

# Tears of the Great Church: The Lamentation of Santa Sophia

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**D**URING THE PERIOD of the Ottoman occupation, the so-called *Tourkokratia*, the Greeks expressed their concerns in folk songs, whose numerous variants were gradually collected and published in the nineteenth century to form an impressive corpus. Some songs reach back all the way to the last years of Byzantine Greece before its fall to the Ottoman Turks. One song in particular achieved a great deal of popularity and perhaps qualifies as the most popular demotic song among Greek-speakers of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth. The poem is well known, but it has not received the scholarly attention it deserves. Entitled [*The Song*] of *Santa Sophia*, it is thought to describe the situation shortly before the fall of Constantinople to Sultan Mehmed II Fatih on May 29, 1453. This song survived orally and was finally recorded in the nineteenth century. Numerous versions existed in the eighteenth century; its nucleus dates to the period of the fall of Constantinople. I will attempt to demonstrate that at least one form of this poem dates to a specific event in 1452, six months before the conquest of Constantinople.

Numerous variations of this poem have been collected.<sup>1</sup> Fauriel, in the first edition, presented a short version.<sup>2</sup> Pouqueville

<sup>1</sup> Variants from numerous regions are collected in A. Kriares, *Πλήρης Συλλογή Κρητικών Δημωδών Ασμάτων* (Athens 1920). A version was published in C. A. Trypanis, *The Penguin Book of Greek Verse* (Harmondsworth 1971) 469–470, no. 254.

<sup>2</sup> C. Fauriel, *Chants populaires de la Grèce moderne II Chants historiques, romanesques et domestiques* (Paris 1825) 340. This version is reprinted in E. Khrysos,

then published a longer version, which has been curiously neglected and has been rescued from obscurity only recently.<sup>3</sup> The third version to appear was edited by Zampelios.<sup>4</sup> Passow published additional versions.<sup>5</sup> By the beginning of the twentieth century a dominant version, based largely on Passow, had been established and has been reprinted in subsequent collections of Greek folk poems.<sup>6</sup> I will conclude that Pouqueville's

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*Ἡ Ἄλωση τῆς Πόλης* (Athens 1994) 248 n.2.

<sup>3</sup> F. C. H. L. Pouqueville, *Voyage de la Grèce* IV (Paris 1826) 242–245, which presents, in my estimate and in the opinion of other scholars, an older version than Fauriel's. Rescued: A. Polites, *Το Δημοτικό Τραγούδι: Περώντας από την Προφορική στη Γραπτή Παράδοση* (Herakleion 2010) 354–355.

<sup>4</sup> S. Zampelios, *Ἄσματα Δημοτικά τῆς Ἑλλάδος* (Corfu 1852); criticism of this version in G. Apostolakes, "Τὸ Τραγούδι τῆς Ἀγίας Σοφιάς," *EEThes (philos)* 5 (1940) 3–15.

<sup>5</sup> A. Passow, *Τραγούδια Ρωμαίικα, Popularia carmina Graeciae recentioris* (Leipzig 1860); Passow received his information from H. Ulrich, who had spent time in Greece (p. v, "Cum ante hos tres annos Henrichi Ulrichi carissimi soceri quae in Graecia olim collegerat carmina popularia, ut in lucem ederem, a posteris eius mihi mandarentur"). No. cxcvi (146–147) presents the first variation. A second (no. cxciv, 145) follows Fauriel's version with minor spelling variants (cf. the Appendix below) and, on the strength of its specifically naming Salonica (8, πῆραν τὴν Σαλονίκη), it may be interpreted as a reference to the capture of Thessalonica by Murad II in 1430, thus suggesting that an even earlier poem referred to the sack of that city twenty-three years before the fall of Constantinople; cf. M. Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition* (Cambridge 1974) 93, who further quotes and translates this variant. Passow published yet a third version (no. cxcv, 146). The text of Passow's cxcvi eventually became the dominant text, even though many other versions existed, given the oral composition, nature, and dissemination of the poem. Cf. R. Beaton, *Folk Poetry of Modern Greece* (Cambridge 1980) 203: "it is worth remembering that very few texts published in the nineteenth century are likely to be *exact* reproductions of oral performance."

<sup>6</sup> The dominant version was established via the Passow version through the efforts of the eminent folklorist N. G. Polites at the beginning of the

version contains an older nucleus that reflects the concerns of an earlier composition, which was, in time, reworked to include ‘newer’ circumstances that were not, *ab origine*, the concern of the poem.<sup>7</sup>

This poem/song is composed in the universal ‘fifteen syllable’ meter (δεκαπεντασύλλαβος) or ‘political verse’ (πολιτικὸς στίχος) of Greek folk poetry, with its metrical pattern  $\cup - \acute{\cup} - \acute{\cup} - \acute{\cup} - \acute{\cup} - \acute{\cup} // \cup - \acute{\cup} - \acute{\cup} - \acute{\cup} - \acute{\cup}$ , evidently made up of two proto-lines which were eventually joined into one line at the spot marked by the caesura (//) after the eighth syllable; the original line ending with the caesura always concludes with an iamb while the second proto-line line ends in a trochee.<sup>8</sup> Thus two original logical, metrical, grammatical, and syntactical units have been joined together in one line, and each half line can be, and often is, made up of an ‘oral formula’. A half line, a whole line, or even a group of lines in Greek folk poetry are normally paraphrased to provide the same sense in order to produce emphasis. In this poem the opening three formulaic lines, which make up the *proemium* of Pouqueville’s version, indicate a new day by mentioning the resulting colors in the east (in a fortuitous reminiscence of Homer’s “rosy-fingered dawn”), the passing of darkness in the west, the wind on the mountains, and the accompanying change of light in the general region.

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twentieth century: *Ἐκλογαὶ ἀπὸ τὰ Τραγούδια τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ Λαοῦ* (Athens 1914) 4–5, no. 2; this version (retaining, with a slight change in line 17, Passow’s text) was published, with Italian translation, in A. Pertusi, *La Caduta di Costantinopoli* (Verona 1976) II 397–398.

<sup>7</sup> For the dominant version and Pouqueville’s variant see the Appendix below, where variations of the Fauriel version are also indicated. As with all folk songs, there was music associated with this poem, which the present study will not address.

<sup>8</sup> For recent discussion of the structure, rhythm, and meter of Greek folk poetry see Beaton, *Folk Poetry* 44–51; M. J. Jeffreys, “The Nature and Origins of the Political Verse,” *DOP* 28 (1974) 141–195; Marc D. Lauxtermann, *The Spring of Rhythm* (Vienna 1999).

In the dominant version and its variants,<sup>9</sup> this song purports to describe the situation in Santa Sophia<sup>10</sup> shortly before the fall of Constantinople. It describes, in mainly pessimistic tones, a deplorable situation. It emphasizes the importance of the Great Church, as Santa Sophia was popularly known in the late Byzantine period and in the subsequent centuries, and then describes the last Catholic mass and Orthodox liturgy. Present are the doomed populace, the last emperor, hours before his death, and the reigning patriarch of Constantinople. The services are interrupted by an angel who informs the congregation that all prayers to avoid the inevitable are in vain because it is God's will that the city fall to the Turks. Instructions are issued to discontinue the services and to spirit away all sacred vessels, texts, and the altar to the West. The icons weep and the Madonna is saddened by the news. The poem ends with a hint of salvation when the angel asks the Madonna to weep no more and prophesies: "in time all this will revert to us" ["to you," in some versions]. The last line with its promise of eventual salvation and liberation endeared this poem to the Greeks. The poem succeeds in creating an atmosphere of impending doom and of a sorrowful end to the millennial empire.

Numerous elements are invoked: the significance of the church in the annals of Christianity; the divine interruption of the proceedings; the end of a cycle ordained by the preternatural with miraculous signs; and an oracle that offers a ray of hope to a nation about to be enslaved. Two lines supply his-

<sup>9</sup> The variations between these versions seem minor: cf. Pertusi, *La Caduta* II 394: "Τῆς Ἁγιάς Σοφίας, giunto in diverse redazioni, ma di contenuto assai simile." Pertusi was unaware of Pouqueville's version.

<sup>10</sup> The scholarly literature on this building is large. The most detailed study, in spite of some dated remarks, remains the meticulous investigation by the Greco-French astronomer E. M. Antoniades, *Ἐκφρασις τῆς Ἁγίας Σοφίας* I–III (Athens 1907–1909); cf., among others, R. J. Mainstone, *Hagia Sophia: Architecture, Structure and Liturgy of Justinian's Great Church* (New York 1988).

toricity: in Fauriel's version, line 11 (absent in Pouqueville and other versions) makes a historical reference that the city is destined to fall to the Turks; thus it has been taken that the conquest of 1453 is indicated. Further evidence is supplied in Fauriel line 15 (absent in Pouqueville's edition and in other versions and expunged by scholars even in the Fauriel version), which mentions the possible defilement of the altar. It has been assumed that by 'dogs', a widespread derogatory term for non-believers, the Turkish besiegers are specified.<sup>11</sup> Pouqueville's version, however, does not name the Turks anywhere and makes no reference to dogs. The Pouqueville version lacks Fauriel's historical specificity and renders the chronology and circumstances of the poem both ahistorical and problematic, since no specific occasion is suggested.

Scholars have approached the poem's imagery rather subjectively,<sup>12</sup> but have never thoroughly considered the historical circumstances and the specific occasion indicated. Many elements require attention and the contents of the poem should be

<sup>11</sup> In other popular poems of the *quattrocento* 'dog' is also reserved for the Ottoman sultan and conqueror of Constantinople, Mehmed II. Cf. e.g. in Νεκρὸν σῶμα λέγω τὸ σὸν τί τόθειεν ὁ σκύλος, / Ἢ τὴν τιμίαν κεφαλὴν, ῥφθέντα, τὴν ἰδικὴν σου, the dog is the sultan, while the vocative ῥφθέντα refers to the dead emperor Constantine XI: "Θρήνος τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως: Διήγησις πάνυ θλιβερὴ πονετικὴ καὶ πλήρης Βαβαὶ παπαὶ τῆς συμφορᾶς τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως," in A. E. Ellissen, *Analekten der mittel- und neugriechischen Literatur* III (Leipzig 1857) 106–249; the same poem is entitled "Ἄλωσις τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως" in E. Legrand, *Bibliothèque grecque vulgaire* I (Paris 1880) 169–203 (based on *Paris.gr.* 2909, which includes a prose summary). Discussion of the poem's authorship in G. H. Henrich, "Ποιὸς ἔγραψε τὸ ποίημα Ἄλωσις Κωνσταντινουπόλεως;" in E. Motos Guirao and M. Morfakidis Filactós (eds.), *Constantinopla: 550 años de su caída* II (Granada 2006) 405–414.

<sup>12</sup> E.g. the opinions, subjective arguments, and unsupported opinions offered by Apostolakes, *EEThess (philos)* 5 (1940) 3–15, and *Τὰ Δημοτικὰ Τραγούδια* (Athens 1929). Apostolakes' views have been criticized by K. Rhomaios, "Τὸ Τραγούδι τῆς Ἁγιά Σοφιάς," *Νέα Ἐστία* 52 (1953) 860–866, and "Νέες Ἀπόψεις γιὰ τὸ Τραγούδι τῆς Ἁγιά Σοφιάς. Σύγκριση Τραγουδιοῦ καὶ Ἱστορικῶν Πηγῶν," *Ἀρχεῖον Πόντου* 28 (1966) 499–525.

reconsidered; they may not portray the events of May 29, 1453, as this date is not offered in Pouqueville's version. To emphasize the importance of the Great Church, the third line of the dominant version repeats a slight variation of the formula encountered in various forms elsewhere and substitutes tocsins for bells and deacons for priests. Such references to the numbers of tocsins, bells, high priests, priests, and deacons do not reflect historic reality. We lack evidence that so large a number of bells and personnel existed in this late period. The majestic description of the Great Church does not correspond to reality.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, during the Byzantine era Orthodox churches avoided the use of bells, which was one of the identifying marks of Catholic churches.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, it has been suspected that a number of bells had been housed in the Great Church. A tradition exists which states that Santa Sophia possessed bells donated by the doge of Venice to Emperor Michael III in 865;<sup>15</sup> they were housed in a special tower but were used

<sup>13</sup> Cf. E. S. Papagianne, "Ο Θρήνος τῆς Ἀγίας Σοφίας: Θρύλος ἢ Πραγματικότητα;" *Βυζαντινὴ Πραγματικότητα καὶ Νεοελληνικὲς Ἑρμηνεῖες* 3 (Athens 1999) 22–25, who concludes that the description of the Great Church in the poem does not reflect reality. Papagianne, however, erroneously believes that there was a last liturgy and mass attended by the emperor before the final assault and sack.

<sup>14</sup> Antoniadēs, *Ἐκφρασις* I 138–140, demonstrates that in its early history Santa Sophia did not possess bells or bellfries. The situation may have changed in time but the evidence remains controversial; some architectural traces may indicate the existence of a bellfry as late as the seventeenth century. George Pachymeres mentions bells at Santa Sophia: τῶν τῆς ἐκκλησίας συνακτηρίων κωδῶνων ... ἄβατον τὸν ναὸν κατενόουν, ὡς μηδὲ σημάντροις καὶ κώδωσιν ἠθροισμένοι (7.5: III 29 CFHB).

<sup>15</sup> Antoniadēs, *Ἐκφρασις* I 138–141, who adds that in his own time the Venetian bells (or perhaps, one should cautiously add, some bells) of Santa Sophia were preserved in the Church of Santa Eirene (nowadays used mainly for concerts): "οἱ κώδωνες τῆς Ἀγίας Σοφίας διατηροῦνται ἐν τῷ γείτονι ναῷ τῆς Ἀγίας Εἰρήνης, καὶ τὴν πληροφορίαν ταύτην ἐπεκύρωσέ μοι ὁ Μουατζήρ Ἰσμαήλ τοῦ τεμένους, προσθεὶς ὅτι ἦσαν μικρῶν διαστάσεων."

infrequently, as Greek churches normally employed the *σήμαντρον*/tocsin. The opening lines are a widespread oral formula signifying, in prosaic terms, “a large number.”

The events portrayed in the dominant version do not match the historical circumstances of May 29, 1453: a mass and liturgy conducted shortly before the fall present insurmountable problems. Through poetic license history appears to be stretched on a Procrustean bed to emphasize the importance of the church and the enormity of the situation. We are told that the emperor and the patriarch officiated in the proceedings. While the legal position of the emperor, Constantine XI Dragaš Palaeologus, was ambiguous,<sup>16</sup> there was certainly no reigning Orthodox patriarch in Constantinople at this time (see below). According to one important witness, the Latin archbishop/metropolitan of Lesbos, Leonardo Giustiniani,<sup>17</sup> a liturgy and mass were jointly held in Santa Sophia on May 28–29 shortly before the final assault commenced. Leonardo’s scene is reiterated by his numerous followers and imitators: the

<sup>16</sup> Constantine was not crowned in Santa Sophia for unknown reasons. Various authors noted the awkward situation of an emperor without a crown on the Constantinopolitan throne. Doukas 34.2: ὁ βασιλεὺς Κωνσταντῖνος (οὐπω γὰρ ἦν στεφθεὶς, ἀλλὰ οὐδὲ στεφθῆναι ἔμελλε ... βασιλέα ἐκάλουν Ῥωμαίων). The misconception of a crowned Constantine XI persists: e.g. H. W. Hazard (ed.), *A History of the Crusades III* (Madison 1975) 755 s.v. Constantine XI Palaeologus, “Byzantine emperor 1448 (crowned 1449)–1453;” *ODB* 1 (1991) 505, and J. Freely and A. S. Çakmak, *Byzantine Monuments of Istanbul* (Cambridge, 2004) 283 (“on January 6 1449 he was crowned as Constantine XI in the Church of St. Demetrius in Mistra”). Constantine XI was never crowned in Mistra or anywhere else, but his claim to the throne was never questioned or challenged.

<sup>17</sup> On this eyewitness to the siege and fall and his influential account see M. Philippides, “The Fall of Constantinople: Bishop Leonard and the Greek Accounts,” *GRBS* 22 (1981) 287–300, “The Fall of Constantinople 1453: Bishop Leonardo Giustiniani and his Italian Followers,” *Viator* 29 (1998) 189–227, and “The Fall of Constantinople 1453: Classical Comparisons and the Circle of Cardinal Isidore,” *Viator* 38 (2007) 349–383; M. Philippides and W. K. Hanak, *The Siege and Fall of Constantinople in 1453: Historiographical, Topographical, and Military Studies* (Farnham 2011) 14–26.

emperor, his lieutenants, and courtiers visited Santa Sophia to attend its last mass and liturgy. After the services Constantine, his commanders, his barons, and his retinue returned to his palace, where the emperor addressed his Venetian and Genoese allies. Modern research has concluded that the services and the address of the emperor, as described by Leonardo, are fictional, *dramatis causa*.<sup>18</sup>

This fabrication of history for the purpose of adding literary pathos to the unfolding drama had its effect, and Leonardo's passages create a tragic mood. Yet, aside from Leonardo and his imitators, no other eyewitnesses mention such events. In the hours preceding the general assault there was no time for a celebration in Santa Sophia. Such services were held, if they took place at all, in the vicinity of the walls, perhaps in one of the many chapels or churches near the western walls. It is inconceivable that the emperor and his Venetian and Genoese commanders departed from the critical sector already under attack,<sup>19</sup> moved in a procession from the western *Sulu Kule* neighborhood of the city to Santa Sophia by the Golden Horn, then traveled northward to the "palace," where Constantine XI delivered a speech moments before the assault was launched. Moreover, Constantine had abandoned his imperial quarters at the palace of Blakhernai, which had been turned over to the Venetian *bailo* and his troops. Ubertino Pusculo, an

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Philippides and Hanak, *The Siege* 598–599. It has also been demonstrated that both the address of the emperor to his allies and that of Mehmed II to his troops are fictional: cf. G. T. Zoras, *Αἱ Τελευταῖαι πρὸ τῆς Ἀλώσεως Δημηγορίαι Κωνσταντίνου τοῦ Παλαιολόγου καὶ Μωάμεθ τοῦ Πορθητοῦ* (Athens 1959), who concludes that both the occasion and the contents of the speeches must be attributed to the imagination of Leonardo: "Τὸ συμπέρασμα εἶναι ὅτι ἀμφότεραι αἱ δημηγορίαι οὐδέποτε ἐγένοντο καὶ ... ἀνήκουν ... εἰς τὴν φαντασίαν τοῦ Λεονάρδου" (33). Detailed discussion in M. Philippides, *Constantine XI Dragaš Palaeologus (1404–1453): A Biography of the Last Greek Emperor* (in press), ch. 1.

<sup>19</sup> For the topography and the military sectors under direct threat and imminent attack, cf. Philippides and Hanak, *The Siege* 297–359.



eyewitness, states that the emperor had erected a tent to house himself and to serve as his headquarters in the enclosure between the great and outer walls,<sup>20</sup> in the area between the Gate of Saint Romanus (*Top Kapı*)<sup>21</sup> and the *Pempton* (present day *Hücum Kapı*) by the Lykos stream (nowadays channeled underground, below Istanbul's avenue *Vatan Caddesi*). The emperor, his commanders, troops and mercenaries, and civilian laborers had been constantly repairing the damaged defenses and would have had no opportunity to assemble for last-minute processions and speeches, even though such scenes are described in dignified tones by Leonardo. Throughout that day, the evening, and the night, the Turks had kept the defenders occupied with minor engagements, bombardment, and skirmishes.<sup>22</sup> If any services and speeches were conducted and pronounced,

<sup>20</sup> The "palace" is never specified. Blakhernai was officially the palace of the Palaiologoi but Constantine XI made the *Pempton* his headquarters for the duration of the siege; his official residence was a pavilion erected by the Great Wall. The Venetians defended the Blakhernai. Since the banner of Saint Mark was flying above the palace of the Greek emperor, one might think of an intriguing, diplomatically thorny situation that would have resulted, had Constantinople been saved. With other scholars, I accept the view that the imperial residence was still Blakhernai and not the Porphyrogenetus Palace (*Tekfur Saray*), as has been occasionally (although inadequately, in my opinion) suggested: for that suggestion see N. Asutay-Effenberger, *Die Landmauer von Konstantinopel-Istanbul* (Berlin/New York 2007) 134–142. That the emperor had established his headquarters at the critical sector under attack is stated explicitly in Puscuro's hexameters (4.1007–1013): the emperor attempted to catch some sleep in this tent before the final assault: *rex ... intra tentoria* (1006). There is no reason to doubt the evidence supplied by this reliable eyewitness (see below).

<sup>21</sup> Criticism of the new controversial interpretation advanced by N. Asutay, "Die Entdeckung des Romanos-Torres an den Landmauern von Konstantinopel," *BZ* 96 (2003) 1–4, relocating the Gate of Saint Romanus from the *Top Kapı* to the Fourth Military Gate, is supplied in Hanak and Philippides, *The Siege* 335 n.167.

<sup>22</sup> Doukas 39.5: ὁ δὲ τύραννος [Mehmed] ἤρξατο ... συνάπτειν πόλεμον καθολικόν. καὶ δὴ ἐσπέρας γενομένης οὐκ ἔδωκεν ἀνάπαυσιν τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις τῇ νυκτὶ ἐκείνῃ.

they would have been short and would have taken place near the hastily improvised defenses at the *Pempton* sector, the weak spot where, it was known, the general assault would concentrate its efforts. One can conclude that Leonardo paints his fictional scene in the ancient cathedral and in the palace in order to add nobility, atmosphere, and pathos to his narrative, according to prevailing humanist principles and ancient precedents of literary composition.

No other source mentions a mass and liturgy in Santa Sophia prior to the sack. Doukas informs us that when the Turks entered the city at the western walls, word reached the inhabitants by the Golden Horn that the defense had collapsed. Then the Greeks were reminded of an old prophecy (propagated by individuals whom Doukas labels “pseudo-prophets”) declaring that the Turks would advance as far as Santa Sophia but would be turned back by divine intervention. Non-combatants flocked to the Great Church in search of sanctuary and in the expectation of a miracle:<sup>23</sup>

in just one hour that enormous church was filled with men and women, in the lower and upper floors, as well as in the courtyard; in every area there were innumerable individuals. So they barred the gates and stood there hoping for salvation.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Doukas 39.18: τὸ δὲ προσφεύγειν ἐν τῇ Μεγάλῃ Ἐκκλησίᾳ τοὺς πάντας, τί; ἦσαν πρὸ πολλῶν χρόνων ἀκούοντες παρά τινων ψευδομάντεων, πῶς μέλλει Τούρκοις παραδοθῆναι ἡ πόλις ... μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα καταβάς ἄγγελος ... τότε τροπὴν ἔξονται οἱ Τούρκοι ... ἐγένετο οὖν ἐν μιᾷ ὥρᾳ ὁ ὑπερμεγέθης ἐκεῖνος ναὸς πλήρης ἀνδρῶν τε καὶ γυναικῶν καὶ κάτω καὶ ἄνω καὶ ἐν τοῖς περιαύλοις καὶ ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ ἀναρίθμητος. κλείσαντες δὲ τὰς θύρας εἰστήκεσαν τὴν παρ’ αὐτοῦ σωτηρίαν ἐλπίζοντες.

<sup>24</sup> Doukas is echoed by Laonikos (II 161 Darkó): ἄνδρες τε καὶ γυναῖκες, πλῆθος πολὺ γενόμενοι ... ἐτράποντο ἐπὶ τοῦ μεγίστου νεῶ τῆς πόλεως, τῆς ἁγίας Σοφίας καλουμένης ... οὐ πολλῶ μόντοι ὕστερον ἐάλωσαν ὑπὸ Τούρκων ἀμαχητί, καὶ ἀνδρῶν οὐκ ὀλίγοι ἐντὸς τοῦ νεῶ διεφθάρησαν ὑπὸ τῶν Τούρκων. Similar tones are encountered in the account of the Russian eyewitness Nestor-Iskander: W. K. Hanak and M. Philippides, *Nestor-Iskander: The Tale of Constantinople (of its Origin and Capture by the Turks in the Year 1453)*

Doukas does not mention any services conducted at that time.

The fact is that during the last months of Byzantine Constantinople, the Great Church had been avoided by the pious Orthodox,<sup>25</sup> who had concluded that their cathedral had been contaminated by Catholic rites during the celebration of the union between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches in December 1452. Doukas provides a detailed account of the ensuing chaos. After the celebration of the union, the church never functioned properly and was regarded as the abode of demons and as a pagan temple:<sup>26</sup>

and the Great Church was considered by them to be a refuge of demons and a Hellenic temple. Where were the candles? Where was the oil for the lamps? Everything was in darkness and there was no one to prevent it. Deserted seemed the holy church to be

(New Rochelle/Athens/Moscow 1998) 80–81.

<sup>25</sup> In the colorful language of Doukas, who clothes the antipathy in comparisons that further reveal the prejudices of the medieval mind (37.5–37.9): οἱ δὲ τῆς Πόλεως, ἀπὸ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης, ἐν ἧ ἐγένετο τάχα ἡ ἔνωσις ἐν τῇ Μεγάλῃ Ἐκκλησίᾳ, ὡς Ἰουδαίων συναγωγὴν ταύτην ἀπέφευγον καὶ οὐκ ἦν ἐν αὐτῇ οὔτε προσφορὰ οὔτ' ὀλοκαύτωσις οὔτε θυμίαμα ... καὶ τὸν ναὸν ὡς βωμὸν καὶ τὴν θυσίαν ὡς Ἀπόλλωνι τελουμένην ἐνόμιζον.

<sup>26</sup> Doukas 37.5: καὶ ἡ Μεγάλη Ἐκκλησία ὡς καταφύγιον δαιμόνων καὶ βωμὸς Ἑλληνικὸς αὐτοῖς ἐλογίζετο. ποῦ κηροί; ποῦ ἔλαιον ἐν ταῖς λυχναιαῖσι; τὰ πάντα σκοτεινὰ καὶ οὐδεὶς ὁ κωλύων. ἔρημον τὸ ἅγιον τέμενος ἐφαίνετο, προσημαῖνον τὴν ἐρημίαν, ἣν ὑποστῆναι μέλλει μετ' ὀλίγον. Doukas comments bitterly on to the folly of the Greeks and their attitude towards the Great Church (39.19): ὦ δύστηνοι Ῥωμαῖοι, ὦ ἄθλιοι, τὸν ναόν, ὃν ἐκαλεῖτε χθὲς καὶ πρὸ τοῦ χθὲς σπήλαιον καὶ βωμὸν αἰρετικῶν καὶ ἄνθρωπος οὐκ εἰσέρχεται ἐξ ὑμῶν ἐντός, ἵνα μὴ μιανθῇ διὰ τὸ ἱεουρῆσαι ἔνδεον τοὺς τὴν ἔνωσιν τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἀσπαζομένους, νῦν ἕνεκα τῆς ἐπελθούσης ὀργῆς ὡς σωτήριον λύτρον ἐνδύεσθε; ἀλλ' οὐδὲ τῆς δικαίας ὀργῆς ἐπελθούσης ἐκίνησεν ἂν τὰ σπλάγχνα ὑμῶν πρὸς εἰρήνην· καὶ γὰρ ἐν τοσαύτῃ περιστάσει εἰ ἄγγελος κατήρχετο ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ ἐρωτῶν ὑμᾶς· εἰ δέχεσθε τὴν ἔνωσιν καὶ τὴν εἰρηνικὴν κατάστασιν τῆς ἐκκλησίας, διώξω τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ἐκ τῆς πόλεως, οὐκ ἂν συντίθεσθε. εἰ δὲ καὶ συντίθεσθε, ψευδὸς ἂν ἦν τὸ συντιθέμενον. ἴσασι νῦν οἱ εἰπόντες πρὸ ὀλίγων ἡμερῶν· κρεῖττον ἐμπεσεῖν εἰς χεῖρας Τούρκων ἢ Φράγγων.

and it pointed to its future abandonment that it was going to suffer shortly thereafter.

All versions of the poem state that the emperor and the patriarch officiated in the celebration that took place in Santa Sophia. Yet there was no official patriarch in residence to preside over this last liturgy and mass.<sup>27</sup> The last patriarch of Constantinople, Gregory III Mamas, in the face of strong opposition had been forced to flee and seek shelter with Pope Nicholas V (August 1451) because he favored the union,<sup>28</sup> and no successor had been found.<sup>29</sup> Santa Sophia became a focal point for the Greeks only after the Turks entered the city, when the population flocked there in search of asylum. Desperate

<sup>27</sup> The view that an otherwise unknown Anastasios or Athanasios reigned at this time has been shown to be mistaken: C. Gennadios [metropolitan] of Helioupolis, “Υπήρξεν ἢ ὄχι Πατριάρχης Ἀθανάσιος ὀλίγον πρὶν τῆς Ἀλώσεως,” *Ὀρθοδοξία* 8 (1933) 279–285. The only contemporary source to mention a patriarch and assign a name to him is the Slavonic narrative of Nestor-Iskander (81), whose eyewitness author assigns the name Anastasios to the reigning patriarch (Hanak and Philippides, *Nestor-Iskander* 90–91). In all likelihood, Nestor-Iskander mistook a high cleric (perhaps Cardinal Isidore himself; see n.29 below) to be the patriarch. Cf. W. K. Hanak, “Pope Nicholas V and the Aborted Crusade of 1452–1453 to Rescue Constantinople from the Turks,” *Byzantinoslavica* 65 (2007) 337–359, esp. 349.

<sup>28</sup> Sphrantzes *Chron.Minus* 31.12. The pope made Gregory’s restoration a non-negotiable term in return for military aid to the Greek emperor.

<sup>29</sup> Cardinal Isidore was appointed Latin Patriarch of Constantinople by Nicholas on January 24, 1452. Isidore’s status carried a great deal of ambiguity, as the unionist Orthodox patriarch, Gregory III, was with the pope awaiting restoration; in addition, Isidore’s titular appointment did not include jurisdiction over Constantinople, but over Negroponte (Chalcis in Euboea) and Crete (*Arch.Segr.Vat. Reg.Vat.* 398 fol. 56). Isidore never used his title while in residence at Constantinople in 1452–1453. On this topic see Hanak, *Byzantinoslavica* 65 (2007) 348. On his activities during the siege, his capture during the sack, and his escape to the west, see Philippides, *Viator* 38 (2007) 349–383, and *Mehmed II the Conqueror and the Fall of the Franco-Byzantine Levant to the Ottoman Turks* (Tempe 2007) 121–131; and Philippides and Hanak, *The Siege* 26–31.

individuals simply assembled within, perhaps because of the popular prophecy that the enemy would be stopped at the gates of this church by an angel. One can conclude that the circumstances as presented in the dominant version are entirely fictional: there was no last ceremony attended by the emperor, his knights, and the patriarch.

Pouqueville's version supplies no specific historical circumstances; the poem's contents are not associated with May 29, 1453. I suggest that originally the Pouqueville version dealt with another event that was subsequently displaced by the monumental character of the conquest: the celebration of the union of the churches, in which both the emperor and the Latin patriarch and official legate of the pope participated. One of the conditions imposed by Pope Nicholas V on Constantine XI for the grant of monetary and military aid was that the emperor officially accept and celebrate the union of the Orthodox and Catholic Churches that had been concluded in Florence in 1439. The pope dispatched Cardinal Isidore as his official legate to Constantinople to ensure the union. Cardinal Isidore, who may have been a member of the Greek imperial family and a relative of the emperor,<sup>30</sup> pressed the point and

<sup>30</sup> No biography of this fascinating personality exists; Isidore's early career is shrouded in mystery. Cf. D. A. Zakythinis, "Μανουήλ Β' ὁ Παλαιολόγος καὶ ὁ Καρδινάλιος Ἰσίδωρος ἐν Πελοποννήσῳ," in *Mélanges offerts à Octave et Melpo Merlier III* (Athens 1957) 45–69; V. Laurent, "Isidore de Kiev et la métropole de Monembasie," *REByz* 17 (1959) 150–157; J. W. Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391–1425): A Study in Late Byzantine Statesmanship* (New Brunswick 1969) 525–526; and K. M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant II* (Philadelphia 1976) 3–4 n.5. Isidore was closely related to the imperial family (perhaps a cousin of Constantine XI), and was compelled to become a monk in order to eliminate any claim that he might have to the throne; cf. H. A. Kalligas, *Byzantine Monemvasia: The Sources* (Monemvasia 1990) 169–170, esp. n.98. For Isidore's writings see G. Mercatti, *Scritti d'Isidoro il cardinale Ruteno e codici a lui appartenuti che si conservano nella Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana* (Vatican City 1926); and J. Gill, "Isidore, Metropolitan of Kiev and All Russia," *Unitas* (Eng. edit.) 11 (1959) 263–275 (repr. J. Gill, *Personalities of the Council of Florence and Other Essays* [New York 1964] 65–79).

Constantine finally acceded to the demand. The official celebration of the union took place on December 12, 1452, amid protests and polarization. The radical actions of the extreme anti-unionists delighted the Porte, which had naturally opposed any attempt of the Greeks to come to an agreement with Catholic Europe, and even favored and nurtured the formation of a fifth column within Constantinople.

The celebration of December 12, 1452, in Santa Sophia is noted by Nicolò Barbaro, the Venetian physician who composed a diary of the siege operations<sup>31</sup> and who undoubtedly attended the festivities; he devoted a few sentences to the ceremony, even though he cited the wrong date for the occasion.<sup>32</sup> Leonardo, in a short note, recorded the celebration but was clearly disappointed and expressed reservations about the sincerity of the participants.<sup>33</sup> Only one source has supplied a long account of the proceedings: the humanist Ubertino Pusculo, who had traveled to Constantinople to perfect his knowledge of ancient Greek, in his classical Virgilian hexameters. Pusculo's narrative comprises the major part of his third book<sup>34</sup> and

<sup>31</sup> On Barbaro and his authoritative diary of the siege (*Giornale dell' assedio de Costantinopoli*) see Philippides and Hanak, *The Siege* 10–13.

<sup>32</sup> Barbaro 4–5 (Pertusi, *La Caduta* I 11): *Adì 13 dezembrio fo fatto la union in la giexia de Santa Sofia con grandenissima solenitade de chierixie, en etiam ve jera el reverendo gardenal de Rosia, che jera mandà per el papa, etiam ve jera el serenissimo imperador con tuta la sua baronia, e tutto el populo de Costantinopoli; e in quel zorno ve fo de gran pianti in questa zitade, e questa union si se intende, che i sia unidi come nui Franchi, e non aver più sisme in la giexia.*

<sup>33</sup> Leonardo, *Epistola ad Nicolaum* (PG 159.925; Pertusi, *La Caduta* I 126–127): *actum est industria et probitate praefati domini cardinalis [sc. Isidori], ut sacra unio, assentiente imperatore senatuque – si non ficta fuit – firmaretur celebrareturque secundo Idus Decembris, Spirid<i>onis episcopi sancti die.*

<sup>34</sup> Pusculo, *Constantinopolis* 3.481–646 (pp.51–55); this important section was not included in the selected passages of Pertusi, *La Caduta* I. Pusculo's poem entitled *Constantinopolis libri IV* was edited by G. Bregantini, *Miscellanea di varie operette* I (Venice 1740), on the basis of a single manuscript in the Marciana, transcribed by G. M. Gervasi. There are a few grammatical and

supplies the last description on record of Santa Sophia in a Christian setting before it was converted into a mosque and eventually into a Turkish-Islamic museum.<sup>35</sup> Pusculo is our only source to relate the details of the last celebrated mass and liturgy in Santa Sophia:<sup>36</sup> Isidore rose and addressed the emperor; in his speech, amounting to some fifty lines of Pusculo's hexameters (3.529–587), he states that he was moved by patriotism to return to Constantinople, in spite of his advanced age,<sup>37</sup> alludes to the Council of Florence that concluded the union of the Churches, and announces that Pope Nicholas V will send aid. Pusculo also recorded the response of the emperor.<sup>38</sup>

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metrical problems in Pusculo's text; four other manuscripts exist but there is no modern edition of the entire work with an *apparatus criticus*. Bregantini's text was reprinted in Ellissen, *Analekten* III, Anhang 12–83. On Pusculo see Philippides and Hanak, *The Siege* 31–32.

<sup>35</sup> For Santa Sophia as a mosque cf. G. Necipoğlu, "The Life of an Imperial Monument: Hagia Sophia after Byzantium," in R. Mark and A. S. Çakmak (eds.), *Hagia Sophia from the Age of Justinian to the Present* (Cambridge 1992) 195–225. For its influence upon modern architecture see the meticulous study by R. S. Nelson, *Hagia Sophia, 1850–1950: Holy Wisdom Modern Monument* (Chicago/London 2004).

<sup>36</sup> Pusculo 3.506–525 (51–55 Ellissen): *Templum erat antiquum, media constructus in urbe, / Relligione ingens, regum monumenta priorum / Excelsum servans, variisque insigne columnis. / Convexum coeli forma testudine fulget / Auratis desuper, pictisque colore lapillis / Coelesti. Ingentes subeunt immane columnae / Rubrae, opus extractum, viridesque, et candida signant / Marmora; porphyreae tabulae, fulvaeque relucent / Parietibus latis. Distincta coloribus arte / Strata oculos stringunt pavimenta intrantibus. Aere / Tres valvae insignes bullis, pulchro aurichalco / Ingentes duplices. latae sonuere volutae / Cardinibus; latum ante ipsam porrigitur aedem / Vestibulum, foribus totidem, et simili ornamento / Insigne. Hic solio se rex componitur alto / Ad portam templi mediam, stratoque resedit / Quem circum Graji proceres funduntur. Ad illum / Ut venit, dextras jungunt, mutisque salutant / Vocibus a summo Nicolao principe dicta / Pace: salutato et legatus [sc. Isidore] rege recumbit / Sede humili, parva, fuerat quae forte parata.*

<sup>37</sup> 3.532–535: *nec tantos ferre labores / Auderem senior: non tunc tua limina adirem. / Sed me communis patriae sors aspera movit / Rursus adire lares patrios.*

<sup>38</sup> 3.588–600: *Talia dicta dabat legatus [Isidore]. Corde premebat / Rex [Con-*

No other surviving source describes the occasion. To the Greek anti-unionists, these celebrations were the work of the devil: the less said about them the better. Sphrantzes states only that the union took place on December 12.<sup>39</sup> Doukas concentrates on the reaction of the anti-unionists and portrays the climate of despair that followed.<sup>40</sup> Bishop Leonardo realized that the Greeks were insincere and only registered his personal suspicions charging the Greeks with dishonesty.<sup>41</sup> Barbaro, a practical merchant, sailor, and physician, was not interested in theology and devoted few sentences to the union. It was left to the scholarly humanist Pusculo to describe the occasion with his classical hexameters. Pusculo may not have been blessed with Virgil's talent but he was an eyewitness and merely gave embellishment to Isidore's speech and Constantine's response. Pusculo circulated his poem while numerous survivors (including Isidore) were alive in Italy, and he would have incurred a charge of fabrication had he departed from the historical essentials of the situation. The substance of his report must reflect

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stantine XI] *curas, fixosque oculos tellure tenebat. / Tunc sic pauca refert: Mihi non est copia soli / Pontifici adjungi summo, nec cogere dignum / Est populum: placido fiant haec corde necesse est. / Sed tu si qua potes primum scrutare per artes / Tentamenta animos monachum primosque sacra / Ordinis explora; placeat si foedere tali / Hacque via ulcisci Teucros; et morte levari; / Et conare tamen populum allectare periclo / Attonitum. Interea cunctum explorare senatum / Quid sit opus facto, hunc et maturare jubebo.*

<sup>39</sup> *Minus* 36.6: καὶ γενομένου τῆ 13<sup>η</sup> Δεκεμβρίου μηνός.

<sup>40</sup> Doukas 36.5: ἐν τῇ συμφωνίᾳ οὖν αὕτη ἔστερξαν τοῦ γενέσθαι λειτουργίαν κοινήν ἐν τῇ Μεγάλῃ Ἐκκλησίᾳ, τελεσθεῖσα παρὰ Ἰταλῶν καὶ Γραικῶν, καὶ μνημονεύσαντες τὸν πάπαν Νικόλαον ἐν τοῖς διπτύχοις καὶ τὸν ἐξόριστον πατριάρχην Γρηγόριον. τὰ τῆς ἱερᾶς μυσταγωγίας ἐπληρώθη ἐν μηνὶ Δεκεμβρίῳ 13<sup>ῃ</sup> ... ἦσαν δὲ καὶ πολλοὶ οἱ οὐκ ἔλαβον προσφορὰν ἀντιδώρου ὡς βδελυκτὴν θυσίαν τελεσθεῖσαν ἐν τῇ ἐνωτικῇ λειτουργίᾳ. ὁ δὲ καδδηγάλιος ἀνιχνεύων πᾶσαν καρδίαν καὶ πάντα σκοπὸν τῶν Γραικῶν, οὐκ ἐλάνθανον γὰρ τὰ μαγγανεύματα καὶ αἱ ἀπάται τῶν Γραικῶν αὐτῷ. ἀλλ' ὡς τοῦ αὐτοῦ γένους ὦν σὺν ὀλίγῃ ὀρμῇ ἔσπευδε βοηθῆσαι τῇ Πόλει, καὶ ἤρκει αὐτὸ πρὸς ἀπολογίαν τῷ πάπᾳ ὅσον γέγονε, τὸ δὲ πλεον ἀνετίθετο τῷ Θεῷ τῷ πάντα οἰκονομῶντι πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον.

<sup>41</sup> Cited n.33 above; in the same passage he adds: *celebrarant unionem Graeci voce, sed opere negabant.*



reality: both the cardinal and the emperor spoke during the ceremony. Pusculo further noted the ineffective efforts of Isidore to convert the fanatic anti-unionists.<sup>42</sup>

The south soffit of the *bema* arch in Santa Sophia portrays in mosaic a colossal archangel (presumably Gabriel), while on its northern counterpart the remains of another colossal archangel (presumably Michael) are still evident.<sup>43</sup> These archangels flank a mosaic of the Madonna and Child, with the Madonna looking sideways toward the angel to her right. The entire composition was visible in the *quattrocento* and probably inspired the incident about the archangel and his message to the Madonna and the icons in the various versions of the poem. Thus Santa Sophia's apse mosaics guide us to the very late Byzantine period, as far as this poem is concerned, since, after the conquest and the conversion of the church to a mosque, Christians were seldom allowed into the building,<sup>44</sup> and it is doubted whether

<sup>42</sup> Pusculo 3.634–646: [*Isidorus*] *monachos primos, altaeque Sophiae / Presbyteros, templique duces, quo plurima in urbe / Pulchra celebrantur, nunc hos, nunc instruit illos; / Hortatur, suadet, capiti se adjungere summo / Christicolum: soli pereant ne sponte relict. / Praeterea et cives primos, ambitque coactos / In simul affatur. Semotum singula quemquam / Admonet interdum. Frustra tolerare labores / Nocte dieque valet. Grajorum nescius artis / Perfidiae ac magnae, Grajus licet, arte Pelasga / Tractatur. Jam mensis abit namque unus, et alter: / Tantum verba habet, ac nullum deflectere civem, / Aut monachum potuit, nec regis flectere mentem.*

<sup>43</sup> C. Mango, *Materials for the Study of the Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul* (Washington 1962) 80–83, with pl. 106, enthroned Madonna with Child; pl. 107, Archangel Gabriel; and pl. 108, surviving lower wing tip of Archangel Michael; also Freely and Çakmak, *Byzantine Monuments* 118, with color pl. X. Cf. Mango's observation (80 n.260): "No detailed report of these mosaics has yet appeared." Mango points out that the archangel was probably executed in the ninth century, while the Virgin, excepting her face, probably dates to the fourteenth. Archangels became a focal point of the lore associated with Santa Sophia; for some prominent tales see G. Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Washington 1984) 203–206; and Philippides and Hanak, *The Siege* 218–219.

<sup>44</sup> Western visitors had difficulty gaining access to the building; during the Greek war of independence, Santa Sophia remained inaccessible to Chris-

these mosaics were visible in the following centuries, prior to the nineteenth century restoration by Gaspare and Giuseppe Fossati which produced accurate copies before the mosaics were covered again.<sup>45</sup> Most, if not all, figural mosaics were whitewashed or covered under the precepts of Islamic law until they were revealed in the twentieth century.<sup>46</sup> The inspiration from art in this poem may derive from the days before the conquest when the mosaics were still visible.

In Pouqueville's version there is no alarm. The heavenly voice does not order an end to the services; instead of *πάψετε* "stop/cease" or *πάρτε* "take away," what we encounter is *φέρτε* "bring." The mood and the atmosphere are different; neither do the icons weep nor is the Madonna perturbed. The

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tians. Subsequently, all travellers had to obtain, at considerable expense, an imperial *firman* to gain admittance to this building and to other mosques. On this topic see Mango, *Materials* 3 and n.2. Antoniadès himself had to obtain special permission to complete his study of the building; cf. his preface, *Ἐκφρασις I α'–γ'*.

<sup>45</sup> Dim traces of the Virgin and Child mosaic were visible but the subject of the composition could not be identified and the Madonna was occasionally thought to be a mature Christ; cf. Antoniadès, *Ἐκφρασις III* 37. Antoniadès could only perceive its general outline. The detailed history of the mosaics in Santa Sophia during the Ottoman period has never been established. Not all mosaics were whitewashed; some were still evident as late the sixteenth century: Mango, *Materials* 98–100.

<sup>46</sup> A notable exception remains the main dome Pantokrator mosaic that is probably still lying under the Islamic inscription proclaiming the glory of God, executed by the calligrapher Musta Izzet Effendi after the completion of the nineteenth-century restoration. The Pantokrator mosaic has not been visible since 1652, but in 1847–1849 the Fossati brothers noted that "un gran medaglione con un Pantocrator" existed (Mango, *Materials* 89–90), which they sketched in pencil (reproduced in Mango, fig. 23). On the other hand, there are doubts as to the actual existence of this mosaic, which, it has been suggested, may have disappeared long before the Fossati restoration; cf. Mango 91. For the history of modern archaeological work see Nelson, *Hagia Sophia*.

only hint of alarm is the prediction that “the holy altar will fall into the sea.” Thus the Pouqueville version places the proceedings squarely within a Christian context and retains the references to patriarch and emperor. If the Pouqueville version describes the liturgy and celebration of the union, as I suggest, the mention of a patriarch present may allude to Cardinal Isidore, the pope’s representative and titular Latin patriarch of Constantinople. Consequently, this poem parallels the report of the celebration by Ubertino Pusculo. The reference to the altar destined to be sunk belongs to this genre of circulating prophecies and countless omens predicting the submersion of Constantinople. Prophecies from this genre were illustrated by a notable artist of the late sixteenth century, the Veneto-Cretan icon painter and miniaturist George Klontzas (ca. 1540–1608). At the end of his career, Klontzas illustrated a delightful codex,<sup>47</sup> which bears witness to the popularity of numerous apocalyptic tales that were in circulation among the Greeks at this time. This codex represents Klontzas’ own conception of the past, the present, and the future as it was predicted in apocalyptic literature.

Pouqueville’s version of the threnody is set apart from May 29, 1453, and refers to the ‘celebration’ of the union. This version may even qualify as a mild expression of opposition to the union and may join the genre of the numerous anti-union texts. The absence of anti-Latin themes indicates that the song did not attack directly the court’s pro-Latin policies and may be divorced from the radical anti-unionists headed by the im-

<sup>47</sup> See G. L. Mingarelli, *Graeci codices manu scripti apud Natos patricos Venetos asservati* (Bologna 1784) no. 244; and E. Mioni, *Indici e cataloghi* N.S. 6 *Codices Graeci manuscripti Bibliothecae Divi Marci Venetiarum* II (Rome 1960) p.36. Its miniatures without the accompanying text were published (in black-and-white illustrations and not in the original color of brown/gold pen ink) and analyzed by A. D. Paliouras, *‘Ο Ζωγράφος Γεώργιος Κλόντζας (1540 ci. – 1608) και αί Μικρογραφίαι του Κώδικος Αύτου* (Athens 1977). Cf. J. Vereecken and L. Hadermann-Misguich, *Les Oracles de Léon le Sage illustrés par Georges Klontzas: La version Barozzi dans le Codex Bute* (Venice 2000).

placable George Scholarios and his rabid followers. In time this lament over the union was recast to accommodate another historical event. I would then suggest the following possible evolution of this poem: it may have existed earlier than 1453 in a short version grieving over the fall of Thessalonica;<sup>48</sup> this original nucleus was reworked to lament the union of the Orthodox and the Catholic Churches, as is indicated by the Pouqueville version. Finally, the monumentality of the fall of Constantinople in 1453 overwhelmed the poem's regret of the union and, with modifications, focused on the fall of the city, especially when the memory of the unpopular union began to fade among the survivors.<sup>49</sup> Thus the intention of the middle version was to prophesy the triumph of Orthodoxy and the reversal of the union that had been engineered (according the dictates of *Realpolitik*) by the imperial court. After the fall the emphasis was shifted to a millennial prophecy of national liberation from the Turks. In the process, the religious content was transformed into a prophecy of an eventual secular salvation with tones of national aspiration.

The dominant version, with its secular promises for the future recovery of Constantinople, exercised considerable influence on the popular mind when it became the anthem of the so-called *Megale Idea*,<sup>50</sup> and its emotional aspects were echoed in influential literary circles. Nikos Kazantzakis made it the

<sup>48</sup> See n.5 above.

<sup>49</sup> The formal invalidation of the proceedings of the Council of Florence (1439) occurred in 1484, during the reign of Patriarch Symeon I (1482–1486); that document makes no reference to the celebration of the union in December of 1452: M. Paize-Apostolopoulou and D. G. Apostolopoulos, *Έπίσημα κείμενα τοῦ Πατριαρχείου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως: Τὰ Σωζόμενα ἀπὸ τὴν Περίοδο 1453–1498* (Athens 2011) 184–190, no. 26.

<sup>50</sup> On this and its nationalistic overtones that created numerous problems in modern Greece, see T. G. Tatsios, *The Megali Idea and the Greek-Turkish War of 1897: The Impact of the Cretan Problem on Greek Irredentism* (Boulder/New York 1984).

climax of his play *Constantine Palaeologus*.<sup>51</sup> The play concludes with two lines from the dominant version: Σώπασε, κυρά-Δέσποινα, μὴν κλαῖς καὶ μὴ δακρύξεις· / πάλι μὲ χρόνους, μὲ καιρούς, πάλι δικιὰ μας θά 'ναί! This play may not be the best work that has come forth from the pen of Kazantzakis; his tragedies, in general, challenge neither director nor actor and are seldom staged nowadays. Yet in this particular tragedy he has managed to evoke the atmosphere of fin de siècle and of a mystical experience promising secular salvation. The play is the last pious formulation of a powerful legend and of a potent myth that belongs to the literary environment of the nineteenth century and directly acknowledges the importance of this folk song during the years of the *Tourkokratia*.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>51</sup> In N. Kazantzakis, *Θέατρο: Τραγωδίες μὲ Βυζαντινὰ Θέματα* II (Athens [1970]) 481–581; for detailed analysis of this play see Philippides, *Constantine XI*, ch. 1.

<sup>52</sup> Kazantzakis chose this variant for his quotation. The same line is recorded elsewhere with minor variations and punctuation; the most important variation is in the seventh word of the last line, as it records δικὰ and not δικιὰ: Σώπασε κυρά Δέσποινα καὶ μὴ πολυδακρύξης, / πάλι μὲ χρόνους μὲ καιρούς πάλι δικὰ σας εἶναι. The same lines read in some manuscripts: Σώπασε, κυρά Δέσποινα, καὶ σεῖς κόνες μὴν κλαῖτε· / πάλι μὲ χρόνους, μὲ καιρούς, πάλι δικὰ σας εἶναι. A number of versions omit these last two lines. Kazantzakis wrote the play in 1944, while Greece was still under Nazi occupation. It was revised in 1949 and in 1951. The text was used as the libretto for Manolis Kalomirois' opera *Κωνσταντῖνος Παλαιολόγος*. The opera has fared better than the play: it was staged in Greece in 1962, 1966, and 1971, while the play was performed once by amateurs, the Drama Club of Athens College in 1965. On Kazantzakis' play cf. A. Thrylos, "Τὸ Θεατρικὸ Ἔργο τοῦ Νίκου Καζαντζάκη," *Μορφές καὶ Θέματα τοῦ Θεάτρου* (Athens 1961) 170–198, esp. 189 ff.; T. Detorakis, "Ὁ Καζαντζάκης καὶ τὸ Βυζάντιο," *Παλίμνηστον* 4 (1987) 183–198; and O. Omatos Saenz, "Constantino Paleólogo, personaje del teatro neohelénico," in *Constantinople* II 461–478.

## APPENDIX: The Text of the Poem

*Dominant Version* (n.6 above):

Σημαίνει ὁ Θεός, σημαίνει ἡ γῆ, σημαίνουν τὰ ἐπουράνια,  
 σημαίνει κ' ἡ Ἁγία Σοφία, τὸ μέγα μοναστήρι,  
 μὲ τετρακόσια σήμαντρα κ' ἑξηνταδύο καμπάνες,  
 κάθε καμπάνα καὶ παπάς, κάθε παπάς καὶ διάκος.  
 Ψάλλει ζερβὰ ὁ βασιλιάς, δεξιὰ ὁ πατριάρχης, 5  
 κι' ἀπ' τὴν πολλὴ τὴν ψαλμουδιὰ ἐσειόντανε οἱ κολόνες.  
 Νὰ μποῦνε στὸ χερουβικὸ καὶ νὰ ἴβγη ὁ βασιλέας,  
 φωνὴ τοῦς ἦρθε ἐξ οὐρανοῦ κι' ἀπ' ἀρχαγγέλου στόμα:  
 “Πάψετε τὸ χερουβικὸ κι' ἄς χαμηλώσουν τ' ἅγια,  
 παπάδες πάρτε τὰ γιερά, καὶ σεῖς κεριὰ σβηστήτε, 10  
 γιὰτὶ εἶναι θέλημα Θεοῦ ἡ Πόλη νὰ τουρκέψη.  
 Μὸν στεῖλτε λόγο στὴ Φραγγιά, νὰ ἴρθουνε τρία καράβια,  
 τὸ ἴνα νὰ πάρη τὸ σταυρὸ καὶ τᾶλλο τὸ βαγγέλιο,  
 τὸ τρίτο τὸ καλλίτερο, τὴν ἅγια τράπεζά μας,  
 μὴ μᾶς τὴν πάρουν τὰ σκυλιὰ καὶ μᾶς τὴ μαγαρίσουν.” 15  
 Ἡ Δέσποινα ταράχτηκε καὶ δάκρυσαν οἱ εἰκόνες.  
 “Σώπασε κυρὰ Δέσποινα καὶ μὴ πολυδακρύξεις,  
 πάλι μὲ χρόνια μὲ καιρούς, πάλι δικά σας εἶναι.”

God, the earth, the heavens sound the tocsin;  
 Santa Sophia, the Great Church, also sounds the alarm,  
 With its four hundred tocsins and the peel of sixty-two bells;  
 For every bell there is a priest, for every priest a deacon.  
 The emperor chants to the left, the patriarch to the right, 5  
 And all this chanting makes the columns shake.  
 As they were starting the Cherubic hymn for the emperor to exit  
 A heavenly voice was heard from the mouth of the Archangel:  
 “Stop the Cherubic hymn, lower the sacred implements;  
 Priests remove the holy (vessels); candles blow yourselves out. 10  
 Because it is the will of God that the City fall to the Turks.  
 Only send word to the West and ask for three ships to come;  
 One will take the cross, the other the Gospel,  
 The third, the best of the three, our holy altar,  
 Lest the dogs take it from us and defile it.”  
 The Madonna was perturbed and the icons shed tears. 15  
 “Be still Madonna and weep no more:  
 With the passage of years and time, it will be yours again.”

*Pouqueville Version* (n.3 above):

Ἐρρόδησ' ἡ ἀνατολὴ καὶ ἑξημερών' ἡ δύση,

ἐπὴρ' ἀέρας στὰ βουνὰ καὶ ἥλιος στὰ λαγκάδια,  
 καὶ στὰ μικρὰ περίχωρα τὸ φῶς καὶ ἡ ἡμέρα.  
 σημαίνει ὁ Θεός, σημαίνει ἡ γῆ, σημαίνουν τὰ οὐράνια,  
 σημαίνει καὶ ἡ Ἁγία Σοφία, τὸ μέγα μοναστήρι, 5  
 μὲ δεκαπέντε σήμαντρα, μὲ δεκαοχτὼ καμπάνες,  
 μ' ἐξήντα δύο ἀρχιερεῖς, τριακόσιους δυὸ παπάδες,  
 διακόνοι εἰκοσιτέσσερες καὶ ψάλτες ἐνενηντα,  
 πνευματικοὶ σαράντα δυὸ μὲ τὰ χαρτιὰ στὸ χέρι.  
 καὶ ψάλλουν “ἅγιος ὁ Θεός,” στέκουν καὶ τὸ καντάρουν, 10  
 λέγουν καὶ τὸν Ἀπόστολον, ψάλλουν τὰ Ἄλλελουῖα,  
 λέγουν καὶ τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον στὸν ἄμβωνα ἀπάνω.  
 ψάλλουν καὶ τὸ χερουβικὸν πρὶν νὰ χαμηλώσ' τ' ἅγια.  
 φωνὴ τοὺς ἦλθε ἀπ' οὐρανοὺς καὶ ἀπ' ἀρχαγγέλλου στόμα  
 νὰ πάψουνε αἱ ψαλμουδιὲς διὰ νὰ διαβοῦνε τ' ἅγια, 15  
 καὶ φέρτε τὸν χρυσὸν σταυρὸν καὶ τ' ἀργυρὸ τὸ τέμπλο,  
 τὰ μανουάλια τὰ χρυσᾶ τὰ μαργαριταρένια,  
 καὶ τ' ἀσημένιο θυμιατὸ καὶ τὸ ἅγιο εὐαγγέλιο,  
 καὶ ἡ ἁγία τράπεζα στὴν θάλασσαν θὰ πέση. 20  
 ἠθέλησεν ὁ βασιλεὺς νὰ πάη νὰ προσκυνήσῃ.  
 δεξιὰ στέκετ' ὁ βασιλεὺς, ζερβιὰ ὁ πατριάρχης,  
 στὴν μέση εἶναι ἡ Δέσποινα μὲ τὸν Χριστὸν στ' ἀγκάλες.  
 κι ὁ Μιχαὴλ ἀρχάγγελος στέκει παρηγορᾷ την.  
 “Σῶπα κυρία Δέσποινα καὶ μὴ παραπονάσαι,  
 πάλιν μὲ χρόνους, μὲ καιρούς, πάλιν διὰ νάν' δικά σου. 25  
 θὰ ψάλλουν καὶ θὰ λειτουργοῦν κ' ἐσένα θὰ δοξάζουν.”  
 Ἀμήν, Χριστέ, καὶ γένοιτο εἰς πάντας τοὺς αἰῶνας.

The east formed rose hues and the west shed its darkness;  
 Winds rose in the mountains; the sun shone in the valleys;  
 Light and day reached all lesser suburbs.  
 God, the earth, and the heavens sound the alarm;  
 Santa Sophia, the Great Church, also sounds the alarm, 5  
 With its fifteen tocsins and the peel of eighteen bells,  
 With its sixty-two high priests, three hundred and two priests,  
 Twenty-four deacons, ninety cantors,  
 And forty-two confessors with texts in their hands.  
 They chant “God is holy” in harmony; 10  
 They read the texts of the Apostle, and chant “Alleluia”;  
 They also read the Gospel from the ambo.  
 They chant the Cherubic hymn before lowering the sacred implements.  
 A heavenly voice was heard, the mouth of the Archangel:  
 “Stop all chanting to let the sacred implements pass; 15  
 Bring the golden cross and the silver altar,

The candle-holders of gold decorated with pearls,  
 The silver censer and the holy Gospel;  
 The holy altar will fall into the sea.”  
 The emperor wished to go and prostrate himself. 20  
 The emperor stands to the right, the patriarch to the left.  
 Between them is the Madonna bearing Christ in her arms.  
 Archangel Michael stands by her and calms her down:  
 “Be still Madonna and be not perturbed;  
 With the passage of years and time, it will be yours again. 25  
 They will chant, they will celebrate the liturgy, and you will be glorified.”  
 Amen, Christ: may it pass in all centuries to come.

The Fauriel version differs from the dominant version: it lacks the first two lines of the dominant (and lines 4 and 5 of Pouqueville’s version) and substitutes the following two lines: Πῆραν τὴν Πόλη πῆραν τὴν, πῆραν τὴ Σαλονίκη! / Πῆραν καὶ τὴν Ἁγία Σοφία, τὸ μέγα μοναστήρι. The next line in Fauriel’s version (3 in the dominant, 6 in Pouqueville) instead of μὲ supplies ποὺ εἶχε. L. 5 of Fauriel reads: Σιμὰ νὰ βγοῦν τὰ Ἅγια κι ὁ βασιλιάς τοῦ κόσμου. The following line after the caesura reads: ἀγγέλων ἀπ’ τὸ στόμα. L. 7 of the Fauriel edition differs from l. 7 in Pouqueville: Ἀφῆτ’ αὐτὴν ψαλμωδιάν, νὰ χαμηλώσουν τ’ Ἅγια. Lines 10 and 11 of the dominant version are missing in Fauriel. L. 8 in Fauriel (l. 12 in the dominant) changes the first word from Μὸν to Καί, while 9–10 (13–14 of the dominant) read νὰ πάρουν τὸ χρυσὸ σταυρὸ καὶ τ’ ἅγιο εὐαγγέλιο / καὶ τὴν ἁγία τράπεζα, νὰ μὴν τὴν ἀμολύνουν. Lines 11–13 differ from 16–18 of the dominant: Σὰν τ’ ἄκουσεν ἡ Δέσποινα, δακρῦζουν οἱ εἰκόνες. / “Σώπα, κυρία Δέσποινα, μὴν κλαίης, μὴ δακρῦζης· / πάλε μὲ χρόνους, μὲ καιροῦς, πάλε δικά σου εἶναι.”<sup>53</sup>

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