

CONFESSIONS OF AN INGENIOUS MAN: THE CONFESSIONS OF FAITH  
OF JOHN XI BEKKOS IN THEIR SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND THEOLOGICAL  
BACKGROUND<sup>1</sup>

Efi RAGIA

**I. A FEW COMMENTS ON THE LIFE OF JOHN BEKKOS**

The Patriarch who connected his name with the Church Union of Lyons was John XI Bekkos. Even though his biography is quite well known, it is useful for the present study to review some of the facts of his life in a way that explains much of what follows.<sup>2</sup> Bekkos was born around 1225 in the Empire of Nicaea. Not much is known about his early life, except that he was George Babouskomytes' student.<sup>3</sup> He was ordained a priest very early in life and enlisted in the patriarchal clergy in order to become chartophylax of the Patriarchate under Patriarch Arsenios and grand skeuophylax under Patriarch Joseph I. His positions ensured him authority and prestige; he was accordingly esteemed by the Emperor, Michael VIII Palaeologos, who sent him as his envoy to Stefan Uroš in Serbia in 1269 and to Louis IX in Tunis in 1270.<sup>4</sup> As a grand skeuophylax and chartophylax of the Patriarchate, but also as an

---

<sup>1</sup> This paper was written as part of the postdoctoral research project entitled "Electronic Database on the Social History of Byzantium from the 6th to the 12th Centuries: Sources, Problems and Approaches", which was implemented within the framework of the Action «Supporting Postdoctoral Researchers» of the Operational Program "Education and Lifelong Learning" (Management Agency: General Secretariat for Research and Technology), and is co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Greek State. The program was realized at the IBR/IHR/NHRF from April 2012 through March 2015.

<sup>2</sup> A. RIEBE, *Rom in Gemeinschaft mit Konstantinopel. Patriarch Johannes XI. Bekkos als Verteidiger der Kirchenunion von Lyon (1274)* (Mainzer Veröffentlichungen zur Byzantinistik 8), Wiesbaden 2005, p. 101 sq.; ODB 2, p. 1055; *PLP*, n° 2548; J. GILL, John Beccos, Patriarch of Constantinople, 1275-1282, *Βυζαντινά* 7, 1975, p. 251-266, here 253.

<sup>3</sup> C. CONSTANTINIDES, *Higher Education in Byzantium in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries (1204-ca. 1310)* (Texts and studies of the history of Cyprus 11), Nicosia 1982, p. 16-17; N. XEXAKES, *Ὁ Ἰωάννης Β΄ Βέκκος καὶ αἱ θεολογικαὶ ἀντιλήψεις αὐτοῦ*, Διατριβὴ ἐπὶ διδασκαλία, Αθήνα 1981, p. 29-30; RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 102-103; D. M. NICOL, The Greeks and the Union of the Churches: the preliminaries to the second council of Lyons, 1261-1274, in *Medieval Studies presented to Aubrey Gwynn*, ed. J. A. WATT, J. B. MORALL, F. X. MARTIN, Dublin 1961, p. 454-480, here 461.

<sup>4</sup> RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 103-105, 109; XEXAKES, *Βέκκος* (quoted n. 3), p. 29-30. Cf. NICEPHORI GREGORAE, *Byzantina Historia*, ed. L. SCHOPEN (CSHB), 1, Bonn 1829, p. 128-129. The author notes that Bekkos combined physical appearance and eloquence in a manner that appealed to Emperors and archons (ὡς εἶναι βασιλεῦσι καὶ ἄρχουσι καὶ πᾶσι σοφοῖς λαμπρὸν περιλάλημα).

associate of both Patriarchs Arsenios and Joseph, John Bekkos also had a good reputation among his colleagues and exercised influence over the patriarchal clergy and the prelates of the Church. This is amply demonstrated by the grand logothete George Akropolites' exasperation: "the chartophylax is dragging the synod by the nose", he exclaimed when he realized the ease with which John Bekkos led the synod in the direction he wanted.<sup>5</sup> These facts are of some importance because they explain why Bekkos' Patriarchate was secure and unthreatened on both the Arsenite and the Josephite fronts.<sup>6</sup> The Emperor's decision to bring him over to his own side at any cost is to be understood as a carefully calculated move with the purpose of making use of his influence over the synod.<sup>7</sup> More than that, it appears that John Bekkos was indeed one of the very few persons – if not the only one – who actually could become Patriarch of the Church of Constantinople without fearing for his position at the head

---

<sup>5</sup> GEORGES PACHYMERES, *Relations historiques*, 1, *Livres I-III*; 2, *Livres IV-VI*, édition, introduction et notes par A. FAILLER, traduction française par V. LAURENT (CFHB 24/1-2), Paris 1984, 1, p. 483.22-23; A. FAILLER, Chronologie et composition dans l'histoire de Georges Pachymères, *REB* 39, 1981, p. 145-249, here 222. This was recorded during the preliminary procedures to the synod of Lyons (1273), when Michael VIII tried to have Bekkos removed from office by means of false accusations.

<sup>6</sup> The Arsenites did not acknowledge the legitimacy of the successors of Patriarch Arsenios nor of all those prelates whom they had promoted to their ranks. The situation became more complex with the blinding of John IV Laskaris, which also put Michael VIII's right to the throne at risk. See P. GOUNARIDIS, *Το κίνημα των Αρσενιατών (1261-1310). Ιδεολογικές διαμάχες την εποχή των πρώτων Παλαιολόγων*, Αθήνα 1999, p. 35 sq.; V. LAURENT, Les grandes crises religieuses à Byzance. La fin du schisme arsénite, *Bulletin de la section historique de l'Académie Roumaine* 26/2, 1945, p. 225-313, here 225-230. The Josephites were formed during the procedures for the Union of Lyon. GOUNARIDIS, *Κίνημα* (quoted n. 6), p. 95 sq., 108-111, argues that the Josephites were primarily identified with the patriarchal clergy, something which appears not that simple after the election of John Bekkos. Also see D. M. NICOL, The Byzantine reaction to the second Council of Lyons, 1274, *Studies in Church History* 7, 1971, p. 113-146, here 117-118, 121; ID., Preliminaries (quoted n. 3), p. 464-465; ID., *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, Cambridge 1994<sup>2</sup>, p. 62, 44-45; A. PAPADAKIS, with the collaboration of J. MEYENDORFF, *Η χριστιανική Ανατολή και η άνοδος του παπισμού. Η Εκκλησία από το 1071 ως το 1453*, Αθήνα 2003, p. 332-333; H. EVERT-KAPPESOWA, La société byzantine et l'Union de Lyon, *BSI.* 10, 1949, p. 28-41, here p. 28-29. Bekkos is the only Patriarch of the time whose legitimacy in office was not attacked by the Arsenites.

<sup>7</sup> On these events see RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 77-78, 105-108; A. PAPADAKIS, *Crisis in Byzantium: the Filioque controversy in the Patriarchate of Gregory II of Cyprus (1283-1289)*, Crestwood NY 1977<sup>2</sup>, p. 18-19; XEXAKES, *Βέκκος* (quoted n. 3), p. 35-37; H.-G. BECK, *Ιστορία της Ορθόδοξης Εκκλησίας στη βυζαντινή αυτοκρατορία*, 2, Αθήνα 2004, p. 143-145; GILL, John Beccos (quoted n. 2), p. 254-255; FAILLER, Chronologie (quoted n. 5), p. 223; NICOL, Preliminaries (quoted n. 3), p. 470-472; and the notes of G. RICHTER, Johannes Bekkos und sein Verhältnis zur römischen Kirche, *BF* 15, 1990, p. 167-217, 181-183; V. LAURENT et J. DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec de l'Union de Lyon (1273-1277)* (Archives de l'Orient Chrétien 16), Paris 1976, p. 38-41.

of his Church. His subsequent elevation to the patriarchal throne in June 1275 can be considered as a great success on the part of Emperor Michael VIII Palaeologos.<sup>8</sup> As a person, however, John Bekkos appears to have been very honest and candid.<sup>9</sup> He was not politically flexible; on the contrary, George Pachymeres' detailed narrative shows that he was unable, as chartophylax, to manoeuvre and meet the conflicting requirements of Patriarch Joseph and of the Emperor.<sup>10</sup> These characteristics explain why his relations with the Emperor were at times so difficult.<sup>11</sup> His writings show that his reasoning was structured, but quite often they are colored with emotion, which clearly made an impact on his audience. His embracing of the Church Union was genuine and was not instigated by personal ambition; indeed, Bekkos was convinced not only of its political necessity, but also of its theological foundation, which is the very thing for which his opponents never forgave him and that Bekkos never renounced. Bekkos, however, was not responsible for the accomplishment of the Union in 1274. We may even wonder whether Bekkos' change of sides had a greater effect on the Church prelates than the resignation of Patriarch Joseph, which cleared the way for the Church of Constantinople to meet the Emperor halfway.<sup>12</sup> The fact is that John Bekkos, as a chartophylax, wrote, signed and sealed with his seal the synodical document that was sent to Lyons in February 1274, but at the head of the Byzantine Church there appears the metropolitan bishop of Ephesus, Isaac. The collaboration of the prelates was later rewarded with the transfer of the jurisdiction

---

<sup>8</sup> John Bekkos was elected Patriarch on the 26<sup>th</sup> of May 1275 and was enthroned on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June. See XEXAKES, *Βέκκος* (quoted n. 3), p. 37-39; V. LAURENT, La chronologie des patriarches de Constantinople au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle (1208-1309), *REB* 27, 1969, p. 129-149, here 145; LAURENT, Crises (quoted n. 6), p. 272. In Laurent's opinion the election of John Bekkos was perfectly legal also, because he would not be taken "ni pour intrus ni pour un adultère".

<sup>9</sup> PACHYMERES, 1 (quoted n. 5), p. 489.2.

<sup>10</sup> On the confrontations of John Bekkos with the Emperor and the prelates see RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 111-112.

<sup>11</sup> Beautifully summarized in GILL, John Beccos (quoted n. 2), p. 255-256. Also on the personality of Bekkos, see RICHTER, Bekkos (quoted n. 7), p. 212-217.

<sup>12</sup> In a short note, Patriarch Joseph I made a commitment to abdicate if the result of the synod of Lyons did not meet his requirements. See LAURENT-DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 26-28, n° 6 (previous edition in J. GILL, The Church Union of the Council of Lyons portrayed in Greek documents, *OCP* 40, 1974, p. 5-45, here n° 3, p. 20-22); GOUNARIDIS, *Κίνημα* (quoted n. 6), p. 98-99. It is generally acknowledged that Bekkos' influence led to the Emperor's agreement in 1273/4 with the Church of Constantinople. See LAURENT-DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 26 n. 3; RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 77, 82; FAILLER, *Chronologie* (quoted n. 5), p. 224.

over the patriarchal monasteries from the Patriarchate to the country bishops. The measure was from the beginning considered favorable to Isaac.<sup>13</sup>

In his lifetime, John Bekkos wrote four confessions of faith. The first was written between February and April 1277. It is included in a letter addressed to Pope John XXI.<sup>14</sup> The second, dated April 1277, was the official adherence of the Patriarch of Constantinople to the Latin Creed.<sup>15</sup> Both these documents are dependent on the synodical procedures of February of the same year. Bekkos delivered his third profession, generally considered as “orthodox”, to the court that was held against him in January 1283. This “orthodox” profession was apparently kept in the archives of the Patriarchate and was inserted into Gregory II’s *Tomos* from August 1285.<sup>16</sup> The fourth profession was written in a manifestly aggressive tone in October 1294, a couple of years before his death.<sup>17</sup> A copy of it was included in a manuscript that contained works of George Metochites. The document was recently edited in its complete version as the author’s last will,<sup>18</sup> in which Bekkos leaves his few

---

<sup>13</sup> The metropolitan of Ephesus, who replaced the Patriarch as the head of the synod ; his name appears first in the document signed in February 1274 and sent to Lyons, with the formula *metropolita Ephesinus prehonorus et exarcus totius Asiae, cum sancta synodo*. The other signatories were the metropolitans of Herakleia of Thrace, Sardis, Nicomedia, Nicaea, Chalkedon, Naupactus, Philadelphia, Thessalonica, Larissa, Tyana, Herakleia Pontica, Iconium, Caria, Corfu locum adimplens Mytilene, Athens locum tenens Philippoupolis, Rhodes, Serres, Amastris, Alania, Prusa, Madytos, Abydos, Christianoupolis, Selybria, Mesembria, Apros, Achryraus, Pegae and Parion, Didymoteichon, Anastasiopolis, and the archbishops of Bizye, Kypsella, Garella, Derkos, Proconnese, Lopadion, Pergamon, Melenikon, Berroia, followed by the clerics of the Patriarchate. See L. PIERALLI, *La corrispondenza diplomatica dell'imperatore bizantino con le potenze estere nel tredicesimo secolo (1204-1282)* (Collectanea Archivi Vaticani 54), Città del Vaticano 2006, App. 2. The composition of this document was part of Bekkos’ duties as chartophylax. According to Byzantine administrative practice the subscriptions of the prelates and the clerics that are mentioned in the beginning immediately followed Bekkos’ subscription, as mentioned specifically at the end: see PIERALLI, *Corrispondenza* (quoted n. 13), 413.173-177; J. DARROUZÈS, *Recherches sur les Oφφίκτια de l'Église byzantine* (Archives de l'Orient Chrétien 11), Paris 1970, p. 413-418. On the patriarchal monasteries see PACHYMERES, 2 (quoted n. 5), p. 573.

<sup>14</sup> LAURENT-DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), n° 19, p. 478-485 [previous edition in GILL, *Church Union* (quoted n. 12), n° 8, p. 34-41]; LAURENT, *Regestes I, 4*, n° 1432.

<sup>15</sup> PIERALLI, *Corrispondenza* (quoted n. 13), App. 3; LAURENT, *Regestes I, 4*, n° 1433.

<sup>16</sup> PG 142, col. 237-238; LAURENT, *Regestes I, 4*, n° 1490; PAPADAKIS, *Crisis* (quoted n. 7), p. 157-158. More than thirty copies of the *Tomos* have survived. Laurent did not comment at all on Bekkos’ profession in the document.

<sup>17</sup> V. LAURENT, La date de la mort de Jean Bekkos, *ÉO* 25, 1926, p. 316-319. The author fixed the date at the end of March 1297.

<sup>18</sup> S. KOTZABASSI, The Testament of Patriarch John Bekkos, *Βυζαντινά* 32, 2012, p. 25-35 (previous, incomplete edition in PG 141, col. 1027-1032). Also see M. PATEDAKES, Οι διαθήκες των πατριαρχών της πρώιμης Παλαιολόγειας περιόδου (1255-1309), *Θησαυρίσματα* 37, 2007, p. 65-85. The full text is found in *Laurentianus Plut.* 7,31, dated to

belongings to his two companions in exile, Constantine Meliteniotes and George Metochites.<sup>19</sup> Quite interestingly, the fourth profession confirms Bekkos' love of the classics, noted by Pachymeres:<sup>20</sup> among other things that were to be distributed to his companions upon his death figure texts of Thucydides, Herodotus, Lucian, Homer and Aristotle.<sup>21</sup> That a man educated in ancient Greek literature was elected Patriarch of Constantinople, handled the Union of the Churches, and stayed true to his unionist convictions until his death may be certainly deemed a paradox of history, but not of human nature.

## II. THE PROCEDURES OF 1273 AND 1277

The procedures of 1277, which were formally completed with the official confessions of faith of the Emperors and of the Patriarch, can only be explained through Michael VIII's negotiations with the Church of Constantinople in 1273. Indeed, it appears that for the Byzantines the Church Union of 1274 was based on an "agreement among gentlemen", which Emperor Michael VIII had managed to reach with the prelates of the Church of Constantinople. The Emperor guaranteed with a chrysobull that the Union would only comprise the primacy of the Pope, the acknowledgement of his jurisdiction over the Church, and the restitution of his commemoration in the liturgy; the Creed and the traditions of the Eastern Church would not be altered.<sup>22</sup> On the 24<sup>th</sup> of December 1273 the synod responded with

---

the late 13<sup>th</sup> c. or the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> c. Kotzabassi (p. 26) thinks that the manuscript was written by "a scribe who belonged to the entourage of George Metochites"; considering that Metochites was also exiled at that time with Bekkos and that *Laurentianus Plut.* 7,31 contains only works of Metochites, and since the author does not specify whether all the texts were produced by one hand, then in my opinion the possibility that this manuscript is an autograph of George Metochites should not be rejected.

<sup>19</sup> Constantine Meliteniotes is mentioned as Kostintzes and as Constantine the Sinaite, and is qualified as "having the place of a son", while George Metochites is qualified as servant (ὁ μὲν εἰς τάξιν υἱοῦ μοι λελόγισται, εἰς ὑπηρέτην δέ μοι ὁ ἕτερος). See KOTZABASSI, Testament (quoted n. 18), p. 34.50-51, 52, 61-62, 69.

<sup>20</sup> PACHYMERES, 2 (quoted n. 5), p. 489.5-6, notes that Bekkos was educated in the classics and only engaged in theology after his imprisonment in 1273 at the request of the Emperor.

<sup>21</sup> KOTZABASSI, Testament (quoted n. 18), p. 34.52-58. Bekkos bequeathed his books to Constantine. Cf. CONSTANTINIDES, *Education* (quoted n. 3), p. 139, on similar works circulating in the Empire of Nicaea, and also G. HOFMANN, Patriarch Johann Bekkos und die lateinische Kultur, *OCP* 11, 1945, p. 141-164, here 159-161.

<sup>22</sup> LAURENT-DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 24-26 and n° 4, p. 314-319 [previous edition in GILL, *Church Union* (quoted n. 12), n° 1, p. 12-19]; F. DÖLGER, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches, von 565-1453*, 3, *Regesten von 1204-1282*,

another document,<sup>23</sup> in which the prelates accepted these terms, and undertook the obligation to depose immediately any Church member in violation of the agreement.<sup>24</sup> The document is a γράμμα or assurance (ἐπασφαλιζόμεθα)<sup>25</sup> signed by the members of the synod. After this development, the official document of the Church of Constantinople sent to Lyons contained the official recognition of Roman primacy by the prelates and the clerics of the Church of Constantinople, without any mention of appellate jurisdiction or the commemoration of the Pope.<sup>26</sup> With it the Byzantine delegation carried to Lyons the Emperor's full confession of faith, which reiterated many stipulations made by Pope Clement IV, and a simple confirmation letter from co-Emperor Andronicus II.<sup>27</sup> When the ambassadors returned from Lyons, the Union was formally instituted in Byzantium in a ceremony held in the Blachernae palace on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January 1275.<sup>28</sup>

---

bearbeitet von P. WIRTH, München 1977, n° 2002b. See D. J. GEANAKOPOLOS, *Ὁ αυτοκράτωρ Μιχαήλ Παλαιολόγος καὶ ἡ Δύσις, 1258-1282. Μελέτη ἐπὶ τῶν Βυζαντινο-λατινικῶν σχέσεων*, Αθήναι 1269, p. 199-200; J. GILL, Notes on the De Michaele et Andronico Palaeologis of George Pachymeres, *BZ* 28, 1975, p. 295-303 here 302-303; GOUNARIDIS, *Κίνημα* (quoted n. 6), p. 101-102; NICOL, Preliminaries (quoted n. 3), p. 466, 474-476; FAILLER, Chronologie (quoted n. 5), p. 224-226. FAILLER, Chronologie (quoted n. 5), p. 228-230, maintains that Michael VIII issued two chrysobulls, the second addressed to the clergy for obtaining its consent. This, however, is not supported either by the content of the only surviving chrysobull or by Pachymeres' text alone, which contains a long digression on the handling of the patriarchal clergy, on which see below, esp. n. 187.

<sup>23</sup> LAURENT-DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), n° 5, p. 320-323; [previous edition in GILL, Church Union (quoted n. 12), n° 2, p. 18-21]. LAURENT, *Regestes I, 4*, n° 1428, confuses the synod of 1273 with that of 1277. See commentary in RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 80-82; PAPADAKIS, *Χριστιανική Ανατολή* (quoted n. 6), p. 337-340.

<sup>24</sup> LAURENT-DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 321.34-323.11.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 321.30.

<sup>26</sup> PIERALLI, *Corrispondenza* (quoted n. 13), p. 411.113-132. See RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 82-83; B. ROBERG, *Die Union zwischen der griechischen und der lateinischen Kirche auf dem II. Konzil von Lyon (1274)*, (Bonner Historische Forschungen 24), Bonn 1964, p. 122-125, 141; H. EVERT-KAPPESOWA, Une page de l'histoire des relations byzantino-latines: le clergé byzantin et l'Union de Lyon (1274-1282), *BSI.* 13, 1952-1953, p. 68-92, here 77.

<sup>27</sup> PIERALLI, *Corrispondenza* (quoted n. 13), n° 12, 16; DÖLGER (WIRTH), *Regesten* (quoted n. 22), n° 2006, 2072; J. GILL, *Byzantium and the Papacy, 1198-1400*, New Brunswick 1979, p. 121-122, 132-133, 136-138; ROBERG, *Union* (quoted n. 26), p. 125-126, 138-140; GEANAKOPOLOS, *Μιχαήλ Παλαιολόγος* (quoted n. 22), p. 196-198; PAPADAKIS, *Crisis* (quoted n. 7), p. 15-18; BECK, *Ιστορία* (quoted n. 7), p. 146-149; PAPADAKIS, *Χριστιανική Ανατολή* (quoted n. 6), p. 334-335; NICOL, Preliminaries (quoted n. 3), p. 476-478; H. EVERT-KAPPESOWA, Une page des relations byzantino-latines, *BSI.* 16, 1955, p. 297-317, here 300-302, 306; FAILLER, Chronologie (quoted n. 5), p. 231-232 and n. 41. The letter of Pope Clement is edited in A. TĀUTU, *Acta Urbani IV, Clementis IV, Gregorii X (1261-1276) e regestis Vaticanis aliisque fontibus* (Fontes. Pontificia Commissio ad Redigendum Codicem Iuris Canonici Orientalis s. 3, 5/1), Roma 1953, n° 23 (see the confession in p. 65-67).

<sup>28</sup> PACHYMERES, 2 (quoted n. 5), p. 511. See RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 87-88; GOUNARIDIS, *Κίνημα* (quoted n. 6), p. 101; FAILLER, Chronologie (quoted n. 5), p. 232;

What is to be noted from the events is that the Emperor and the Church of Constantinople consciously excluded the theological aspect from discussions regarding the Union. Accordingly, theological discussions on the Creed were not accepted, justified, or even academically desired. It is apparently on these terms the Church was “at peace”<sup>29</sup>, as George Pachymeres recorded after these events had been completed: the popular saying, however, μὴ ἄψη, μὴ θίγης, condensed the complicated situation into two tiny phrases.<sup>30</sup> Only time would tell whether this handling would be enough to maintain peace within the Church, and whether a simple decision would be enough to check the opposition of Arsenites and Anti-Unionists. But more than that, the way in which the Union was implemented meant that the responsibility for its theological aspects would fall directly on those who signed a confession of faith, meaning on Michael VIII, Andronicus II, and John XI Bekkos. Consequently it is they who would be in due time held liable for the Union of 1274.<sup>31</sup> Undoubtedly the Emperor calculated that there would be time enough to renounce the Union, had his political goals been achieved, but in the end time was not on his side. Perhaps Michael Palaeologos’ gravest tactical mistake of the period 1273-1282 was to take for granted the obedience of the Unionists, of whom he demanded that they silently tolerate the accusations of opposing parties.

The subjects dealt with by the synod of 1277 resulted from the demands of Pope Innocent V, who insisted that the Emperors take a corporal oath<sup>32</sup> repeating the confession of 1274, and make a public proclamation of the Union. Church prelates, clerics and lay archons also had to sign a confession of faith, something which had up to that time been avoided; the clergy had to celebrate mass with the *Filioque* addition

---

GEANAKOPOLOS, *Μιχαήλ Παλαιολόγος* (quoted n. 22), p. 205; NICOL, *Last centuries* (quoted n. 6), p. 53-57; EVERT-KAPPESOWA, *Relations* (quoted n. 27), p. 309; K. SETTON, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571)*, 1, *The thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries*, Philadelphia 1976, p. 116-117, 120.

<sup>29</sup> PACHYMERES, 2 (quoted n. 5), p. 495.2.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 511.16-17; RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 88; GILL, *Church Union* (quoted n. 12), 43-44. The phrase is metaphorical and means “do not touch, do not discuss”.

<sup>31</sup> EVERT-KAPPESOWA, *Relations* (quoted n. 27), p. 306, and PAPADAKIS, *Crisis* (quoted n. 7), p. 16, maintain that the Union was a “personal” affair for Michael VIII. Also see J. BOOJAMRA, *The Byzantine Notions of the “ecumenical council” in the fourteenth century*, *BZ* 80, 1987, p. 59-76, here 63-65.

<sup>32</sup> “Corporal oath” or in Latin *iuramentum corporale*, also known as *sacramentum corporale*, is even today a solemn oath taken by touching the cloth that covers consecrated elements, such as the Eucharist, the Cross, etc. See *Webster’s Revised Unabridged Dictionary*, 1913, s.v. “corporal”. Also *Glossarium mediae et infimae Latinitatis conditum a C. DU FRESNE Domino DU CANGE auctum a monachis ordinis S. Benedicti*, editio nova aucta pluribus verbis aliorum scriptorum a Leopold Favre, Niort 1883, 2, p. 577, s.v. *corporalis*.

to the *Credo*.<sup>33</sup> Pope Innocent's death in late July 1276 had delayed the departure of the Roman delegation and his letters reached Byzantium with the embassy of John XXI, after February 19<sup>th</sup> and before the beginning of April 1277. However, Michael VIII was well aware of the intentions of the Holy See of Rome because his ambassadors had returned in late summer or early autumn 1276.<sup>34</sup> Now, Michael VIII was one of the most realistic rulers that ever ascended the throne of Byzantium. To him it was quite clear that it would have been impossible to extract confessions from individuals, as the Pope wished, without this giving rise to vigorous protests that would be difficult to overcome; more than that, the Pope's demand infringed on Byzantine "constitutional" praxis: feudal oath was common in the West, but not in Byzantium; individuals were not allowed to vow their allegiance and obedience to anyone other than the Emperor or they faced charges of treason.<sup>35</sup> However, even if the Byzantines were reluctant to take the oath on any occasion, testimonies about it are abundant, because Byzantium had already incorporated the oath into its legal procedures in the 7<sup>th</sup> c.; the oral form is also attested in a few legal texts as a "corporal oath", but a written oath was even more formal and binding in a legal context.<sup>36</sup> On

<sup>33</sup> These demands are contained in Pope Innocent's letter of May 1276. See A. TĀUTU – F. DELORME, *Acta Romanorum Pontificum ab Innocentio V ad Benedictum XI (1276-1304) e regestis Vaticanis aliisque fontibus* (Fontes. Pontificia Commissio ad Redigendum Codicem Iuris Canonici Orientalis s. 3, 5/2), Roma 1954, n° 4, p. 7-8.

<sup>34</sup> ROBERG, *Union* (quoted n. 26), p. 174-178. The delegation of Pope John XXI was led by Jacob of Ferentino and Gaufried of Turin. See ROBERG, *Union* (quoted n. 26), p. 182; LAURENT-DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 74; GEANAKOPOLOS, *Μιχαήλ Παλαιολόγος* (quoted n. 22), p. 227; GILL, *Byzantium* (quoted n. 27), p. 164-168; SETTON, *Paracy*, p. 124-126; EVERT-KAPPESOWA, *Relations* (quoted n. 27), p. 309-310. The Byzantine delegation of 1275 was led by George Metochites.

<sup>35</sup> N. SVORONOS, *Le serment de fidélité à l'empereur byzantin et sa signification constitutionnelle*, *REB* 9, 1951, p. 106-142.

<sup>36</sup> Byzantium introduced the oath as an acquittal from an offence and even from the charge of heresy in the Sixth Ecumenical Council (680/1), with the condition that there be no other evidence to prove someone's orthodoxy. In its written form the oath was a confession of faith, while in its oral form it was characterized as ὄρκος σωματικός, and was taken by placing one's hand on the Gospel. See S. TROIANOS, *Η εκκλησιαστική διαδικασία μεταξύ 565 και 1204*, *Επετηρίς του Κέντρου Ερεύνης της Ιστορίας του Ελληνικού Δικαίου* 13, 1966, p. 3-146, here 106-107, 109. Also see DARROUZÈS, *Οφφίκια* (quoted n. 13), p. 443-450; D. PAPANATOU, *Η συμβιβαστική επίλυση ιδιωτικών διαφορών κατά τη μέση και ύστερη βυζαντινή εποχή* (Forschungen zur byzantinischen Rechtsgeschichte, Athener Reihe 9), Αθήνα-Κομοτηνή 1995, p. 91-97; P. GOUNARIDIS, *Ὀρκος και αφορισμός στα βυζαντινά δικαστήρια*, *Symmeikta* 7, 1987, p. 41-57; H. SARADI, *Ο ὄρκος στα βυζαντινά συμβόλαια (9<sup>ος</sup>-15<sup>ος</sup> αι.)*, in *Τόμος τιμητικός Κ. Ν. Τριανταφύλλου*, Patra 1990, p. 385-397. Also see, recently, O. DELOUIS, *Église et serment à Byzance: norme et pratique*, in M.-F. AUZÉPY et G. SAINT-GUILLAIN (éd.), *Oralité et lien social au Moyen Âge (Occident, Byzance, Islam) : parole donnée, foi jurée, serment*, Paris 2008, p. 211-246. A written oath is not at all rare in all types of documents. While Emperor Justinian generally forbade oath giving with Novel 77, Empress



the other hand, the demands of the Pope on this occasion directly contradicted the promises given to the Church by Michael VIII in 1273; it was one thing to recognize the jurisdiction of the Pope, and completely another to proceed to actions that de facto diminished the authority of the Patriarch of Constantinople.<sup>37</sup> For these reasons the convocation of a synod was the only option that appeared possible at that time and would hopefully produce an outcome that could not be contested, either by the Pope or by the participants. That there was no unanimity among them is quite clear from the fact that three separate documents were signed. But in the end, Michael VIII hoped that the synod would give him considerable negotiating latitude within and outside the borders of the Empire.

In these conditions, the synodical file of 1277 was composed of three documents of a manifestly political character,<sup>38</sup> which follow the principles of the agreement of 1273. That the outcome of the synod was destined from the very beginning to be communicated to the Pope is made clear by the repetition of the recognition of papal primacy, which is contained in two of them. The documents were aimed at clarifying to the Pope, first, how strong the internal opposition was, and second, that the Emperors and Patriarch John XI Bekkos exercised enough persuasion and power to suppress oppositional movements and to take every step necessary in order to sustain the Union. For this reason all three documents take the form of legal texts, which are legally binding for the signatories.

The *Tomographia*,<sup>39</sup> signed by metropolitans and bishops on the 19<sup>th</sup> of February 1277, is concerned with the penalties imposed on dissidents. In the first part of the Tomos the synod duly repeats its recognition of Roman primacy, “which had been bestowed on the apostolic See of old”. A brief expression emphasizes that the prelates supported the Emperors’ decisions (τῆ τούτων γνώμη ἐξακολουθησάντων). For the synod of the orthodox bishops the agreement made on the 24<sup>th</sup> of December, 1273, was still standing, the Union had been completed, and therefore there was no reason to analytically reaffirm their compliance with those terms.<sup>40</sup> Any other subject, such

---

Irene instituted the subscription of witnesses in legal documents and this became the main probative value of the authenticity of a document in middle Byzantium.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. PACHYMERES, 2 (quoted n. 5), p. 495.16-22, 505.18-19.

<sup>38</sup> LAURENT-DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), n° 16, 17, 18 (previous edition in GILL, *Church Union* (quoted n. 12), n° 5, 6, 7).

<sup>39</sup> LAURENT-DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 467.32; LAURENT, *Regestes 1, 4*, n° 1431.

<sup>40</sup> LAURENT-DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 463.14-465.3.

as the theological aspects of the Union and adherence to the Latin Creed, that was not comprised in the agreement of 1273 – in fact these had specifically been excluded – was simply a non-issue. Following the decisions of 1273, the synod of 1277 repeated the penalty of deposition and, in addition, decreed excommunication and anathema for those who rebelled against the Union, regardless of their social status.<sup>41</sup>

The other two documents of the synodical file, signed by the clerics of the Patriarchate and by the archons of the palace, are remarkable for their content. They are both to be regarded as assurances, certificates or statements and are styled as such by the copyist (ἔγγραφος ἀσφάλεια).<sup>42</sup> The *asphaleia* is a particular type of document that is commonly found in private disputes files. By this certificate the signatories guarantee that they will uphold an agreement made with the other party.<sup>43</sup> In their document, the clerics affirm that they support the decisions reached by the synod; moreover, they declare that they endorse the primacy of the Pope and that, in conformity with the decisions of the synod, they consider as excommunicated all those who refuse to do the same and break away from the body of the Church;<sup>44</sup> most importantly, they guarantee that they will support the Patriarch and the synod of prelates in all things.<sup>45</sup> This addition is apparently the reason for composing the document: through the *asphaleia* the Patriarch appears to have strengthened his position regarding contact with Rome and regarding the Union in particular.

The palace archons' document differs significantly from the other two. It describes how insolence and contempt for the Emperor and his people culminated after the Union. The situation apparently worsened when the opposing parties (pro-imperial and Unionists, and Anti-Unionists, therefore not really supporters of the Emperor) called each other schismatics. For this reason the archons decided to restore “concord” (ὁμόνοια) and appropriate “acclaim” (εὐφημία) to the Emperor.<sup>46</sup> In the

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78-79, 467.12-27. A provision about those who repented is included.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 469, 475.

<sup>43</sup> The document signed by the clerics contains the term ὑπόσχεσις (promise) (*ibid.*, p. 469.13: ὑπισχνούμεθα). The second document, that of the palace archons, contains by implication the terms γνωμοδότησις (consultatory response), ἀπόφασις (decision), ἐξασφάλισις (assurance), but also *tomos* (*ibid.*, p. 475.13, 477.7, 10, 11). On this type of document see PAPADATOU, *Επίλυση* (quoted n. 36), p. 22-25, 43-48. The *asphaleiai* are documents signed by the party that is considered more liable to break the agreement, in other words the party that compromises.

<sup>44</sup> LAURENT-DARROUZES, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 469.9-21.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 469.10-12. The document is not a “profession”, as characterized by V. LAURENT, Les signataires du second synode des Blakhernes (été 1285), *ÉO* 26, 1927, p. 129-149, here 140.

<sup>46</sup> LAURENT-DARROUZES, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 475.1-13.

acclamation that follows the archons wish longevity, victories, peace and salvation to the Emperors and undertake the obligation to maintain their faith and good will toward the people of the Emperor; all those who dare speak in blasphemy against the Emperors will be forever cursed.<sup>47</sup> The *asphaleia* of the archons makes no mention of the synod. Considering that this document too was probably sent to Rome, it can be concluded that it was destined to lay before the Pope a clear statement of the archons' support for Michael VIII and his dealings. An acknowledgement of papal primacy, or indeed a confession of faith, would have no place in it.

The result of the synod of 1277 as portrayed in the corresponding documents should not be underestimated: it is in reality a declaration of loyalty to the Emperor and to the Patriarch by their people. Having to deal with a situation that anticipated sedition, the Emperor managed to obtain the political support of his archons, and to secure the support of the prelates and clerics for the Patriarch in a manner that was legally binding for the participants who did sign the documents, and had grave consequences, for those who did not. This affair was concluded in writing through synodical procedures that followed a long established Byzantine administrative tradition, thereby validating the decisions reached in the most official manner. It was a significant victory on the internal front and a direct consequence of the way that the Union of Lyons had been achieved in 1273/1274. The fact that the documents bound the signatories to a specific pre-decided course of action regarding the Union is amply demonstrated by the removal of the signatures of prelates and archons from the corresponding copies of the documents that still survive today. Those signatures obviously compromised the position of the participants of the synod; on the contrary, the signatures of the patriarchal clerics were left at the end of their own *asphaleia*, apparently because the Anti-Unionists wanted to use this evidence to obtain their cooperation in the events that followed the death of Michael VIII.<sup>48</sup>

There is absolutely no reason to assume, as Laurent did, that another synod, held shortly after the synod of February 1277, ended with the prelates making a full

---

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 475.14-477.9.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20-24, 79-80 and 462 n. 1. I do not agree with Laurent's estimation, which is shared by Darrouzès, that George Moschabar removed the signatures from the documents in 1288-1289. Also see below, esp. n. 185.

confession of faith, similar to those of Bekkos and of the Emperor.<sup>49</sup> Such a confession was simply never written and never sent to Rome, not even in 1274 – if it had been, Rome would have kept it piously in its archives. It appears that for the Byzantines the Union of Lyons was completed in accordance with the decisions of 1273/1274, so a detailed repetition of the concessions to the Pope was not needed. The decisions of 1277, on the contrary, gave the Patriarch full authority to proceed with the details in a manner that would presumably please the Holy See of Rome. Indeed, the dealings of 1277 gave some latitude to the Emperor and to the Patriarch for deliberating with Rome, but whether it would be deemed satisfactory by the Pope was a whole different issue.

### III. THE FIRST AND THE SECOND CONFESSION OF JOHN BEKKOS

These, then, were the subjects discussed in the synod of 1277, and this is the file that was completed by Bekkos' letter containing his first profession of faith. It becomes clear that none of the signatories of 1277 claimed any responsibility for what followed. The Church officially recognized the primacy of the Pope in the synodical document sent to Lyon, and repeated its recognition three years later. Considering that the Church in the agreements of 1273 had formally approved the re-establishment of the primacy, jurisdiction and commemoration of the Pope, it may be doubted whether these omissions in the official documents indeed point to a severe restriction of papal rights in comparison to what John XI Bekkos offers the Pope in his confessions, as has been pointed out recently.<sup>50</sup> However, the prelates were hardly innocent. The handling of the political and ecclesiastical administration in Constantinople leads to the conclusion that, with their signatures, the prelates authorized Michael VIII and John XI Bekkos to take any step necessary towards accomplishing the Union. Nevertheless, instead of their people's adherence to the Latin creed, the Emperor and the Patriarch only had a political compromise to offer to the Pope: their personal

---

<sup>49</sup> LAURENT, *Regestes I*, 4, n° 1434; XEXAKES, *Βέκκος* (quoted n. 3), p. 40-41; FAILLER, *Chronologie* (quoted n. 5), p. 231; RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 81, speaks of a "series of synods" that were held in Constantinople in 1277.

<sup>50</sup> See LAURENT-DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 317.6-10, 321.16-19; PIERALLI, *Corrispondenza* (quoted n. 13), p. 223.178-195, 411.125-132; RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 82-87, 200-203. Cf. EVERT-KAPPESOWA, *Relations* (quoted n. 27), p. 306; EAD., *Clergé* (quoted n. 26), p. 77-78.

letters and confessions were expected to substitute for all the omissions noticed in the official synodical documents of 1277.

The content of Bekkos' first letter, which was written after the papal emissaries of 1276/1277 had reached Constantinople,<sup>51</sup> is based on the decisions of the synod<sup>52</sup> and can be divided into three parts: first comes the recognition of papal primacy;<sup>53</sup> there follows a report on the outcome of the synod that lays emphasis on the social aspect of the conflict and on the danger that this posed for political stability in Byzantium.<sup>54</sup> The final part contains a brief confession of faith.<sup>55</sup>

The letter begins with the acceptance of the Union, called εἰρήνη ("peace, pacification"), or ὁμόνοια ("concord"),<sup>56</sup> which had been accomplished in the Council of Lyons with the Emperor's systematic struggles (ἀγῶσι).<sup>57</sup> The insistence on Emperor Michael VIII's efforts for the accomplishment of the Union works in a twofold manner: it bolsters the Emperor's profile and it serves as a justification for the prelates' concession to his will. Open recognition of this "peace and concord" is offered to Pope John XXI as an acknowledgment of his own zeal and efforts in accomplishing peace between the Churches. In addition, the Pope is recognized as worthily occupying the throne of Rome, which for this reason was granted to him by God.<sup>58</sup> In this reasoning, official recognition of papal "primacy and privileges" (τὰ πρεσβεῖα καὶ προνόμια) is only an almost natural effect of peace and harmony, since, as the Patriarch notes, these had always (ἀρχῆθεν, ἀνέκαθεν)<sup>59</sup> been bestowed on the Pope.<sup>60</sup> This meant that the Church of Constantinople after the Union wholeheartedly (ὅλη ψυχῇ καὶ γνώμῃ) recognized the primacy and appellate jurisdiction and re-established the commemoration of the Pope in liturgies.<sup>61</sup> This part is a shorter version of the official argumentation of the pro-unionist party as it is known from the

<sup>51</sup> LAURENT-DARROUZES, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 479.14-15.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 479.1-481.8.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 481.9-483.18.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 483.19-485.26.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 479.6, 481.1, 6. On the concept of εἰρήνη and ὁμόνοια in Bekkos see RICHTER, Bekkos (quoted n. 7), p. 176-179.

<sup>57</sup> LAURENT-DARROUZES, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 479.8-9.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 479.22: ... κατ' ἀξίαν καὶ τὸν ὑψηλὸν τοῦτον καὶ μέγαν θρόνον ὁ θεὸς δεδῶρηται... RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 202-203, perceives this expression as recognition of the Pope's appointment *gratia dei*.

<sup>59</sup> LAURENT-DARROUZES, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 479.13, 481.6-7, 483.10.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 479.10-14, 481.2-8.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 481.9-15. See RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 202-203.

documents of 1273/1274.<sup>62</sup> Behind expressions that are elaborate and, admittedly, flattering for the Pope, lies the Byzantines' desire to justify their choice for Church Union, and to smooth out the difficult points of the agreement such as the appellate jurisdiction that the Church of Constantinople restored to the Holy See of Rome. In the Byzantine perception, it is the Byzantine Church that welcomes the Church of Rome into its communion, not the opposite.<sup>63</sup>

John Bekkos then continues with a report on the dealings of the recent synod by placing the blame for the social unrest in Byzantium on Satan.<sup>64</sup> The report, the details of which will be examined below, is placed in the document because it justifies the Byzantines' position with regard to the full implementation of the Union in Byzantium. Bekkos then proceeds with the confession of faith, explaining that what he has written up to this point has the full support of the synod.<sup>65</sup> Bekkos means that the synodical *Tomographia*, summarizing the conclusions of the synod and containing no stipulations regarding dogmatic issues, still authorized him to proceed. In my opinion there can be no doubt that every participant of the synod was fully aware that a confession of faith would follow. Consequently John XI Bekkos speaks on behalf of his synod by claiming that his profession will convince the Pope that the Church of Constantinople acknowledges and accepts the orthodoxy of the Church of Rome.<sup>66</sup>

The text lays emphasis on the substance and nature of the Son,<sup>67</sup> because these clarify, and, in the reasoning of John XI Bekkos, justify, the procession of the Holy Spirit from Father and Son. The Patriarch's argument is simple: the Son is "eternal" like the Father (συναιΐδιος), is "of the same substance" (ὁμοούσιος), and has all His qualities, except one: *He is not a Father* (δίχα μόνου τοῦ εἶναι πατήρ). The Father is the "cause" of all earthly and celestial things (δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο, τὰ τε ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς). The Holy Spirit is recognized as "connatural" (of the same nature) and "consubstantial" (of the same substance) to the Father, and proceeds "from the Father through the begotten Son" (διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ γεννηθέντος). It follows that "by nature" and

<sup>62</sup> Cf. LAURENT-DARROUZES, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 317.3-16, 22-29.

<sup>63</sup> RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 312; F. DVORNIK, *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy*, New York 1966, p. 156.

<sup>64</sup> LAURENT-DARROUZES, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 479.1-8, 481.16-19. See RICHTER, Bekkos (quoted n. 7), p. 172.

<sup>65</sup> LAURENT-DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 483.10-13.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 483.10-18.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 483.24-485.8. Lines 485.9-18 are devoted to the doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit and lines 483.19-23 are devoted to the Father.

“by substance” the Holy Spirit comes from the Son as well (...πρόεισι μὲν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς... πρόεισι δὲ καὶ ἐκ τοῦ Ὑιοῦ, καθάπερ ἀμέλει καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ Πατρὸς). Bekkos’ phrasing has been characterized as “un exercice de style”: however, Bekkos uses synonyms for emanation as an explanation and justification of his arguments, not the opposite. In other words, Bekkos needs the synonyms to explain his theological position, but they are not substitutes for it.<sup>68</sup> In effect, the Patriarch skilfully avoids expressions that would imply that the Son is the *cause* of the emanation for the Spirit, thus circumventing the main anti-unionist argument, namely, that according to this theory there would be two sources of emanation, and two causes for the procession of the Holy Spirit. But more than that, Bekkos’ first confession offers a formal justification of the *Filioque* grounded on the *substance*, the ὁμοούσιον (“consubstantial”), of the Son and the Father. But in Bekkos’ reasoning the Son is *not* a Father, and only the Father is the *cause* of all creation. By distinguishing the qualities of the Son, Bekkos avoids diffusing the persons of the Trinity.<sup>69</sup>

John XI Bekkos’ letter completed the set of synodical documents that would be sent to Rome. Its content invites the interpretation that Bekkos also had an audience within the Empire; he strove to maintain orthodoxy in the way that he understood and accepted it, and he probably thought that it would not stir up discussions on doctrinal issues. There can be only estimates about the diplomatic contacts that followed with the emissaries of the Pope. While it is possible to detect points that may have been specifically demanded of the Byzantines, the contents of the talks elude us. In any case, it appears that there was no particular pressure exercised by the papal legates in

---

<sup>68</sup> LAURENT-DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 484, n. 1; RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 184-187. Cf. GEORGES PACHYMERES, *Relations historiques*, 3, *Livres VII-IX*, édition, traduction française et notes par A. FAILLER (CFHB 24/3-4), Paris 1999, p. 37.32-39.2, who comments on the multitude of synonyms used by Bekkos, not without some irony. Also see RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 184-187, 209; PAPADAKIS, *Χριστιανική Ανατολή* (quoted n. 6), p. 350-351.

<sup>69</sup> RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 156-161, 164-167; P. GILBERT, Not an anthologist: John Bekkos as a reader of the Fathers, *Communio* 36, 2009, p. 259-294, here 284-285; PAPADAKIS, *Crisis* (quoted n. 7), p. 64-65, 67-70, 88 ; T. ALEXOPOULOS, The Byzantine *Filioque*-Supporters in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century John Bekkos and Konstantin Melitiniotes and their Relation with Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, *Studia Patristica* 68, 2013, p. 381-395. Bekkos’ approach is a combination of Cappadocian and Augustinian theology. By emphasizing on the Son and distinguishing Him from the Father, the Patriarch avoids diffusing the persons within the substance. This was the main anti-unionist argument, which is of Photian origin; in Photius’ theology, two emanation sources would point either to Arianism (division of persons) or to Sabellianism (confusion of persons). In orthodox theology the individuality of the three persons of the Trinity is a key concept for understanding its nature.

order to extract the official confessions. The talks, and the entire deliberations of February-April 1277, ended with new professions of faith, signed by Emperor Michael VIII, co-Emperor Andronicus II, and Patriarch John XI Bekkos.<sup>70</sup> The documents of April 1277 were directly dependent on Emperor Michael's official confession of 1274. The imperial confession of 1277 is saved in four original Latin copies of which one is considered to be the first original and bears the gold seal of the emperor.<sup>71</sup> The confession of Andronicus II is a copy of Michael's confession of 1277.<sup>72</sup> In the imperial confessions the oath taken by George Akropolites in Lyons, a "corporal oath", is added with adjustments into the end.<sup>73</sup>

The official confession of the Patriarch of Constantinople, dated April 1277, is saved in its Greek and Latin originals<sup>74</sup> and can be roughly divided into three parts. The first contains the acceptance of the Union and the recognition of primacy, the second contains the confession of the Latin creed, and in the third part the Patriarch accepts as orthodox the customs and traditions of the Church of Rome. Of these the third section is a copy of the imperial confession, and the first section, which also derives from it, comprises significant alterations and adjustments. The main part, the confession itself, contains similar expressions and even copies phrases from the imperial text, but its theological composition is quite elaborate<sup>75</sup> and follows the principles contained in *Cum sacrosancta*.<sup>76</sup> The subjects treated in Bekkos'

---

<sup>70</sup> GILL, *Byzantium* (quoted n. 27), p. 165-169; LAURENT-DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 80.

<sup>71</sup> PIERALLI, *Corrispondenza* (quoted n. 13), n° 20. See ROBERG, *Union* (quoted n. 26), p. 184-185; DÖLGER (WIRTH), *Regesten* (quoted n. 22), n° 2028.

<sup>72</sup> PIERALLI, *Corrispondenza* (quoted n. 13), n° 21; DÖLGER (WIRTH), *Regesten* (quoted n. 22), n° 2073. Andronicus' document is saved in its original Greek form and in two original Latin copies. The documents, by being reproduced each time after 1274 with or without adjustments, display a rather complicated diplomatic history that lies beyond the scope of interest of the present study. See however the comments of DÖLGER (WIRTH), *Regesten* (quoted n. 22), n° 2006; PIERALLI, *Corrispondenza* (quoted n. 13), p. 219-223, esp. n. 2; GILL, *Church Union* (quoted n. 12), p. 5-6. Also see below, n. 185.

<sup>73</sup> George Akropolites' oath, taken in Lyons on behalf of Emperor Michael VIII, is published in PIERALLI, *Corrispondenza* (quoted n. 13), n° 17. Cf. PIERALLI, *Corrispondenza* (quoted n. 13), p. 320: *...ut affirmet, ratificet per corporale sacramentum imperium nostrum ea quae magnus logotheta iuravit...*

<sup>74</sup> PIERALLI, *Corrispondenza* (quoted n. 13), App. 3; LAURENT, *Regestes 1, 4*, n° 1433; ROBERG, *Union* (quoted n. 26), p. 186-187.

<sup>75</sup> The opening of the imperial confession of 1274, which is also comprised in the imperial documents of 1277 and mentions the names of the emissaries of Pope Innocent V, is completely omitted in Bekkos' confession.

<sup>76</sup> See below, especially n. 87.



confession on the whole are arranged in reversed order, which means that he exercised freedom of composition.

The confession of John XI Bekkos is styled as a simple γραφή or λίβελλος πίστεως, the latter term only placed at the beginning of the profession.<sup>77</sup> The first part is an extended version of his letter, in which submission and primacy are developed and specified. Bekkos, once again stating that he is writing with the support of the synod, offers appropriate acclaim and “submission” (προσκύνησιν) to the Pope and asks for his blessing.<sup>78</sup> The Patriarch declares that the synod had completed the Union dealings; the imperial confessions of faith, which contained the requested vows (meaning the “corporal oath” of George Akropolites), amply “certified the Union of the Churches in perfect faith and with precise communication”. Exactly how the Union was sanctioned by the Church of Constantinople was contained in the *Tomos*, on which the prelates placed their signatures, which had “power of oath”.<sup>79</sup> Once again bureaucratic terminology is apparent in terms current in legal documents, such as βεβαίωσιν (“confirmation”), ὀρκωμοτικοῦ (“written oath”), ἐπιστώσατο (“certified”), ὄρκου δυνάμιν ἐχούσας οἰκειοχείροις ὑπογραφαῖς (“signatures by their own hand, which have power of oath”).

Bekkos then proceeds to clarify the different aspects of primacy, which had been confirmed and sanctioned by previous Emperors and Patriarchs according to Church law (κανονικῶς), and had been demonstrated by the submission (ὑπακοήν) of the Fathers in the Councils of the Church. To the “extreme and perfect primacy and authority” (ἄκρον καὶ τέλειον πρωτεῖον καὶ ἀρχήν) over all the “catholic Church” is acknowledged *plenitudo potestatis* (μετὰ πλήρους ἐξουσίας), which comprises the authority of the Pope in matters of faith (περὶ τῆς πίστεως), and canonical jurisdiction (κρίσιν) over other sees.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, all the privileges granted to other Churches and confirmed by the Emperors are declared void (οὐκ ἄλλως ἔσχον τὸ στέργον) if not otherwise sanctioned by the Pope.<sup>81</sup> The meaning of this stipulation was

<sup>77</sup> PIERALLI, *Corrispondenza* (quoted n. 13), p. 419, 420, 421. For diplomatic observations on the letter of the Patriarch see DARROUZÈS, *Οφφίκια* (quoted n. 13), p. 395-399.

<sup>78</sup> PIERALLI, *Corrispondenza* (quoted n. 13), p. 418: ... μετὰ πάσης τῆς περὶ ἐμὲ ἱερᾶς καὶ ἁγίας συνόδου τὴν ὀφειλομένην προσαγορευίαν τῇ {ή} ὑμετέρα ὑπακοῇ, προσκύνησίν τε καὶ εὐχῶν αἴτησιν... (I am obliged to amend the text here); LAURENT, *Regestes I*, 4, p. 225.

<sup>79</sup> PIERALLI, *Corrispondenza* (quoted n. 13), p. 419.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 420.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 420-421.

completely different in the imperial confessions;<sup>82</sup> it was based on a condition of Pope Clement, that commanded the extension of his jurisdiction over other Churches, patriarchal in particular, as this had been verified in the Councils.<sup>83</sup> It is not known why Bekkos made such an important addition to the original texts. In Pope Gregory X's epistles, the interest of the Holy See of Rome for the sees of Jerusalem, Cyprus and Serbia is quite evident.<sup>84</sup> Consequently it appears that John XI Bekkos' specification was probably a request of the emissaries. This conclusion indicates that the restriction on papal *plenitudo potestatis* in the imperial confession of 1274 had been noticed in Rome. In any case, it is far-reaching to assume that the Patriarch acted on his own initiative. From the Byzantine point of view all matters concerning the internal affairs of the Churches belonged to the jurisdiction of each prelate, be he Patriarch or archbishop.<sup>85</sup> Without officially subjecting other Churches to Rome, Bekkos here appears to be giving the Pope a diplomatic advantage, namely the power to negotiate Rome's standing in relation to foreign Churches.

Bekkos then continues with the profession itself. He explains that, because of the time that has elapsed since the schism, some have come to believe that there is a dogmatic

---

<sup>82</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 233-234, 317 (Michael's confessions), 333 (Andronicus' confession in Greek, which exactly reproduces Michael's text –and in fact its Latin version is its exact translation): πρὸς ταύτην οὕτω τὸ τῆς ἐξουσίας πλήρωμα συνίσταται, ὅτι τὰς ἐτέρας ἐκκλησίας καὶ τὰς πατριαρχικὰς ἐξαιρέτως, ἐν διαφόροις προνομίοις αὐτῆ ἢ τῆς Ῥώμης ἐκκλησία τετίμηκε, τοῦ ἰδίου πλὴν πρεσβείου, τὸ μὲν ἐν ταῖς γενικαῖς συνόδοις, τὸ δὲ καὶ ἐν τισιν ἄλλαις ἀεὶ σωζομένου. See RICHTER, Bekkos (quoted n. 7), p. 206-208; ROBERG, *Union* (quoted n. 26), p. 58-59; BECK, *Ιστορία* (quoted n. 7), p. 138. According to PAPADAKIS, *Χριστιανικὴ Ανατολή* (quoted n. 6), p. 232 sq., esp. 236-238 and 336, this stipulation is interpreted as the acceptance that Rome is the source of all the honors and privileges of all Churches. However, the text in both versions, Greek and Latin, does not support such an interpretation.

<sup>83</sup> TÄUTU, *Acta*, p. 67: “Sed et in omnibus causis ad examen ecclesiasticum spectantibus ad ipsius potest recurri iudicium et eidem omnes Ecclesiae sunt subiectae ipsarumque Prelati et oboediantiam et reverentiam sibi debent, apud quam sic potestatis plenitudo consistit, quod Ecclesias ceteras ad sollicitudinis partem admittit, quarum multas, et patriarchales praecipue, diversis privilegiis eadem Romana Ecclesia honoravit, sua tamen praerogativa tam in generalibus conciliis quam in quibuscumque aliis semper salva.”

<sup>84</sup> TÄUTU, *Acta*, p. 136. Antioch is also mentioned. On the events relating to the Churches of Ochrid and Serbia see PAPADAKIS, *Χριστιανικὴ Ανατολή* (quoted n. 6), p. 323-328, 371-376, 380-387. The history of both Churches largely depended on the antagonism between the Empire of Nicaea and the Despotate of Epirus. Bulgarian papal dependence ended in 1235 and Patriarch Germanus II officially recognized the institution of the Bulgarian Patriarchate. Serbia had already been recognized as an autocephalous archbishopric under the reign of Theodore I Laskaris (1207/8-1222).

<sup>85</sup> On primacy see generally DVORNIK, *Primacy* (quoted n. 63), p. 154-163; H.-G. BECK, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich*, München 1959, p. 32-35. On primacy and Bekkos in particular see RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 203-206. On the idea of “pentarchy” see F. DVORNIK, *The idea of apostolicity in Byzantium and the legend of the Apostle Andrew*, Cambridge Mass. 1958, 265-268. The idea was developed in the 9<sup>th</sup> century.

difference between the Churches. His profession aims at dissolving this misapprehension. Bekkos here elaborates on the doctrine of the incarnation of the Son and of the procession of the Holy Spirit. In accordance with orthodox theology he qualifies the Son as the “one and only Word, eternal Son of the Father, beginning from beginning, light from light, God from God, *pantokrator* from *pantokrator*, indistinguishably equal to the Father who has begotten him” (λόγον μονογενῆ, υἰὸν ἰδίον πατρός, ἀρχὴν ἐξ ἀρχῆς, φῶς ἐκ φωτός, θεὸν ἐκ θεοῦ, παντοκράτορα ἐκ παντοκράτορος, ἴσον ἀπαραλλάκτως τῷ γεγεννηκότι πατρί), and proceeds to the doctrine of the incarnation through the Virgin Mary.<sup>86</sup> The Spirit exists in God and in the Son by nature and essence, and therefore it comes from God and from the Son as well. The Spirit is an innate quality of the Father and of the Son (ἴδιον); “its existence is not generated outside of them” (οὐκ ἔξωθεν ταύτης προελθὼν εἰς τὸ εἶναι). For this reason, the Spirit “comes from” (προχωρεῖ) or “springs from, which means emanates” (προχεῖται μὲν γὰρ, ἦγουν ἐκπορεύεται) from the Father and from the Son, as if they were the source. Yet Bekkos denies emphatically that, in accordance with this reasoning, there would be two emanation sources, and underlines the fact that orthodox theology recognizes Father and Son as “one source”. Indeed, this is the reason why the “luminaries and teachers of the Church” have declared that the Holy Spirit is common to Father and Son.<sup>87</sup>

Obviously in this profession there is some distance from what Bekkos himself wrote in his letter. No mention is made of the Son not being a Father: instead, the Son is recognized as “equal” (ἴσος) to the Father and as having the exact same qualities. In fact, this profession is close to the profession of Clement IV and follows the principles of the *Cum sacrosancta* constitution of the Council of Lyons.<sup>88</sup> At this

<sup>86</sup> PIERALLI, *Corrispondenza* (quoted n. 13), p. 421-422. On the position of the Virgin Mary in Bekkos’ theology see PAPADAKIS, *Crisis* (quoted n. 7), p. 88-89.

<sup>87</sup> PIERALLI, *Corrispondenza* (quoted n. 13), p. 422-423. On John Bekkos’ citations of the Church Fathers regarding the Son’s relation to the Spirit, see RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 161-164.

<sup>88</sup> TĀUTU, *Acta*, p. 65-66. Cf. LAURENT-DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 325.3-6: ... διδάσκει ὅτι τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρός αἰωνίως ἅμα τε καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ Υἱοῦ, οὐχ ὡς ἐκ δύο ἀρχῶν, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἐκ μιᾶς ἀρχῆς, οὐ δυσὶν ἐκπορεύεσιν, ἀλλὰ μιᾷ ἐκπορεύεται, καὶ ταύτην τὴν τῶν ὀρθοδόξων πατέρων καὶ διδασκάλων, Λατίνων ἅμα καὶ Γραικῶν, πρόδηλον εἶναι γνώμην καὶ ψήφισμα... Commentary of the *Cum sacrosancta* is found *ibid.*, p. 28-30; RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 48; GILL, *Church Union* (quoted n. 12), p. 10-11. There is no indication about the chronological placement of the Greek translation of the text, but I think that it would fit perfectly in the context of the 1277 dealings, which goes along with LAURENT, *Regestes I, 4*, n° 1419 and explains why it was comprised in the dossier or the

point, it is useful to underline once more that Bekkos never proclaims, or even implies, that the Father and the Son are *one cause* of the emanation of the Holy Spirit. In his mind, the *source* of emanation refers to the substance<sup>89</sup> and differs from causality among the persons or *hypostases* within the Trinity. Only the Father is the original *source*, the only *principle* and *cause*, and divine action originates in Him alone.<sup>90</sup> So, even though Bekkos is here closer to the Latins, his profession is once more not a blind copy of their suggestions. He has not rejected any part of his theology; on the contrary, he reproduces in this second profession the essence of his own theology.<sup>91</sup>

Bekkos then briefly refers to the “catholic Church of the Apostles”, to baptism and to the doctrine of the Trinity and continues with the customs, rituals and beliefs of the Latin Church in matters of daily practice. These include among others purgatory, confirmation (βεβαίωσις), and azymes, which are clearly distinguished as practices of the Church of Rome (ταῦτα ἡ ἁγία ἐκκλησία τῆς Ῥώμης οὕτω λέγει τε καὶ κηρύττει).<sup>92</sup> This part is a copy of the Emperor’s confession of 1274,<sup>93</sup> but contains some additions or differs slightly at points relating to practices of the Orthodox Church.<sup>94</sup> All Roman practices are recognized by Bekkos (δεχόμεθα, δεχόμεθα καὶ

---

1277 dealings. However, I do not think that it ever became a part of any official document of the clergy, much less that it was ever signed by the Church archons. Also see PAPANAKIS, *Χριστιανική Ανατολή* (quoted n. 6), p. 345-348. When the Son is not recognized as ἴσος to the Father, it is Arianism. See above n. 69.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 170, 177-178; GILBERT, John Bekkos (quoted n. 69), p. 278-280; XEXAKES, *Βέκκος* (quoted n. 3), p. 109-119, 128-129. Bekkos emphasizes the old Nicene doctrine of the Son being from the substance of the Father, an idea that occurs frequently in St. Cyril’s writings.

<sup>90</sup> GILBERT, John Bekkos (quoted n. 69), p. 275 sq., esp. 281-287. See in detail RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 165-167; XEXAKES, *Βέκκος* (quoted n. 3), p. 120-130; PAPANAKIS, *Χριστιανική Ανατολή* (quoted n. 6), p. 348-350, 334-355; BECK, *Kirche* (quoted n. 85), p. 316; ALEXOPOULOS, *Byzantine Filioque-Supporters* (quoted n. 69), p. 382-386. This idea of John Bekkos is fundamental and derives from the basic thought of St. Basil the Great. Gilbert called it “referential causality”, which means that all qualities and actions of the Son refer back to the Father as their first cause. Riebe also recognized this idea in the writings of Bekkos.

<sup>91</sup> RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 209-210.

<sup>92</sup> PIERALLI, *Corrispondenza* (quoted n. 13), p. 423-425. On these see RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), 211-214; T. KOLBABA, *The Byzantine Lists. Errors of the Latins*, Urbana and Chicago 2000, p. 37-39, 43-44, 198, 199. Confirmation was a sacrament separate from baptism in the West and it was reserved for bishops, as is noted by Bekkos.

<sup>93</sup> PIERALLI, *Corrispondenza* (quoted n. 13), p. 230-231, 315-316, 331-332; ROBERG, *Union* (quoted n. 26), p. 142.

<sup>94</sup> E.g. the phrase on the Eucharist is Bekkos’, cf. PIERALLI, *Corrispondenza* (quoted n. 13), p. 425: ...παρ’ ἡμῖν δὲ πάλιν ἐξ ἐνζύμου ἐκτελούμενον ἄρτου, ἅγιον καὶ τοῦτο γινώσκομεν... See RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 211-213.

καθομολογοῦμεν) as “devout, orthodox and true” (εὐσεβῶς καὶ ὀρθοδόξως καὶ ἀληθῶς). However, their acceptance is placed in the context of denouncing the schism (εἰς βεβαίωσιν πληρεστάτην ... τῆς τοῦ σχίσματος ἀπαρνήσεως), and is considered as a sign of the pure and true submission of the Church of Constantinople. In spite of all the practices he enumerates, Bekkos states at the end that his Church is obligated to maintain its customs without change as they have been kept since old times: “we are obligated to insist that the customs of our Church, that have been upheld from old, remain unchanged” (ὀφείλομεν ἐμμένειν ἡμεῖς ἀπαραλλάκτως ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀρχῆθεν κρατήσασι παρὰ τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἐθίμοις).<sup>95</sup> This stipulation is in conformity with the commitments made by Michael VIII in the chrysobull of 1273 to the Church<sup>96</sup> and is close to the text of the imperial confession of 1274, which, however, also contained a specific mention of the *Filioque*.<sup>97</sup> Nevertheless, John XI Bekkos, unlike the Emperor who recognized the spiritual authority of the Pope, here makes a resolute statement, addressing the Pope as his equal, without referring to the *Filioque* addition to the *Credo*.

From the analysis of the documents that has been attempted here it becomes clear that the Byzantines in 1277 did not deviate from the decisions of 1273. It appears that in the perception of the Emperor and the Church they had already accomplished the Union in 1274/1275, and consequently no new concessions would, or could, be made. The commitments to the Pope were repeated in 1277. However, the new papal requests were implemented in a manner that was extremely bureaucratic but familiar

<sup>95</sup> PIERALLI, *Corrispondenza* (quoted n. 13), p. 425.

<sup>96</sup> LAURENT-DARROUZES, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 317.17-21.

<sup>97</sup> PIERALLI, *Corrispondenza* (quoted n. 13), p. 333: Ὁμολογοῦντες δὲ ταῦτα καὶ στέργοντες καὶ ἀποδεχόμενοι καὶ ὑπισχνούμενοι παραφυλάξαι, ὡς εἴρηται, ἀξιοῦμεν σοῦ τὴν μεγαλειότητα, ἵνα ἡ ἡμετέρα ἐκκλησία λέγῃ τὸ ἅγιον σύμβολον, ὡς ἔλεγε τοῦτο πρὸ τοῦ σχίσματος καὶ μέχρι τῆς σήμερον. καὶ ἵνα ἐμμένωμεν καὶ τοῖς ἡμετέροις ἐθίμοις, οἷς ἐχρώμεθα καὶ πρὸ τοῦ σχίσματος, .... τοῦτο γοῦν ἀβαρές ἐστὶ τῇ μεγάλῃ ἀγιωσύνῃ σου καὶ οὐκ ἀσύνηθες καὶ ἡμῖν νῦν δύσκολον διὰ τὸ τοῦ λαοῦ τὸ ἄπειρον πλήθος (copy of Michael's confession in Andronicus' document of 1277). Cf. *ibid.*, p. 235-236, 317-318; see LAURENT-DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 25; RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 83-84; RICHTER, Bekkos (quoted n. 7), p. 208-209; EVERT-KAPPESOWA, *Relations* (quoted n. 27), p. 307. Pope Gregory X was already aware of the intentions of the Byzantines in 1272. The usual verb employed in requests by subjects of the Empire to the Emperor is δεόμεθα (“we plead”) or παρακαλοῦμεν (“we beg, we request”). The text in this case has ἀξιοῦμεν, meaning, “we demand”, quite a powerful expression that reflects the standpoint of the Byzantines on this issue. The ὀφείλομεν employed by the Patriarch has the meaning of “we are obligated to” as in “it is our duty to”, which gives a completely different meaning to the request. On the written δεήσεις see M. NYSTAZOPOULOU-PELEKIDOU, *Les Déseis et les lyseis. Une forme de pétition à Byzance du X<sup>e</sup> siècle au début du XIV<sup>e</sup>*, in *La pétition à Byzance*, éd. D. FEISSEL - J. GASCOU (Monographies 14), Paris 2004, p. 105-124.

to Byzantine practice. Indeed, the confessions of the Emperors and of the Patriarch are substitute for individual confessions that could not be conceded to John XXI.<sup>98</sup> Therefore the synod invested the actions of the Emperors and of the Patriarch with the necessary authority and formality. In consequence, Michael VIII Palaeologos, Andronicus II, and John XI Bekkos, are addressing the Pope officially as representatives of their state and Church, on behalf of their people. By stating that the synod had sanctioned the Union, that the confessions had been subscribed and the vows given, Bekkos is precisely underlining the legitimacy of the process. Modern scholars seem perplexed about what really happened, and tend to believe that ceremonies took place, in which what the Pope had demanded was accomplished, meaning at least a signed confession by the prelates, or a “corporal oath” by the Emperors. But none of these things ever really came to pass.<sup>99</sup> Bekkos was probably much more concerned about how the content of his confession would be received within the Empire. His elaborate theological section strives to found his beliefs on solid arguments. Perhaps, his purpose was to preclude reactions, but as we shall see below, it was exactly his search for justification that brought on the charges against him.

#### IV. THE THIRD CONFESSION AGAINST THE SOCIAL BACKGROUND

Michael VIII had made great efforts to keep the theological aspect of the Union separate from its political significance. For the government, the whole problem of the Union of Lyons was purely political, a development that is amply demonstrated in the content of the archons’ ἀσφάλεια of 1277. Without any theological debate, expressing oneself against the Union was considered an outright challenge to imperial authority: indeed it was regarded as high treason. The fact that the opposition, Arsenite or Josephite, sometimes consciously pursued this line of fulmination actually aggravated

---

<sup>98</sup> For this reason also the “corporal oath” taken by George Akropolites in Lyons was reproduced with adjustments in the imperial confessions: see PIERALLI, *Corrispondenza* (quoted n. 13), n° 26, 27.

<sup>99</sup> See for example GEANAKOPOLOS, *Μιχαήλ Παλαιολόγος* (quoted n. 22), p. 228-229; NICOL, *Last centuries* (quoted n. 6), p. 62; D. M. NICOL, *The Greeks and the Union of the Churches. The Report of Ogerius, protonotarius of Michael VIII Palaiologos, in 1280, Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy 63/C n° 1*, 1962, p. 1-16, here 2-3 [*Byzantium: its Ecclesiastical History and Relations with the Western World* (Variorum Reprints) London 1972, n° VII]; GILL, *Byzantium* (quoted n. 27), p. 168, estimates that Bekkos was “stimulated” by the example of the Emperors to write his confession.

the situation for the oppositional leaders. The government, on the other hand, on the basis of the agreements of 1273 and 1277, was legitimized in treating Anti-Unionists as traitors to the person of the Emperor.<sup>100</sup> Therefore, even though before 1277 Michael VIII had already severely punished anybody who had, in the context of the Union, dared express himself against the legitimacy of Michael's reign, the Emperor only hardened his position after the procedures of 1277 had been concluded.<sup>101</sup>

For the prelates of the Constantinopolitan Church it was not much different. Probably nourishing the idea that this affair would have no repercussions on them, they commanded complete silence on theological issues. Indeed, Pachymeres makes it amply clear that in the prelates' mind the Union by "economy" (οικονομία) was a whole different issue from the theological part, which had been omitted from the Union deliberations as if this side of it had never existed.<sup>102</sup> Perhaps to their great surprise and most obviously contrary to their expectations, John Bekkos was not willing to keep this silence, even though initially he had promised that he would not bring up any theological subjects for discussion.<sup>103</sup> Pachymeres notes that Bekkos was not only concerned with points that were evident, but opened debates on major theological issues, on which objections would inevitably be raised.<sup>104</sup> It is not easy to decide why Bekkos engaged himself in defending the Union. It is maintained that he was convinced about its theological side, and maybe his honest disposition would not allow him to remain silent when he realized that there was ground for a true rapprochement between East and West. In any case, his writings have been recently

<sup>100</sup> This was actually the charge that the clerics of the Patriarchate were facing in 1273/4. See PACHYMERES, 2 (quoted n. 5), p. 499-501, 505.8-12, and also see below p. 000.

<sup>101</sup> Nikephoros Doukas Angelos, ruler of Epirus, and John Angelos, ruler of Thessaly, were excommunicated by the synod in July 1277. See LAURENT, *Regestes I, 4*, n° 1435; RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 111; GILL, *Byzantium* (quoted n. 27), p. 169-170; LAURENT-DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 77-78, 81-82; GEANAKOPOLOS, *Μιχαήλ Παλαιολόγος* (quoted n. 22), p. 205-207, 229-230. On the opposition in general, without distinguishing between Anti-Unionists and Arsenites, see V. PUECH, *The Byzantine Aristocracy and the Union of the Churches (1274-1283): a Prosopographical Approach*, in G. SAINT-GUILLAIN, D. STATHAKOPOULOS (éd.), *Liquid and Multiple: Individuals and Identities in the Thirteenth-Century Aegean* (Monographies 35), Paris 2012, p. 45-54.

<sup>102</sup> PACHYMERES, 2 (quoted n. 5), p. 607.6-10, 611.1-4. On the concept of *oikonomia* in Pachymeres, see A. FAILLER, *Le principe de l'économie ecclésiastique vue par Pachymère*, *JÖB* 32/4, 1983, p. 287-295. On the concept of *oikonomia* in Bekkos see XEXAKES, *Βέκκος* (quoted n. 3), p. 100-101; RICHTER, *Bekkos* (quoted n. 7), p. 191-199.

<sup>103</sup> PACHYMERES, 2 (quoted n. 5), p. 531.9-24. Bekkos gave this promise to Theodore Xiphilinos, *meγas oikonomos* of the Patriarchate. It is doubtful that it took the form of an official document, as Laurent proposes. See LAURENT, *Regestes I, 4*, n° 1430; LAURENT-DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 64-65; PAPADAKIS, *Crisis* (quoted n. 7), p. 19-20.

<sup>104</sup> PACHYMERES, 2 (quoted n. 5), p. 603.24-605.1, 605.21-23.

classified almost equally between the period of his Patriarchate and the period which followed his deposition.<sup>105</sup> Bekkos may have found himself in a position to have to defend the Union and the orthodoxy of Rome, not only because he believed in it, but mainly because he would have to justify his own, and by extension the Emperor's, adherence to the Latin creed,<sup>106</sup> and because he wanted to spare himself from facing the charge of heresy.<sup>107</sup> It is also possible that he thought his efforts would eventually appease the schism within the Empire and have a longer lasting effect on the relations with Rome. That he perceived it as his own duty to bring peace to a society split in pieces he confesses in his *De iniustitia*.<sup>108</sup>

The synod and the government of Michael VIII Palaeologos were facing a grave political problem in 1277. The synod made no discrimination between Arsenites and Josephites, simply because the common characteristic of these groups was that they denied communion with the instituted Church. Indeed, the two groups had decided on a temporary collaboration with the purpose of overturning the Union, thus undermining the position of the Emperor, the Patriarch and the Church. The situation is therefore described in political and official terms in the *Tomographia*: the dissidents were divided into constitutional groups, which formed the whole of the Byzantine polity. Each one of these groups was commanded by an internal hierarchy; they thus formed a *taxis* and people in them belonged to an "order" (τάγμα).<sup>109</sup> Mention is made

<sup>105</sup> RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 123-128.

<sup>106</sup> Cf. PACHYMERES, 2 (quoted n. 5), p. 603.9-10: ... ὡς οὐκ ἔσφαλται σφίσιν ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον τὴν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν καταπραξαμένοις εἰρήνην...; PG 142, col. 233B.

<sup>107</sup> PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 43.26-45.2: βουλόμενος γὰρ τοῖς αἰτιωμένοις ἀπολογεῖσθαι καὶ ἔγκλημα φεύγειν αἰρέσεως, ἔλαθεν αἰρέσει δόξας δικαίως περιπαρεῖς.

<sup>108</sup> Bekkos explains his attitude quite eloquently in *De iniustitia*. See PG 141, col. 950C-952A: ... τὸν πατριαρχικὸν τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ἐνεπιστεύθημεν θρόνον, καὶ τὸ διὰ τὴν ῥηθεῖσαν ἔνωσιν σκάνδαλον ἀνεῤῥάγη, καὶ ὁ τῆς κακίας πυρσὸς ἐπὶ μέγα ἤρετο καθ' ἐκάστην, καὶ λαοὶ ἀπ' ἀλλήλων ἐσχίζοντο, καὶ ἱερεῖς ἱερέων διεστέλλοντο, καὶ μυρία ἄλλα ἐπλημμελεῖτο δεινά, οἷς ὁ τῆς κακίας εὐρετὴς ἐγεγήθει, καὶ ἐπεγάννυτο. Τι γοῦν πρὸς ταῦτα, ὦ πρὸς τῆς Τριάδος αὐτῆς! ἡμᾶς ἔδει ποιεῖν; ἀναπεσεῖν, καὶ ὄκνη δοῦναι τὰ καθ' ἑαυτούς, καὶ ὡσπερ ἄλλω τὸ πλεόν ἡμῶν μέλλον τὸ σχίσμα περιοῦν; ... Ἥμεν οὖν, ὅπερ ἔδει, πρόθυμοι πρὸς τὸ ζύμπαντας πείθειν ἀνθρώπους τῶν συνάξεων μὴ ἀπολιμπάνεσθαι, τῶν κοινωνιῶν μὴ ἀποστερεῖσθαι, τὴν ἀλλήλων ἔνωσιν μὴ περιοῦν, τὴν ἀδελφικὴν ὁμόνοιαν μὴ λυμαίνεσθαι· καὶ τὸ περὶ ταῦτα ἡμῶν πρόθυμον οὐ μέχρι τῆς δι' ὁμιλιῶν ἀγράφων παραινέσεως ἴστασθαι ἡμᾶς εἶα, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς διὰ γραφῶν ἀνέπειθεν ἄπτεσθαι.

<sup>109</sup> LAURENT-DARROUZES, *Dossier grec*, p. 465.4-8. The term *taxis* is not directly mentioned in the text, while the term "order" (τάγμα) is mentioned twice, see LAURENT-DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 465.6, 467.13. On the terms see N. OIKONOMIDES, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IX<sup>e</sup> et X<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Paris 1972, p. 21-24.



of the relatives of the Emperor (βασιλικῆς συγγενείας τε καὶ σειρᾶς),<sup>110</sup> higher dignitaries (συγκλήτου βουλῆς),<sup>111</sup> Church prelates, archons and priests,<sup>112</sup> monks and laymen. Women are particularly mentioned in this context because they, too, were enlisted for the cause (γυναῖκες ἐναρίθμιοι φαίνονται).<sup>113</sup> The synod finally decreed against the dissidents, regardless of their social status (τύχη), their profession or their dignity.<sup>114</sup>

Bekkos' letter to Pope John XXI was composed in the same direction but emphasized the social aspect and the effect the conflict had on Christian life (χριστιανικὴν διαγωγὴν καὶ κατάστασιν) in the Empire.<sup>115</sup> Bekkos explained to the Pope that the body of Constantinopolitan Church leaders was decimated because prelates and priests of whatever rank were being dismissed from it under penalty of excommunication. The Anti-Unionists had also acknowledged "protectors and leaders" (προστάται καὶ ἀρχηγοὶ),<sup>116</sup> acted under the guidance of advocates<sup>117</sup> and came from all social strata (κἂν ὁποίας ὄσιν οὗτοι τύχης καὶ καταστάσεως). Lay people were distinguished by the fact that they were "not adorned with priesthood", be they of high repute or not, or belonging to the "humble and lowly" or not (τῶν ταπεινῶν τε καὶ χθαμαλῶν).<sup>118</sup> As a consequence, Byzantine society was now sharply divided between Unionists and Anti-Unionists. Those who renounced the imperial unionist policy scorned the liturgies of the official Church, refused to come into

---

<sup>110</sup> Under the Comnenian hierarchy system, they were the first after the Emperor and they took their position according to blood relation with him personally. See in general L. STIERNON, *Notes de titulature et de prosopographie byzantines. Sébaste et gambros*, *REB* 23, 1965, p. 222-243.

<sup>111</sup> People with high positions in the state would be those belonging to this group, with a distant relationship to the Emperor, or with no relationship at all. The grand logothete George Akropolites for example would belong here.

<sup>112</sup> LAURENT-DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 465.5-6: ...τῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν ἀρχόντων, τοῦ ἱερατικοῦ καταλόγου...

<sup>113</sup> The term ἐναρίθμιοι is traditionally used to signify enlistment in a military corps. Here it has the meaning of fighting for a specific cause, which is to overturn the Union. On the term, coming from the Latin *numerus*, see J. HALDON, *Warfare, state and society in the Byzantine world, 565-1204*, London 1999, p. 112.

<sup>114</sup> LAURENT-DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 467.12-20. Τύχη ("fortune") in Byzantine social terminology signifies a situation defined by several parameters, such as descent, dignity or title, nationality, personal state (free or not, such as captive/slave). See ODB, 3, p. 2131.

<sup>115</sup> LAURENT-DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 481.19-28.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 481.29-30.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 481.19-20. This is a very interesting and vivid picture that Bekkos draws about anti-unionist advocates who urged people with "unlawful preachings" to reject the Union. See in detail EVERT-KAPPESOWA, *Société* (quoted n. 6), p. 33-34.

<sup>118</sup> LAURENT-DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 483.2-5.

contact with unionist priests, and abstained from attending the mysteries, including the most sacred of all, baptism.<sup>119</sup> The detailed reports comprised in the *Tomographia* and in Bekkos' letter make it clear that the split ran vertically through Byzantine society and aimed at informing the Pope about the difficulties in implementing the Union. They also justified the final plea to maintain the traditional customs and practices of the Constantinopolitan Church. Bekkos himself omits all these formalities in his *De iniustitia* and describes a situation of social unrest on the verge of civil war that prevailed after the Union, because the people “perceived the peace as separation, not as association”.<sup>120</sup>

Even though Pachymeres places the major strife around Patriarch John Bekkos in the context of 1279/80, it would be compelling to assume that the disapproving voices became louder after the confessions of 1277.<sup>121</sup> In Pachymeres' text, it is only implied that Bekkos was at that point facing accusations of heresy;<sup>122</sup> indeed, complaints made by leading prelates, among them by the metropolitan of Ephesus, Isaac, forced the Emperor to promulgate an edict in which he ordered that any deviation from the Scriptures should be hindered.<sup>123</sup> As the situation stood, however, it was only a matter of viewpoint in determining who was actually deviating from the “orthodox” reading of the Scriptures. Obviously, for the government of Michael VIII Palaeologos, the real danger was that the artificially united front of the official unionist Church was cracking, and this not only affected the fragile Church Union, but also fomented social unrest within the state. Bekkos noted in particular that everybody, “all the people of our generation together” (ξύμπαντες ὁμοῦ τῆς ἡμῶν γενεᾶς ἄνθρωποι), men, women, young or old, farmers or artisans and those without any occupation, felt

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 481.19-26; GOUNARIDIS, *Κίνημα* (quoted n. 6), p. 113-114.

<sup>120</sup> LAURENT-DARROUZES, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 465.19-21. Cf. PG 141, col. 952D-953A: ...ὡς ἡμῖν μὲν ἢ μέσον τῶν ἀμφοτέρων Ἐκκλησιῶν εἰρήνη τὸν ὅμοιον οὕτω τοῖς πατράσιν ἐσπουδάζετο τρόπον, ἄλλως δ' ὁ τῶν πραγμάτων μετεκέκλωστο ἄτρακτος, καὶ ἐν ἀθρόα μεταβολῇ περὶ ἧς νῦν καὶ λέγειν οὐκ ἔστι καιρὸς, ... ξύμπαντες ὁμοῦ τῆς ἡμῶν γενεᾶς ἄνθρωποι ἄνδρες, γυναῖκες, γέροντες, νέοι, κόραι, πρεσβύτεδες μάχην, καὶ οὐκ εἰρήνην, διάστασιν, καὶ οὐ σύνδεσμον, τὴν εἰρήνην ἠγήσαντο. See GEANAKOPOLOS, *Μιχαὴλ Παλαιολόγος* (quoted n. 22), p. 203; NICOL, *Last centuries* (quoted n. 6), p. 79; RICHTER, *Bekkos* (quoted n. 7), p. 170-171.

<sup>121</sup> PACHYMERES, 2 (quoted n. 5), p. 603-605.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 605.4-5: Μάχη τις ἐπ' οὐ καιρίως καὶ φιλονεικία συνίσταται· τὸ δὲ τῆς μάχης κεφάλαιον, ὅτι κινοῦνται δόγματα. Cf. PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 37.12-14.

<sup>123</sup> PACHYMERES, 2 (quoted n. 5), p. 605.12-17; DÖLGER (WIRTH), *Regesten* (quoted n. 22), n° 2046; GILL, *John Beccos* (quoted n. 2), p. 258-259.

the need to engage in theology, even if they were not adequately educated.<sup>124</sup> On the other hand metropolitans who openly supported the Emperor felt that Bekkos' writing activity was compromising their own position. So there came a point when Church prelates who had previously supported the Patriarch in the affair of false accusations – notably Isaac of Ephesus<sup>125</sup> – started wishing for his removal from the patriarchal throne. In addition, Emperor Michael was coming closer to realizing that he was being accused of heresy by his people.<sup>126</sup> To the extent that religious conflict was increasingly taking on the characteristics of political subversion, the situation was becoming dynamically explosive, and was only exacerbated by Michael VIII's persecutions, which reached their peak in 1279/80.<sup>127</sup>

And this was actually the situation that Andronicus II had to deal with after the death of Michael VIII in December 1282. Let us summarize what he was confronted with: Arsenite monks, who denied the legitimacy of the successors of Patriarch Arsenios; some of them did not even recognize the legitimacy of the champion of Orthodoxy, Patriarch Joseph, on the basis of a fictitious excommunication;<sup>128</sup> many of them still recalled how Emperor Michael VIII had ascended the throne; Josephites, supporters of Patriarch Joseph, Anti-Unionists who were largely at conflict with Arsenites;<sup>129</sup> and an aristocracy in turmoil on account of the persecutions, exiles and corporal punishments that some of its most distinguished members had suffered under Michael VIII. They expected nothing less than vindication;<sup>130</sup> some of the aristocrats did not even hesitate to align themselves with those monks who challenged

<sup>124</sup> PG 141, col. 952D; in particular see *ibid.*, col. 984B, C, D. Also PACHYMERES, 2 (quoted n. 5), p. 513. Cf. GOUNARIDIS, *Κίνημα* (quoted n. 6), p. 113; NICOL, Reaction (quoted n. 6), p. 124-125; EVERT-KAPPESOWA, Société (quoted n. 6), p. 36-37.

<sup>125</sup> PACHYMERES, 2 (quoted n. 5), p. 569-571; RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 112, n. 54; LAURENT, *Regestes 1, 4*, n° 1443; GILL, John Beccos (quoted n. 2), p. 257-258. John Bekkos submitted his resignation but it was not accepted. In this instance he had the full support of the prelates, who considered the accusations manufactured.

<sup>126</sup> PACHYMERES, 2 (quoted n. 5), p. 611.9-10, 16-20.

<sup>127</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 617.16-18, 25-29, 619.11-14, 29-30.

<sup>128</sup> PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 47.23-29; GOUNARIDIS, *Κίνημα* (quoted n. 6), p. 89 sq., 115-116.

<sup>129</sup> The two factions are clearly distinguished in PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 63.6-11.

<sup>130</sup> Manuel Raoul, Isaac Raoul and John Angelos Doukas were blinded, Andronicus Kantakouzenos died in prison, John Kantakouzenos was forced to succumb to the Emperor's pressure. Irene Palaeologina was imprisoned with two of her daughters and Theodore Mouzalon was flogged. On these and many others see PACHYMERES, 2 (quoted n. 5), p. 611-621; PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 23.19-29; NICOL, Report (quoted n. 99), p. 1-16 (11 sq. for prosopographical details); GOUNARIDIS, *Κίνημα* (quoted n. 6), p. 107; NICOL, *Last centuries* (quoted n. 6), p. 78-79; ID., Reaction (quoted n. 6), p. 128-135; EVERT-KAPPESOWA, Société (quoted n. 6), p. 31-33, 39; EAD., Relations (quoted n. 27), p. 315-316.

Andronicus' authority.<sup>131</sup> The most uncompromising monks pointed out that he, too, had been crowned by the – allegedly – excommunicated Patriarch Joseph, which meant that his reign lacked legality.<sup>132</sup> It probably took no more than a few days before Andronicus II realized that his position was a precarious one. He was forced to agree with the most radical party, which denied Michael VIII a proper memorial service and was represented in the palace by his aunt, Eulogia (Irene). His mother, Theodora, was also forced to agree and later delivered a denouncement of the Union in writing.<sup>133</sup>

Andronicus II acted almost immediately and had John XI Bekkos removed from the patriarchal throne and Joseph re-installed (late December 1282). Joseph's second ascent to the patriarchal throne served as a declaration of the restoration of Orthodoxy; at the same time, by supporting the Anti-Unionists and legitimacy through the Patriarchate, it sent clear message to the Arsenites.<sup>134</sup> Andronicus II made every possible effort to pacify the Church, the monks and the people for the greater good. The steps and the measures he took were characterized by admirable tolerance.<sup>135</sup> His dealings in 1282/1283 were a result of the way that the Union of Lyons had been achieved, because restricting the involvement of the Constantinopolitan Church to the mere recognition of the primacy of the Holy See meant nothing else than confining

---

<sup>131</sup> It is considered that John Tarchaniotes pursued a political agenda, however, he was probably not aiming at overthrowing Andronicus II; he was finally exiled after the synod of Adramyttion. See NICOL, Report (quoted n. 99), p. 13; GOUNARIDIS, *Κίνημα* (quoted n. 6), p. 125-128; GEANAKOPOLOS, *Μιχαήλ Παλαιολόγος* (quoted n. 22), p. 238-240.

<sup>132</sup> PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 51.3-6, 53.10-12; NICOL, *Last centuries* (quoted n. 6), p. 96; BECK, *Ιστορία* (quoted n. 7), p. 159-160; LAURENT, *Crises* (quoted n. 6), p. 237-241.

<sup>133</sup> PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 25.8-12, 67.10-13, 139.3-4. In the synod of April 1283 it was decided that the Empress mother would be duly commemorated by the Church together with Andronicus II. The document signed by Theodora Palaeologina is primarily a declaration of loyalty to the "Church of God" rather than a "confession of faith". This term is only found in the title of the document and in a short phrase which confesses faith to the Orthodox Church: οὐδὲν παρ' ἡμῖν φρόνημα ἕτερον, ἀλλ' ἡ τὸ γνήσιον τῆς καθολικῆς καὶ ἀποστολικῆς ἐκκλησίας. The rest of the document contains a clear renouncement of the Union and a statement that Theodora accepts the convictions of Bekkos, Meliteniotes and Metochites. Theodora also explicitly promises that she will not attempt to give her late husband a proper memorial service. See the document in S. PÉTRIDÈS, *Chrysobulle de l'impératrice Theodora*, *ÉO* 14, 1911, p. 25-28 (text in p. 26-27); NICOL, *Last centuries* (quoted n. 6), p. 95-96, 97; ID., *Reaction* (quoted n. 6), p. 138-139; see also E. MITSIOU, *Regaining the true faith: the confession of faith of Theodora Palaiologina*, in this volume **p.???**

<sup>134</sup> John XI Bekkos withdrew to the Panachrantos monastery on the 26<sup>th</sup> of December, 1282. See PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 27; RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 115; GOUNARIDIS, *Κίνημα* (quoted n. 6), p. 122-124; LAURENT, *Crises* (quoted n. 6), p. 245.

<sup>135</sup> PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 23.11-13. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 31.31-32: ... πανθ' ὑφιέντος πράττειν, ὡς ἂν γοῦν μόνον τὰ τῆς χθεσινῆς ἐκείνης καταγίδος καταστορεσθεῖεν...

liability for the Union to three persons and their immediate environment, meaning Michael VIII, Andronicus II, and John XI Bekkos.<sup>136</sup> It follows that Andronicus had to be remitted of all responsibility. Orchestrators of this transitional phase were the late Emperor's sister, Eulogia, Theodore Mouzalon, and the entourage of Patriarch Joseph.<sup>137</sup>

Bekkos vividly describes the situation prevailing in those days. In his own words he explains that the crowd was incited against him by “a few persons with temporary power in their hands” (ὀλίγοι τινὲς τῶν τῷ καιρῷ τὰ πρόσφορα δυναμένων) – Josephites to whom the Emperor had granted freedom of action – and forced him to abandon the patriarchal residence because his safety was not guaranteed (ἀναγκασθῆναι ἡμᾶς διὰ προσδοκίαν θανάτου... τῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν ἀναχωρῆσαι).<sup>138</sup> In January 1283 Bekkos was called to appear before the synod, facing charges of illegally ascending to the patriarchal throne and of stirring up theological discussions about the Union.<sup>139</sup> In the expectation of the trials, the people were incited against the Unionists and the crowd gathered around the church of Blachernae and its surroundings, galleries and supra-structures. Bekkos speaks of the crowd, ὄχλος or πληθὺς, and uses the expression “the most vulgar of the city crowd” (χυδαῖον τοῦ πολιτικοῦ πλήθους) in order to point out that the crowd was composed of people from the lower social strata of Constantinople.<sup>140</sup> For three whole days he did not know if he would live to see the light of dawn.<sup>141</sup> Finally, his case was heard. Regarding the position of the prelates who participated in the synod, Bekkos notes in his *De iniustitia* that in these intimidating conditions one would be forced to

<sup>136</sup> Andronicus II claimed that he signed the confession of faith against his will. See PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 23.29-31, 31.30-33.3, 24-26; ROBERG, *Union* (quoted n. 26), p. 220.

<sup>137</sup> PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 23.19-20, 29-31, 33.24-26; NICOL, *Reaction* (quoted n. 6), p. 142-144.

<sup>138</sup> PG 141, col. 953A.

<sup>139</sup> See PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 45.3-7. On the outcome of the trial see RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 116-117.

<sup>140</sup> PG 141, col. 953C-D, 956C-957A, 960C, 961D-964A; LAURENT, *Regestes I, 4*, n° 1455. Cf. GEORGII METOCHITAE DIACONI, *Historiae dogmaticae librum I et II*, ed. A. MAI, Romae 1871, p. 91. On the lower social classes of Constantinople see H.-G. BECK, *Zur Sozialgeschichte einer frühmittelalterlichen Hauptstadt*, BZ 58, 1965, p. 11-45, here 32-34. The strong expression χυδαῖον πλήθος probably derives from St. Basil (P. TREVISAN, *San Basilio. Commento al profeta Isaia*, Torino 1939, p. 7.205.17: χυδαῖον λαόν), and is generally not found in Byzantine sources, except for Patriarch Photius and Eustathios of Thessalonica.

<sup>141</sup> PG 141, col. 956C-957A.

compromise.<sup>142</sup> We shall see that this comment does not fully apply to his own case. Nevertheless, John Bekkos signed a new confession of faith, the third confession of his life.

The text can be roughly divided into two parts, of which the first comprises the accusations he faced and the second contains the confession. The opening of this letter, characterized as *libellus* (τῆς ὁμολογίας καὶ πίστεως λίβελλος)<sup>143</sup> is quite interesting, because it brings the document into close association with Pachymeres' text: Bekkos admits that, in his effort to convince everybody about the peace, called here “alleged peace” (δῆθεν εἰρήνη), he spoke and wrote treatises on Church doctrines<sup>144</sup>. He goes on to summarize what he wrote, in accordance with the synod's *interpretation* of it (...ἄπερ οὕτως ἔχοντας καὶ ἡ θεία καὶ ἱερὰ σύνοδος ἐφωράσατο, “this is what the divine and holy synod has determined”<sup>145</sup>). First, according to the synod's understanding, he had proclaimed that the “cause” of the existence of the Holy Spirit (αἰτία) is the Father and the Son; second, it was believed that he used the διά preposition to prove this, meaning that there were two “causes”, or two “beginnings” (ἀρχή);<sup>146</sup> and third, he was supposed to have sustained that Father and Son are one cause for the Spirit, as if they were one source, or one beginning. Last, Bekkos had denied that “the Son is as much the cause of existence of the Spirit as the meaning of the preposition ‘through’ allows”.<sup>147</sup> In this passage Bekkos resumes what his opponents understood of his theology and what he was accused of, namely, that one cannot separate procession from causation within the Trinity and, therefore, proclaiming that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, or through the Son, can be interpreted as, or lead to, one of these three affirmations. This anti-unionist

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 957C: Τί γοῦν ποιῆσαι οἱ πρὸς ἄλογον μανίαν πλήθους, καὶ ὀρμὴν ἀκάθεκτον, ἀντέχειν οὐκ ἐξισχύοντες; Τί ἄλλο γε ἢ τοῦ καιροῦ ἐνδοῦναι τῇ δυναστείᾳ, καὶ μὴ ἐπιχειρεῖν ὀλίγαις ῥανίσιν ὕδατος φλόγα ὄλην εἰς αἰθέριον ὑψουμένην σβεννύειν;

<sup>143</sup> PG 142, col. 238 A.

<sup>144</sup> Cf. PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 35.15-23.

<sup>145</sup> The translation of PAPANAKIS, *Crisis* (quoted n. 7), p. 158: “...were found to be of a dubious nature and... the synod had them condemned” does not confer the meaning of the text.

<sup>146</sup> PG 142, col. 237 B: ...ὄθεν καὶ δύο ἀναφαίνεται τοῦ Πνεύματος αἴτια, καὶ ἡ προσεχῆς καὶ ἡ πόρρωθεν ἀρχὴ ἐντεῦθεν ὑπονοεῖται... Cf. PACHYMERES, 2 (quoted n. 5), 609.21-27. A temporal difference among the persons destroys their equal standing within the Trinity. In Riebe's analysis, to avoid complications deriving from this idea, Bekkos used the ancient metaphors of the source (ὀφθαλμός, πηγὴ, ποταμός) and the sun (ἥλιος, ἀκτίς, φῶς). See RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 70-71; XEXAKES, *Βέκκος* (quoted n. 3), p. 126-136; PAPANAKIS, *Crisis* (quoted n. 7), p. 69, 79-80.

<sup>147</sup> PG 142, col. 237 B-C. In this passage I am using the translation of PAPANAKIS, *Crisis* (quoted n. 7), p. 158.

interpretation of the *Filioque* is of Photian conception; in reality, this part of Bekkos' third confession reproduces the very quintessence of Photius' theology, whose principles Bekkos himself systematically contested in his writings.<sup>148</sup>

There follows an official renouncement of these arguments and of every other that leads to this "dogmatic absurdity" (ἀτοπίαν τοῦ δόγματος).<sup>149</sup> Bekkos then continues with an orthodox profession. He declares that the Holy Spirit takes its existence and proceeds from the Father, who is the *cause* of existence for the Son and the Spirit; the διά preposition does not signify a causal implication of the Son in the procession of the Spirit, either by Himself, or with the Father, as if "*Father and Son would be considered by some as one cause, and one beginning of the Spirit*" (ὡς εἶναι τὸν Υἱὸν καὶ τὸν Πατέρα ... ἐν<sup>150</sup> αἴτιον καὶ μίαν ἀρχὴν τοῦ Πνεύματος).<sup>151</sup> In the end Bekkos renounces all those who did not embrace these orthodox principles. By this *libellus*, the ex-Patriarch professes his devoutness and proves that he fully embraces the doctrines and teachings of the fathers. Bekkos' deposition from the Patriarchate was confirmed by the synod, which decided in addition to disordain him. The last two clauses of the document concern these decisions, which Bekkos was compelled to accept.<sup>152</sup>

What is peculiar about this document is that it is not primarily a profession of faith, but a renouncement of his opponents' *interpretation* of his arguments. Bekkos here does not disclaim his own conviction that eastern and western theological approaches on the procession of the Holy Spirit are compatible; he does not condemn his own

<sup>148</sup> GILBERT, John Bekkos (quoted n. 69), p. 284-285. In the author's understanding Photius' theology was "a kind of extreme and militant statement of the Cappadocian 'three hypostases, one ousia' doctrine". Also see in detail XEXAKES, *Βέκκος* (quoted n. 3), p. 78-79, 82-83. The following writers examine Bekkos' attack on Photius' authority: RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 156-161; XEXAKES, *Βέκκος* (quoted n. 3), p. 78-79, 82-83; V. LAURENT, *Le cas de Photius dans l'apologétique de Jean XI Bekkos*, *ÉO* 29, 1930, p. 396-415; LAURENT-DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 65-69; F. DVORNIK, *The Photian Schism. History and Legend*, Cambridge 1948, 403-407; RICHTER, Bekkos (quoted n. 7), p. 173-174, 185-187; PAPADAKIS, *Crisis* (quoted n. 7), p. 83-86; HOFMANN, Patriarch Johann Bekkos (quoted n. 21), p. 149-157, 161-162. It is also of note that Bekkos made use of epistles by Popes Nicholas I, Hadrian II and by Patriarch Photius that were written in the period of the Photian schism.

<sup>149</sup> PG 142, col. 237 C.

<sup>150</sup> Corrected for ἄν in the edition.

<sup>151</sup> PG 142, col. 237 D – 238 A. I am obliged to amend the text (cf. previous footnote) at this point, even though the potential infinitive (εἶναι ἄν) here might as well stand to declare (im)possibility. However, considering that this phrase is placed within the orthodox profession, I believe that Bekkos would not leave a shadow of a doubt regarding the *cause* of procession; on the contrary the phrase "one cause, one beginning" (ἐν αἴτιον, μίαν ἀρχὴν) is a complete literary schema.

<sup>152</sup> PG 142, col. 238 A-B.

reasoning, which supported the orthodoxy of Rome. In reality he denounces not his own theology, but its *perception* by his anti-unionist enemies. Of course, Bekkos never stated that Father and Son are one cause; this would diffuse the two hypostases. He never stated that Father and Son constitute two causes of existence either, because it would be dangerously close to dualism. He never proclaimed that the *διά* preposition introduces a causal relationship between the Son and the Spirit, because this would directly contradict the first principle, that only the Father is the ultimate cause;<sup>153</sup> rather, in Gilbert's words, "the Son is the bearer of the Father's causality".<sup>154</sup> Each and every theological stipulation of the text is compatible with Bekkos' unionist theory, but from the reverse viewpoint. Even the last sentence on the significance of the *διά* preposition is ingeniously structured in order to avoid contradiction with his own theological principles.

There is some confusion in the sources about the authorship of this document. Pachymeres claimed that it was presented to him by his accusers, but the Patriarch Gregory of Cyprus noted in the *Tomos* of 1285 that it was composed by the former Patriarch.<sup>155</sup> In reality Bekkos admits in his *De iniustitia* that he authored the third confession himself. He writes: "Conscious that all our beliefs remained invulnerable, and that we maintained our piety unbroken, we considered that we should not delay presenting ourselves (to the court) and offering only one apology, (meaning) the confession of our own faith, and (that we should) keep silent at any other reproach that our adversaries would address to us, and say absolutely nothing about any injustice that was or would be done to us (in the future), at least for now".<sup>156</sup> And this Bekkos did, by disclaiming that his beliefs were similar, or the same, to what his

<sup>153</sup> Cf. PACHYMERES, 2 (quoted n. 5), p. 609.15-17: ...αἴτιον μὲν οὐκ ἔλεγε τὸν Ὑιὸν τοῦ Πνεύματος, αἴτιον δὲ διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ τὸν Πατέρα τοῦ Πνεύματος ὁμολογεῖ, ἐπεὶ καὶ διὰ Λόγου προβολεὺς, εἴτ' οὖν αἴτιος, λέγεται τοῦ Πνεύματος ὁ Πατήρ.

<sup>154</sup> In Bekkos' theology only God is the Father and the cause of all existence, and attributing causative role to the Son would equate Him to the Father (it would make him another God with all the qualities of God, which is dualism; as we have seen, the Son is distinguished because he is not a Father). The causality ascribed to the Son with the *ἐκ* or *διά* argument falls in Bekkos' theory about the "referential causality". See above, n. 90 with references, and in particular GILBERT, John Bekkos (quoted n. 69), p. 286-287. On the *διά* formula also see RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 167-171, 231-232; XEXAKES, *Βέκκος* (quoted n. 3), p. 136-140; GILL, Church Union (quoted n. 12), 42; ID., Notes (quoted n. 22), p. 294-297; ID., *Byzantium* (quoted n. 27), p. 156-158; PAPADAKIS, *Crisis* (quoted n. 7), p. 79-80; EVERT-KAPPESOWA, Clergé (quoted n. 26), p. 86; RICHTER, Bekkos (quoted n. 7), p. 201-202.

<sup>155</sup> PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 47.6-11; PG 142, col. 238 B. Even RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 117, and XEXAKES, *Βέκκος* (quoted n. 3), p. 48-50, do not think that this is a document by John Bekkos.

<sup>156</sup> PG 141, col. 961 C.



opponents thought he was proclaiming with his theology, and by adding to the end a profession of faith that was truly orthodox. In my opinion John Bekkos would not have hesitated at all to deliver this confession, and would not have any reservations about denouncing these anti-unionist proclamations, or denouncing all his followers, because if any of them had come to believe that there were two causes of procession, then they would indeed be heretics!<sup>157</sup> It appears that the only stipulations that were added to the document by the demand of the members of the synod were the last two, regarding Bekkos' deposition from the Patriarchate and the deprivation of his priesthood, which served specific purposes of the court and which Bekkos accepted, in his own words, with reservations (πρὸς τὸ παρὸν, "at least for now"). I intend to analyse this detail below.

To conclude this chapter it is significant to underline that the third confession was never considered to be anything but orthodox. However, the estimation that John Bekkos renounced his beliefs is not to be retained.<sup>158</sup> Indeed, Bekkos was not intimidated by the angry crowd, and was not bullied into signing this document. Nevertheless, even though the confession was found to be orthodox from the very beginning, it "did not ensure him the philanthropy (of the court)", as Gregory of Cyprus admitted.<sup>159</sup> The way that the Anti-Unionists handled the case of John Bekkos at the synod of 1283, that they allowed him to deliver this confession, is quite telling of Bekkos' competence and influence over his own judges, of his theological resourcefulness and of his ingenuity. On the contrary, the opinion that one might form about the anti-unionist camp at this point is not flattering and one might tend to agree with George Pachymeres' subtle suggestions.<sup>160</sup> In my estimation the Anti-Unionists

---

<sup>157</sup> See PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 105.13-15: Αἴτιον οὖν οὐ φαμέν τὸν Υἱὸν ἐπὶ τῇ ἐκ Πατρὸς προόδῳ τοῦ Πνεύματος, οὔτε μὴν συναίτιον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀναθεματίζομεν καὶ ἀποβαλλόμεθα τὸν οὕτω λέγοντα. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 43.14-18. Apparently Bekkos had inserted a triple anathema in the *Synodikon* against those who were led to believe in the two causes of existence. The anathema has left no trace in the *Synodikon* as it is preserved today. See GILL, Notes (quoted n. 22), p. 300-301.

<sup>158</sup> PAPANAKIS, *Crisis* (quoted n. 7), p. 55, speaks of a "sudden defection" of Bekkos. Also RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 96; GILBERT, John Bekkos (quoted n. 69), p. 269; BECK, *Kirche* (quoted n. 85), p. 681; IDEM, *Iστορία*, p. 157.

<sup>159</sup> PG 142, col. 237 A. GREGORAS, 1 (quoted n. 4), p. 170.21-171.1, confuses the synod of 1283 with that of 1285. His vocabulary, however, is surprisingly similar to that of Gregory II.

<sup>160</sup> It is interesting that Pachymeres noted that the court considered the effort to understand and explain these citations as lying beyond human intelligence (παρὰ τὸ εἰκὸς ταῖς ἐννοίαις τῶν ῥητῶν ἐμβαθύνων, ἐπὶ τοῖς ὑπὲρ νοῦν ἀνθρωπίναις διανοίαις παρατολμᾶν). See PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 37.11-17, 24-31.

had not realized what had happened in the synod. But Bekkos was soon ready to clear the situation up.

## V. BEKKOS' DEPOSITION AND HIS FOURTH CONFESSION

After he was sentenced Bekkos was confined under favorable conditions in the Megiste Monastery in Prousa. Apparently during this period he wrote his long report, titled *De iniustitia* (*Περὶ ἀδικίας, ἧς ὑπέστη, τοῦ οἰκείου θρόνου ἀπελαθείς*), addressed to the Patriarch of Alexandria, who presided at the trial, and to the Patriarch of Antioch.<sup>161</sup> In the document Bekkos proposes to put into writing all he wanted to say about the recent events, without making any excuses for his orthodox profession, obviously because he was conscious of its importance. His objections targeted mainly the procedures that were followed, and not the theological background of the conflict. For these reasons the text is not an apology, but rather an account of the events.<sup>162</sup> John Bekkos had not delivered a resignation letter, and had not been officially deposed by any synod, when Joseph I was reinstated as Patriarch.<sup>163</sup> He was ousted from the Patriarchate on the charge of heresy. It is generally maintained that his deposition was probably comprised in the announcement of depositions made by Joseph's representatives in the first days of January, but Pachymeres did not include the name of Bekkos in the narrative. It is significant to underline here that at this point there was no convoked synod to confer its judgement on the accused.<sup>164</sup> The trial

<sup>161</sup> PG 141, col. 969 B; LAURENT, *Regestes I, 4*, p. 263, Critique 1 (dated to December 1284). The Patriarch of Alexandria was Athanasios and the Patriarch of Antioch was Theodosios Prinkips. They both resided in Constantinople for many years. PAPANAKIS, *Crisis* (quoted n. 7), p. 70, characterizes Athanasios as a "staunch traditionalist".

<sup>162</sup> Summarized by Bekkos himself in PG 141, col. 957 D. METOCHITES, 1 (quoted n. 140), p. 92, maintains the same position (μὴ τις οἰέσθω με τούτων τὰ ἐξῆς διηγούμενον ὡς ἐν ἀπολογίας μέρει συντίθεσθαι).

<sup>163</sup> PG 141, col. 953 A-B; METOCHITES, 1 (quoted n. 140), p. 89.

<sup>164</sup> PG 141, col. 953 C, 956 C; PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 31.11-20; LAURENT, *Regestes I, 4*, n° 1453 (1-2 January 1283); XEXAKES, *Βέκκος* (quoted n. 3), p. 44-47; GILL, John Beccos (quoted n. 2), p. 260- 261; GOUNARIDES, *Κίνημα*, p. 121-122. Pachymeres' silence about Bekkos' position in those days casts doubt on the procedure. We are forced to conclude either that Pachymeres sympathised more with Meliteniotes and Metochites, because they are the only ones mentioned to have been deposed, or that he was well aware of the breach in canonical procedure, therefore he suppressed the report. In my opinion the second is closer to the truth, because METOCHITES, 1 (quoted n. 140), 90, maintains that the entourage of Joseph drafted a decision of deposition and presented it as a document by Joseph I. The deposition of Bekkos should normally have taken place before the second ascent of Joseph I. In any case Pachymeres is not impartial.

began a few days later on the initiative of the new Patriarch's entourage.<sup>165</sup> John Bekkos estimated that Joseph's entourage was predetermined to have him condemned, which agrees with the narrative of Pachymeres and resulted in some manoeuvring and threatening of the members of the synod.<sup>166</sup> He was then called to answer for the charges of corrupting the orthodox faith by contributing with his writings to the accomplishment of the Union.<sup>167</sup>

Bekkos reveals interesting details about what was actually discussed when he appeared at court. In his view the judges intended to lead the crowd into believing that he had misunderstood the texts supporting the Union, which they did in an authoritative and not in a substantiating manner (νομοθετικώτερον πλέον ἢ ἀποδεικτικώτερον).<sup>168</sup> For this reason the synod had not been convoked to “discover the truth”, or “to judge”, but “to sanction” a decision that had already – even though atypically – been taken, meaning his deposition.<sup>169</sup> This defective handling led to the structuring of the confession of 1283. In other words Bekkos, who was overthrown on account of heresy, *was not found to be a heretic* by the synod that was convoked exactly for that reason; the synod did not manage to substantiate the charge of heresy, because Bekkos signed an orthodox profession.<sup>170</sup> Apparently this development was the reason for which Bekkos was compelled to accept the last two clauses of his third confession,<sup>171</sup> and why Gregory of Cyprus – who may very well have been the instigator of these legal stipulations – underlined that John Bekkos had “written [the document] and signed [it] by his own hand” (οἰκεία χειρὶ γράψας καὶ ὑπογράψας).<sup>172</sup> I

<sup>165</sup> In the account of Pachymeres the monks around Joseph claimed from the beginning that they were officially representing the Patriarch. See PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 29.27-31.2.

<sup>166</sup> See PG 141, col. 957 B-C: Ἡ δὲ ἀπειλή οὐ χρημάτων, οὐ κτημάτων, οὐ τῆς ἀρχιερωσύνης αὐτῆς ἔκπτωσις ἦν, ἀλλὰ θάνατος, καὶ οὗτος ἀπηνής καὶ βιαιότατος. Cf. PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 33.30-35.6.

<sup>167</sup> PG 141, col. 960 D, 961 D-964 A, 964 C-D. At this point Bekkos requested the presence of the Emperor, but his request was rejected.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 961 D.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 960 B.

<sup>170</sup> Gregory of Cyprus also makes note of this fact in the *Tomos* of 1285, see PG 142, col. 237 A. One must compare the so far unnoticed comment of PACHYMERES, 2 (quoted n. 5), p. 585.7-9: ἔμελλε δὲ καὶ τοῦτο τοῖς ταλαιπώροις τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἐσύστερον πρόσκομμ' εἶναι, ἐγκαλουμένοις ὡς ἐξεκηρύχθησαν οἱ ὀρθόδοξοι.

<sup>171</sup> PG 142, col. 238 B: ...δέχομαι καὶ τὴν τοιαύτην καθαίρεσιν ὡς ἐνθέσμως καὶ κανονικῶς γεγонуῖαν, καὶ στέρξω τὴν τοιαύτην ψῆφον, ὡς δικαίαν καὶ ἔννομον, μηδέποτε πειρασόμενος ἱερωσύνην ἀνακαλέσασθαι.

<sup>172</sup> PG 142, col. 238 B. See SARADI, Ορκος (quoted n. 36), p. 390; PΑΡΑΔΑΤΟΥ, *Επίλυση* (quoted n. 36), p. 94-96. Also see above p. 000, n. 36.

have mentioned above that legal procedure was highly appreciated by the Byzantines. The court may have hoped that the document of the third confession would cover up the mistakes made, or even perfectly legalize, the procedure followed. But this would only happen if John Bekkos intended to keep silent, which he did not. To him the sequence of events made absolutely no sense,<sup>173</sup> and he started protesting very soon after he had been sentenced. According to the testimony of Metochites, his attitude was well calculated.<sup>174</sup>

Bekkos' arguments can be summarized as follows: first, his deposition was beyond the competence of his judges, who were not bishops, "not even priests", but monks; elsewhere he speaks of lay people and simple deacons; this meant that they had no authority over a Patriarch.<sup>175</sup> Second, Joseph, who was barely breathing – and therefore had little or no participation in the events –, was reinstated even before Bekkos had been deposed;<sup>176</sup> with this argument Bekkos implied, but did not actually put into words, that Joseph's second ascent to the patriarchal throne was not legalized, since his own dethronement had occurred *ἀκανονίστως καὶ ἀθέσμως*.<sup>177</sup> Indeed, Pachymeres' report of the trial complements the emotionally charged account by Bekkos. According to Pachymeres, Bekkos did not hesitate to challenge the judges to make a decision on whether he still had the same dignity or not, meaning that they,

<sup>173</sup> PG 141, col. 964 B: Ὁρθοδόξου γὰρ Χριστιανισμοῦ παραδοχὴν οἱ δικάζοντες τῆς ἀρχιερωσύνης στέρησιν ἡμᾶς [corr. for ὑμᾶς in the edited text] ἐδικαίωσαν, οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως, καὶ ὅθεν εἰς τὴν τοιαύτην κινήθεντες ἀπόφασιν, πάντως δὲ οὐκ ἄλλοθεν, ἀλλ' ἐξ ὧν προειρήκαμεν. See RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 97-98.

<sup>174</sup> METOCHITES, 1, p. 92: λογισμὸς δὲ τις ἐπῆλθεν ἡμῖν συσταλεῖσιν, ἄλλον εἶναι τὸν εἰς τοῦτο καιρὸν, ἥνικα ἂν καὶ παρρησιάσασθαι γένοιτο ἐμφανές, ἀκοῦσαί τε καὶ εἰπεῖν. Cf. GREGORAS, 1 (quoted n. 4), p. 169.10-15.

<sup>175</sup> PG 141, col. 953 D-956 A, 960 C. Bekkos is exaggerating at this point. The composition of the court was perfectly legal by the standards of the Palaeologan period. Members of the court were the Patriarch of Alexandria, who presided over the synod instead of Patriarch Joseph, George of Cyprus and Manuel Holobolos from the patriarchal clergy, the grand logothete Theodore Mouzalon and the protonotarios Theodosios Saponopoulos as representatives of the palace. On the courts see P. LEMERLE, *Recherches sur les institutions judiciaires à l'époque des Paléologues II. Le tribunal du patriarcat ou tribunal synodal*, *AB* 68, 1950, p. 318-333, here 324-325; and also the observations of D. KYRITSES, *Some remarks about imperial courts of justice in Late Byzantium*, in *Κλητόριον in Memory of Nikos Oikonomides*, ed. F. EVANGELATOU-NOTARA – T. MANIATI-KOKKINI, Athens 2005, p. 303-326.

<sup>176</sup> PG 141, col. 953 A-B. This agrees with the narrative of PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 29.3, who notes that Joseph *μόνον οὐκ ἄπνους ὧν* was carried on a bed to the Patriarchate. Bekkos' intense irony in the passages concerning Patriarch Joseph targets the Patriarch's entourage, not Joseph himself. See for example PG 141, col. 960 A: Καὶ τι ἂν εἴη τῆς τούτων ἰσχῦος τὸ τέλος; ὁ πατριαρχικὸς θρόνος; Ἄλλ' οὗτος προαφηρέθη, ἄλλος ἐπ' αὐτοῦ κεῖται.

<sup>177</sup> PG 141, col. 953 C.

unsolicited and self-appointed judges, had called before them a Patriarch *in office*.<sup>178</sup> In the atmosphere of 1283 it comes as no surprise that the answer Bekkos received was to be expected: Bekkos' elevation to the patriarchal throne was itself illegal, because the former Patriarch, Joseph, was still alive – an argument of Arsenite inspiration that is officially heard for the first and last time<sup>179</sup> –, and because Bekkos himself was liable for delivering an orthodox confession of faith.<sup>180</sup> John Bekkos could in reality tolerate being discharged from his patriarchal office; Pachymeres even notes that he did not usually take pleasure in his duties.<sup>181</sup> But what hurt Bekkos more was being deprived of his priesthood. The reader must remember that the ex-Patriarch had devoted himself quite early to the Church. In his *De iniustitia*, which was addressed to his judges, he wrote: “You who are the judge have found us orthodox, and yet you have stripped us of our priesthood? You may argue, ‘because you have written essays on the Church Union’. Fine, fine, if our mores are not fully devout, if we have violated our own (traditions), if we have corrupted the Church by introducing an unknown doctrine. If on those charges we are innocent in our soul and mind, and all the treatises we ever wrote (we did so) for contributing to the peace of the Churches, ... why so unworthily for the injured, unworthily for the one who has done

---

<sup>178</sup> PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 45.30-35. Pachymeres even comments that Bekkos' allegation was “like a nail to their heart”, probably implying that this was an irrefutable argument. Cf. PG 141, col. 956 C, where Bekkos claims that the synod of prelates should first vote to suspend him and then elect Joseph I.

<sup>179</sup> In the letter of the monks of Athos Bekkos is paralleled to Barabbas, see LAURENT-DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 21.21-423.1; RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 89. This characterization, however, is placed regarding the cordial relations of John Bekkos to Patriarch Joseph I and does not imply that he illegally ascended to the patriarchal throne. In the interpretation of the monks, Joseph was accused for καθοσίωσις on account of his confession; in reality the Patriarch never faced this accusation. Darrouzès noted that Joseph abdicated following his own commitment to do so after the Union. See the confession of Joseph I in LAURENT-DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 31-33, n° 8. In late December 1282, Andronicus II invoked this argument of the Josephites in order to convince John Bekkos to step down from the Patriarchate, see PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 27.7-10.

<sup>180</sup> PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 47.1-4, cf. 45.3-5. These are actually the official charges. On the charge ἐχθρὸς Ῥωμαίων (PG 141, col. 956 C) see P. GOUNARIDIS, Ἰωάννης Βέκκος, ἐχθρὸς Ῥωμαίων, in *The Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean, 12<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> Centuries, Proceedings of the International Symposium in Memory of D. A. Zakythinos*, ed. L. MAUROMMATES, K. NIKOLAOU (Byzantium Today 2), Athens 1998, p. 29-40. Relative to the subject also see the perceptive analysis of M.-H. BLANCHET, *Georges-Gennadios Scholarios (vers 1400-vers 1472). Un intellectuel orthodoxe face à la disparition de l'Empire byzantin* (AOC 20), Paris 2008, p. 363-367.

<sup>181</sup> PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 27.20-21.

him this injustice was the decision on the deprivation of our priesthood conferred upon us?”<sup>182</sup>

It cannot be guessed exactly what Bekkos hoped to achieve with his protests. The fact is that the irregularities of the trial and of the entire second Patriarchate of Joseph I, brief though it was, called for a new examination of the whole issue of the Union. On the one hand, the procedures did not ensure the legitimacy of the decisions taken, as has been amply demonstrated; on the other hand, bishops and clerics had been turned into judges overnight; Bekkos speaks of the intimidation they put up with in those days;<sup>183</sup> monks, either Josephites or Arsenites, who had no constitutional authority and who, in fact, had kept themselves outside the organized Church for so long, dictated the next moves and influenced the decisions.<sup>184</sup> On the other hand, the prelates and the clergy were doing what they could in order to avoid the worst penalties. The prelates claimed that they had signed against their will, and that their signatures were forged; the accusation that John Bekkos and Michael VIII had forged the signatures of the prelates, which Pachymeres places in the context of 1279, in my opinion can only relate to the documents of 1277 and was probably heard for the first time in early 1283.<sup>185</sup> This would explain perfectly well why the prelates' signatures

<sup>182</sup> PG 141, col. 964 C-D; GREGORAS, 1 (quoted n. 4), p. 169.4-6. See in particular PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 103.25-27: ... εἰρηνεύειν θέλοντες μόνον, ἀφέντες τὰ πάντα, ταῦτα ἐπράττομεν, οὐ μὴν δὲ καὶ ὥστε τοὺς βουλομένους ἐργολαβεῖν καὶ περιάπτειν ἡμῖν αἰρέσεως ἔγκλημα.

<sup>183</sup> PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 33.14-17, 30-35.15; METOCHITES, 1 (quoted n. 140), p. 91, 92-93; RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 115-116. Also see above, n. 141. The short comment of Metochites, κατάκριτοι δὲ πλέον ἤπερ κριταὶ, on the judges, implies that the members of the court had previously been collaborators and probably concerns the prelates who assisted in the procedure, later accused as Unionists and deposed at the beginning of Gregory II's Patriarchate. Also see n. 188.

<sup>184</sup> PG 141, col. 953 C: Μοναχῶν δὲ τινῶν συγκεκροτημένων περὶ αὐτόν, ... πολλὴν τὴν καθ' ἡμῶν ἔχων δυσμένειαν, ὡς τῶν ἀρχῆθεν τῆς ἡμῶν κοινωνίας ἀπερρώγοτον τυγχάνον... ψήφισμά τι καθ' ἡμῶν σχεδιάζει...

<sup>185</sup> The document with the allegedly forged signatures of the prelates that Pachymeres places in the context of the 1279 deliberations has left absolutely no trace in the surviving documents. Considering that the author fails to mention anything about the procedures of 1277, I believe that he simply transfers the events of 1277 chronologically to 1279. See PACHYMERES, 2 (quoted n. 5), p. 583-585. The prelates' "apology" to the Pope – apparently the synodical *Tomographia* of 1277 –, is mentioned, as well as the confessions of the Emperors and of the Patriarch – *πίστεις* –, and in summary some of the content relating to the emanation of the Holy Spirit. John Bekkos in 1279 did not repeat his confession, unlike the Emperors, who sent copies to Pope Nicholas III. FAILLER, *Chronologie* (quoted n. 5), p. 233, noted that there is no mention of the synod of 1277, as did V. GRUMEL, *Les ambassades pontificales à Byzance après le II<sup>e</sup> Concile de Lyon, 1274-1280*, *ÉO* 23, 1924, p. 437-447, who did not proceed to firm conclusions about the omission. W. NORDEN, *Das Papsttum und Byzanz. Die Trennung der beiden Mächte und das Problem ihrer Wiedervereinigung bis zum*

are missing from all Greek language documents that were signed in the period 1273-1282 and why on the contrary the names of the clerics are preserved in the *asphaleia* of 1277; obviously it was necessary to eliminate evidence regarding the prelates' adherence to the Union and thereafter to facilitate their participation in the trial of Patriarch John XI Bekkos. The clergy was under extreme pressure to forsake the Patriarch and co-operate with the monks supporting Joseph I.<sup>186</sup> Indeed, Pachymeres' narrative further implies that the clergy took much of the blame; the clerics were admitted to their own church on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January, 1282, during a ceremony in which the Latins of Constantinople had a leading role on the concession of the monks who presided over it. To the attendants of the ceremony, "it all seemed like a (bad)

---

*Untergange des byzantinischen Reichs (1453)*, Berlin 1903, p. 575-578, is the only historian I know of who thought that the information about 1279 referred in reality to 1277. Also see LAURENT, *Regestes I, 4*, n° 1444; ROBERG, *Union* (quoted n. 26), p. 210-211; RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 92-93; XEXAKES, *Βέκκος* (quoted n. 3), p. 41-42; GEANAKOPOLOS, *Μιχαήλ Παλαιολόγος* (quoted n. 22), p. 236-237; GILL, *Byzantium* (quoted n. 27), p. 175-176; ID., *John Beccos*, p. 258; EVERT-KAPPESOWA, *Clergé* (quoted n. 26), p. 89-91; EAD., *Relations* (quoted n. 27), p. 314; SETTON, *Papacy*, p. 131-132.

<sup>186</sup> The collection of the documents of 1277 has been attributed by LAURENT-DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), 20-24, to George Moschabar. In their interpretation, the names of the clerics in the *ἀσφάλεια* of 1277 were preserved with the purpose of compromising Gregory of Cyprus' position in 1288/9. However, one might wonder why a simple signature would be more embarrassing for the Patriarch than his own *Tomos* of 1285, on account of which he came close to being accused of heresy! Nonetheless, the only argument in favor of LAURENT-DARROUZÈS' opinion is the fact that the oldest manuscript, *Vat. Chisianus gr. 54* (14<sup>th</sup> c.), contains treatises of Moschabar, whereby they concluded that Moschabar himself was the first collector of the copies. Very recently D. MONIOU, *Γεώργιος Μοσχάμπαρ, ένας ανθενωτικός της πρώιμης παλαιολόγειας περιόδου. Βίος και έργο*, Athens 2011, p. 82-83, questions Moschabar's connection to that manuscript, because his basic work against John Bekkos is not comprised in it. LAURENT-DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 72-73 and n° 15, p. 458-461, also attribute to Moschabar a forged document that precedes the collection in the manuscript – here, suffice it to say that the style of this document is much beneath George Moschabar even as a forgery. *Vat. Chisianus gr. 54* also contained a version of Michael VIII' 1274 confession, which derived from Andronicus II's confession of 1277 (see above, p. 000 and note 72), in which it was originally inserted. As I understand from the obscure note 2 in PIERALLI, *Corrispondenza* (quoted n. 13), p. 220, the author questions any link between the *Vat. Chisianus gr. 54* and the older edition of the imperial confession of 1274 (which appeared for the last time in an inventory from 1534-1549). However, the contents of *Vat. Chisianus gr. 54* point to the conclusion that the codex was initially composed by a Unionist and not by an Anti-Unionist, such as Moschabar, perhaps with the purpose of including details about the way in which the Union was accomplished in Byzantium. This interpretation also explains the fact that the manuscript ended up in the possession of Cardinal Isidor of Kiev. See in general LAURENT-DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 71-73; DÖLGER (WIRTH), *Regesten* (quoted n. 22), n° 2006; V. LAURENT, *Catalogue de manuscrits grecs et textes byzantins, ÉO 27*, 1928, p. 448-449; ID., *Un polémiste grec de la fin du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle: la vie et les œuvres de G. Moschabar, ÉO 29*, 1929, p. 129-158; GILL, *Church Union* (quoted n. 12), p. 5-6.

dream”.<sup>187</sup> The clergy was thus utterly humiliated, even though in 1273 they had been bullied more than any other body into signing the agreements with the Emperor. George Pachymeres obviously counted himself among them and implied in complaint that the Emperor allowed everybody to be judged on the same charges.<sup>188</sup> Finally, in April of 1283, the unionist prelates were also condemned for having signed the Union.<sup>189</sup>

Bekkos’ firm belief that his interpretation of the texts of the Fathers was orthodox<sup>190</sup> and his effort to prove this before an authorized court invited a new, this time theological, examination of his position, in order to have him condemned of heresy, which would justify, even if retrospectively, the penalties imposed on him in early 1283. The second trial took place in the palace of Blachernae in 1285.<sup>191</sup> Bekkos’ situation at that time was so important for the pacification of the Church, that Emperor Andronicus II almost begged him for reconciliation.<sup>192</sup> But Bekkos was adamant. The Church, meaning Gregory II, first had to prove that the citations of the *διὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ* formula should be interpreted correctly in a different manner than the

<sup>187</sup> PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 31-35.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.7-14. It appears only natural that the clergy in 1273/1274 felt responsible for the fate of Patriarch Joseph I and resisted the Emperor’s demands. However, their position of waiting for the result of the Council of Lyons incurred the charge of treason (ἄντικρυς ἐκρίνοντο τῆς πρὸς βασιλέα καθοσιώσεως). Michael VIII was so angry with their attitude that he threatened them with demanding the payment of the rents of their houses for the years lapsed since the conquest or, even worse, with confiscating the houses and redistributing them to his supporters because each and every house in Constantinople belonged to him personally since he was, after all, the conqueror of the City! See PACHYMERES, 2 (quoted n. 5), p. 499-501, 505.8-12. In the account of Pachymeres, however, what terrorized the clerics more than the Emperor’s threats was the fate of Manuel Holobolos, the rhetor of the Church, see PACHYMERES, 2 (quoted n. 5), p. 501-505; RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 79-80. Also see GILL, *Byzantium* (quoted n. 27), p. 131-132; ID., Notes, p. 302; GOUNARIDIS, *Κίνημα* (quoted n. 6), p. 99-104; the most encompassing presentation of the clergy is found in EVERT-KAPPESOWA, *Clergé* (quoted n. 26), p. 68-92; EAD., *Société* (quoted n. 6), p. 31-32.

<sup>189</sup> See PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 63-65; LAURENT, *Regestes 1, 4*, n° 1463. The bishops and clerics who had been ordained by John Bekkos, or had collaborated for the accomplishment of the Union, were deposed after the synod of Adramyttion; see LAURENT, *Regestes 1, 4*, n° 1485; RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 97, 117; GOUNARIDIS, *Κίνημα* (quoted n. 6), p. 134-136; LAURENT, *Crises* (quoted n. 6), p. 269-273; S. PÉTRIDÈS, *Sentence synodale contre le clergé unioniste*, *ÉO* 14, 1911, p. 133-136.

<sup>190</sup> This is what he answered when he was asked at the second trial to renounce his beliefs. See PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 115.6-10.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101-103; the second trial was deemed necessary because of Bekkos’ allegations against the metropolitan of Prusa, see RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 118-119; GILL, *John Beccos* (quoted n. 2), p. 262-263; ID., Notes, p. 299-300; PAPADAKIS, *Crisis* (quoted n. 7), p. 55-57; and also MONIOU, *Μοσχάμπαρ* (quoted n. 186), p. 42-45; NICOL, *Last centuries* (quoted n. 6), p. 98. Papadakis calls Bekkos’ tactic leading up to the second trial of Blachernae a “tactical mistake”.

<sup>192</sup> PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 117.10-20.



interpretation he had given them, and then, if he was convinced, he would compromise; otherwise he accepted the charges of heresy. Bekkos accepted no middle course out of the problem that had been created.<sup>193</sup> His position would lead either to his vindication, or to his conviction. Pachymeres retrospectively noted that Bekkos laid a trap for his adversary by recording the comment of an anonymous prelate that, as everybody was in search of his own justice, “the whole justice of God would not suffice”.<sup>194</sup> Indeed, the influence exercised by John Bekkos over his audience once again becomes apparent, since he did manage to instil doubt in their minds about their conception of orthodox interpretations of the procession doctrine. Important clerics of the Patriarchate had a hard time signing the *Tomos* of Patriarch Gregory II,<sup>195</sup> but ex-Patriarch John Bekkos and his chief collaborators Constantine Meliteniotes and George Metochites were finally condemned for heresy.<sup>196</sup>

Bekkos lived in exile at the fortress of St. Gregory in the gulf of Astakos until his death.<sup>197</sup> He never came to terms with his deposition and he never renounced his beliefs. His *Testament*, written in 1294,<sup>198</sup> does not lack any of his former vigour and strength as it takes the place of one more confession, albeit without the formalities of an official document.<sup>199</sup> It was written in place of an ἀπολογία (“apology”) with the intention to profess his convictions once again, unlike other people who, when convicted, renounce their actions.<sup>200</sup> Bekkos explains in this letter why he persisted.

---

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.12-15.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.3-8.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127-129; METOCHITES I, p. 170-172; LAURENT, *Regestes 1, 4*, n° 1490, esp. Critique 3; V. LAURENT, Les signataires du second synode des Blakhernes (été 1285), *ÉO* 26, 1927, p. 129-149. The clerics in particular recalled the way they had been treated regarding the unionist documents of 1273/1274, “even though they were not referring to the doctrine”. Metochites makes particular mention of the pressure exercised on the clergy in those days. Finally the grand econome, grand skeuophylax and grand sakellarios of the Patriarchate did not sign the *Tomos* and their names are not reproduced in any of the thirty or more copies. Other clerics of the Patriarchate only signed under pressure and intimidation. The Patriarch of Alexandria, Athanasius II, who had presided at the trial that decreed the deposition of John Bekkos, was threatened with exile and finally signed his own confession; see PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 137.21-28.

<sup>196</sup> PG 142, col. 259-243. The *Tomos* of Patriarch Gregory II confers anathemas and expels the condemned from the body of the Church on account of eleven charges of theological content. See RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 119-120; XEXAKES, *Βέκκος* (quoted n. 3), p. 50-51; PAPADAKIS, *Crisis* (quoted n. 7), p. 62-63, 153-165, including translation; BECK, *Ιστορία* (quoted n. 7), p. 157-158.

<sup>197</sup> PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 117.22-25.

<sup>198</sup> KOTZABASSI, *Testament* (quoted n. 18), p. 37.46.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.10-11: ... ἀλλὰ καὶ τόσον διὰ σπουδῆς ἢ ὁμολογία, ὅτι καὶ τὴν ἐπιτελεύτιον φθάνων ἀνάγκην, καὶ διατίθεμαι, καὶ ὁμολογῶ.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.1-6.

He admits that his belief that the Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son (δι' Υιοῦ) was considered a crime that incurred deposition from the patriarchal throne; but even if to some it was equal to *hybris* (ὕβρις), he would not deny this crown. “How could I deny an abuse on account of a doctrine that they refute and thus lead to the abuse of Christ himself?” he wrote with conviction and bitterness.<sup>201</sup> In this document, Bekkos attacks his opponents by attacking their disinclination to admit that procession *through* the Son, which is documented as a doctrine of the Fathers, equals procession *from* the Son. In Bekkos’ view this disassociates the Son from the Spirit, and no argument could convince him that a quality of the Son does not belong to Him, in other words that the Spirit takes its existence from the Son but the Spirit is not inherent in Him.<sup>202</sup> Moreover, in Bekkos’ perception this belief of the Anti-Unionists appears to acknowledge some kind of instrumental service (ὀργανικῶς) of the Son to the Father. Alienating (ἀλλοτριῶν) the Spirit from Christ, who is from his own Father, and believing that He is just a servant (ὕπηρετικὸν αὐτὸν πρεσβεύειν ὄργανον τοῦ Πατρὸς), is the worst affront to Christ;<sup>203</sup> indeed, this is Arianism (Ἀρειανισμὸς πάντως ταῦτα λαμπρὸς).<sup>204</sup> For this reason, Bekkos declares that he will not bring this shame on Christ, and that he continues to profess that the Spirit’s *procession* from the Father through the Son is *existence* from the Father through the Son.<sup>205</sup> Bekkos’ closing words in his will are instilled with determination, pride and bitterness. All his assets were confiscated; the little that was left he had distributed to his closest persons (οἰκεῖοι) and to others; what he had with him in exile he bequeathed to those who remained with him in prison.<sup>206</sup> His elaborate signature is marked by the same

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.19-20: ... κἀν τινι ἐπάξιον ὕβρεως, ἐγὼ τοιοῦτον ὕβρεως στέφανον ἀναδεῖσθαι οὐκ ἀπαναίνομαι. Πῶς γὰρ ἂν καὶ ἀρνησαίμην ὀνειδισμὸν ἐπὶ δόγματι, ὅπερ καὶ εἰς ὀνειδισμὸν αὐτοῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ οἱ ἀντιλέγοντες ἡμῖν περιτρέπουσιν.

<sup>202</sup> Cf. PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 131.13-18: ταύτην δὲ μάλιστα τὴν ἐξήγησιν μὴ καλῶς ἔχουσιν τῆς ἐννοίας ἐπειρᾶτο δεικνύειν, ὡς ἢ μὴν ὁμωνυμιζομένου δῆθεν τοῦ προβολέως, καὶ ποτὲ μὲν εἰς αἴτιον ἐκλαμβανομένου, ποτὲ δὲ εἰς δότην καὶ χορηγόν τε καὶ ἀπλῶς παροχέα, ἢ εἰ μέλλει ἀπλοῦν τὸ προβολεὺς συντηρεῖσθαι, μιᾶς ἐννοίας δηλωτικὰς εἶναι ἀνάγκη καὶ ἀμφοτέρας τὰς λέξεις, τὴν τε εἰς τὸ εἶναι πρόοδον καὶ τὴν εἰς αἴδιον ἔκφανσιν. In the view of PAPADAKIS, *Crisis* (quoted n. 7), p. 63-64, 66-67, 69, two separate perceptions of the Trinity, the Augustinian and the Cappadocian, are juxtaposed in the conflict.

<sup>203</sup> KOTZABASSI, Testament (quoted n. 18), p. 32.23-34.47; RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 177-184; ALEXOPOULOS, Byzantine *Filioque*-Supporters (quoted n. 69), p. 385-387.

<sup>204</sup> KOTZABASSI, Testament (quoted n. 18), p. 34.44.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.45-46.

<sup>206</sup> George Metochites was transferred briefly to Constantinople to recover from his illness and some time later he met the Emperor. The meeting took place close to the fortress of St. Gregory; the Emperor then granted 100 gold pieces to Bekkos and 50 to Meliteniotes;

perseverance; he signed as if he were still the archbishop of Constantinople, “convicted in exile and imprisonment until death on account of the true doctrine of the Fathers, that is, on account of the procession of the Spirit from the Father through the Son”.<sup>207</sup>

It is true that the ἐκ or διὰ argument that Bekkos used to explain the procession of the Holy Spirit scandalized most of his opponents and Bekkos here appears to be focusing on it.<sup>208</sup> But this impression is actually misleading. The content of the *Testament* can be rather characterized as a summary of Bekkos’ theological allegations against Gregory of Cyprus; in fact, his tone is quite aggressive.<sup>209</sup> In the second trial of Blachernae, Bekkos challenged Patriarch Gregory to answer his theory with another theological composition that explained the existing citations on the procession of the Holy Spirit through the Son. The Patriarch included his theory in the *Tomos* of the synod and in his own *Profession*<sup>210</sup> and founded his explanation of the διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ formula on the qualities of the persons of the Trinity by distinguishing two levels of existence, cause and manifestation (“divine life” and “external life” in the words of Papadakis), which both relate to God’s very being.<sup>211</sup> Pachymeres is quite elucidating when relating the impact the *Tomos* had on the prelates. The metropolitans of Ephesus, Cyzicus and Philadelphia declared that it was so similar to Bekkos’ theory that there was no point in composing it.<sup>212</sup> However, Patriarch Gregory II distinguishes between eternal manifestation through the Son as an inter-trinitarian

---

neither of them, however, appears to have participated in the meeting. See PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 117.27-119.2; GEORGII METOCHITAE DIACONI, *Historia Dogmatica*, ed. I. COZZA-LUZI, Romae 1905, p. 326-327, 330-331. GREGORAS, 1 (quoted n. 4), p. 169.7-10, also makes mention of the poverty that the ex-Patriarch endured after his first exile. On the chronology see A. FAILLER, Chronologie et composition dans l’histoire de Georges Pachymérés, *REB* 48, 1990, p. 5-87, here, 12-14, 20 sq.

<sup>207</sup> KOTZABASSI, *Testament* (quoted n. 18), p. 35.77-80.

<sup>208</sup> Cf. PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 609.3-7: ... καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐκεῖσε προσθήκης ἐπὶ τῇ τοιαύτῃ θεολογίᾳ -ἐκ Πατρὸς διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἐκπορεύεσθαι διδασκόμεθα παρ’ ἐκείνων λέγειν- δέον οὖν, ταύτας προῖσχύμενον, καὶ αὐτὸν ὅσον ἐπὶ τῇ προσθήκῃ καὶ θεραπεύεσθαι καὶ θεραπεύειν καὶ μηδὲν παρεγγχεῖν ἐξηγήσεσιν, ὁ δὲ πολλὰς τῶν γραφῶν συνεφόρει. Also see above, n. 153.

<sup>209</sup> GREGORAS, 1 (quoted n. 4), p. 168.19-169.1, claims that Gregory II was so envious of Bekkos’ abilities, that he strove to have him condemned and exiled at any cost.

<sup>210</sup> PG 142, col. 233-246, 247-252; PAPADAKIS, *Crisis* (quoted n. 7), p. 68, 72-73; MONIOU, *Μοσχάμπαρ* (quoted n. 186), p. 45-50; GILL, John Beccos (quoted n. 2), p. 263. Moschabar signed the *Tomos*, but shortly afterwards he turned against the Patriarch and caused his abdication; see PAPADAKIS, *Crisis* (quoted n. 7), p. 106-109.

<sup>211</sup> PAPADAKIS, *Crisis* (quoted n. 7), p. 90-92; ID., *Χριστιανικὴ Ανατολή*, p. 352-354; ALEXOPOULOS, *Byzantine Filioque-Supporters* (quoted n. 69), p. 387-388.

<sup>212</sup> PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 133-135.

relation (among the persons of the Trinity), and procession (*cause*) from the Father only, while Bekkos speaks of procession within the Trinity itself, meaning, from the common *substance* of the Trinity.<sup>213</sup> The Gregorian theory is exactly what Bekkos attacks in his *Testament* by attacking all those who had signed the *Tomos* of 1285; they acknowledged procession *through* (διὰ) the Son as a doctrine of the Fathers, but denied that it was identical to procession *from* the Son and insisted that procession from the *substance* is a quality of the Father alone. Bekkos censures this view for its lack of evidence regarding procession.<sup>214</sup> In his estimation, it amounts to claiming that the existence of the Holy Spirit, coming only from the Father and manifesting itself “instrumentally” through the Son, takes its will from the Son, as if it follows Him (ὡς ἐπόμενον τούτῳ); plainly, the anti-unionist declaration that they recognized the Spirit as an inherent quality of the Son, was in Bekkos’ opinion empty words.<sup>215</sup> Bekkos did not acknowledge Gregory’s theory as correct and well-founded, and this had an impact on his personal position: Bekkos in reality did not accept “defeat”. He never came to terms with his deposition, because he never came to consider that Patriarch Gregory’s theological explanation was superior, or more orthodox, than his own.<sup>216</sup>

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

The confessions of faith of Patriarch John XI Bekkos proved to be a challenging subject from the very beginning. Apart from the fact that their theological content required extreme care regarding the issues involved that are critically connected to the Union of the Churches, which is obvious, it became almost immediately apparent that the third confession is not the text that the other sources and the bibliography claim it to be. Moreover, even though this profession eventually found its place in the events as well, the whole affair of the Union as portrayed in the documents examined here

---

<sup>213</sup> RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 261f, esp. 269; PAPADAKIS, *Crisis* (quoted n. 7), p. 71-72, 86-96; ID., *Χριστιανική Ανατολή*, p. 352-360; GILBERT, John Bekkos (quoted n. 69), p. 270, 272. Cf. PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 129.27-131.5, and the editor’s n. 12. Also see BECK, *Ιστορία* (quoted n. 7), p. 158; T. ALEXOPOULOS, The Eternal Manifestation of the Spirit “Through the Son” (διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ) According to Nikephoros Blemmydes and Gregory of Cyprus, in *Ecumenical Perspectives on the Filioque for the Twenty-first Century*, ed. M. HABETS, London – New Delhi – New York – Sydney 2014, p. 65-86, esp. 77-84.

<sup>214</sup> Cf. PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 131.11-19.

<sup>215</sup> KOTZABASSI, *Testament* (quoted n. 18), p. 33.26-32. On the concept of the “organic” service of the Son in Bekkos see XEXAKES, *Βέκκος* (quoted n. 3), 143-147.

<sup>216</sup> Also see the comments of GILL, John Beccos (quoted n. 2), p. 265-266, albeit in a different context.

was not consistent with the interpretations found in modern bibliographies largely because, as most of them belonged to the negotiations of 1277, they were published by Joseph Gill only in 1974, with a noteworthy commentary, but not one based on diplomatic-historical considerations. In consequence, in order to clarify the situation with respect to the four confessions of John XI Bekkos, it became almost imperative to disregard the analysis of recognized authorities of Byzantine history initially; indeed much of what has been written was based on V. Laurent's supposition that the Union was sanctified in Byzantium exactly in the manner that the Holy See of Rome wished, meaning in a synod, in which Emperor Michael VIII Palaeologus took the "corporal" oath that the grand logothete George Akropolites had taken in Lyons, and the prelates expressed their "complete obedience" to the Church of Rome. The synod, according to Laurent, was supposed to have taken place in April, 1277. This opinion required that the synod of February of the same year be treated separately than the "synod of April". But Laurent completely misunderstood the content of the documents and was led to the conclusion that the relating councils of the Byzantine Church were in sum three, the first of them officially proclaiming the Union of Lyons in December 1276; the second, held in February of 1277, renewed these concessions, and in the third, the most official, the Church, the Emperor and the Patriarch signed all the official documents. Jean Darrouzès put things somewhat in the right perspective<sup>217</sup> but did not proceed with a full clarification of the issue. The result is that, while the bibliography on the Union of Lyons and its application in Byzantium remains on the course set by Laurent, with minor divergencies, the documents tell us another story –and this is obvious to anybody who reads the dossier of 1277.

This mess is only partly due to George Pachymeres' narrative. This acute author relates in detail various aspects of Michael VIII's negotiations with the Church, the Patriarch, and the clergy in 1273, but only describes in a few words what happened after the return of the Byzantine delegation from Lyons, fails to mention the synod of 1277 and reproduces in a completely different context the Church prelates' argument that their signatures in the documents had been forged. Covering up the serious irregularities of the trial held against Bekkos in 1283, Pachymeres omits details about his "official" deposition, obscures the exact process of the trial that followed and

---

<sup>217</sup> LAURENT, *Regestes I*, 4, n° 1428, 1431, 1434; LAURENT-DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec* (quoted n. 7), p. 80-81; in p. XVI-XVII Darrouzès did not include in his chronological table the councils proposed by Laurent.

keeps us in the dark about the role of the prelates in it. We might not be too far away from the truth if we assume that Pachymeres was only being cautious when it came to people with authority, many of whom might still have been alive at the time he was writing his *History*; but Laurent explains his complicated narrative by noting that it “betrays his schismatic soul”.<sup>218</sup> Pachymeres, however, was simply identifying himself with the clergy of the Patriarchate that was placed in an extremely difficult position in all phases of the Union. Indeed, the clergy constitutes the milieu closest to the Patriarch; its members’ contribution to the developments was so important, that nothing would ever have been accomplished had the clergy not cooperated.

Where does all this lead us, regarding John XI Bekkos and his confessions? To begin with the last point, it is important to bear in mind that the clergy trusted Bekkos, who had been, after all, one of their own – something that cannot be said for his successor Gregory II. This trust is well portrayed in the *asphaleia* of the clerics of 1277. The *Tomographia* and the *asphaleia* secured the allegiance, loyalty and commitment of the prelates and the patriarchal clergy respectively, and authorized John XI Bekkos to fulfill the Union by sending to the Pope his official confession. The compliance of the synod is specifically mentioned in Bekkos’ letter to Pope John XXI and in the confession. As a result, even though they had not signed the confession, the prelates had officially given their consent to the negotiations with the Holy See of Rome, and this is exactly what they denied that they had done in 1283. So even if the signatures in the *Tomographia* are not preserved – for reasons that have been explained adequately – the list might not have been very different from the prelates’ synodical letter of February 1274. There, approximately forty sees are represented, which is a surprisingly large number of the total of sees of the Empire – considering that a large part of the old Comnenian Empire was lost in the thirteenth century to Latins, Turks and other enemies.<sup>219</sup> It would be a serious mistake to believe that Michael VIII beguiled the synod into signing the acts of 1273/1274, or that after the documents of 1277 had been signed Bekkos secretly proceeded to the official confession, or that

---

<sup>218</sup> LAURENT, *Signataires* (quoted n. 45), p. 140; also NICOL, *Reaction* (quoted n. 6), p. 127, n. 1. BECK, *Kirche* (quoted n. 84), p. 679, estimated that Pachymeres assumed a “Zwischenstellung” between Unionists and Anti-Unionists.

<sup>219</sup> Also BECK, *Ιστορία* (quoted n. 7), p. 146-147; EVERT-KAPPESOWA, *Clergé* (quoted n. 26), p. 78-79. See above in n. 13 the list of 1274.

prelates and clergy collaborated in an effort to deceive the Pope.<sup>220</sup> On the contrary, as we have seen, the prelates were generously rewarded for their cooperation with the subjection of the patriarchal monasteries of their districts to their jurisdiction. The documents prove that the Union in Byzantium was restricted to a mere verbal recognition of papal rights, which had initially been promised in 1273, meaning primacy, jurisdiction and commemoration. The prelates, but also John XI Bekkos and Emperors Michael VIII Palaeologos and Andronicus II, conceded nothing more. This conclusion is also corroborated by Pachymeres' evidence. He relates that after the return of the ambassadors from Lyons a liturgy was held in the palace in January 1275, where the Gospels and the Apostles were read in Greek and Latin and Pope Gregory X was duly commemorated. But there is no mention of the *Filioque*,<sup>221</sup> the Church of Saint Sophia was not implicated at any stage of the liturgy and there was no communion with azymes. It is nearly beyond any doubt that there was no commemoration in parish churches either.<sup>222</sup> This is the real meaning of Michael VIII Palaeologos' request and of John XI Bekkos' declaration that the customs of the Church should not and would not change; they were not simply empty words, but reflected the practice adopted by the Emperor and the Patriarch in view of the demands of Rome. Consequently, there was no "public act" either, and nobody ever took the corporal oath the Pope demanded.<sup>223</sup> As we have seen, the synodical documents of 1277, followed by the official confessions, substituted for the oath in a manner that was acceptable and most formal in Byzantium; in reality, they formally sanctioned the Union without deviating from the decisions of 1273.

It was not a very complicated plan. Its disadvantage, however, lay in two important preconditions: first, the Pope would have to agree with a typical recognition of his rights in Byzantium, and second, there would be no debate on the Creed. The

---

<sup>220</sup> EVERT-KAPPESOWA, *Clergé* (quoted n. 26), p. 70; EAD., *Relations* (quoted n. 27), p. 307. The author claims that the prelates and clergy were deceived by Michael VIII.

<sup>221</sup> RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 88, PAPADAKIS, *Crisis* (quoted n. 7), p. 19, and EVERT-KAPPESOWA, *Relations* (quoted n. 27), p. 309, are in favor of the position that the *Filioque* was not sung in Byzantium, contrary to GILL, *Byzantium* (quoted n. 27), p. 163.

<sup>222</sup> PACHYMERES, 2 (quoted n. 5), p. 511.4-13. After EVERT-KAPPESOWA, *Société* (quoted n. 6), p. 32, there took place a "commémoration solennelle dans les églises grecques", which stopped immediately after Michael VIII's excommunication by Pope Martin IV. A different opinion is found in ROBERG, *Union* (quoted n. 26), p. 220, n. 4.

<sup>223</sup> NORDEN, *Papsttum* (quoted n. 185), p. 575, maintained that Emperor Michael VIII took the oath in front of the synod. Also see EVERT-KAPPESOWA, *Relations* (quoted n. 27), p. 310-311; EAD., *Clergé*, p. 84; BECK, *Ιστορία* (quoted n. 7), p. 150-151; RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 92-93; Also see above, n. 98, for more references.

Byzantines couldn't control the first, and indeed Gregory X's successors pressed for more concessions. But the Emperor also had serious problems with the Patriarch. John XI Bekkos attempted to turn the Union by economy into a true Union based on a genuinely theological rapprochement with Rome. He truly believed in it and passionately defended his opinion that there was common ground between the Churches. Nevertheless, he did not become "Catholic" – he never celebrated mass in the Roman rite or communed with azymes and he never sang the *Filioque*.<sup>224</sup> Even in his first two confessions he did not include the *Filioque*, which was specifically demanded of him, but founded his observance of the Latin Creed on his conviction that the Son shares the *substance* of the Father, and yet the Father remains the only original *source* whence all divinity springs and the only, the ultimate *cause*. With this theory John XI Bekkos thought that he remained true to the orthodox theological tradition and still admitted to the legitimacy of the *Filioque*. Typically, until he was condemned in the second synod of Blachernae, his theology was orthodox. He probably calculated that his confession would be accepted in Rome, and that it would cause no reactions within his own Church, but he was mistaken in both. The prelates were greatly annoyed because the Patriarch's attitude directly broke with the second precondition laid out in the agreement of 1273, thus endangering the position of everybody who had sanctioned the Union in the first place.

It is not easy to determine when the Patriarch realized that the accusation against him was heresy; he was probably convinced that no argument would be strong enough to destroy his theory. For this reason his attitude during the first trial was well calculated and his third confession was certainly well thought through and so well executed that nobody understood that Bekkos in reality had not denounced any of his own theological stipulations; it was considered from the beginning an orthodox profession. Bekkos' expulsion from the Patriarchate was taken as a great victory for the Anti-Unionists, however, it cannot be estimated as such, because Bekkos, after delivering a purely orthodox confession, was not condemned as a heretic. Nevertheless, public and official attitude were hostile towards him, so John Bekkos sought justification in the second trial of Blachernae. Since his own position regarding the Union was solidly founded on theology, the only way for Gregory II to eliminate Bekkos' still existing influence over the clergy and the prelates was to refute his arguments one by one on

---

<sup>224</sup> EVERT-KAPPESOWA, Clergé (quoted n. 26), p. 75-76.



the same terms. The Patriarch indeed took up the challenge, and its effect was not only long-lasting, but was incorporated into the orthodox tradition. It has been argued that Patriarch Gregory's theology by founding the theory of timeless and eternal manifestation of the Spirit offers a truly orthodox – and indeed Neo-Platonic – interpretation of the *ex patre filioque*. Be that as it may, Gregory's theory was not used for facilitating the reconciliation of the Churches, but for annulling Bekkos' approach and thereby any chance of understanding between Rome and Constantinople.<sup>225</sup>

This is not the place to take a stand on which theory is better. More important, I am not qualified to make such a judgment and my historical sense deters me from any attempt to juxtapose the two systems, because in this way the historical point would remain elusive to me and to the readers – to quote an author, “the whole justice of God will not suffice” for such a task. In any case, neither Bekkos, nor many renowned prelates of his time were convinced of the rightfulness of Gregory II's theological stipulations; to many it appeared that the two systems were quite similar to each other, to the point that it was considered that there existed a real danger of accusing Bekkos purely “out of malice”.<sup>226</sup> This perfectly explains why after the second synod of Blachernae the Unionists always referred to Bekkos' theology, and the Anti-Unionists counted on Gregory's explanation of the *διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ* citations of the Fathers; both theories were deemed valid within a particular context, both were considered to be grounded in the teachings of the Cappadocian Fathers. This development leads to the impression that in 1285 not only the validity of the two theological systems was at stake, but also the decision itself. In other words, this decision would in time affect the ecclesiastical and consequently the foreign policy of the Empire, because it preconditioned either a rapprochement with the West, in case judgement was in favour of Bekkos, or a definitive rift with Rome, which is exactly what happened.<sup>227</sup>

However, this impression is rather misleading because it is only formed retrospectively, and there is no saying whether the participants of the second council

---

<sup>225</sup> PAPADAKIS, *Crisis* (quoted n. 7), p. 148-149, where the author maintains that Gregory II strove for a genuine solution to the *Filioque* problem. Also PAPADAKIS, *Χριστιανική Ανατολή* (quoted n. 6), p. 359-360. However, also see GILBERT, John Bekkos (quoted n. 69), p. 259-261.

<sup>226</sup> PACHYMERES, 3 (quoted n. 68), p. 133.18-19.

<sup>227</sup> PAPADAKIS, *Crisis* (quoted n. 7), p. 137-143, 147-148; GILBERT, John Bekkos (quoted n. 69), p. 262-264, 275-278.

of Blachernae were aware of how important their decision would be. Bekkos defended the Union for two reasons, because he felt that he was contributing to appeasing the schism within Byzantium, and because he felt that the Churches could arrive at an understanding on the theological level. In reality, he defended the Union and stayed true to his convictions, much more than the Popes ever did. The papacy was not willing to discuss the Creed, no matter what the benefit might have been, and John Bekkos' elaborate second confession was not accepted in Rome because it deviated from the official line decided at Lyons.<sup>228</sup> There is absolutely no trace in the archives of Rome of the synodical documents of 1277, which completed the Union on the Byzantine side; this simply means that the documents of the synod were discarded because they did not meet the demands of the Pope. For this reason Michael VIII Palaeologos was excommunicated by Pope Martin IV. The Emperor died some time after that event.<sup>229</sup> Had he lived longer, he would have striven for the restoration of orthodoxy, and John XI Bekkos would have been forced to step down from office because of his unionist convictions. But the fact remains that Bekkos never renounced his principles and proved himself courageous and enduring enough to live with the consequences of his choices until his death.

---

<sup>228</sup> Pope Nicholas III demanded that the term on individual oaths from members of the clergy, prelates and archons from all over the country be implemented; moreover, the Byzantines had to concede the presence of a cardinal residing at Constantinople and handling jurisdiction issues. See GEANAKOPOLOS, *Μιχαήλ Παλαιολόγος* (quoted n. 22), p. 232-235; NICOL, *Last centuries* (quoted n. 6), p. 63, 64-65; GILL, *Byzantium* (quoted n. 27), p. 173-174; SETTON, *Papacy*, p. 129-130; EVERT-KAPPESOWA, *Relations* (quoted n. 27), p. 312-313; ROBERG, *Union* (quoted n. 26), p. 203-205, 209-213.

<sup>229</sup> PACHYMERES, 2 (quoted n. 5), p. 637-639; RIEBE, *Rom* (quoted n. 2), p. 72; GEANAKOPOLOS, *Μιχαήλ Παλαιολόγος* (quoted n. 22), p. 250-253; NICOL, *Last centuries* (quoted n. 6), p. 67; ROBERG, *Union* (quoted n. 26), p. 214-219; SETTON, *Papacy*, p. 138-139; BECK, *Ιστορία* (quoted n. 7), p. 152-154.