

**“Divine” Diseases and Illnesses in Constantinople  
During the 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries  
A case study of three contemporary works**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This article examines three cases of diseases and illnesses in Constantinople during the 14th and 15th centuries, exploring how these were utilized as theological arguments in the conflict over the Union of the Churches among the citizens of the Byzantine capital. Through the analysis and translations of a letter by Demetrios Cydones, a letter by John Eugenicos, and a portion of an oration by Theodore Agallianos, this paper demonstrates how each scholar used these physical phenomena to support their theological and ecclesiastical positions. These works are considered to be of high literary quality, underscoring the high level of education in Constantinople, even during the late decades of its Byzantine existence.*

Keywords: Constantinople, 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries, Union of the Churches, Pro- and Anti-Unionists, Diseases and Illnesses, epistolography.

**B**y the end of the 14th and beginning of the 15th centuries, the Eastern Roman Empire, commonly referred to as Byzantium, had significantly diminished from its former grandeur. A prolonged series of civil wars among members of the imperial family, coupled with the rapid expansion of a new adversary in the East, the Ottoman Empire, had brought the Byzantine state to the verge of collapse.<sup>1</sup> Most of its populace, residing in Constantinople, sought deliverance from any conceivable source. Efforts ranged from astrological interpretations to soliciting aid against emerging threats from former adversaries, demonstrating a readiness to reconsider established institutions such as the Greek Orthodox Church and its doctrines. It is particularly significant that, in the decades preceding the Empire's ultimate fall, Byzantine emperors frequently proposed the submission of the Greek Orthodox Church to the Pope in Rome. This was in exchange for adopting Catholic dogma and securing substantial military

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assistance from European Catholic states.<sup>2</sup> Numerous prominent Byzantines, whose commitment to the Orthodox faith was superficial, converted to Catholicism at an early stage, whereas others remained steadfastly Orthodox until the end. These factions engaged in frequent conflicts; each convinced that the preservation of the imperial city hinged solely on their approach. In these ideological clashes, they quickly interpreted the emergence of diseases and illnesses within the city as “God-sent” and “divine” signs, validating their own position. Three contemporary works, two letters, and (a part of) an oration are analyzed and translated into English in this article, and they serve as pertinent examples of this phenomenon, an indirect result of a theological and ecclesiastical conflict.

*Demetrios Cydones's letter to Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos for the plague of 1391*

Demetrios Cydones, one of the most prominent intellectual figures of the imperial court in the second half of the 14th century and a teacher of Emperor Manuel II, was among the first scholars of the last generation of Constantinopolitan intellectuals to convert to Catholicism.<sup>3</sup> The exact timing of his conversion remains unknown. However, according to his work *Apologia della propria fede*, Cydones began studying Latin later in life under the tutelage of an Italian scholar in Constantinople, utilizing the works of Thomas Aquinas—specifically translating Aquinas' *Summa Contra Gentiles*—around 1360.<sup>4</sup> It is possible that his theological studies in Latin coincided with his conversion to Catholicism. Additionally, a highly improbable account is mentioned by the later scholar George-Gennadios Scholarios regarding Cydones' shift to Catholicism. According to Scholarios's work about Cydones's death, Cydones repented shortly before his demise; he abandoned all his positions in Rome (sic) and went to Crete to seek forgiveness from the scholar Joseph Bryennios. Unfortunately, he did not reach the island in time, as he reportedly became insane on board (sic) and died within an hour.<sup>5</sup>

During the summer of 1391, a plague outbreak occurred in the remaining Byzantine lands. A brief *Chronicon* of important dates after 1187, which was copied in cods. *Athon. Dionysiu* 282 (ff. 185v-186r), *Par. gr.* 938 (ff. 103r-109v), and *Par. gr.* 1175 (ff. Ar-Cv), confirms that “during the year 6899 (1391) the fifth plague (*θανατικόν*) happened”<sup>6</sup>. The plague severely impacted Constantinople, as documented in the correspondence between Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos and Demetrios Cydones.<sup>7</sup> On June 8th, 1391, Manuel II left Constantinople and crossed the straits to Asia Minor.<sup>8</sup> He participated in the eastern expedition of the Turkish Emir Bayezid as his vassal.<sup>9</sup> Despite this, he maintained communication with his circle in the imperial capital.<sup>10</sup> In his letters from the eastern front, the Emperor described

the harsh conditions and unfamiliar territories in exchange for news and updates from Constantinople.

In his letter number 20 to Cydones from Ankara, Manuel mentioned that he eagerly awaited news from him, "particularly because of the pestilence which was taking such a terrible toll in our city while I was among you."<sup>11</sup> Cydones's response to Manuel's letter was immediate, emotional, and poetic, describing the grief in the city due to the plague.<sup>12</sup> He went further by blaming the residents of Constantinople, their lifestyle, and their sins as the reason for this God-sent disease. In the same letter, Cydones also attributed the misfortunes of Emperor Manuel in the East to these reasons. He concluded by expressing his regret for not choosing to live in a foreign country and stated that he would rectify his mistake by leaving Constantinople again if the situation did not improve.

Considering Cydones's past, his adoption of Catholic dogma, and his relationship with the West, it is plausible that by blaming the Constantinopolitans' lifestyle and sins, he was implicitly criticizing their Orthodox faith. Notably, he closed his letter by mentioning his intention to leave again in search of salvation in a foreign country. A few months before writing this letter, Cydones had returned from a long journey to Venice with Manuel Chrysoloras, where he received Venetian citizenship.<sup>13</sup> He seemed prepared to exchange a sick and sinful Orthodox Constantinople for a healthy and pious Catholic Venice. The English translation of the letter follows:

Alas, what a heavy and dark cloud overshadows the city of the Romans (Constantinople)! Alas, what a wave has completely overwhelmed it! Alas, a plague has attacked its inhabitants, and it hardly lets us breathe but sends everyone to rapid death; Such (plagues) have been afflicting us for a long time, and are gradually destroying us all to emaciation, for many bad events have previously led us to this catastrophe. But now the terror has reached its climax, because it no longer threatens the weak and insignificant, but what we thought more frightening (than all), surrounded and besieged on all sides. We had all hoped that God would grant us some deliverance from these terrors through you, a rational man, who enjoys literary studies and not gives into passions and cannot even imagine a life without justice and laws, a friend of the good and an enemy of the wicked, who always prefers what benefits the community to self-interest, and what all use as a definition of an emperor, the wise and the uneducated

alike, and he is worthy of the emperorship in every aspect. Because these (responsibilities) were previously neglected by the state's rulers, the barbarians acquired such power and restricted our dominion daily. But with you now, all these (qualities) appear and adorn one man, and there is a reason for everyone to have the finest hopes, not failing to do good, because their leader is rational, and not to perish all together, because a man like you has taken the helm.

But even this medicine, although it is among the very strongest, we see it being defeated by the malice of the disease, or rather to the greatness and multitude of our sins, through which we daily anger God, the Ruler and King of everything, because we obey the laws deprive of good providence, choosing lawlessness as our law, and therefore living as befits those who wander in darkness, and in the opinion of everyone, this is and remains the reason of all evil that comes over the human race.

It also prevents the benefit that your virtue could bring us, although you do everything to alleviate a bit of our misfortunes. You endure suffocating heat and cold, hunger and dangers, and every other hardship because you want to do something good for us. When I remember the dignity given to you by God, how you are compelled to serve those who your imperial predecessors joined even unbidden, and how you now perform feats to please enemies, how others savor the gains of your labors, you but envy the sole prize of victory for your trouble and the envied inherit their fate, and that the language and customs of the barbarians must be absolutely repugnant and unbearable to a lover of Greek words, when I think about it – the thought of my worries prevents me from calming down either during the day or at night - I sigh for your sake and call out to the people around me: "What a man has to suffer such a fate here, it's our sins that cause him to impose this punishment!"; then I mourn the unfortunate, which is the only one left of us unfortunatetly, whether they call it a city or a homeland, which must now suffer slavery instead of dominion, which it had formerly gained over all, and I suffocate myself that I did not chose to live in a foreign country and have other messengers of bad luck at home, than to

be instructed in these things by personal observation and experience after my return.

So I will correct (my mistake) by leaving the country (city) again, if God will not be reconciled and send us help through you. Because the barrel of hope is never entirely empty for people as long as they are still breathing. Now I pray to God that he will not allow the light of Israel to go out completely; that means receiving you as his servant, even if God thinks this may be good for us.

*John Eugenikos's letter to Serapion for a plague after 1438 (1441?)*

John Eugenikos served as a Byzantine official and writer in the first half of the 15th century and was the younger brother of Mark Eugenikos, later known as St. Mark of Ephesos.<sup>14</sup> From an early age, the Eugenikos brothers received an illustrious education from various Holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church and at many monasteries in Constantinople. Consequently, Mark and John grew up as staunch supporters of the Orthodox dogma, which they upheld until the end of their lives, especially during a period of significant ecclesiastical and theological changes for the Empire.

In 1438, the Council of Ferrara-Florence for the Union between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches took place, in which both brothers participated. They vehemently opposed the Union, with John leaving the Council before its conclusion and returning to Constantinople via the Peloponnese. Upon his return to the Byzantine capital, a new wave of plague emerged, which became the main topic of John's letter to the monk Serapion in the Peloponnese.

The specific plague wave is not well-documented in primary sources and secondary literature, but it appears to have occurred in the late 1430s or early 1440s.<sup>15</sup> In his letter, John Eugenikos described it as an additional misfortune to the already existing "storm and turmoil of the soul," likely referring to the ecclesiastical disputes and the attempted unification of the two churches. This hypothesis is supported by John's lamentation at the end of the letter's first paragraph, where he states that catastrophe is imminent and expected, while he is being persecuted for "devoting to God's grace and prayers" and "choosing to keep the faith of our forefathers pure and the conscience to the ecclesiastical dogmas uncorrupted." John presented this pandemic as a consequence of the mishandling of public and private affairs following the Council of the Union of the Churches in Italy. He compared this widespread disease in the city to "the Egyptian plagues" and sought the "New Moses" in the person of the monk Serapion. Like Cydones, John expressed his intention

to leave the city and move with his entire family to the Peloponnese, away from physical and spiritual danger. The English translation of the letter follows:<sup>16</sup>

I know you want to know how we live. So, we live miserably and with difficulty. To this living deception and confusion and to the now generated storm and turmoil of the soul, the terrible plague was added, scaring and shaking us, and making us wonder what more will happen. It is reaping and cutting down every (person of any) age in the city without mercy, and the young people no less. It often takes members of our families and friends, while it prepares not a few (people) for the Gates of Hades, and the remained ones are left trembling from fear waiting to have the same fate with them. Until now, we are with God's tolerance, unaffected by the misfortune, but we are disappointed with these events. This is the life we are struggling with, my holy and honorable father, since we left the things here, shook off the common misfortune, and rushed, without any personal gain, to save our country, meaning our homes. Now, instead of this (salvation), I see with my own eyes the great catastrophe existing and being expected, and there is no good use of the common and private affairs; more of distortion to the common affairs while the private affairs are bad and miserable; and there is a clear prosecution against us, as long as we live devoted to God's grace and your prayers, choosing to keep the faith of our forefathers pure and the conscience to the ecclesiastical dogmas uncorrupted.

These things are happening now, and because I cannot see and take them anymore or I don't want to, I prepare, with God's help, to leave in spring before death catches me and, instead of my place here, will send me to a faraway and common residence and put aside every human thought. I will move with my entire house (family), not for the Despot or the honors or the income or the comforts, but for your exceptional holy appearance and interaction with you, for your admirable and honey-sweet words, which always sound harmonically to my heart's inners and move my soul and drive my thought to you. So pray for these, my holy despot, with all your soul, so the all-good God will

provide the advantage from His mercy, and overlook the multitude of my sins, because temptations and difficult circumstances rise up against me one after another from everywhere and always, and many times I don't know how to deal and think about them, and (pray) to give me strength. Know that as I had written before, when I left Mantinea and embarked on the ship, and now again I am writing as I owe, believing to be with you and living in a good disposition with your divine nature and multiplying that blessed day and night, during which I enjoyed your holy seeing and interaction, which it was for me a celebrating day and spiritual joy and an occasion of absolute good cheer and gladness of heart, in which only alone or with a few other days it is possible for me to think and say that I truly lived; in which I saw the proper behavior of the holy fathers and teachers, from which the last was our common light giver, my brother and guide; in which I saw Paul flowing more than the rivers; in which I saw the golden speaker and golden mouth (Chrysostom) pouring with abundance the divine and full-of-nectar streams of teaching, more than the beautiful flow stream of the Nile.

But because I am suffering from the mud and the pile of dirt here and I am being crushed by the Egyptian plagues which have fallen upon me, appear to us as a New Moses, and stretch out your holy right hand, put your mystical staff against the sea of our sufferings and cut the force of the waves and lead us to safety. Submerge the enemies with their armies and lead friends, compatriots, and companions to the promised land. Not in a foreign land, but in a familiar land, we will praise The Lord together and, at the same time, glorify His praising name. Cheer us with your honorable letters about everything and everyone, even so far, with your divine speeches and salutations.

Although John Eugenikos eventually moved to the Peloponnese, as he suggested in his letter, where he died in 1454/5, the exact date of his departure from the Byzantine capital remains unknown.<sup>17</sup> His letter number six to George Scholarios, dated before 1449, in which he mentioned another plague, indicates that he was still in Constantinople at the time of its

composition. The similarity in the description of this new plague to the one mentioned in his earlier letter to Serapion suggests a possible relation between the two outbreaks: "and it often took members of our families and friends, while it threatened others by preparing them to approach the Gates of Hades, and the remaining ones were waiting to fall into the same fate."<sup>18</sup>

In his new letter, he mentioned a certain Theodore, a child who had fallen ill from the disease. He was likely referring to the student and nephew of George Scholarios, Theodore Scholarios Sophianos.<sup>19</sup> Eugenikos appeared devastated by Theodore's sickness, crying and lamenting the potential loss of the youngster.<sup>20</sup> However, the young boy survived the plague. Scholarios informed John Eugenikos of Theodore's recovery, to which Eugenikos responded: "...What a joyful chapter, that our good child, nature's flower, the useful Theodore, has been relieved from the plague, and unharmed, thanks to God, he enjoys health, and he has (returned) back to his studies..."<sup>21</sup>

*Theodore Agallianos's oration on his incident of gout in 1437*

Theodore Agallianos is considered one of the most prominent figures in the patriarchal administration during the two decades preceding the events of 1453, a challenging period marked by the efforts to unify the churches.<sup>22</sup> He held the title of hieromnemon, and although he served under unitive patriarchs such as Metrophanes II, Theodore was vehemently opposed to any ecclesiastical union. His work *Dialogus cum monacho adversus Latinos* (*Ἱερομνήμονός τινος Διάλογος μετὰ μοναχοῦ τινος κατὰ Λατίνων*) encapsulates his anti-unionist sentiments, detailing the persecutions he endured due to his beliefs and describing the schemes Catholics employed to coerce the Orthodox into signing the Union.<sup>23</sup>

A possible reason for his opposition was his tutelage under the anti-unionist scholar and later Bishop of Ephesos, Mark Eugenikos, at his private school.<sup>24</sup> Despite his strong anti-unionist stance, during the Council of the Union of the Churches in Ferrara-Florence, he was appointed to the Byzantine delegation and planned to travel to the West. However, a severe gout flare on the eve of his departure forced Theodore to cancel his plans and remain in Constantinople. This gout flare is corroborated by Sylvester Syropoulos's memoirs on the Council of the Union of the Churches, where Sylvester mentioned that all the Byzantine officials participated "...except the hieromnemon because he was suffering from a long and difficult-to-cure illness."<sup>25</sup>

Agallianos described the incident in great detail in his *Oration A* in 1463 as part of his effort to justify his struggles for the benefit of the Orthodox Church. Specifically, Theodore's Orations were prepared to defend himself against accusations of neglecting his duties as Great Chartophylax of the

Ecumenical Patriarchate. These accusations were made by the Great Skeuophylax George Galesiotis and the Great Ecclesiarches Manuel Christonymos, who later became Patriarch Maximos (1476-1481). In total, he composed two Orations, which were parts of the same work titled *Orations of the Great Chartophylax and Deacon Theodore Agallianos (Τοῦ Μεγάλου Χαρτοφύλακος διακόνου Θεοδώρου τοῦ Ἀγαλλιανοῦ λόγοι)*, accompanied by a prologue (protheoria).<sup>26</sup> Through this work, he did not focus solely on ecclesiastical laws but also provided detailed descriptions of various parts of his ecclesiastical career. His references to his ecclesiastical actions prior to 1453 particularly emphasize his resistance against the implementation of the Union of the Churches in collaboration with Gennadios Scholarios. The "divine" illness of gout was a significant part of this narrative.

Theodore Agallianos himself copied the entire work into two manuscripts: codex *Ambr. Plut.* 226 (D 33 sup., olim T 228; fols. 1r-53v) and codex *Oxon. Bodl. Canon.* 49 (fols. 106r-152v).<sup>27</sup> *Oration A* is the most extensive part of the work, consisting of 1,348 verses, of which 47 verses describe the severe episode of gout that prevented him from following the Byzantine delegation to the West and participating in other pro-Latin ceremonies in the capital. The translation of the 47 verses of *Oration A* describing the incident follows:

After a few days, a festive day for our church arrived, the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, during which the Holy Patriarch was getting prepared to have a Holy Service with the Bishops and all the clergymen. The emperor was also invited to the event, which, in the end, brought honor and pride to the celebration, and the ambassadors of the Latins were also present, enjoying ourselves during our celebration. So everything and everyone was getting ready to go to the biggest church. I left my house early in the morning carrying the holy garments for the Holy service, first for God and then for the accustomed order of the Patriarch. While I was walking, pain struck one of my feet, and painfully, I arrived at the big church. After a little, I was feeling pain in both my feet. Being desperate, I left the service due to my illness, and I returned home, also feeling the pain to the back of my thighs, and I was mostly carried and supported. When I reached home, I threw myself into bed, or to speak the truth, I was thrown (into bed).

Why am I saying all this? Because all this appearance and honoring show of the celebration to the Latins, was like an acceptance and confirmation to them and their authority's treaty and hope that to the already happened end (of the Union); because everyone who participated and not only them but also many others who were drawn into association succumbed to the Latins during the already happened faked Council, except for a few. But for me, God's providence that foresees the future and takes care of the best interest of everyone, according to the good intention of each soul, foresaw that if I was in Italy, I was going to profit nothing but suffer a lot of toilsome and damage and dangers. And because of that and the vague society or authority or hope of the Latins or because anyone would not be able to speak what he wants (freely), the Seed to Israel (Word of God), as it is said, will be omitted.

Divine power and foresight for that (for not participating to the Council) and this happened; I was already in bed, suffering a lot from a variety of my old diseases, and I could not move at all, and every part of my body and every joint were entirely connected with the disease. The doctors were astonished because the various medicines, applicable and drinkable, and the rest of the aid were useless. The Patriarch, along with the clergy, were getting ready to sail; the strength of my illness became the reason for not sailing with them to Italy, and I was left to die. And my bed had me as an unburied dead for almost three months, and when they (the Patriarch and the clergy) prepared everything, they boarded into the ships, and they left. Due to that, a lot of noise (disturbance) happened from the people, and the bells of the monasteries and the churches of the city sounded, sending them away with a sound of sadness than happiness. Then my heart was moved and started lamenting and became warm, lifting me from the bed, and, like being released from bondage, I started walking steadily. I got on my horse, and I rushed to the sacred precinct, in which the holy remains of the saint and just Michael were laying, and I thanked him. Then, while I was approaching the hippodrome columns, I stopped briefly and saw the ships sailing, and then I returned

home healthy. So, who can dispute that the suffering of my body was related to divine foresight, provided for my interest?

### *Conclusions*

In all three cases, the plagues and illnesses were viewed as divine interventions sent by God to steer people onto the right path, whether through punishment or as a means of prevention. However, the concept of the “right path” varies based on the background and beliefs of each source and author, diverging from both Catholic and Orthodox dogma.

In Demetrios Cydones's letter to Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos, the plague of 1391 in Constantinople was seen as a punishment sent by God for its citizens' sins. Given Cydones's conversion to Catholicism, this can be interpreted as a divine chastisement for the Constantinopolitans' adherence to Orthodox dogma rather than submission to the Catholic Church.

Similarly, in John Eugenikos's letter to the monk Serapion in the Peloponnese after the plague of 1438, the outbreak in Constantinople was again considered a divine punishment. This time, it was attributed to the mishandling of public and private affairs following the Council of the Union of the Churches in Italy. Those who remained faithful to Orthodox dogma were portrayed as persecuted but protected from infection. John Eugenikos's own family planned their escape from the city, further emphasizing his view that God opposed conversion to Catholic dogma.

Theodore Agallianos's case, while more personal and less lethal, involved a “divine” illness—a severe gout flare—that prevented him from participating in the signing of the Union of the Churches at the Council in Italy. Like John Eugenikos, Agallianos interpreted this as God's intervention against any conversion to Catholic dogma, affirming his conviction to remain steadfast in Orthodox beliefs.

Despite these misfortunes, as demonstrated in the translations, they became sources of inspiration and intellectual fervor for scholars with strong ecclesiastical and theological convictions. These scholars examined, studied, and composed eloquent works of high literary quality, whether through letters to friends and family or orations defending their actions throughout their careers. These works reflect their unwavering commitment to their faith and interpretations of divine will in challenging times.

### **REFERENCES**

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<sup>1</sup> For the byzantine civil wars, see “Part 3: The Mortal Illness of Byzantium: The Age of Civil Wars, 1321–54” in Nicol 1979, pp. 159–261; for the expansion of the Ottoman Empire to the West during that period, see Beldiceanu-Steinherr 1965, pp. 439–61.

<sup>2</sup> A characteristic case of negotiations took place in 1355 between John V Palaiologos and Pope Innocentius VI. The Byzantine Emperor sought military assistance to repel the Ottoman threat in exchange for the submission of the Orthodox Church to the papacy and the conversion of the Byzantine aristocracy to Catholicism, including his firstborn son and heir to the throne, Andronicos. In addition, John V used young prince Manuel Palaiologos as a collateral for the agreement and was to be sent to the papal court in Avignon, see Miklosich-Theiner 1872, p. 30.14–17: *ὑπόσχομαι δοῦναι τὸν υἱὸν μου, τὸν ἐνδοξότατον καὶ πανευτυχέστατον δεσπότην, κῦρον Μανουήλ τὸν Παλαιολόγον, τῷ διαληφθέντι ἀρχιεπισκόπῳ, τοῦτον δὲ ἄξει οὗτος εἰς αὐτὸν τὸν δεσπότην ἡμῶν τὸν πάπαν μετὰ ἐνὸς κατέργου.*

<sup>3</sup> For Cydones, see Trapp et al. 1976–94, nr. 13876.

<sup>4</sup> See Mercati 1931, pp. 359–403; Beck 1959, p. 733.

<sup>5</sup> Petit et al. 1936, vol. 8, p. 507 (no. VI), pp. 27–30: *πρὶν δὲ νηὸς τυχεῖν ἐγκαίρως τῆς ἐνταῦθα φέρειν μελλούσης, νόσῳ περιπεπωκῶς φρενίτιδι καὶ πολλὰ διὰ τὴν νόσον εἰπὼν ἃ νῦν ἱστορεῖν οὐ καλόν, πόλλων [sic] παρόντων καὶ μετὰ λύπης ὀρώντων τε καὶ ἀκρωμένων, καὶ μηδὲ μίαν ὄραν γεγωνὸς φρενήρης ἀπέθανεν.*

<sup>6</sup> Schreiner 1975, pp. 238–261 (*Chronicon* nr. 33), here p. 244 (note 15): *ἔτους ,ζωϛθ’* (September 1390– August 1391) *ἐγένετο τὸ πέμπτον θανατικόν.*

<sup>7</sup> For Manuel II Palaiologos, see Trapp et al. 1976–94, nr. 21513; for the edition and translation of Manuel II’s letters, see Dennis 1977. For the edition of Demetrios Cydones’ letters, see Loenertz 1960; a German translation of Cydones’ letters was prepared in Tinnefeld 1981–2003; see, also, Dennis 2003, pp. 401–410.

<sup>8</sup> On the exact date of Manuel’s crossing to the East, see note 8 of *Chronicon* nr. 10: *τῇ η’ τοῦ ἰουνίου ἐπέρασεν ὁ βασιλεὺς ὁ ἅγιος ὁ κῦρις Μανοῆλ (sic) εἰς τὴν Ἀνατολίην, τῇ μνήμῃ τοῦ ἁγίου μεγαλομάρτυρος Θεοδώρου/on June 8th (1391) the Holy King Sir Manuel crossed to the East, name day of the Holy martyr Saint Theodore, see Schreiner 1975, p. 104.*

<sup>9</sup> Dennis 1977, p. xv.

<sup>10</sup> See his letters nr. 14–21, which their editor calls the “third package”, Dennis 1977, p. xxi.

<sup>11</sup> Dennis 1977, pp. 59–61, here p. 61 (Letter nr. 20.19–20): *...πολλῶν τε ἄλλων εἴνεκα καὶ τοῦ λοιμοῦ ᾧ, φεῖ, ἡμῖν ἀνηλίσκεθ’ ἢ πόλις ὅθ’ ὑμῖν ἐπεδήμουν...*

<sup>12</sup> For the edition of the letter, see Loenertz 1960, pp. 386–388 (Letter nr. 431).

<sup>13</sup> For Cydones’s trip to Venice, see Loenertz 1950, pp. 65–66. For Cydones’s Venetian citizenship, see the relevant document in Loenertz 1938, pp. 125–26.

<sup>14</sup> John Eugenikos (Trapp et al. 1976–94, nr. 6189) was probably born after 1394. According to the synaxarium by Petit 1927, pp. 195–235, their age difference was three years; thus, Mark was born at the beginning of the 1390s. See Papadopoulos-Kerameus 1902, p. 57.2–3: *Μετὰ τὴν γέννησιν τοῦ θείου Μάρκου ἀπέρασαν χρόνοι τρεῖς καὶ ἔτεκεν ἡ μητέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ δεύτερον υἱόν* (After the birth of Holy Mark, three years passed, and his mother gave birth to a second son).

<sup>15</sup> According to Congourdeau 1999, p. 377, the period between 1436 and 1447 was a period of calmness, marking an average cycle (11 years) of the bubonic plague / Black Death in Constantinople. However, the letter of John Eugenikos suggests otherwise.

<sup>16</sup> For the edition of the letter, see Lampros 1912, vo. 1, pp. 162–163 (letter nr. 7). Special thanks to Prof. Marianna Thoma (University of Athens) for her support with parts of the translation.

<sup>17</sup> Lampros and others suggest that he moved to Peloponnese for a brief period, see Lampros 1912, pp. λθ'-μα'.

<sup>18</sup> Lampros 1912, pp. 160-161 (letter n. 6: *Τῷ αὐτῷ Σχολαρίῳ*), here p. 160.17-20: ...*συχνῶς τῶν οἰκειῶν καὶ φίλων τοὺς μὲν ἀναρπάσαν, τοὺς δ' ἀπειλήσαν καὶ ὅτι ἐγγυτάτω πυλῶν Ἰδοῦ παρασκευάσαν, τοὺς δ' ἔτι ζῶντας καὶ ἐρρωμένους ἐν τοῖς ὁμοίοις ὅσαι ὤραι προσδοκᾶν περιπεσεῖσθαι προξενήσαν...*

<sup>19</sup> Trapp et al. 1976–94, nr. 26405.

<sup>20</sup> Lampros 1912, pp. 160-161 (letter n. 6: *Τῷ αὐτῷ Σχολαρίῳ*), here p. 160.20-25: ...*Τοῦ δὴ τοιοῦτου τρόμου τῆ τε ψυχῆ καὶ τοῖς μέλεσιν ἡμῶν ἐγκειμένου καὶ περὶ τοῖς φιλάτοις οὕτωςι δεδιότων, ἦκεν ἡμῖν ἀγγελία πικρὰ καὶ δεινῶν ἐπιθήκη, ὁ τοῦ καλοῦ νέου κίνδυνος, ὃν ἀτεχνῶς εὐθὺς μετὰ τὸν ὁμώνυμον αὐτῷ Θεόδωρον λογίζεσθαι μωρία μετὰ παρακαλοῦντα...*

<sup>21</sup> Lampros 1912, pp. 167-168 (letter n. 10: *Τῷ Σχολαρίῳ*), here p. 168.18-21: ...*Ὁ δὲ τῆς χαρμονῆς τὸ κεφάλαιον, ὅτι τὸν καλὸν ἡμῖν παῖδα, τὸ τῆς φύσεως ἄνθος, τὸν χρηστὸν Θεόδωρον, τοῦ λοιμοῦ καθάπαξ ἀπαλλαγέντα, ἐν ἀκραιφνεῖ σὺν Θεῷ καθεστηκέναι τῆ ὑγείᾳ δηλοῖς καὶ τῆς προτέρας περὶ λόγους σπουδῆς ἔχεσθαι...*

<sup>22</sup> For Theodore Agallianos, see Trapp et al. 1976–94, nr. 94.

<sup>23</sup> For the edition of the work, see Blanchet 2013.

<sup>24</sup> Patrineles 1966, p. 27.

<sup>25</sup> Laurent 1971, p. 184.13-15 (§III.24): §24. *Ἐκ δὲ τῶν ἀρχόντων τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ὁ μέγας σακελλάριος, ὁ μέγας σκευοφύλαξ, ὁ μέγας χαρτοφύλαξ, ὁ μέγας ἐκκλησιάρχης, ὁ καὶ τῶν παρόντων συγγραφεύς, ὁ πρωτέκδικος, ὁ νομοφύλαξ, καὶ οἱ ἐξῆς ὀφφικιάλιοι ἄρχοντες πάντες σχεδὸν πλὴν τοῦ ἱερομνήμονος, κατασχούσης αὐτὸν ἐνταῦθα νόσου πολομημέρου καὶ δυσθεραπεύτου...*

<sup>26</sup> For the edition of Agallianos's Orations with their protheoria, see Patrineles 1966, pp. 91-152.

<sup>27</sup> For the *Ambrosianus*, see Martini-Bassi 1906, pp. 253-54; for the *Oxoniensis*, see Coxe, 1853 (rpr. 1969), pp. 52-54.

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