡς εἰπεῖν μὴ διευλυτωθῇ, οὐκ ἂν εἰς μίαν ὀρθοδοξίαν περιωπὴν ἄμφω τὰ γένη συνέλθοιεν, ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἄλληλ' ἐπιτάρροθα λοιπὸν ἔσονται ἂν. Τὸν τοιοῦτον τοίνυν ἀγαθὸν δοκοῦντα σκοπὸν ὁ φιλόχριστος οὗτος καὶ εὐσεβέστατος βασιλεὺς ὑπ' ἀνάγκης ἐν ἑαυτῷ θέμενος, πρὸς τὸν τῆς Ῥώμης πρεσβείαν περὶ τοῦ;του ἐκπέμπει πρόεδρον· ὃς δῆτα καὶ χαριέντως ἀποδεξάμενος ταύτην καὶ ἐνασμενισάμενος μάλα τῷ ἐνθυμήματι, δι' οἰκείων αὐθις προσεπηξίωσε πρέσβων τὴν περὶ τούτων ἐν Φλωρεντίᾳ γενέσθαι σύνοδον, ὅπερ καὶ γέγονε. τῶν γὰρ περὶ αὐτὸν τοὺς ἐπιλέκτους ὁ βασιλεὺς εἰληφῶς καὶ λογάδοας τινὰς, συμπαρεῖλθει καὶ τὸν ῥηθέντα μακάριον Μάρκον, ὃνπερ ἤδη ἐκεῖσε γενόμενος, καὶ τῆς συνόδου συστάσης, ἔξαρχον αὐτῆς ἀρμοζόντως κατέστησεν· ἐξ γὰρ ἐξ ἑκατέρου μέρους τῶν προσδιαλεγόμενων ταχθέντων, τῶν ἡμετέρων οὗτος ἐξάρχειν προστέτακται· ἐν οἷς καὶ ὁ χρηματίσας μητροπολίτης Νικαίας Βησσαρίων καὶ Γεμιστός, οἱ θεομάχοι τε καὶ πολυειδῶς διεφθαρμένοι, σὺν ἐτέροις ἦσαν κοθόρνοις ἢ θεοκαπήλοις, οἵτινες οὐχ αἰρετικοὶ μόνον ὑπούλως (ᾧθεν δὴ καὶ τοῖς ἐναντίοις νῶτα δεδώκασι καὶ τοὺς προσανέχοντας αὐτοῖς τηνικαῦτα προσέφθειραν τὴν ἀλήθειαν προδοῦναι ἐπαγγελίαις τιμῶν τε καὶ δωρεῶν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀσεβεῖς ἄντικρυς ἦσαν, τὴν παλαιὰν Ἑλλήνων περὶ θεοῦ, ἢ δαίμονας εἰπεῖν οἰκειότερον, βδελυγμίαν ἐν ταῖς σφῶν αὐτῶν περιφέροντες ψυχαῖς, καθὼς γε τὰ αὐτῶν ἀθεώτατα τρόνι συγγράμματα δείκνυσιν, ἅπερ εἰς διαστροφὴν δῆθεν καὶ σκάνδαλον τῶν ἀπλουστέρων καταλελοίπασιν.”

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the characterization of Mark put forward by a number of western scholars, especially in the 20th century. While it is acknowledged that Mark has to be understood as a child of his time, his life, work and thought can nevertheless serve in an exemplary fashion as material for a meaning discourse on the pursuit of unity between Western and Eastern Churches today: By studying his theological sources and method, one could facilitate more effectively Mark's desire for unity among the various Churches both in doctrine and liturgical praxis.

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