

CARDINAL ISIDORE, C.1390–1462

**A LATE BYZANTINE SCHOLAR, WARLORD, AND
PRELATE**

Marios Philippides and Walter K. Hanak†

Cardinal Isidore, c. 1390–1462

A member of the imperial Palaiologan family, albeit most probably illegitimate, Isidore became a scholar at a young age and began his rise in the Byzantine ecclesiastical ranks. He was an active advocate of the union of the Orthodox and Catholic churches in Constantinople. His military exploits, including his participation in the defense of Constantinople in 1453, provide us with eye-witness accounts. Without doubt he traveled widely, perhaps more so than any other individual in the annals of Byzantine history: Greece, Asia Minor, Sicily, Russia, Poland, Lithuania, and Italy. His roles included diplomat, high ecclesiastic in both the Orthodox and Catholic churches, theologian, soldier, papal emissary to the Constantinopolitan court, delegate to the Council of Florence, advisor to the last Byzantine emperors, metropolitan of Kiev and all Russia, and member of the Vatican *curia*.

This is an original work based on new archival research and the first monograph to study Cardinal Isidore in his many diverse roles. His contributions to the events of the first six decades of the *quattrocento* are important for the study of major Church councils and the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks. Isidore played a crucial role in each of these events.

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A Late Byzantine Scholar, Warlord, and
Prelate

**Marios Philippides and
Walter K. Hanak[†]**

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Contents

<i>Preface</i>	vii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	x
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xi
1 The rise of Isidore	1
1 <i>The early years</i>	1
2 <i>The sojourn in the Morea and the letters of Isidore</i>	8
2 Isidore and the Council of Basle	38
1 <i>Prelude to Basle</i>	38
2 <i>At Basle</i>	40
3 <i>Byzantine issues resulting from Basle</i>	64
4 <i>The Muscovite reaction</i>	69
3 The rise of Isidore and the Council of Ferrara-Florence	79
1 <i>Metropolitan of Kiev and of All Rus'</i>	79
2 <i>The Council of Ferrara-Florence</i>	89
3 <i>The return to Muscovy and the aftermath of Florence</i>	99
4 The papal emissary	122
1 <i>The first mission to Constantinople: a failure</i>	122
2 <i>The second mission to Constantinople: warlord and gift-bearer</i>	124
3 <i>Disputations</i>	135
4 <i>Isidore and the declaration of church union</i>	150
5 Defender, humanist, and survivor	189
1 <i>Imperial councilor and legate</i>	189
2 <i>Warrior and reporter</i>	194
3 <i>Two letters of Isidore</i>	198
4 <i>The escape of Isidore</i>	212

6	Cretan interlude	243
	1 <i>Early propagandist</i>	243
	2 <i>Two major themes in Isidore's letters from Candia</i>	248
	3 <i>Religious propaganda and military strategy</i>	259
7	II Cardinal Greco Vecchio: The last years	290
8	Conclusions: <i>Damnatio memoriae?</i>	329
	<i>Appendix</i>	348
	1 <i>Isidore the historian</i>	348
	2 <i>Selections from Isidore's Panegyric to Manuel II and John VIII</i>	349
	3 <i>English translation of selections from Isidore's Panegyric to Manuel II and John VIII</i>	360
	<i>Bibliography</i>	376
	<i>Index Nominum</i>	408
	<i>Index Locorum</i>	415
	<i>Index Rerum Antiquarum</i>	420

Preface

In contemporary academic scholarship, the field of history is often viewed as a branch of literary studies. To a certain degree, this is true. However, our approach in this study is to treat each of these disciplines as co-partners, for both disciplines are dependent upon original source materials that we employ extensively in our research topic. It is true that each of the fields of study scrutinizes the materials, one from the perspective of literary analysis, and the other from a search for internal evidence illuminating the role of individuals in diverse encounters and revealing evidentiary information for its historical significance. To cite the importance of the historical process, we quote James Howard-Johnston, who elaborates:¹

History is not a social science. Historians handle data – gathering, sorting, patterning – rather than constructing theories. They deal with a bewildering array of particulars – individuals and groups, places of every conceivable sort (from the smallest of localities to whole continents), times, actions and processes (slow- or fast-moving, gentle or violent), structures (whether the built environment in town and country or the institutions developed by human societies for the ordering of life), thoughts passing in and out of minds (only to be grasped if articulated in words), thought worlds (the immaterial structures of minds linked together in social networks) *etc. etc.* There is no question of exactitude in history. If calculation of the effects of a single wave in the sea or a slight breadth of wind in the air is beyond the capacity of the swiftest and most capacious of computers, it is inconceivable that useful general laws of human behavior in social aggregates can ever be formulated, when thoughts are continually bubbling to the surface in billions of minds, when gestures and actions are continually setting in motion causal chains which have no end. No, the historian is, first and foremost, a sleuth, seeking out data and clues to data, trying to understand the surrounding world.

It is in this context that we approach the study of a significant individual, Cardinal Isidore, who contributed much to his age, but also added to the inconclusive

circumspections of that period. And yet, we employ throughout this work literary analysis in our examination of original texts, without which there would exist a vacuum in this study.

Isidore over a span of a half century demonstrated that he was a complex individual, involving himself in sundry activities (literary happenings, writing, textual transmission, and manuscript copying; diplomat, high ecclesiastic, theologian, and soldier, among other undertakings) and significant historical events (to cite at this moment but two from among many, especially the Council of Ferrara–Florence and the fall of Constantinople in 1453). It is not our intention to evaluate his personality from the perspective of psychohistory, for this would lead us through endless mazes from which we could not extricate ourselves. Rather, we see Isidore from the perspective of his actions and accomplishments, his successes and failures, and numerous other activities. To say that he was an enigmatic figure with a strange personality would be a misstatement of the evidence at hand. He did influence prominent people, both lay and ecclesiastic, and was involved, even if minimally, in the main intellectual movement of his age – the Renaissance. We have attempted, then, to reconstruct a picture of him that exemplifies all his strengths, accomplishments, and even shortcomings.

This study is based upon extracting significant information from primary sources, since the extant secondary literature is at time erroneous, lacks meticulousness in providing historical information, and advances interpretations that cannot be supported by the primary sources. This is not to say that the primary sources themselves do not also contain erroneous and contradictory information, for indeed they do. Our approach has been to carefully weigh all source materials for relevancy, historical accuracy, and literary achievement. The primary sources were obtained from leading depositories, whose archival holdings are extensive. Our leading source for manuscripts was the Vatican Library, which provided us reproductions of countless materials, including documents and letters, among other texts. We were fortunate to avail ourselves of printed sources, some of questionable editorial quality, but nonetheless useful. As our bibliography demonstrates, our secondary source list is extensive. We had to garner every conceivable tidbit of information to understand the role that Isidore, in his many capacities, played in his time that indeed was an eventful age. To support our study of this high churchman, we have provided quotations from the primary source materials in their original languages with accompanying English translation. What emerges in our study is a fresh and perhaps a new critical understanding of the contributions of Cardinal Isidore to the historical record and the literary world of the fifteenth century.

Walter K. Hanak and Marios Philippides

†Walter K. Hanak, a close friend and a scholarly collaborator for over three decades, died on January 28, 2016. By that time we had compiled an early draft of this study. It fell upon me to complete the research, the text of the book, and

see it through publication. Our project could not have been completed without his detailed knowledge and command of Slavonic material. He is greatly missed by his family, by his former students, and by the scholarly community.

Marios Philippides

Note

- 1 J. Howard-Johnston, *Historical Writing in Byzantium* (Heidelberg, 2014), p. 11.

Acknowledgements

In our research and writing of *The Siege and the Fall of Constantinople in 1453: Historiography, Topography and Military Studies* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), we came to the realization that no comprehensive study exists of the life and times of Cardinal Isidore, a participant in so many significant events of the *quattrocento*. We also recognized that our research would rely extensively upon primary source materials, since the secondary literature provides an incomplete picture of this churchman and his accomplishments in the historical and literary events of his time. Our work required us to obtain and to peruse a significant number of original texts that are available through various depositories. The list of institutions is extensive, but in the main we requested and received reproductions of documents from the Vatican Library (Rome). We are grateful to their staff for furnishing us this valuable material. Next, we should be grateful to the librarians in charge of the Vatican microfilm collection at Saint Louis University (Missouri), who pointed us in the right direction. Additional original source materials in printed form and secondary works were made available to us at the Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies. We are particularly appreciative of our respective university libraries – Shepherd University and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst – which obtained microfilm collections and printed materials, mainly through the interlibrary loan process. We are especially grateful to Professor Julie Hayes, the Dean of the College of Humanities and Fine Arts of the University of Massachusetts, for a Faculty Research Grant that allowed us to purchase digital images of Isidore's manuscripts housed in the Library of the Vatican Archives. If we have overlooked other depositories that contributed significantly to our study, we are duly apologetic.

Abbreviations

AG	Joseph Gill, ed. <i>Quae supersunt Actorum Graecorum Concilii Florentini</i> , 2 parts
BS	<i>Byzantinoslavica</i>
Byz	<i>Byzantion</i>
BZ	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
CBB	Peter Schreiner, ed. <i>Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken, Chronica Byzantina Breviora</i>
CC	Agostino Pertusi, ed. <i>La Caduta di Costantinopoli. Vol. 1: Le Testimonianze del Contemporanei. Vol. 2: L'Eco nel Mondo</i>
CF	Joseph Gill, <i>The Council of Florence</i>
CFDS	<i>Concilium Florentinum. Documenta et Scriptorum. Series A and B</i>
CFHB	<i>Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae</i>
CSHB	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae</i>
CW	<i>The Classical World</i>
DOP	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
DOS	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Studies</i>
FC	Steven Runciman, <i>The Fall of Constantinople</i>
JWarb	<i>Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes</i>
LCB	Donald M. Nicol, <i>The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261–1453</i>
MCT	Franz Babinger, <i>Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time</i>
MHH	Philippe A. Déthier and Carl [Karl] Hopf, eds. <i>Monumenta Hungariae Historica Ser. Scriptorum. Vol. 22.1</i>
MP	John W. Barker, <i>Manuel II Palaeologus (1391–1425): A Study in Late Byzantine Statesmanship</i>
NE	Nicolai Iorga, <i>Notes et Extraits pour servir à l'histoire des Croisades au XV^e Siècle</i> , 6 vols.
NH	<i>Νέος Ἑλληνομνημίων</i>
N-I	Nestor-Iskander, <i>The Tale of Constantinople (Of Its Origin and Capture by the Turks in the Year 1453). (From the Early Sixteenth-Century Manuscript of the Troitse-Sergieva Lavra, No. 773). Trans. and Annotated by Walter K. Hanak and Marios Philippides</i>
OCP	<i>Orientalia Christiana Periodica</i>

- ODB *Alexander P. Kazhdan, et al., eds., The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium, 3 vols.*
- PaL *Kenneth M. Setton, The Papacy and the Levant (1204–1571). Vol. 2: The Fifteenth Century*
- PG *Jacques-Paul Migne, ed. Patrologia Cursus Completus, Series Graeco-Latina*
- ΠκΠ *Spyridon P. Lampros, Παλαιολόγεια καὶ Πελοποννησιακά. 4 vols.*
- PLP *Erich Trapp, et al., eds. Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit. 7 vols.*
- ПСРЛ *Полное Собрание Русскихъ Лѣтописей.*
- RdD *Freddy Thiriet, Régestes des délibérations du Sénat de Venise concernant la Romanie. 3 vols.*
- REB *Revue des études byzantines*
- РИБ *Русская историческая Библиотека*
- RKOR *Franz Dölger, ed. Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches*
- SF *Marios Philippides and Walter K. Hanak, The Siege and Fall of Constantinople in 1453: Historiography, Topography, and Military Studies*
- ΤΙεPN *Agostino Pertusi and Antonio Carile, eds. Testi Inediti e Poco Noti sulla Caduta di Costantinopoli*
- ТОДРЛ *Труды Отдела Древне Русской Литературы*
- ВВ *Византийский Временник*
- ЗРВИ *Зборник радова Византлошког Института*

1 The rise of Isidore

1 The early years

The career of Isidore (Ἰσίδωρος, Isidorus, Исидоръ, Сидоръ)¹ spans a number of decades, but he is largely known for his later years after he had assumed a leadership role in the affairs of the Orthodox Church, and then in the Roman Church following the union of churches that had been proclaimed at Florence. Thus the latter part of his life is well documented and can be reconstructed with a certain degree of certainty and confidence. Less documented is the middle phase from about 1420 to his rise to the metropolitan seat of Kiev and of All Rus'. Lamentably documented are his early years, his childhood and youth, which an investigator faces with a certain degree of uncertainty, if not despair, and often speculation must be, as it always has been, evoked when we are dealing with insurmountable obstacles created by *lacunae* in the primary sources, lack of information and erroneous citations in the secondary works, and considerable scholarly controversy in all works relative to him. We have often encountered challenging notions of who he was and what he had accomplished. Generally speaking, the early life of churchmen is often shrouded from public view, perhaps viewed as a period of little consequence, and thus adds to the mystery of who that person might be or had been. This has proven to be a rather common practice. As Isidore's career was spent in the late medieval Greek world, in the early Italian Renaissance, and in the northern Slavic area, one would anticipate a wealth of documents addressing all phases of his life.² The Greek sources, however, are reticent about his childhood years as are the Italian-Latin works, which become numerous after his elevation to cardinal in the later stages of his life. We should anticipate that Muscovite sources would provide us with additional factual information about Isidore's birth, life, and significant accomplishments prior to his designation as the metropolitan of Kiev and of All Rus', but no such *vita* exists by his hand; additionally, there is no biographical information compiled by his associates and by contemporaneous ecclesiastical scribes to enlighten us. Given the controversial issues associated with his rise to the metropolitan seat at Moscow, his initial role at the Council of Basle (Bâle, Basil, Basel) in favor of the union of the churches and then his major role in the Council of Ferrara-Florence to subject the Greek and the

Russian Church to the pope, the absence of a *vita* is understandably reasonable, if in fact it is not to be attributed to the vicissitudes of times. Its absence is an unfortunate circumstance and has led to substantial controversy and speculation among scholars. Thus we know of no Greek or Slavic sources that precisely identify his family, provide us with any familial associations, or supply concrete knowledge about his background, considerable education, and ecclesiastical connections. The sources, particularly the secondary works, present a confusing and puzzled picture. Isidore then remains in many respects a mysterious figure to scholarship, as he did to the Muscovite Rus', to the Roman *curia*, and even to the Byzantine Greeks themselves. As we shall have occasion to observe, he emerges as an enigmatic figure who appeared upon the scene at a crucial phase in both the history of the rise of Muscovite Rus' and then later participated in and witnessed the end of the Byzantine Empire. For Muscovy, this was their attempt to consolidate authority and dominion under the grand prince Vasiliï II Vasil'evich, and for the Byzantines and their last two emperors, John VIII and Constantine XI, this was their eleventh-hour struggle to salvage remnants of their rapidly disintegrating, declining, and territorially receding "empire," whose lands were being consumed through the onslaughts of the Ottoman Turks under the sultans Murad II and Mehmed II.

To begin with, there survive no authoritative sources to establish his origins.³ Was he a Moreot, from Monemvasia perhaps as he seems to have been rather attached to this Peloponnesian town, or was he born in Constantinople and eventually found his way to the Morea? Early views by scholars suggest that he had been born either in Constantinople or in Thessalonike, or perhaps even in Dalmatia.⁴ On the other hand, A.W. Ziegler, citing an unknown and unpublished *curriculum vitae* of Isidore, states:⁵ "d'origine grecque, il était vraisemblablement né entre 1380 et 1390 dans la ville commerçante de Monembasia en Péloponèse." Generally speaking, the Muscovite Rus' scribes tend to favor Thessalonike as his place of origin,⁶ apparently intending to link him with the venerable monks Saints Constantine-Cyril and Methodios and their role in the mid-ninth century conversion and Christianization of the Slavs.⁷ Beyond this meager information, the Slavic sources stress either his Greek roots⁸ or identify him as a Greco-Slav without providing additional information.⁹ The Greek sources as well lack specificity and remain at variance with Slavic accounts. Isidore, according to one version popular with modern scholars who stress his Constantinopolitan links and his assumed noble birth¹⁰ without directly linking him to a particular family,¹¹ was born c. 1385 or perhaps c. 1390 in Monemvasia or elsewhere in the Morea,¹² and expired in Rome on Wednesday, the 27th of April (the dates often cited as the 23rd or the 29th of April 1463 are erroneous).¹³ Addressing his lineage, Haris A. Kalligas has drawn an interesting supposition that merits comment. She advances the unsubstantiated notion that Isidore was the illegitimate son of the despot Theodoros I of the Morea, the fourth son of the emperor John V Palaiologos and Helena Kantakouzene, and the brother of the reigning emperor Manuel II.¹⁴ Kalligas adds further:¹⁵ "It is certain that he came from the Peloponnese and that he had a special attachment

and constant interest in Monemvasia.” However, the sources are persistently silent concerning his origin and this silence has led to a number of widely differing opinions on it – e.g., that he came from Thessalonike or that he was of Slav descent. This silence seems very strange regarding a person whose activities during a half century covered an area from Crete and the Peloponnese to Russia [Muscovite Rus’], and from Constantinople to Rome, who mixed and corresponded with the important people of his time in Byzantium and the West, and about whom much has been written.¹⁶ The only firm conclusion in this labyrinth of suppositions that can be made is that Isidore, from early on in his childhood, was well connected and had the patronage of the imperial family. A lowly social status would not have afforded him the education that he received and the attention that was lavished upon him by the imperial family. A connection with the Palaiologan family cannot be ruled out, for such an advantage assisted in his rise to become an important ecclesiastical leader.¹⁷

Similarly, one may not be certain as to the year of his birth, but we can only surmise and make general inferences that may lead to further complications. If we assume that he was born c. 1385 or c. 1390, this would imply that when he was assigned a defensive military role during the siege of Constantinople in 1453 he was already advanced in age, in his sixties, and perhaps too aged to participate in the military operations and direct combat, with perhaps one exception. We know from the sources that on the day of the fall and sack of the imperial city he was riding a horse and received a wound during a skirmish. Yet we know that he had been assigned an important military sector to defend,¹⁸ the area in the northwest of the city near the juncture of the sea walls along the Golden Horn with the Wall of Herakleios.¹⁹ He was familiar with the sector, for he had been both a monk and *hegoumenos* (abbot) of the monastery of Saint Demetrios²⁰ (Δημητρίου [Μονή τοῦ ἁγ.] τῶν Παλαιολόγων, Ἅγιος Δημήτριος εἰς Ἐυλόφορταν, Ἅγ. Δημήτριος ὁ Κανάβης [Καναβοῦ]).²¹ At that time he would have been 68 if 1385 is the actual year of his birth (or 63 if 1390 is his year of birth). Thereafter, he managed to have an active life for another decade until he fell victim to a stroke and eventual death. If all this were true he would have enjoyed a remarkable constitution and would have been in command of exceptional physical strength and prowess in his advanced years. If, on the other hand, we adjust the year of his birth to c. 1390, then we encounter another challenging problem when we consider that Isidore was entrusted by Emperor Manuel II to pronounce the eulogy for his brother, Theodoros I, on an unspecified anniversary date commemorating his death. On this occasion, Isidore would have been a young man and one may ask whether the emperor would have entrusted such a serious and demanding task to a youth, unless he was an immediate descendant of Theodoros, as was custom.²² If indeed that is the case and the youthful Isidore was entrusted with such a task, is it possible that he had very close ties with the imperial family; perhaps he was even a close blood relative of Theodoros I, an illegitimate son, and a nephew of Manuel II.²³ Or does this occasion imply that he was a child prodigy in public speaking and that was the reason why he was chosen to pronounce the eulogy? His participation

in the operations of the siege of Constantinople in 1453 and his active role in the defense suggest that, at the time of the siege, he was perhaps in his fifties, but even that age would make him too young to pronounce a speech composed by the emperor in the second decade of the fifteenth century. Conversely, if he had been approaching his twentieth year when he gave this oratorical recital, then he was too old to actively participate in the defense of Constantinople, escape with a head wound, and survive another ten years. His actions on the fateful day of 29 May 1453, may have been occasioned by a momentary urge to defend Santa Sophia, perhaps to earn a martyr's death in doing so, in spite of his advanced age. Given the chronological constraints combined with the lack of evidence, a tentative conclusion may be reached that would suggest that Isidore was born c. 1390. That date concurs with the years of his education, the rudiments of which could not antedate 1400, with the recitation he provided as a talented young man while still in his teens, and would not preclude his limited combat experience, perhaps directing his troops from the safety of the walls or limited and light military activity during the actual operations in the defense of Constantinople in 1453. Moreover, this date would also allow him another decade to recover from the wound that he had received on the day of the fall and sack and his subsequent debilitating adventures, only to fall victim to a stroke in the next decade and die soon thereafter when he was in his seventies. That Isidore died in Rome on Wednesday, 27 April 1463, has now become an indisputable fact,²⁴ contrary to the earlier given dates.

We may state with some degree of certainty that Isidore received a significant portion of his education in the Greek imperial capital,²⁵ whether he was a native of that city or was a recently arrived émigré from the Morea. If he had actually been born in Constantinople, his early years would have been marked by the traumatic and intermittent land blockade conducted by the Ottoman Emir Bayezid I, which began in 1394 and lasted, on and off, until 1402 and the monumental battle of Ankara.²⁶ During the years of the prolonged blockade the population of Constantinople suffered greatly, along with the institutions that had been traditionally supervised by the court and the church. The terrible economic conditions, the inclination of its citizens to abandon their traditional homes, the acute spread of the plague within confined quarters,²⁷ and the general dissolution of society robbed the imperial capital of its numerous institutions that must have included the educational as well, which had to be revived after the elimination of Bayezid and the return of the emperor Manuel Palaiologos to his capital following his long absence in the West in a vain search for aid.²⁸ It has been implied that Isidore traveled to Constantinople in the retinue of Manuel upon his return from the West in 1403.²⁹ Manuel had slowly made his way to Italy and had departed Venice for the Morea in mid-April 1403. There, Manuel was reunited with his wife and family. While in the Morea he also took considerable time to resolve a number of problems and finally reached his imperial city in June of 1403.

When still in Venice, Manuel II was joined by his friend, the famous intellectual and teacher of ancient Greek, Manuel Chrysoloras, who then accompanied

the emperor on his return voyage to Constantinople.³⁰ Is it possible that Manuel II recalled his friend from the West in order to revive the state of education in his imperial capital, which obviously had suffered during the long Ottoman blockade? The education system in Constantinople had to be restored. For Manuel, its revitalization was of immense interest for he himself was an intellectual³¹ and clearly he had an intense concern for education.³² Exactly who taught Isidore, where he studied, and what subjects he excelled in cannot be established with certainty.³³ Given the literary interests that he later exhibited in his own writings, letters, and essays, he received training in the scriptures, in the Church Fathers, and in laws governing the different dioceses and ecclesiastical jurisdictions. In addition, a prerequisite would have been solid training in ancient Greek and specifically in the Attic dialect favored by the intellectuals of the period. He was certainly comfortable in corresponding with the other humanists in Italy in Attic. In Constantinople he had studied in the company of notable Italian humanists, including the famous Guarino dei Guarini of Verona (1374–1460).³⁴ Isidore's association with Guarino provides us with the possibility of identifying a probable teacher. Guarino, we know, followed Chrysoloras to the imperial city and became one of his disciples in the summer of 1404.³⁵ Can we then conclude that Isidore received instruction, together with his friend Guarino, under the direction of one of the most famous teachers of Greek, Manuel Chrysoloras? Isidore's training must have included calligraphy and the transcription of ancient manuscripts. It is not generally known that numerous manuscripts copied by the hand of Isidore survive and are of the highest quality.³⁶ Isidore's career shows that he had received a considerable education under a great master, who could have been the famous Chrysoloras.³⁷ In his later years after the fall of Constantinople, Isidore borrowed books from the Vatican Library that reveal an intellectual bent with a keen interest in antiquity, ethnography, astronomy, and the occult.³⁸ The rudiments, if not actual advanced study, for his considerable command of literature must have their roots at this early stage in his career. However, his instruction under Chrysoloras had frequent interruptions. In 1404 and again in 1405–1406, Chrysoloras traveled to Italy.³⁹ If in fact Isidore had been under the tutelage of Chrysoloras, his studies must have come to an end in 1407, when Manuel II dispatched Chrysoloras to western courts in an endless search for military aid. His travels took him as far away as Spain. This was the great teacher's last voyage to the West⁴⁰ and he never returned to Constantinople.⁴¹ But by the time of his departure, Isidore must have been quite an accomplished pupil, for he emerges in history soon thereafter.

The earliest work associated with Isidore is in fact the funeral oration that Emperor Manuel II composed for his brother, Theodoros I of the Morea,⁴² which has created considerable confusion among scholars⁴³ concerning the actual date of its composition and the occasion or perhaps the occasions at which it was pronounced by Manuel II and/or Isidore himself.⁴⁴ At a later date,⁴⁵ Isidore composed a speech in honor of Emperors Manuel II and John VIII, and spoke of the circumstances that led to the composition of Manuel II's

eulogy for his dead brother. This lengthy and in many aspects tedious speech required substantial time to reach its final form. The emperor sought scholarly advice on its style and composition.⁴⁶ It is known that Manuel forwarded several advanced copies of his composition to at least three scholars, whose advice he sought and evidently whose opinions he respected. To improve it, he requested comments on the text's style. Thus Georgios Gemistos Plethon, Isidore, and Manuel Chrysoloras were recipients of advanced copies.⁴⁷ Plethon submitted a few observations that survive;⁴⁸ whether Isidore replied we do not know, but the probability remains high that he did. Chrysoloras's long reply has survived, has been edited, and printed recently.⁴⁹ This rediscovery of Chrysoloras's text⁵⁰ has important chronological implications. The speech had yet to be pronounced in the summer of 1414 when Chrysoloras was still writing his response.⁵¹ This is to say that the oration must have been pronounced *after* 1414.⁵² In addition, we may perhaps suggest that the speech was delivered before 1417. In the summer of 1417,⁵³ Manuel II wrote a letter to Guarino and asked him to translate the Greek text into Latin or into Italian.⁵⁴ Manuel must have been proud of his accomplishment and elated upon its reception by the audience at Mistra. The conclusion that we may reach suggests that the speech was pronounced after 1414, but before 1417.

Isidore himself writes of the circumstances of his delivery of Manuel II's funeral oration in the letter that he addressed to the emperor, which in fact is a report of his arrival in the Morea.⁵⁵ We would place this letter as the first surviving letter that Isidore composed when he took up residence in the Morea, for it was written soon after he pronounced half of the speech at the ceremony, that is, soon after his arrival in the Morea.⁵⁶ It is in fact more than a letter. It constitutes a report on his voyage and the opening passages address the situation and the conditions that he encountered in the Morea. He apologizes for not immediately writing and excuses himself for his lack of education (ἀμουσία) and his inability to express himself (τὸ μὴ σὺν ὄρῳ δύνασθαι λέγειν . . . καὶ τὴν σιωπὴν ἀσπάξεσθαι ἔπειθεν), which forced him into a temporary silence. These are *topoi* within the genre of epistolography and indicate the literary "humility" that declares the writer's pretended lack of education.⁵⁷ Isidore highlights this point by declaring his familiarity with Attic Greek and with the style and language of Plato and Demosthenes, as he humbly states that only these authors could speak it properly.⁵⁸ After a few more formalities, Isidore states that he intends to give a brief statement of his experiences, which he asserts are in sore need of a much more sophisticated literary talent than his own.⁵⁹

He appears to be astonished at the local customs of the inhabitants of the Morea and expresses surprise at their character, which he judges to be rather primitive and barbaric, especially since their cruelty "surpassed that of the Scythians."⁶⁰ Once he arrives in Mistra, the capital of the Morea, his tone changes. He has found a haven of civilization. There he maintains a watchful eye over his manuscript and reveals nothing of its contents, suggesting in a classical reference that he retained a silence befitting an initiate into the Eleusinian mysteries.⁶¹ He

does not wish his audience to gain an “advanced look” at the emperor’s speech before the appointed day, even though his arrival and the impending address apparently and speedily became “the talk of the town” (“winged rumor was faster than a bird”).⁶² Isidore describes the ceremony in the same letter, which also reveals that it was on an unspecified anniversary of Theodoros’s death:⁶³

ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ τοίνυν ἦκεν ἡ προθεσμία καὶ ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ ἔτους, καθ' ἣν ὁ εὐφημούμενος μετέστη τῶν ὧδε, τελευτῆ δὲ ἐπὶ τῆδε γίγνεται, ἔδει δὲ ἐν ταύτῃ καὶ τὸ βιβλίον [*Ἐπιτάφιος* τοῦ Μανουήλ] ἀναγινώσκεισθαι, παρῆν μὲν ὁ πάντα ἄριστος καὶ λαμπρότατος δεσπότης [Θεόδωρος Β'], παρῆν δὲ καὶ ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς καὶ ἡ γερουσία δὲ καὶ πᾶν ὅσον ἔκκριτόν τε καὶ καθαρὸν τοῦ ἱερατικοῦ καταλόγου. καὶ τοῦ δήμου δὲ οὐδεὶς ἀπῆν. συνέρρεον γὰρ ἅπαντες ἐπὶ τὴν ἀκρόασιν μᾶλλον ἢ τῶν Ὀλυμπιασιν ἀγώνων οἱ θεαταί. καλὸν τοιγαροῦν ἐδόκει καὶ προσῆκον πρὸ τῆς τελετῆς τὸν *Ἐπιτάφιον* ἀναγινώσκεισθαι, καὶ ὁ τοῦ βιβλίου διακομιστῆς [*Ἰσίδωρος*] ἐπὶ τοῦτο προεκαλεῖτο. ὁ δὲ οὐχ ὑπήκουεν, ἑτέροις τοῦτο φάσκων προσῆκειν. καὶ οἱ μὲν ἐνέκειντο, ὁ δὲ οὐκ ἐνεδίδου, ὡς καὶ ὁ δεσπότης παρεκελεύετο, εἶξε τῷ ἐκείνου προστάγματι, καὶ ἀνεγίνωσκε μὲν ἐξαναστάς, ἠκροῶντο δὲ ἅπαντες . . . διεξήει δὲ τοῦ βιβλίου τὸ ἦμισυ. ἐπ' ἐκείνῃ δὲ Γαζῆς ὁ καλὸς ἀνεγίνωσκε, τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ἠρέμα καὶ ὁμαλῶς τὴν ἠγῶ πέμψων, κατὰ μικρὸν δ' ἔτι τὴν φωνὴν ὑπεραίρων ἐς διάτορον τι καὶ γεωνὸς ὅσον τε ἐγρῆν καὶ ἡ τάξις ἀπῆται τοῦ λόγου . . . εἶπεν ἄν τις μουσικός . . . τούτοις [τοῖς ἀκροαταῖς] δὲ τὸ δάκρυον ἔρρει κρουνηδὸν καὶ τὸ ἄσθμα συνεχῆς ἐξήει κεραυνόμενον τῷ τῆς λύπης χρώματι. ὁ δὲ δῆμος ἐκπεπληγμένοις ἐφώκισαν. . .

The appointed day came and the day of the year, which marked the anniversary to the eulogized man’s death, arrived. A ceremony was held, during which the book [the speech of Manuel] had to be read aloud. Present were His Excellency, the most illustrious despot [Theodoros II Palaiologos of the Morea], the chief priest [bishop/metropolitan], the senate, and all the prominent individuals and the holy members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. No citizen stayed away. All crowded to the recital; their number surpassed the number of fans in the Olympic games. So it seemed that it was the appropriate and the respected time for the Funeral Speech to be read aloud, before the formal ceremony, and they urged the bearer of the book [Isidore] to proceed. But he would not obey and kept saying that this task should be given to others. They persisted, but he would not yield. Finally the despot himself urged him and he had to obey that order. So he rose and began reading aloud. All listened . . . and he went through half of the book. . . . From that point on the good man Gazes began reading. At first he did so calmly and smoothly with a resounding voice, which, in a short time, he raised to the high level that was required by the arrangement of the speech. . . . One might think of him as a musician . . . the audience cried rivers and poured out sighs mixed with the colors of grief. The people appeared thunderstruck.

It is understandable that Isidore could not finish the reading of the speech. It was too long⁶⁴ and if indeed Theodoros had been his near relative or even his father, he may have been overcome by emotion. Gazes's first name is not provided but it appears almost certain that he was the person who went on to become a famous humanist, Theodoros Gazes.⁶⁵ It has been also suspected that he may have been Demetrios Gazes, a minor personality of the period.⁶⁶ Moreover, we wonder whether the audience could actually be moved to tears, for it is certain that the vast majority of them would have been unable to comprehend the difficult and tortuous text of Manuel, couched in classical Attic, an idiom that was no longer immediately nor easily understood by the average Greek, excepting the intellectuals, who had received serious training in classical Greek.⁶⁷ Thus, in terms of chronology, this letter of Isidore, recounting the recitation of the emperor's oration, amounts to his first definitive public appearance. After his description of the ceremony, Isidore reverts to comparisons of similar speeches in antiquity and concludes his letter to the emperor.⁶⁸

It is also noteworthy that the "book," as Isidore labels his manuscript that contained the address,⁶⁹ has survived and is a masterpiece, both in terms of calligraphy and of art history. Isidore himself thus reveals two important talents – that of a manuscript copyist and an exceptional calligrapher. There survive seven other manuscripts that contain the speech of the emperor, but none are of the same quality nor contain a portrait. The exquisite nature of this particular manuscript would explain why numerous individuals in Mistra wished to examine the text, but Isidore would not grant permission to anyone to peruse it before he delivered the speech.⁷⁰ The enclosed portrait of Manuel II in tempera, gold, and ink on parchment bears an inscription in red ink, which duplicates the formal signature of the emperor in official documents: Μανουήλ ἐν Χ<ριστ>ῷ τῷ Θε<ε>ῷ πιστὸς βασιλεὺς καὶ αὐτοκράτωρ Ρωμαίων ὁ Παλαιολόγος, "Manuel in Christ the God the faithful king and emperor of the Romans [Greeks] Palaiologos." The illuminated portrait depicts the emperor in formal attire with crown and *prependulia*, a scepter crowned with a cross, and the *akakia*, a silk pouch filled with earth. He is clad in the *σάκκος μέλας*, the imperial black tunic decorated with the gold *loros*, the medieval Greek descendant of the Roman *trabea triumphalis* that was draped about the shoulder and around the waist.⁷¹

2 The sojourn in the Morea and the letters of Isidore

In his letters, composed after his arrival, Isidore does not appear to have been enamored with his Peloponnesian surroundings, but appears rather disappointed. He leaves the impression that he longed for Constantinople and its literary environment. Perhaps he was not impressed with the local conditions, as he makes clear in his letter to the emperor.⁷² The letters to his friends are more explicit in details and his complaints seem to multiply with each written communication. Even though he seems to suggest that he misses his friends with whom he is corresponding, we form the impression that a great deal

more is at stake than just the friends that he longs for. We wonder whether his departure for the Morea had been forced upon him; thus, he was an unwilling traveler to the despotate and had been ordered there by the emperor himself for unspecified reasons. In the final analysis, he seems to have found the new environment rather objectionable. As a consequence, his complaints about life in the Morea to his friend in Letter 3, judging from the letter's tone, are striking; the friend must have been aware of his feeling, since he had accompanied him when he boarded the ship for the Morea. At that moment, Isidore had promised his friend that he would send frequent letters:⁷³ οἶσθα δέ, ὅτε προσειπώντες ὑμᾶς ἐνεβαίνομεν τῇ νηί, ὅτι σὺ μὲν παρεκελεύου καὶ πέμπειν καὶ πικνὰ [γράμματα], ἡμεῖς δὲ χρῆσθαι σε τοῖς ἴσοις ἀξιούμεν, ἀπηγόρευες δὲ αὐτὸς οὐδαμῶς. ποίει τοῖνυν τουτί, “you know that when I was about to board the ship, that you, in our conversation, asked me to send many [letters] and often, and that I demanded the same of you and you accepted this condition readily. So please do it.” The letter demonstrates that Isidore really desired to leave the peninsula and to return to Constantinople and to his circle of scholarly friends. He expresses this wish in classical terms:⁷⁴ πολλάκις ἠράσθην τῆς Δαιδάλου τέχνης, ἐζήτησα δὲ καὶ τὸ πτηνὸν Διὸς ἄρμα, ὅπως ἀφικοίμην τάχιστα παρὰ σοί. ἐπέτυχον δὲ οὐδέποτε, “how greatly did I miss the craft of Daedalus! I even looked for the winged chariot of Zeus to bring me to you as speedily as possible! I ended up in perpetual frustration.” He furnishes a list of items that he was missing, which his friend in Constantinople was enjoying; this listing implies that Isidore was sorely lacking such amenities in the despotate: Constantinople's handsome porticoes, beautiful churches, elegant houses, and the quality and abundance of various edible items whose superiority was unsurpassed.⁷⁵

Some time after his arrival in the Morea, Isidore became a victim to the plague. He survived as one of his early letters to Guarino attests:⁷⁶ ἄρτι τοῦ μετωπώρου τὴν τοῦ θέρους ὥραν διαδεξαμένου νοσοῦντι νόσον μακρὰν καὶ βαρεῖαν, τὴν λοιμώδη, “it was in the fall, right after summer, that I endured a long and difficult illness that was related to the plague.” Perhaps the year can be established with some degree of certainty. In the so-called “Short/Brief Chronicles,” we encounter mention of the plague affecting the Peloponnese and two possible dates can be reconstructed for this affliction. One records the year as 1409,⁷⁷ which is enumerated as the seventh visitation, and the second for the year 1417. Thus again we encounter the same chronological discrepancies for the early career of Isidore. Since in 1407 Isidore was still resident in Constantinople, under the new chronology through a process of elimination the year 1417 must be the date when Isidore suffered his bout with the plague. It further makes sense that he survived the epidemic of 1417, as he had probably developed some immunity to the affliction during his crucial childhood years. Had he been younger, that is during the first appearance of the plague in 1407, he would have been more susceptible to the extremes of the disease. The appearance of the pestilence in 1417 is counted as the eighth attack in a brief chronicle:⁷⁸ ἔτους ‘ςακς’ ἐγένονεν τὸ ὄγδοον θανατικόν, “in the year 6926

[*anno mundi*, that is 1417] the eighth attack of the deadly disease occurred.” Unlike the seventh visitation, the eighth was more serious as notice of it is made in the literature of the period. Thus Sphrantzes states that Lady Anna of Muscovite Rus’, the child-wife of Manuel’s son, John VIII, died in August, a victim of the plague.⁷⁹ He further adds that the outbreak began in the winter of 1416/1417 in the Black Sea region and then progressed to Constantinople.⁸⁰ He elaborates that the plague had affected other areas, in addition to the imperial city.⁸¹ Moreover, he assigns the outbreak in Constantinople to the “spring and summer,”⁸² perhaps with the climax, which took away Lady Anna of Muscovite Rus’, occurring in August. The death of Anna is also cited by Doukas who agrees with the statements of Sphrantzes.⁸³ Doukas further adds that it was the bubonic plague.⁸⁴ These dates are in agreement with the period that Isidore was also afflicted.⁸⁵ Isidore emerges as one of the few fortunate individuals to escape the consequences of this epidemic and to recover, even though the sources note that this wave of bubonic plague claimed numerous victims.⁸⁶

Isidore continues by expressing his best wishes for his friend’s health and then mentions their “old friendship,” undoubtedly referring to the days when they were students together in Constantinople. He then adds in simile that old friendships can be cultivated to become even stronger with the passage of time before he moves on to hint that he expects more letters from his friends, voicing a complaint that we encounter in all his letters at this stage.⁸⁷ The next important section of the letter to Guarino informs us of the classical interests of Isidore. He clearly had undertaken the task of supplying ancient works (copied by himself perhaps) to his Italian friend:⁸⁸

δέχου τοίνυν ἅμα τούτοις τοῖς γράμμασι τὴν τε Ξενοφῶντος Κύρου Ἀνάβασιν τὸν τε Οἰκονομικόν, καὶ σὺν αὐτοῖς τὸν οὕτω πῶς Ἰέρωνα ἢ Τυραννικὸν ἐπιγραφόμενον, ἀρίστου ῥήτορος ἄριστα συγγράμματα, ἃ δὴ σοι πάντα δεικνύειν μέλλει τό τε τῶν γραμμάτων κάλλος τὴν τε περὶ ταῦτα μετὰ σπουδῆς ὀρθότητα. ἔξεις δὲ ἅμα ἤρι, σὺν γε τῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ βοηθείᾳ. Καὶ τὰ τοῦ Σύρου Σαμοσατέως. εἰ δὴ οἶον θ’ ἡμῖν γένοιτο, λήψη καὶ τὰ τοῦ συγγραφέως Ἀθηναίου κατ’ αὐτὴν τὴν τοῦ ἤρος ὥραν.

Together with this letter accept Xenophon’s *Anabasis* and *Oeconomicus*, in addition to the work normally entitled *Hiero* or *Tyrannikos*, the outstanding writings of an excellent rhetorician, which will demonstrate literary beauty and accurate style. You will have, by spring, with God’s help, the works of the Syrian from Samosata [Lucian]. If I can manage it at the same time next spring you will also receive the works [*Deipnosophistai*] of the author Athenaeus.

It is unclear whether Isidore sent ancient manuscripts to Guarino or copies that he had made from ancient manuscripts. Most probably, they were his own transcriptions and had been copied by Isidore himself, who was involved in this activity throughout his lifetime. Thus he was quite accomplished in calligraphy and was an avid copyist of ancient works even in his later years.⁸⁹ After

all, the beautiful manuscript of Manuel's address had been copied in Isidore's calligraphy.⁹⁰ Moreover, the promise that he would send by springtime Lucian's and Athenaeus's works suggests that at the time he transmitted his letter he was engaged in copying the voluminous works of these authors and that he needed time to finish this task. It is plausible that he was already at work transcribing these works, but had to stop when he became ill. He was by the fall prepared to resume the task. The despotate of Morea and its capital, Mistra, at the time, had been centers of ancient learning and had attracted a number of intellectuals who were interested in antiquity, including the famous Georgios Gemistos Plethon.⁹¹ Less prominent were other individuals and scholars, some of whom were in fact members of Plethon's circle, if not actual disciples, and who regularly transcribed ancient works.⁹² If one had need of a classical work, one might have had good fortune in the Morea, for it possessed a number of well-stocked libraries.⁹³

At the conclusion of this letter, Isidore reveals another interesting aspect of his personality. He had an unquestionable interest in the occult. He complains to Guarino that the horoscopes that he had requested had not reached him. This was for him a vexing matter, which he couches in a witty yet rather forceful way:⁹⁴

ἄ γὰρ πάλαι μὲν αὐτὸς ὑπισχυοῦ, ἤλπιζον δὲ ἐγὼ λαβεῖν. λέγω δὴ τοὺς ἀπὸ τῶν ὀίων κώδικας, ἵνα σὲ καὶ αὐθις ἐκείνων ἀναμνήσω, οὐπω παρ' ἡμῖν ἐγένοντο, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ τὰ ὠροσκοπεία. ἢ τοίνυν θάπτον αὐτὰ πέμψε, κὰν τούτω πολλὴν ἔξω σοι χάριν, ἢ βραδύνοντα περὶ τὰς ὑποσχέσεις ἐν τοῖς ὀφείλουσιν ἔξω, καὶ ἀντὶ τοῦ χάριν εἶδέναι ἐγκαλεῖν σοι μᾶλλον ἀναγκασθήσομαι.

I was hoping to receive what you had promised me: I mean the sheep [= parchment] *codices* (so I may refresh your memory). Neither they nor the horoscopes have reached me. Either send them soon so I may be in your debt or you may delay to fulfill your promises and I will count you among my debtors and, in fact, instead of owing you a favor, I will be forced to place a charge against you.

Isidore remained a believer in horoscopes to the end of his life. In 1453, he was convinced that the final assault against Constantinople was launched by the sultan on the day and at the hour that had been suggested to Mehmed II by his group of astrologers, as he declared to his friend Bessarion in a letter dated *in Creta, die sexta Iulii anno Domini M^oCCCC^oLIII^o*, "in Crete, July 6, 1453 A.D.":⁹⁵

inter haec quinquaginta et tres dies Turcus consumpsit Constantinopolim obsidens nec quicquam perfecit. Sed cum omnis cognitionis illud difficilimum est quod futurum est, nobis oculos mentis occecavit, illi vero ita aperuit, ut Martem potentissimum ac diem et horam accuratissime observaverit; habet enim diligentissimos astrologos persas, quorum consiliis ac iudicio fretus summa quaeque ac maxima sese consecuturum sperat.

The Turk [Sultan Mehmed II Fatih] wore down Constantinople in fifty-three days of siege, but was unable to prevail. Prediction of the future is a very difficult task and our mind's eyes become blind. Yet, the future was revealed to him so that he reserved the mightiest attack for a specific day and hour. He has, after all, very energetic Persian astrologers on whose advice and judgment he relies when he is about to pursue the most difficult and worthiest operations.⁹⁶

In his second letter to Guarino,⁹⁷ Isidore first praises his friend's talent for Greek, and expresses admiration about his ability to learn the language and to be bilingual. He first cites that he could not control his joy when he read Guarino's letter to his circle of friends and, in a classical mode that would be so dear to a humanist, states that he was so captivated by the letter as if he were a member of Odysseus's crew charmed by the song of the Sirens.⁹⁸ He then praises Guarino for glorifying his city and Italy with his scholarship, as he has also decorated Greece with scholarship.⁹⁹ Because of his ties to Greece and a deep command of classical scholarship, Guarino is, according to Isidore, a "Panhellene" (Πανελλήνιος). Isidore suggests, in what he thinks is a flattering comment, that Guarino has less in common with Cicero and more in common with Aelius Aristides and Demosthenes. Then Isidore adds that "as yet the horoscopes have not arrived," οὐπω γὰρ ἦκε παρ' ἡμῖν τὰ ὠροσκοπεῖα. Perhaps it is best to assume that this letter, Regel's Letter 2, precedes his Letter 1. It appears that Guarino dispatched his epistle in the spring. Isidore then replied (Regel's Letter 2) and requested horoscopes, which had not arrived. Isidore after that went through his illness and in the fall wrote a stronger letter (Regel's Letter 1) emphasizing his previous request and adding as an incentive his copies of ancient works.

This examination of the early letters brings into question the old assumption that the manuscript presents the letters in a chronological order. This assumption can no longer be considered valid, as the chronology has changed. The impression was that all these letters were written soon after the arrival of Isidore in the Morea, which scholars used to date to c. 1407. Because of the circumstances of the delivery of the emperor's speech we now know that this event took place one decade later, and this new chronology affects the date of the composition of the letters also. Probably the earliest letter is the one addressed to Manuel II, as it contains the fresh impressions of Isidore with regard to the Peloponnese, along with his account of his voyage, and his report on the recital of Manuel's *Funeral Speech*. Yet in the manuscript, this letter appears as the fifth epistle, as it was published in this order by Regel. Moreover, there is reason to believe that the letter addressed to Khortasmenos is an early letter by Isidore, while he was still longing for the amenities of Constantinople. While this letter appears as the fourth, it seems to have been written after the fifth. The first and second letter to Guarino come after Isidore's illness, that is, after the letters to the emperor and to Khortasmenos, and the second letter to Guarino, we believe, is the first epistle that Isidore wrote. In conclusion, we have to observe

that the order of the letters in the manuscript compilation does not preserve the actual chronology and the logical sequence, contrary to what scholars have assumed thus far.¹⁰⁰

Further, a group of eight early letters were published long after Regel's edition.¹⁰¹ These eight letters are included in the same manuscript compilation,¹⁰² but they are not as informative about Isidore's personal life as the Regel letters. They are more concerned with Isidore as an ecclesiastic and as a public figure. The first letter in this group is addressed to someone who was a close relative/friend of Isidore, of whom it has been noted¹⁰³ that nothing more can be gathered from the correspondence. He appears to have been a resident of Patras,¹⁰⁴ and Isidore labels him an "Achaean,"¹⁰⁵ as he, in his archaizing language, so styles the *quattrocento* Patrenses:¹⁰⁶

ἐπέστελλες γὰρ καὶ ὡς φίλος ἀληθῆς πρὸς φιλεῖν εἰδότα καὶ ὡς ἐξ ἐκείνης ἔλκων τὴν σειρὰν τοῦ γένους ἥσπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς, τὸ γένος τε ἐφίλεις τὴν συγγενεῖάν τε ἠσπάζω καὶ μετὰ θάρρους ἔγραφες. ἔν δὲ μόνον ἠμίασεν, σφόδρα δὲ μ' ἠνίασεν. ἦν δὲ ἐκεῖνο ποῖον; ἔφασκες ἐν τούτοις ὡς ἢ πόρρω τοῦ γένους ἡμῶν αὐτὸς ἢ μὴ γε τοῦτο ἀλλ' ἐγγύς, ὥσπερ οὖν ὑπεροπτικοὶ τινες ἡμεῖς καὶ ἀλαζόνες καὶ οὐχ οὕτω λογιζόμεθα. ἀλλ' ὦ ποῖόν σε ἔπος ἔρκος φύγεν ὀδόντων,¹⁰⁷ ἀνδρῶν βέλτιστε. ἐπὶ τίνι γὰρ ἡμεῖς ἐτέρῳ μᾶλλον ἀνοχοῦμεν ἢ σοί; τί δ' ἄλλο βέλτιον ἡγοῦμεθα τῆς τε συγγενείας τῆς σῆς τῆς τε φιλίας; τίνος δ' ἂν προῦκρίναμεν ἑταιρίαν τῆς σῆς μᾶλλον;

Indeed you sent [the letter] as a true friend to one who knows what love is and who also shares the same descent with you. One matter bothered me, and it bothered me a great deal. What is it? You said, among other things, that either you were far removed from our family or, if this is not the case, and you are close, then I was looking upon you in some form of snobbery when I failed to take it into account. My best friend: what word escaped the barrier of your teeth? Can I boast of a better friend than you? What is dearer to me than our family relationship and your friendship? Whose company would I choose over yours?

The only hint of a date for this short letter comes near its conclusion:¹⁰⁸ ὅθεν δὴ συναιρουμένου θεοῦ οὐκέτι πόρρω τῶν ἰαννουαρίων καλανδῶν, ἀλλ' ἐγγύτερον ἐλπίς ἡμᾶς ἀφικνεῖσθαι παρ' ὑμᾶς τοὺς Ἀχαιοὺς, "so, with God's will, no later than the kalends of January, I hope to come to you Achaeans." The year is not mentioned but it is clear that Isidore's health is strong and he can travel, so the least that may be said is that he had totally recovered from his bout with the plague. Therefore, the position of this letter within the correspondence corpus must follow Isidore's letters to Guarino, and the cited dispatch cannot be earlier than January 1420.¹⁰⁹

The remaining letters, as they stand, cannot be placed in chronological order. The first of those letters¹¹⁰ is addressed, according to the opinion of one scholar,¹¹¹ to the despot of the Morea, Theodoros II Palaiologos. Of interest

are the opening statements, for they indicate that Isidore had a deep interest in ancient Persia:¹¹²

τῷ μὲν οὖν βασιλεῖ τῶν Περσῶν Ἀρταξέρξη σφόδρα καταθύμιον ἐδόκει, ἂν τις αὐτῷ δῶρα προσάγων, κἄν ἦ πᾶν σμικρά, μετὰ πολλῆς εἰσεκόμιζε εὐνοίας. ὃ δὴ καὶ ποτε περὶ τὰς τοῦ Ὑδάσπου ὄχθας παριόντι τῶν γεωγούντων ἐκεῖσέ τις, μάλα πένης, ἀλλὰ καὶ μηδὲν ἕτερον ἔχων, ὃ τὸν βασιλέα δεξιῶσεται τῆς εὐνοίας καὶ μόνης χωρὶς, ἀπὸ τοῦ παρατυχόντος ποταμίου ρεύματος πλήσας τὰς χεῖρας τούτῳ σοι δεξιούμαι, φησί, λαμπρότατε βασιλέων. καὶ ὃς μάλα μὲν ἠσθεὶς ἐπὶ τῇ τοῦ προσάγοντος εὐνοία, σφόδρα δὲ καὶ ἑαυτὸν οἶος ἦν ἐπιδειξάι βουλόμενος, μεγάλῃ τὸν γεωργὸν ἐκεῖνον ἠξίωσε τῆς κηδεμονίας. χιλίους γὰρ χρυσίνους ἐδωρήσατο καὶ τὴν ἀπορίαν ἔλυσε τῷ πένητι. ἀλλὰ τοιαῦτα μὲν περὶ ἐκείνου καὶ πολλὸς τῶν ξυγγραφέων ὁ λόγος.

The Persian king Artaxerxes found it extremely moving when someone brought him gifts, even though they were of very small value, since they were brought with good will. At one time, there was a very poor farmer who lived near the banks of the Hydaspes River and had nothing other than his good will alone to bring to his king. So he filled his hands with water from a river stream that happened to be there and said: “Most illustrious king; I bring this as my gift.” The king was very pleased with the bearer’s good will and, wishing to match the good will, he took great care of that farmer. He gave him one thousand gold pieces and erased his poverty. There are many such stories and many authors have told them.

What is of importance here is the manifest interest of Isidore in ancient Persia and *Perserei*, in general. He must have acquired this inquisitiveness about ancient Persia and its great kings while reading classical literature, an interest that remained with him throughout his lifetime. Later he attempted to contrast an “ancient oracle” supposedly dating from the time of Xerxes’s invasion of Greece in 480 BC; again in 1453, when Constantinople was under Ottoman attack he remembered the ancient attempt of the Persian king. Isidore and his learned friend Leonardo of Chios found time in 1453 to compare Mehmed II to Xerxes and to associate the sultan’s operations to those of the great king.¹¹³ Clearly, Isidore’s attention to the classical era developed at an early age. Isidore probably wrote the next two letters to the despot of the Morea as well. They are composed in a witty style and, like the first letter, underscore the poverty of the Moreots.¹¹⁴

In the years from 1420 to 1430 we find Isidore in the Morea, during which period the Palaiologoi launched an offensive against the remaining local Latin lords. Three Palaiologan brothers, Theodoros II, Constantine XI, and the emperor himself, John VIII, conducted the offensive. Their primary target was the Latin lord Carlo Tocco, who had directed raids deep into Greek territory. The focal point of the Greeks was their concern about Tocco’s control of the stronghold of Glarentza, which provided him with a secure and fortified

base for operations within the despotate. From Glarentza Tocco extended his attacks into Elis, as far as River Alpheios. For the time being, Theodoros did not attack Tocco directly, as he was busy with a campaign against Centurione and the Venetians. Tocco then furnished a *casus belli* in 1427. Matters now reached a turning point.¹¹⁵ In the fall of that year some Albanian groups under the protection of Theodoros brought their herds to the valleys of Elis, their customary winter grazing quarters. During the winter months, Tocco's men, confronted with a scarcity of food, raided the camps of the Albanians in search of foodstuffs. The ensuing Palaiologan land operations against his raids were indecisive and the result was inconclusive at best, even though some modern historians would have us believe that this Greek campaign resulted in total success.¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, their offensive culminated in a Palaiologan naval victory. This sea engagement took place near Actium, the site of Octavian's victory against Mark Anthony, and in the area where later the monumental battle of Lepanto was fought, that is, in the vicinity of the Ekhinades (Curzolari) islands in the Ionian Sea. The "fleet" that John VIII had earlier assembled was placed under the command of Leontaris¹¹⁷ and was dispatched to confront the enemy armada. Tocco had summoned ships from the Ionian Islands and from Epiros as well as reinforcements from Marseilles. Tocco's admiral was his own son, Turnus/Turno. The battle resulted in a decisive victory for the Greeks. The Latin armada suffered heavy losses and Tocco's own nephew was captured during the course of the battle while Turnus, the commanding admiral, barely escaped with his life.

The reason we know of this engagement is that Isidore took up the pen and composed a very long *Panegyric*. The work is important, even though formally speaking it is intended to be a communication. Within this oratorical text there is embedded a substantial amount of history. In a number of sections, Isidore plays the role of a historian who has preserved for us an account of this campaign.¹¹⁸ It was indeed a major victory for the Byzantines, the last at sea to be won by a Greek fleet until the nineteenth century. Sphrantzes, Khalkokondyles, and the short chronicles maintain a strange silence concerning the naval engagement. Perhaps their failure to record the event suggests that it was not viewed as a triumph at that time. Yet Isidore, the supposed author of the *Panegyric*, had no reservations, for he fully realized the importance of the battle. It further seems safe to assume that Carlo Tocco viewed this encounter and its outcome as a major setback for his cause, because soon thereafter he displayed a willingness to negotiate with the Greeks.¹¹⁹ He retreated from the Morea under an arrangement that removed the stigma of humiliation and became a relative of the imperial family through marriage.

It is possible that Isidore was attached in some capacity to the headquarters of the brothers during this period. Not long afterward he returned to Constantinople. Is it possible that he returned with John VIII to the capital in 1428 and that his *Panegyric* was the triumphal announcement of his return? Near the end of the summer of 1428, John, in the company of his brothers, Constantine, Thomas, and Theodoros, rode from Mistra to Corinth. At Kenkhreai, the port

καθ' ἑσπέραν ἐγενόμεθα τοῦ Σιγρί<ου> κατ' ἰσότητα τῆ ἰζ^η τοῦ αὐτοῦ. τὴν δὲ νύκτα ἐνδόντος τοῦ πνεύματος μόλις ἐγενόμεθα κατὰ τὴν Σκύρον, ἐν δεξιᾷ ταύτην ἔχοντες.

τῆ ιη^η δὲ ἡμέρα Κυριακῆ, ὀλίγου ὄντος τοῦ πνεύματος, Εὐ<β>οιάν τε παρεδράμαμεν ἐν δεξιᾷ καὶ τὴν Μακρόνησον, ἢ Μήλος τε ἡμῖν ἀνεφαίνετο, σχεδὸν οὐδὲ τῶν ἰστίων ἐγκειμένων, ἅμα ἔω περὶ τὰ Κύθηρα γενόμενοι, ἐπὶ μᾶλλον ἐξηγρίανε τὸ πέλαιος ὁ ἀπαρκατίας καὶ οὐκέτι Κυθήροις προσχεῖν ἠδυνήθημεν. ἀλλὰ ἡ φορὰ καὶ ἡ βία τοῦ ἀνέμου παραμείνασα<ι> μέχρις ὅλης τῆς ιθ^η, ἐξωκειλάμεν περὶ τὸ Λιβυκὸν πέλαιος, μόλις ὀρῶντες τὰς κατὰ Μεθώνην ἀκρωρείας τῆς Πελοποννήσου, ἀφιστάμενοι ὡς πρὸς Λιβύην στάδια πρὸς περίπου τὰ ψ'. τοῦτο μὲν ἐκτοπισθέντες τῷ ἀπαρκατία, τοῦτο δὲ καὶ τῶν ἐμπόρων τῶν Σικελῶν ἀνθισταμένων καὶ οὐκ ἐόντων ὅλως προσχεῖν τῇ Μεθώνῃ διὰ τὴν πειρατικὴν ναῦν, ἦν ἔφασκε ὁ ναύαρχος τῶν ἐν Ἑλλησπόντῳ νηῶν ἰσταμένην ἐκεῖσε σκυλεύειν πᾶσαν ναῦν.

ἔρις οὖν ἐγένετο, τῶν μὲν ἐξαγαγεῖν ἡμᾶς ἐν Μεθώνῃ σπευδόντων, τῶν δὲ μηδὸλως προσχεῖν ὑποφερόντων. νικᾷ τοίνυν αὐτῶν ἡ ἔνστασις. ἡμῖν συνεπιτιθεμένου τοῦ καιροῦ, καὶ τὴν νύκτα πᾶσαν εὐθύς Σικελίας ἐπλέομεν. τὴν δὲ κ^η ἡμέραν μέτριον γίνεται τὸ πνεῦμα ὡς μόλις κινεῖν τὰ ἰστία. τῆ δὲ κα^η ἡμέρα τετράδι ἐπλέομεν πανημέριοι ἀνέμῳ βορρᾷ εὐκραεῖ οὐχ ὀρῶντες γῆν μετὰ τὴν ἑσπέραν τῆς ιθ^η (ἦγουν τὴν Δευτέραν). περὶ δὲ τὰς ἀρχὰς τῆς νυκτὸς ἐξαίφνης μεταβάλλεται ὁ ἀήρ καὶ γίνεται ταραχὴ μεγάλη. καὶ ἀστραπῶν καὶ βροντῶν πλῆθος κατέλαβεν ἡμᾶς καὶ ὑετὸς συχνός. τρίς τε τῆς νυκτὸς ταύτης κατεβάλλομεν τὰ ἰστία σὺν βία καὶ ἀνάγκῃ πολλῇ καὶ σχεδὸν ἐκινδυνεύομεν ὀλονύκτιοι. ἅμα δ' ἔω ἐλόφησε τὰ δεινὰ. καὶ περὶ ε^η ὥραν τῆς ἡμέρας πάλιν ταραχαὶ καὶ νεφῶν κύκλωθεν ἐπισωρεύσεις καὶ ὑετοὶ καὶ οἱ ὀνομαζόμενοι σίφωνες πρὸς αὐτοῖς. καὶ πάλιν τρίς τὰ ἰστία κατήραμεν καὶ τὴν κβ^η πᾶσαν περὶ κινδύνους ἐτελοῦμεν, ἀλλ' ἡ νύξ ἐπισελθοῦσα ἐλόφησε τὰ δεινὰ καὶ ταύτην διεδράμομεν ἡσύχῳ τῷ πνεύματι καὶ τὴν κγ^η ὁμοίως καὶ τὴν κδ^η.

τῆ δὲ κε^η ἅμα ἔω γῆν τε ἐωρῶμεν (ἦ δ' ἦν ἡ Καλαβρῶν) καὶ κατανοήσαντες ἐν οἷς ἐσμεν, ἔτι καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος αἰρομένου, τὴν Σικελῶν πανημέριοι παραπλέοντες ἐς Συρρακούσας δεκαταῖοι κατήχθημεν περὶ τὸ τέλος τῆς κης ἡμέρας τοῦ Σεπτεμβρίου. ἀλλ' οὐπω φθασάντων ἐλλιμενίσαι καλῶς καὶ πρότονα δῆσαι, οἱ τῶν Συρρακοσίων ἄρχοντες ἐπέμψαντες αἴρουσι τὰ ἰστία καὶ τὸ πηδάλιον καὶ τὸν ναύκληρον ἐξελεθεῖν ἐκέλευον λέγοντες ὅτι Λιβυκὸς τὴν Μελίτην πολιορκεῖ νῆσον καὶ τὴν Γόζαν. ἐξήκοντα δὲ τριῆρεις ἔλεγον εἶναι καὶ ναῦς τὸν στόλον, καὶ τετρακοσίους ἰσπεῖς. ψ' δὲ στάδια τὸ μεταξὺ Συρρακουσῶν ἐστὶ καὶ τοῦ Λιβυκοῦ στόλου. εὐρομεν δὲ καὶ ἐτέρας ναῦς δύο πρὸς ταῖς δέκα κεκρατημένας. ἠβούλοντο δὲ κινηθῆναι κατὰ τῶν Καρχηδονίων. ἀλλὰ καὶ λοιμὸς ἐπέιξε Συρρακουσίους καὶ ἡμᾶς πᾶν ἐπέιχε δεινόν, νόσος κυνάγχης μετὰ πυρετοῦ, φόβοι τῶν ἔξωθεν, στεναχωρία τῶν ἐνδοθεν καὶ πᾶν ἄλλο κακοῦ γένος, καὶ τὸ ἐπελθὸν καθ' ἐκάστην ἡμῖν ὅτι μὴ δεινόν.

ἀλλ' ὅμως τὸν ἐν Συρρακούσαις λοιμὸν ἡγησάμενοι βέλτιον τοῦ τῶν βαρβάρων δεσμοῦ καὶ φόνου, περὶ τὴν κςην τοῦ αὐτοῦ μηνὸς ἐξήλθομεν τῆς νηὸς καὶ παρὰ τινι διγλώσσῳ Σικελῶ̄ προσεξενώθημεν.

Voyage to Sicily (Sept. 15–26, 1429)

1 On September 15, a Thursday, at high noon, we boarded the ship and during the evening of the same day, as the sun was about to reach the western horizon, we made sail and with a favorable strong wind we sailed through the night. It was dawn when we found ourselves about Proikonnesos. Then on the 16th the wind failed and died. After a whole day had passed we were still close to Proikonnesos. Late at sunset of the same day a favorable steady north wind arose and we were able to sail until midnight and beyond, and we reached the neighborhood of Lampsakos. The *triremes* [galleys] of the Venetians had put about in anticipation of our arrival. They came to meet us and urged us to lower our sails. We did so, dropped anchor, and waited for daylight. At dawn, we made sail and in one day we sailed through the Hellespont, passed by Tenedos, and on a straight course reached Sigriion that evening. It was the 17th of the month. During the night the wind dropped and we just made it to the neighborhood of Skyros, which we kept to our right.

2 On the 18th, a Sunday, propelled by a weak wind, we passed on our right Euboea and Makronnesos; by evening we could just see Melos. Then there arose a mighty wind from the north and all night long without sails we were pushed on and by dawn we reached the vicinity of Kythera, where the wind turned the sea ugly. We were unable to reach Kythera. The force and violence of the wind persisted throughout the day of the 19th and we were pushed toward the Libyan Sea, barely making out the tip of the Peloponnese by Methone. We were about 700 *stades* from Libya [= Africa]. We had been brought so far by the mighty wind and by the Sicilian merchants who resisted any attempt to approach Methone because a pirate ship that lurked there bent on preying on any vessel that happened to come by, as the admiral of the ships at the Hellespont had reported.

3 An argument thus arose on board. Some urged that we reach Methone and others argued an opposite course. The persistence of the latter won the day (as they were also assisted by the tempest) and we sailed all night long toward Sicily. On the 20th the force of the wind dropped and became so moderate that it hardly filled the sails. On the 21st we sailed all day long under a favorable strong north wind. From the evening of the 19th, that is Monday, we were out of sight of land. It was almost evening when the atmosphere suddenly changed and a great storm arose. Numerous thunderclaps and a downpour overtook us. Three times we were compelled and forced to lower our sails that night. We were in terrible danger all night long, but at dawn our woes found some relief. But then again about the fifth hour of the day there was a storm and the clouds all around sent sheets

of rain. In addition, there were storms called “tempests” and again we were forced to lower our sails three times. Thus we spent all of the 22nd in danger. But relief came at nightfall that we spent under a mild wind and similar was the situation all day long on the 23rd and on the 24th.

4 On the 25th we saw land at dawn. It was the region of Calabria. We realized where we were and, as the wind all day long guided us toward Sicily, we at last reached Syracuse on the 25th of September. The voyage had taken ten days. But we were not permitted to enter the harbor in peace. We put out our stern cables, since the Syracusan authorities hastened to take up our sails and our steering oar. They asked the captain to disembark. They disclosed that a Libyan armada had laid siege to the island of Melite and to Goza. They said that there were sixty *triremes* [galleys] and ships that were transporting four hundred horsemen. The Libyan armada was 700 *stades* from Syracuse. We discovered that another twelve vessels had been detained and that they wished to move against the Carthaginians. However, the plague was creating difficulties for the Syracusans. We too had our own woes, for we had been infected with sore throats and fevers. The external situation scared us, but we had our own problems on board and encountered all sorts of daily woes.

5 We concluded that the plague in Syracuse presented less of a threat than captivity or death at the hands of the barbarians [Muslims]. Thus, on the 26th of the same month, we disembarked and became guests in the house that belonged to a bilingual Sicilian.

Notes

- 1 It is unclear from all relevant and extant sources whether the name Isidoros (hereafter the more familiar and commonly used Isidore will be cited in this study) was his baptismal name or whether he took this name upon being tonsured a monk. He regularly uses the name Isidoros and does not allude to another, although we may suspect that, if given another name, perhaps baptismal, it too began with an *iota* as was common Greek practice. The question is further complicated by the account of Nestor-Iskander, which more often than not simply makes reference to an unidentified patriarch. Nestor-Iskander provides only two citations for purposes of identification, one shortly prior to and then another soon after the fall of the imperial city in late May 1453. He identifies the cardinal as Patriarch Anastasios and later as Athanasios. It is known that Isidore received the appointment from the pope (*without* the specification of a place name for his ecclesiastical jurisdiction, a situation that will be reviewed more fully in Chapter 4); thus he had no ecclesiastical authority over the imperial city, but only over the outlying territories. It is probable that upon being elevated to Latin Patriarch he assumed another name: perhaps Anastasios or Athanasios, hence the confusion of the sources. For the account of Nestor-Iskander, cf. N-I: for patriarch: pars. 28, 29 ff., and 81, 82; and for Anastasios and Athanasios: pars. 68 and 81. For further commentary cf. *ibid.*, pp. 116, 117 and n. 33; 131 n. 87; and 150, 151, and 156 n. 27. There survives a letter from a member of Isidore's household to Cardinal Domenico Capranica, dated 15 July 1453, that was dispatched from Candia. The document does not identify him by name and only refers to him as “Lord Cardinal.” Cf. CC 1: 112–119; *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c. 500–1492*, ed. J. Shepard (Cambridge, 2008), Table 3, *Patriarchs*, p. 911, which lists an Athanasios II for the year 1450 without further comment in the text; and *ODB*

- 1, which discusses neither an Athanasios II nor an Anastasios as patriarch of Constantinople for that year or the years of 1452–1453. The matter of the existence of a Patriarch Athanasios was examined from the archival point of view and the conclusion was that such a patriarch had never existed. On this, cf. Gennadios, Metropolitan of Heliopolis, “Υπὲρ τῆς ἑξ ἡμετέρας Πατριάρχης Ἀθανάσιος Ὀλίγον πρὸς τῆς Ἀλώσεως,” *Ὁρθοδοξία* 18 (1943): pp. 117–123.
- 2 Attention is directed to a highly generalized and undocumented account about Isidore’s life, albeit written by a modern cleric and notable scholar, Joseph Gill, SJ. Cf. his *Personalities of the Council of Florence and Other Essays* (New York, 1964), pp. 65–78.
- 3 The situation is succinctly summarized by W. Regel, who edited and published the earliest surviving letters of Isidore, *Analecta Byzantino-Russica* (Petropoli [St. Petersburg], 1891), p. xli of the “Introduction/*Proœmium*”: “Nous ne savons rien de certain sur l’origine d’Isidore.” A.M. Bandini, *De Bessarionis vita, rebus gestis, scriptis commentarius* (Rome, 1777), col. 904, was the first scholar to provide us with a list of the surviving compositions of Isidore. More recently, cf. Erika Elia, “Un restauro di erudite: Isidoro di Kiev e il conduce Peyron 11 della Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino,” *Medioevo Greco. Rivista di storia e filologia bizantina* 12 (2012): pp. 71–85; and esp. M. Manfredini, “Inventario dei codici scritti da Isidoro di Kiev,” *Studi Classici e Orientali*, 46/2 (1997): pp. 611–624.
- 4 Bandini: “Sa ville natale paraît avoir été Constantinople ou Thessalonique.” The identification of these cities as Isidore’s birthplace is cited in several studies: A. Chacón [Ciacconi], *et al.*, *Vitae et res gestae pontificum romanorum et S.R.E. Cardinalium ab initio nascentis ecclesiae usque ad Urbanum VIII*, 1 (Rome, 1630): col. 903; *Isidorus Thessalonicensis monachus S. Basilii, et abbas S. Demetrii Constantinopolitani, Archiepiscopus Ruthenorum*. . . ; Bandini, ch. 8, *addendum* 15, states with a hint of preference that Isidore’s birthplace was Thessalonike, but concedes that “others” favor Constantinople instead: *Isidorus patriam habuit Thessalonicam vel Constantinopolim, ut alii tradunt*; and J.-P. Migne, *PG* 161 (Paris, 1866), p. iii f. Migne was perhaps the earliest scholar to make this association when he edited *PG* 159 (Paris, 1866), cols. 943–944, and in the introduction to one Latin letter that Isidore addressed to Christendom on the fall of Constantinople. Migne cites: *Isidorus Thessalonicensis, monachus Sancti Blasii [correctly Basilii?], et abbas Sancti Demetrii Constantinopolitani, archiepiscopus Ruthenorum, cum ad concilium Florentinum in consortio Bessarionis venisset . . . Isidorus quidem sub titulo presbyteri cardinalis SS. Petri et Marcellini*. . . Concerning a monastery of Saint Blaise (Ἁγ. Βλάσιος) two are identified from the sources: one in the vicinity of the cistern of Mokios in the area of the Golden Gate and a second, perhaps misidentified or misstated by Joannes Dominicus Mansi in his *Sacra Conciliorum. Nova, et Amplissima Collectio, in qua præter ea, quæ Phil. Labbeus, et Gabr. Cossartius*. . . 31 (Venice, 1793), 1040 C, that reads: ὁ ποτε ἡγούμενος τοῦ ἁγίου Βλασίου Γερμανός. Cf. R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l’empire Byzantin*. Part 1: *Le siège de Constantinople et le patriarcat œcuménique*, 3: *Les églises et les monastères* (2nd ed., Paris, 1969), pp. 64, 65.
- 5 “Isidore de Kiev, apôtre de l’Union Florentine,” *Irénikon* 13/4 (1936): p. 395. Cf. *idem*, *Die Union des Konzils von Florenz in der russischen Kirche, Das östlichen Christentum* 4/5 (Würzburg, 1938), pp. 56, 57, for an expanded discussion of Isidore’s roots. A Latin rendition of this *curriculum vitae* appears in *Isidorus Arch. Kioviensis et Totius Russiae, Sermones inter Concilium Florentinum Conscripti*. . . , eds. G. Hofmann, E. Candal, and Cardinal Julian Cesarini, CFDS, series A, 10/1 (Rome, 1971), pp. vii, viii. It is apparent that Ziegler, Hofmann, and Candal had utilized the same *curriculum vitae* that may be included in Isidore’s papers that were donated to the Vatican Library in 1928.
- 6 Among the prominent Muscovite Rus’, Russian, and Slavic sources, G. Vernadsky, *The Mongols and Russia, A History of Russia* 3 (New Haven and London, 1953), p. 308, identifies Isidore as a “Greek” or “Hellenized Slav”; whereas in *idem*, *Russia at the Dawn of the Modern Age* 4 (New Haven and London, 1959), p. 12, Vernadsky states that Isidore was a Greek born in Salonika (Thessalonike). H. Paszkiewicz, *The Making of the Russian Nation* (London, 1963), pp. 47 n. 187, and 56, concurs with Vernadsky concerning Isidore’s roots. An older eighteenth-century Russian historiographical tradition states

that Isidore was a Greek born to a noble family in Dalmatia. On this cf. V.N. Tatishchev, *История Российская* [= *A History of Russia*], 5 (Moscow-Leningrad, 1965), pp. 242 and 244. Beyond this meager information, little is added in Slavic works. There is no firm evidence that Isidore was fluent in Old Slavonic, Medieval Rus', Bulgarian, or other Slavic languages, nor have any documents survived demonstrating his skills at writing in Old Slavonic or medieval Bulgarian that would explain his roots. He may have had an elementary training in these languages and possessed a reading knowledge of them, but did not feel comfortable to demonstrate a written skill. This is illustrated in *Codex Vat. sl. 14*, a Slavonic breviary, a Mass-book, perhaps dating to the period of 1453–1463, which was transcribed by an unnamed scribe familiar with Church Slavonic and the theological formulations of the Council of Ferrara-Florence. Isidore appended a Greek notation of his acceptance of the transcription. On this cf. I. Dujāev, "Un fragment des «Notitiae Episcopatum Russiae», Copié par Isidore Ruthenus," *ЗРВИ* 11 (1968): pp. 235–240, esp. 236. Haris A. Kalligas, *Byzantine Monemvasia: The Sources* (Monemvasia, 1990), p. 160, advances the plausible notion that Isidore may have received training under the metropolitan of Monemvasia, Akakios the Elder, who maintained a monastery school (presumably at Kontostephanos), where Slavonic languages were taught. The school became notable for producing several candidates who later became metropolitans of Kiev and of All Rus' or played other leading roles in Byzantine-Rus' ecclesiastical and cultural relations. Cf. A-E. Tachias, "The Testament of Photius Monembasiotes, Metropolitan of Russia (1408–1431): Byzantine Ideology in XVth-Century Muscovy," *Cyrrillomethodianum* 8–9 (1984–1985): pp. 77–109; repr. in *idem, Greeks and Slavs: Cultural, Ecclesiastical and Literary Relations* (Thessalonike, 1997), pp. 365–397. The claim that he was somehow a Hellenized Slav from Thessalonike appears purely speculative, although it is a topic that requires more substantive scholarly scrutiny. The poem of Ubertino Pusculo, who wrote in Vergilian hexameters, is an eyewitness account of the siege of Constantinople in 1453. He states that Isidore was from the "city," that is, Constantinople. But Pusculo could have been misinformed, as he did not have access to the imperial court or the Constantinopolitan leadership; he probably had no personal contact with Isidore before the fall of 1453. Cf. Ubertino Pusculo, *Constantinopolis libri IV*, in *Miscellanea di varie operette*, ed. G. Bregantini, 1 (Venice, 1740), II.216: *Nam genus is [sc. Isidorus] magna Danaum ducebat ab urbe*. Also *SF*, ch. 1, no. I.7.

- 7 Two notable studies on the Cyril-Methodian tradition and its continuing legacy command attention: F. Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions among the Slavs: SS. Constantine-Cyril and Methodius*, Rutgers Byzantine Series (New Brunswick, 1970), esp. chs. 4–6 and 9; and A.P. Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs into Christendom: An Introduction to the Medieval History of the Slavs* (Cambridge, 1970), chs. 2 and 5.
- 8 Cf. *infra*, ch. 3, n. 13, and the associated text from the *Patriarchal or Nikon Annal*, that identifies Isidore as a Greek; modern Russian/Slavic scholars, cited *supra*, n. 6, have either overlooked or have ignored this citation of ethnic identification.
- 9 According to one opinion, but common among nineteenth-century Russian church historians, Isidore had Slavic origins, or was perhaps a Bulgarian "by descent." Cf. Regel, p. xli, n. 3. Among the Russian church historians, Filaret, archbishop of Chernigov, *Виз. История русской церкви. Периодъ Третій, отъ раздѣлія митрополіи до учрежденія патріаршесва (1410–1588 г.)* [= *The History of the Russian Church. The Third Period: From the Division of the Metropolitanate to the Establishment of the Patriarchate (1410–1588)*], 3 (4th ed., Chernigov, 1862), p. 68 n. 154, relates: Вагиканское извѣст'е объ ун'и (слав. Рук. № 12) называетъ Исидора словакомъ; это, вѣроятно, по его знан'ю славян. языка [= Vatican information concerning the Union (of Churches) (*Slav. ms. no. 12*) identifies Isidore as a Slav; this is probable by his knowledge of the Slavic language]. Further, Makarii, archbishop of Kharkov, *Istor'q russkoj cerkvi vъ періодъ монгольскій* (= *A History of the Russian Church in the Mongol Period*) 4, Book 1 (St. Petersburg, 1866), p. 106, states: поспѣшили назначить на кафедру русской митрополіи Исидора, родом Болгарина [= Isidore of Bulgarian stock hastened to settle upon the Russian seat of metropolitan]. Of course, such views of ethnicity must be

rejected, as Regel realized, through the unambiguous statement of (Michael) Doukas, *Βυζαντινοτουρκική Ιστορία*, trans. B. Karales, Κείμενα Βυζαντινής Ιστοριογραφίας 7 (Athens, 1997), that Isidore was “Roman [Greek] by descent,” 36.1 (pp. 480–483): τὸν ποτε ἀρχιεπίσκοπον Ῥωσίας Ἰσιδῶρον . . . Ῥωμαῖον τὸ γένος, and 40.5: αὐτοῦ τοῦ γένους [Γραικοῦ] ὄν. Cf. Doukas, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks: An Annotated Translation of “Historia Turco-Byzantina,”* trans. H.J. Magoulias (Detroit, 1975), 36.1 (p. 203). Further, in this citation Doukas perhaps incorrectly identifies Isidore as “Cardinal of Poland”; the correct form from the Latin is “Cardinal of Ruthenia.” Doukas may have been aware that Isidore, following the Council of Ferrara-Florence, had been awarded high episcopal authority by the papacy, that is, jurisdiction over the Rus’ residing within the Polish–Lithuanian realm. This may have prompted Doukas to provide the designation of “Cardinal of Poland,” albeit incorrectly.

In the “*Praefatio*” of the volume dedicated to Isidore, *Analecta Ordinis S. Basilii Magni. Miscellanea in Honorem Cardinalis Isidori (1463–1963)*, 4 (10), fasc. 1–2 (Rome, 1963), pp. vii, viii, Athanasius G. Welykyj/Welykyi summarizes the Slavic position:

Isidorus Thessalonicensis, vel rectius Moreus (in Peloponneso) secundum alios, immo et Bulgarius vel Constantinopolitanus ad mentem aliorum, natus est inter annum 1380–1390 (J. Mercati). Urbs vero Constantini ei, ut videtur, natalis fuit in spiritualibus, forsan in ipsis initiis saec. XV Variis vicibus in patriam redux (1407, 1417, 1430), ibi etiam curriculum monasticum ingressus est in monasterio S. Michaelis in Monembasia. Mox tamen aërem natalem cum illo Constantinopolitano permutavit, ubi, post exant lata opera et onera, in monasterio S. Demetrii hegumenus conspicitur et ut talis actor historiae temporis devenit.

This citation raises several questions. First, unless Janin, 3: 337–350, has overlooked a monastic institution bearing the name of Saint Michael at or near Monemvasia, none is so identified. No monastic foundation charters could be found to clarify the matter. The only monastery in the vicinity of Monemvasia is Kontostephanos, which we address *infra*, n. 13. For a resolution of the statement that “a monastic institution [bore] the name of Saint Michael,” Kalligas, *Byzantine Monemvasia*, p. 176, makes an interesting observation concerning the monastery of Saint Michael and writes:

It is known that after Manuel’s visit to the Peloponnese in 1415–16 a tax was levied for the defence of the Isthmus of Corinth. . . . It has been assumed that it is from this tax that Isidore tried to relieve the Helikouvinites and his interest arose from the fact that their town had been ceded a few years earlier to the metropolitan of Monemvasia in whose services Isidore was. He himself resided in the monastery of Kontostephanos nearby and had even composed a mass for the Archangel Michael to whom the monastery was dedicated.

Cf. *ibid.*, n. 128.

Giovanni Mercati, however, in his *Scritti d’Isidoro il Cardinale Ruteno e Codici a lui Appartenuti che si conservano nella Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana*, Studi e Testi 46 (Rome, 1926), pp. 12, 13, furnishes a somewhat different interpretation of Isidore’s birthplace, date of birth, and familial association, and other evidence. He, citing *Codex Vat. gr. 914* and contrasting the information with *Palatino gr. 226*, writes:

in alter parole, viene a meno la ragione di distinguere i due Isidori, monaci e scrittori entrambi, ed entrambi originarii, come sembra, della Morea e del pari interessatisi per Monembasia – probabilmente la patria – nello stesso giro abbastanza ristretto di tempo che corrisponde presso a poco all’episcopato di Fozio in Russia. Perchè – si badi – 1° il Ruteno vienne detto senz’altro « natione graecus ex Peloponneso » dall’autore dell’*Andreis* e da Pio II, quasi che fosse una cosa notoria, sicura, in Roma circa il 1462; e l’Isidoro del Vatic. Gr. 914 ci si dimostra non solo vissuto parecchio tempo nel Peloponneso, come già osservarono il Regel e il Pierling, ma imparentato con un letterato di colà, e quindi non difficilmente di famiglia peloponnesiaca ach’egli.

Perchè 2° come il Ruteno nel 1429 c. – sia che stesse ancora in Morea (appresso le navigò nel settembre di quell’anno, v. p. 58 sg., e là trovavasi circa il 1430), sia che fosse a S. Demetrio in Costantinopoli. . . – . . . ch’era stata concessa dal despota Teodoro Paleologo e confermata nel 1405 dall’imperatore Manuele al metropolita Acacio, affinché si celebrassero due messe settimanali per i due figli di Teodoro colà sepolti; terra nella quale penso che Isidoro allora abitasse.

Cf. *ibid.*, p. 12 n. 2, and p. 13 nn. 1–6.

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries there were a number of Slavic pockets or settlements throughout the Morea and Thessaly. Cf. D.A. Zakythinos, *Oi Σλάβοι ἐν Ἑλλάδι. Συμβολαὶ εἰς τὴν Ἱστορίαν τοῦ Μεσαιωνικοῦ Ἑλληνισμοῦ* (Athens, 1945), pp. 61–66 and *passim*. In addition, cf. N. Nicoloudis, *Laonikos Chalkokondyles. A Translation and Commentary of the “Demonstrations of Histories” (Books I–III)*, Historical Monographs 16 (Athens, 1996), pp. 126, 127, 170 n. 90, 288, 289, and 342 n. 40; and H. Ditten, *Der Russland-Exkurs des Laonikos Chalkokondyles*, Berliner Byzantinistische Arbeiten Band 39 (Berlin, 1968), pp. 26, 27; 68, 69; 114–116 n. 148; 135 n. 225; and *passim*.

- 10 Cf., e.g., P. Pierling, *La Russie et le Saint-Siège. Etudes diplomatiques* (Paris, 1896), p. 7 and *passim*. He is deferential toward Isidore, because of his role as an imperial representative at the Council of Basle and then the leading Muscovite ecclesiastic at the Council of Ferrara–Florence, and often writes of him in glowing terms without providing documentary evidence to substantiate his statements.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 7. Pierling, herein, associates him with a nameless *famille illustre*. It is unclear whether the author is linking by implication the metropolitan of Rus’ with the Palaiologan family or another notable noble family.
- 12 J. Gill, “Isidoros, Metropolit v. Kiew u. ganz Rußland (1437),” *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* 5 (Freiburg, 1960), pp. 788–789, more generally ascribes his birth either to the 1380s or 1390s in Monemvasia.
- 13 Cf. *infra*, ch. 7, n. 122.
- 14 Kalligas, *Byzantine Monemvasia*, p. 170. On Helena Kantakouzene Palaiologina, cf. D.M. Nicol, *The Byzantine Family of Kantakouzenos (Cantacuzenus) c. 1100–1460. A Genealogical and Prosopographical Study*, DOS 11 (Washington, DC, 1968), esp. 135–138 and *passim*. For sources on the Palaiologos family, cf. the works of Dölger and Papadopoulos/Baloglou cited below. Theodoros had been married once, to Cleopa, by whom he had a daughter Helena. After Cleopa’s death Theodoros never remarried. On this, cf. S. Runciman, “The Marriages of the Sons of the Emperor Manuel II,” in *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Slavi: Miscellanea Agostino Pertusi*, 1 (Bologna, 1981), pp. 279, 280 and n. 18 for the documentation. Further, Kalligas, *Byzantine Monemvasia*, p. 170 n. 98, states: “It is tempting to speculate on a possible identification of Isidore with one of the mysterious bastard sons of Theodore I, whose traces cannot be found anywhere.” Barker in *MP*, p. 272, stresses that Theodore “had no legitimate male heir.” M. Philippides, “The Fall of Constantinople 1453: Classical Comparisons and the Circle of Cardinal Isidore,” *Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 38/1 (2007): p. 378 n. 123, also emphasizes Isidore’s close ties to the imperial family, who “was forced, at an early age, to become a monk in order to eliminate any possible claim he might have to the throne of Constantinople.” Cf. Alice-Mary Talbot, “Theodore I Palaiologos,” *ODB* 3: 2040. In the final analysis, the hypothesis that Isidore had some imperial blood in his veins will remain an inference at best. Essentially, we lack any solid information in the literature of the period or soon thereafter. On Theodoros I, cf. also the brief comments of Averkius Th. Papadopoulos’s fundamental (“cum laude”) dissertation under Franz Dölger, titled *Versuch einer Genealogie der Palaiologen, 1259–1453*, published under the name A. Papadopoulos [= Papadopoulos] in Munich, 1938; and the modern edition of the same work by C.P. Baloglou, *Γενεαλογία τῶν Παλαιολόγων: 1259–1453* (Athens, 2007), esp. p. 130, Τμ. Στ’, Κεφ. 2, Νο. 2.1, who refers to Theodoros’s illegitimate children in a general manner: Ὁ Θεόδωρος εἶχε καὶ μὴ νόμιμα παῖδια. Haris Kalligas does not repeat the speculation

that Isidore may have been an illegitimate son of Theodoros in her latest study, *Monemvasia: A Byzantine City State* (London and New York, 2010), but only states that Isidore was Emperor Manuel II's "protégé and had been offered by him his excellent education."

It is probable that initially, after he departed Constantinople where he had received some preliminary education, perhaps prior to 1403, Isidore was dispatched to the Morea and specifically sent to the monastery of Kontostephanos, that bears the name of the founding family, the Kontostephanoi, but had imperial and patriarchal associations. Cf. *PaL* 2: 3, 4 n. 5. The monastery was situated by Monemvasia, at Helikouvounon, and this may furnish a clue to why Isidore remained attached to the region. On this family and its intermarriage with other prominent Byzantine noble families, cf. C. Barzos, *Ἡ Γενεαλογία τῶν Κομνηνῶν*, 1. *Κέντρον Βυζαντινῶν Ἐρευνῶν. Βυζαντινὰ Κείμενα καὶ Μελέται* 20a 6 (Thessalonike, 1984), pp. 262, 263. For the monastery and the documentation associated with the metropolitan of Monemvasia and Isidore's role, cf. Kalligas, *Byzantine Monemvasia*, pp. 69, 159, 160, 176, 180, and 183. Cf. *Cod. Vat. gr. 914* and *Palatinus gr. 226*; S.P. Lampros, "Δύο Ἀναφοραὶ Μητροπολίτου Μονεμβασίας πρὸς τὸν Πατριάρχη," *NH* 12 (1915): pp. 255–318; Mercati, pp. 9; 12, 13; and K.M. Setton, "The Bulgars in the Balkans and the Occupation of Corinth in the Seventh Century," *Speculum* 25 (1950): pp. 502 and 525, 526 n. 1.

- 15 There exists in his own writings indirect corroboration that he was a Moreot by birth. Thus, e.g., it is evident that he had a special attachment to the Morea by various statements in one of his works, the *Encomium/Panegyric* to Emperors Manuel II and John VIII (cf. *infra*, nn. 16 and 44, and Appendix for the abridged text), as Mercati, p. 7 n. 1, astutely realized: "La larga parte datavi ala Grecie meglio si comprende e si apprezza, ove tengasi presente l'origine d'Isidoro 'ex Peloponneso'." In addition, the *Andreis* (complete title: *Andreis, id est Hystoria de receptione capitis Sancti Andree*, authored by Pope Pius II, who had a long association with Isidore, cites him as a Moreot. Cf. the edition of the Latin text by S.P. Lampros, "Ἡ ἐκ Πατρῶν Ἀνακομιδὴ τῆς Κάρας τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἀνδρέου," *NH* 10 (1913): pp. 3–112 (Latin text: pp. 80–112), wherein Lampros on p. 103 cites: *Anno qui praecesserat proximam percusserat apoplexias Isidorum episcopum Sabinensem, sanctae Romanae ecclesiae Cardinalem, natione Graecum ex Peloponneso, qui olim Rossanis, borealis genti, praefuerat*. Following tradition, Lampros ascribed authorship of the *Andreis* to Alexander of Clusium, but with some reservations. Cf. *infra*, ch. 7, n. 115. Nowadays it has become increasingly clear, on stylistic grounds, that this work can be attributed to the pen of Pope Pius II. Cf. *PaL* 2: 229 n. 103, who further investigates the mysterious circumstances of the suppression of the true authorship of this interesting work. Also cf. further comments, *infra* ch. 7, n. 128.
- 16 Kalligas, *Byzantine Monemvasia*, pp. 169–178 and n. 97.
- 17 Moreover, we may suppose that in his early years he had links with Manuel II, for he is the only Greek author in his *Encomium* to Manuel II and John VIII to supply us details of the emperor's long voyage to the West that had taken him as far away as England. Is his knowledge of the imperial journey the direct result of his association with the emperor? At the very least, it implies some familiarity with the Constantinopolitan court and with the emperor's immediate retinue that had accompanied him to the West; on this work, cf. *infra*, n. 44.
- 18 This is reported by Heinrich of Soemhern who composed an account of the adventures of the cardinal during the sack of Constantinople and of his adventures and escape to Crete. For this account, cf. the new edition with English translation in M. Philippides, ed., trans. and annotated, *Mehmed II the Conqueror and the Fall of the Franco-Byzantine Levant to the Ottoman Turks: Some Western Views and Testimonies*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 302 (Tempe, 2007), pp. 121–133, esp. 128, wherein it is stated that during the sack the cardinal was trying to rally the troops and to fight back, perhaps attempting to make a last stand in the vicinity of the Great Church, Santa Sophia: *per hunc Machometam [Mehmed II] capta quidem urbe, prope ecclesiam Sanctae Sophiae accessit, putans illic esse armatos aliquot qui Turcis resisterent*. In his letter to his friend Bessarion,

Isidore also alludes to these critical hours, mentions his wounds, and reveals himself to be an active defender in possession of considerable strength; cf. his testimony in CC 1: 66:

et per immortalem Deum . . . saepius et saepius illum execratus sum ac maledixi crudelem ex Turcis qui me sagitta fixit atque in sinistra capitis parte vulneravit ante ianuam cuiusdam monasterii [Sanctae Sophiae], non tam acriter tamen ut eadem hora mihi vitam eriperit, propterea eques et attonitus et spiculum ipsum magna in parte vires amiserat.

- 19 His military role is emphasized by his close friend, his *familiaris* and admirer, Archbishop Leonardo Giustiniani; for their association and conversations during the siege, which are echoed in their accounts of those fateful days, cf. Philippides, “The Fall of Constantinople 1453: Classical Comparisons and the Circle of Cardinal Isidore,” pp. 366, 367. Leonardo stresses the role of the cardinal in the defense of the city in no uncertain terms. Cf. CC 1: 150: *Cardinalis [Isidorus], a consilio nunquam absens, Sancti Demetri regionem ad mare defensabat.*
- 20 The founder of the monastery is identified as Georgios Palaiologos, a general during the Komnenan dynasty. The initial date of foundation is given as the early twelfth century and appropriately the founder selected Saint Demetrios, an early Christian martyr–saint notable for his military accomplishments, as the patron for the new establishment. Cf. J. Thomas and Angela Constantinidis Hero, eds., *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders’ Typika and Testaments*, DOS 35/3 (Washington, DC, 2000), p. 1238. Saint Demetrios is also the patron of the city of Thessalonike where a church, but no monastery, was dedicated to him. Isidore is also associated with the Monastery of Prodromos ([μυνη] τοῦ Προδρομοῦ) ἐν τῇ Πέτρῳ in Constantinople. On this, cf. *Codex Monac. gr. 186*, fol. 298^v; *Catalogus codicum manu scriptorium Bibliothecae Monacensis, 2/4: Codices Graecos 181–265 Continens/Katalog der griechischen Handschriften der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek München, 4: Codices graeci Monacenses 181–265*, ed. Kerstin Hajdú (Wiesbaden, 2012), p. 53; and accompanying literature. Also on the monastery, cf. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l’empire Byzantin*, 3, pp. 421–429.
- 21 To fix a locale for this monastery within the imperial city is problematic. George Majeska identifies the site as mid-way along the southern sea walls, “between the port of Con-toscalion harbor and the Jewish Gate at Vlanga, near the old port of Eleutherius[.]” He dismisses the localization of Alexander Van Millingen, Raymond Janin (who, he states, misread the travelers’ accounts, especially that of Steven of Novgorod), and Wolfgang Müller-Wiener. Cf. G.P. Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, DOS 19 (Washington, DC, 1984), p. 267. Although Van Millingen’s testimony in part is to be questioned relative to the information that he furnishes, he does place the monastery of Saint Demetrios very near the modern-day mosque of Atik Mustafa Pasha, which is within the sea walls along the Golden Horn and is in close proximity to the juncture of the sea walls with the Wall of Herakleios. A. Van Millingen, *Byzantine Constantinople: The Walls of the City and Adjoining Historical Sites* (London, 1899), pp. 197, 198; further, he makes no reference to this monastery and perhaps a church associated with it in his later study, *Byzantine Churches in Constantinople: Their History and Architecture* (London, 1912), leading us to the conclusion that no church was attached to this monastic facility. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l’empire Byzantin* 3, pp. 92–94; *idem*, “Les sanctuaires byzantines des saints militaires,” *Echos d’Orient* 33 (1934): pp. 163–180 and 331–342; *ibid.*, 34 (1935): pp. 56–70; and W. Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon zur Topographie Istanbuls. Byzantion – Konstantinupolis – Istanbul bis zum Beginn des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen, 1977), pp. 27, 32, 110, and 301 ff., concur with Van Millingen, and each provides substantial information regarding the location of this institution. Later, in 1452–1453, before and during the defense of Constantinople against Mehmed II, Isidore contributed funds, perhaps his own private funds, for the reinforcement of the walls and gates in this area. Further, there exists confusion in modern scholarship whether the monastery of Saint Demetrios was a male or female institution. Father Vitalien Laurent,

- “Isidore de Kiev et la Métropole de Monembasie,” *REB* 17 (1959): p. 154, notes his assignment to a convent or nunnery (couvent), hence the female monastery of Saint Demetrios, which is improbable. Earlier, Father Paul Pierling, p. 7, does not qualify whether it was a male or female institution. The issue has been recently resolved: an early fourteenth-century text, “Kellibara I: Typikon of Andronikos II Palaiologos for the Monastery of St. Demetrios-Kellibara in Constantinople,” in Thomas and Hero, 3: pp. 1237–1253 (no. 38), and 4: pp. 1505–1511 (no. 56), establishes that from its very foundation the Constantinopolitan institution like its counterpart at Kellibara in southwestern Asia Minor was a male institution.
- 22 As we shall observe, *infra*, nn. 43 and 50, Isidore would have been a very young man, in his teens, if he delivered the speech in 1409. The modern chronological evidence indicates that Isidore could not have pronounced that speech before 1414, when he was in his twenties. The new evidence revises the chronology upwards. The shift in dates makes the role of Isidore as an orator easier to accept.
- 23 While delivering the eulogy, Isidore seems to have been greatly moved and proved unable to complete the reading. Another person had to continue the recitation. Is it possible that a torrent of emotion overcame him, precisely because he was pronouncing a eulogy of a close relative or perhaps even of his own father? Isidore spoke of the occasion and of his delivery in his letter to Manuel II. On his emotions, cf. Kalligas’ observations, *Byzantine Monembasia*, p. 172: “Isidore in his description carefully hides how much he was moved. . . .” On this eulogy and the occasion of the delivery, cf. *infra*, nn. 54 and 55.
- 24 *Arch. Segr. Vaticano, Arm. XXXI*, tom. 52, fol. 64^r (as quoted in *PaL* 2: 4 n. 5): *Orbitus D<omini> Cardinalis Ruteni: Anno a nativitate Domini MCCCCLXIII, die vero Mercuri XXVII mensis Aprilis, reverendissimus in Christo pater dominus Cardinalis Rutenus appellatus Ysidorus Rome diem suum extremum. Eius anima in pace requiescat*. Cf. *infra*, ch. 7, nn. 30 and 32.
- 25 Pierling, p. xxi, intimates that Isidore earlier was a disciple of the Neoplatonist philosopher, Georgios Gemistos Plethon, at Mistra. James Hankins goes further and makes the emphatic statement that Isidore “had almost certainly been a student of Pletho”; cf. his “Cosimo de’ Medici and the ‘Platonic Academy,’” *JWarb* 53 (1990): pp. 156, 157; repr. and enlarged with appendices in *idem, Humanism and Platonism in the Italian Renaissance*, Storia e Letteratura. Raccolta di Studi e Testi 220, 2 (Rome, 2004), p. 208. Joseph Gill, more circumspect in his research and writings, states, “Isidore probably did [study under Plethon], for his writings at this time display a decided Platonic tendency and an antagonism to Aristotle [which he later displayed especially at the Council of Ferrara-Florence].” Cf. Gill, *Personalities of the Council of Florence*, p. 66. However, Gill, in the “Introduction” to *Isidorus Arch. Kioviensis et Totius Russiae. Sermones inter Concilium Florentinum Conscripti*. . . , eds. G. Hofmann and E. Candal, *CFDS*, Series A, vol. X, fasc. 1 (Rome, 1971): p. vii, modifies his earlier interpretation and asserts that *philosophiam sub Georgio Gemisto Plethone studuit*. If he was a student of the philosopher, then Isidore (who was a number of years senior to Bessarion, at least thirteen) emerges as a contemporary of Cardinal Bessarion, each being a student of Plethon. It is known that Bessarion studied under Plethon in 1431, and then perhaps Isidore might have studied with the master in the 1420s, although we have no concrete evidence to substantiate this claim. Thus the issue is quite plausible, although Isidore himself nowhere makes the assertion that he was a student of Plethon. It is significant, as we shall see later, that there was a very close relationship between the two cardinals, Isidore and Bessarion, especially at the Council of Ferrara-Florence and thereafter into the 1460s. Plethon does not associate himself with Isidore in any of his written works, perhaps for good reason since his writings are not intended to recognize associates or students, and any such claims of a strong bond between the two men, between teacher and student, are purely speculative. On the importance of Plethon to rhetorical literature, Platonism, and neo-paganism, cf. F. Masai, *Pléthon et le platonisme de Mistra* (Paris, 1956); C.M. Woodhouse, *George Gemistos Plethon: The Last of the Hellenes* (Oxford, 1986); and N. Siniossoglou, *Radical Platonism in Byzantium: Illumination and Utopia in Gemistos Plethon* (Cambridge, 2011), among others.

- 26 On these critical years, which would have resulted in the willing surrender of Constantinople to Bayezid I Yıldırım [“the Thunderbolt”], if the battle of Ankara and the rout of the Ottoman forces by the Mongols of Timur (Tamburlaine/Tamerlane) had not intervened, cf. now D. Khatzopoulos, *Le premier siège de Constantinople par les Ottomans, 1394–1402* (Montreal, 1995); and the modern Greek translation by the author, with additions: *Η Πρώτη Πολιορκία της Κωνσταντινουπόλεως από τους Οθωμανούς (1304–1402)* (Athens, *sine anno*). Older literature includes *MP*, pp. 139 ff. and Appendix 9 for an evaluation of sources and dates; *LCB*, pp. 328–330; G. Roloff, “Die Schlacht bei Angora,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 161 (1943): pp. 244–262; H.A. Gibbons, *The Foundation of the Ottoman Empire: A History of the Osmanlis up to the Death of Bayezid I (1330–1403)* (New York, 1916), pp. 250 ff.; H. Hookham, *Tamburlaine the Conqueror* (London, 1962), *passim*; and S.J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, 1: Empire of the Gazis: The Rise and Decline of the Ottoman Empire (1280–1808)* (Cambridge, 1976), p. 307, with modern Turkish scholarship on the events.
- 27 That the plague was perhaps a more immediate concern in the decision to surrender the city to Bayezid has not been examined by modern scholarship. Cf., e.g., the brief chronicle entry 22 for 1402/6910 in *CBB* 1: 28 (p. 184): οἱ δὲ ἐν τῇ Πόλει λ<ο>μοκτονηθέντες, ὁ λαὸς ἐφυγεν. ἔλαβον δὲ τὰς κλεῖδας τῆς Πόλεως τινὲς τῶν ἀρχόντων καὶ ἐπορεύοντο ἐν τῷ Κοτυαεῖω πρὸς τὸν σουλτάνον – τοῦ παραδοθῆναι τὴν Πόλιν. While the spelling of the ms. states λιμοκτονηθέντες, we believe that this is a reference not so much to famine but to the plague, since both words sound identical when voiced. It is possible that λοιμοκτονηθέντες is after all the true reading referring to the plague. That the surrender of Constantinople had become imminent is a certain fact. The initial negotiations for its implementation may have begun as early as the summer of 1401. Cf. *RKOR* 3195 (p. 74). This surrender had been discussed in detail in *MP*, pp. 200 ff.; and in Khatzopoulos, *Η Πρώτη Πολιορκία*, pp. 197–200. For additional contemporary testimonies, cf. *MP*, p. 207 and n. 14.
- 28 Khatzopoulos, *Η Πρώτη Πολιορκία*, pp. 228–249.
- 29 Kalligas, *Byzantine Monemvasia*, p. 170: “It is certain that when Manuel arrived in Constantinople from the Peloponnese in June 1403, after his journey to the West, Isidore had either traveled with him or had preceded him there.” While the evidence is far from “conclusive,” as there are no documents to support either opinion expressed by her, we may ask a legitimate question: Did Isidore and his talents come to the attention of the emperor while the latter was in the Morea at this time or did Manuel decide to bring the young gifted Moreot (his own relative in some unspecified way?) to the imperial city to receive what was presumed to be a first-rate education? The emphatic statement of Kenneth M. Setton, *PaL*, pp. 3, 4 n. 5, that “Isidore first emerges in the light of history as a very young man in the year 1403” must also be seen as an opinion, for there are no surviving documents that speak of Isidore at this early date. Ziegler, *Die Union des Konzils von Florenz*, p. 58, first notices him in 1409. The earliest date for the appearance of Isidore in history is 1414 and not 1403 as scholars have assumed for a long time. This will be discussed *infra*, nn. 43–48.
- 30 G. Cammelli, *I dotti bizantini et le origini dell’umanismo, 1: Manuele Crisolora* (Florence, 1941): 128 ff.; I. Thomson, “Manuel Chrysoloras and the Early Italian Renaissance,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 7 (1966): pp. 63–82, esp. 80; and *MP*, p. 231.
- 31 *MP* devotes an entire chapter to Manuel II as a scholar, ch. 7 (pp. 395–443), and defines his literary activity as “the cornerstone of his being” (p. 410). *MP* further observes (p. 409) that, given his literary and military talents, under “more favorable opportunities,” he could have been “the East Roman Marcus Aurelius.”
- 32 For the state of education in Constantinople in the decade of 1401–1410, with particular emphasis on Manuel II’s efforts to educate his children, cf. M. Philippides, *Constantine XI Dragaš Palaeologus (1404–1453): The Last Emperor of Byzantium* (forthcoming), ch. 2, sec. III. On the low state of learning in Constantinople in the first half of the fifteenth century, cf. the notable observations of I. Ševčenko, “Intellectual

- Repercussions of the Council of Florence,” *Church History* 24/4 (1955): p. 294 and *passim*.
- 33 It should be observed that at this time, in spite of the unfavorable circumstances brought on by the long blockade of Bayezid I, Constantinople managed to educate an impressive number of notable intellectuals, both Greek and Italian, who made the difficult voyage to the imperial city to receive training in the ancient Greek language and in classical Greek literature. Many of these scholars found their way to Italy before and after the fall in 1453 and contributed immensely to the Italian Renaissance. On this *generatio mirabilis*, cf. among others S.P. Lampros, *Αργυροπούλεια: Ιωάννου Αργυροπούλου Λόγοι, Πραγματεΐαι, Ἐπιστολαί, Προσφωνήματα, Ἀπαντήσεις καὶ Ἐπιστολαὶ πρὸς Αὐτὸν καὶ τὸν Υἱὸν Ἰσαάκιον. Ἐπιστολαὶ καὶ Ἀποφάσεις περὶ Αὐτὸν. Προτάσσεται Εἰσαγωγή περὶ Ἰωάννου Αργυροπούλου, τῆς Οἰκογενείας Αὐτοῦ καὶ τῶν Αργυροπούλων καθ’ Ὅλου* (Athens, 1910); D.J. Geanakoplos, *Greek Scholars in Venice: Studies in the Dissemination of Greek Learning from Byzantium to the West* (Cambridge, 1962; repr. as *Byzantium and the Renaissance* [Hamden, 1972]); *idem*, *Interaction of the “Sibling” Byzantine and Western Cultures in the Middle Ages and Italian Renaissance (330–1600)* (New Haven and London, 1976); *idem*, “Italian Renaissance Thought and Learning and the Role of Byzantine Emigré Scholars in Florence, Rome, and Venice: A Reassessment,” *Rivista di studi bizantini e slavi* 3 (1984): pp. 129–157; K.M. Setton, “The Byzantine Background to the Italian Renaissance,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 100 (1956): pp. 1–76; D.A. Zakythinos, “Τὸ Πρόβλημα τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Συμβολῆς εἰς τὴν Ἀναγέννησιν;,” *Ἐπετηρὶς τῆς Φιλοσοφικῆς Σχολῆς τοῦ Πανεπιστημίου Ἀθηνῶν* 5 (1954–1955): pp. 126–138; and K.S. Staikos, *Χάρτα τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Τυπογραφίας: Ἡ Ἐκδοτικὴ Δραστηριότητα τῶν Ἑλλήνων καὶ ἡ Συμβολὴ τους στὴν Πνευματικὴ Αναγέννηση τῆς Δύσης*, 1: *15ος Αἰώνας* (Athens, 1989). Most recently, cf. Maria Mavroudi, “Translations from Greek into Latin and Arabic During the Middle Ages: Searching for the Classical Tradition,” *Speculum* 90/1 (2015): pp. 29–59.
- 34 The earliest letters of Isidore, published by Regel, *supra*, n. 3, are addressed to Guarino. The tone and the jesting material indicate that the two were close friends, probably since the days of their literary training in Constantinople.
- 35 Cammelli, pp. 131 ff.; *MP*, p. 231 n. 57; and M. Baxandall, “Guarino, Pisanello and Manuel Chrysoloras,” *JWarb* 28 (1965): pp. 183–204.
- 36 An example of his exquisite calligraphy at an early stage in his career and life is provided by his transcription of Manuel II’s *Funeral Speech/Ἐπιτάφιος* for Theodoros I, housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des Manuscrits, *Supplément grec 309*. His *codex* also bears a masterpiece of Greek portraiture; cf. Helen C. Evans, ed., *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)* (New Haven and London, 2004), no. 1 (p. 26); and Philippides, “The Fall Constantinople 1453: Classical Comparison and the Circle of Cardinal Isidore,” p. 371 n. 97. For Isidore’s activities as a copyist of ancient texts, cf. C.G. Patrinelis, “Ἕλληνες Κωδικογράφοι τῶν Χρόνων τῆς Ἀναγεννήσεως;,” *Ἐπετηρὶς τοῦ Μεσαιωνικοῦ Ἀρχείου* 8–9 (1958/1959): pp. 63–124, esp. 87: “Ἰσίδωρος καρδινάλιος [δρᾶ 1409–1464].” Isidore’s interests in calligraphy go beyond the task of a copyist. As *Codex Vat. gr. 914*, fols. 1r–3r demonstrates, he had a profound curiosity in the art of ink making, providing not only a recipe for its production, but also expounding upon the process. For a substantial analysis of this text and a critical edition with commentary, cf. Ph. Nusia, “Ἀνέκδοτο Κείμενο περὶ Σκευασίας Μελανιοῦ, Κιναβάρεως, Βαρζίου, Καταστατοῦ, καὶ Κόλλησις Χαρτιοῦ (15ος αι.);” in N. Tsirones, M. Lengas, and A. Lazaridu, eds., *Βιβλιοαμφιάστης 3: Τὸ Βιβλίον στὸ Βυζάντιο. Βυζαντινὴ καὶ Μεταβυζαντινὴ Βιβλιοδεσία. Πρακτικὰ Διεθνοῦς Συνεδρίου. Ἀθήνα 13–16 Ὀκτωβρίου 2005* (Athens, 2008), pp. 43–62, esp. 55–62.
- 37 It is known that he had continued his studies upon his return to the Peloponnese and developed a skill in copying manuscripts, although he spent substantial time in Mistra and Monemvasia. Cf. A. Papadakis, “Isidore of Kiev,” *ODB* 2: 1015–1016; and Kalligas, *Byzantine Monemvasia*, p. 177.

- 38 On Isidore and the Vatican Library, cf. Mercati, ch. 3 (pp. 60–102).
- 39 *MP*, p. 263 n. 109, notes that the documentation for these trips is “scanty” at best, and the journeys were probably of a personal nature, even though a document describes Chrysoloras as an “ambasciatore dell’imperatore di Costantinopoli.”
- 40 This trip is much better documented than the previous voyages of 1404 and 1405–1406; cf. *RKOR* 3318 (pp. 95, 96); Cammelli, pp. 144 ff.; and *MP*, p. 263.
- 41 In Constance, Chrysoloras fell ill and died on the 15th of April 1415; cf. *MP*, p. 322. His stay in the city coincides with the gathering of the Council of Constance and the trial of Jan Hus, the Czech professor, regent of Charles University, priest who preached at the Bethlehem Chapel in Prague, and religious reformer. The question must be raised: Did Chrysoloras go to Constance to confer with the papal leadership and perhaps seek to obtain agreement for military assistance? This is a topic that has not been explored. As we will note in the next chapter, religious reformers dominated this council among others, although some, if not the majority, of the attendees were strong supporters of the papacy.
- 42 Theodoros died in 1407, but the month and exact day of his death remain problematic; cf. *MP*, p. 272, n. 126, for the particulars on the uncertain and ambiguous evidence. The generally accepted date of Theodoros’s death is generally the summer of 1407. Cf., e.g., A.G. Mompherratos, *Oi Palaiologoi én Peloponnhsw* (Athens, 1913), p. 29: Τὸ θέρος 1407 ὁ Θεόδωρος I μετὰ μακρὰν ἀσθένειαν ἀπέθανεν ἐν Μιστρᾷ. Georgios Sphrantzes’s authentic chronicle, the *Minus*, in *Georgios Sphrantzes, Memorii 1401–1477. In anexa Pseudo-Phrantzes: Macarie Melissenos Cronica, 1258–1481*, ed. and trans. V. Grecu, *Scriptores Byzantini* 5 (Bucharest, 1996); *The Fall of the Byzantine Empire: A Chronicle by George Sphrantzes 1401–1477*, trans. M. Philippides (Amherst, 1980); and *Georgii Sphrantze Chronicon*, ed. and trans. R. Maisano, *CFHB* 29 (Rome, 1990), is of no help. It treats this period under a general chronological heading: 3: ἀφ’ οὗ δὴ ἰβου ἔτους μέχρι καὶ τοῦ καου [1403–1413], and telescopes into this summary a number of events that differ chronologically, including the death of the despot of the Morea: καὶ τοῦ θανάτου τοῦ δεσπότης κῦρ Θεοδώρου τοῦ πορφυρογεννήτου εἰς τὸν Μυζιθρᾶν. *MP*, p. 272 n. 126, is more specific: Theodoros probably died in June. The title of Manuel’s speech, as it appears in the manuscripts of the period, reads (with minor variations): Τοῦ Εὐσεβεστάτου καὶ Φιλοχρήστου Βασιλέως Κυροῦ Μανουὴλ τοῦ Παλαιολόγου Λόγος Ἐπιτάφιος εἰς τὸν Αὐτάδελφον Αὐτοῦ Δεσπότην Πορφυρογέννητον Κῦρ Θεόδωρον τὸν Παλαιολόγον Ῥηθεις Ἐπιδημήσαντος εἰς Πελοπόννησον τοῦ Βασιλέως. G.T. Dennis, *The Letters of Manuel II Palaeologus*, *CFHB* 8 (Washington, DC, 1977), points out, pp. 159, 160 n. 1, that this long address has also survived in an epitome of a sort, revised by Manuel himself: *Codex Scorial gr. 14 (R-I-14)*, fols. 257–270.
- 43 The confusion dates back to the *quattrocento*, when Laonikos [Nikolaos] Khalkokondyles, *Laonici Chalcocondylae Atheniensis Historiarum Libri Decem*, ed. I. Bekker, *CSHB*, Book 1 (Bonn, 1843), pp. 202, 203, states that Manuel II during his voyage to the Morea in 1408 pronounced the speech “as if he were a tragedian at his [brother’s] grave”: Ἐμμανουήλος ὁ Βυζαντίου [Constantinople’s] βασιλεὺς . . . ἐπὶ τῷ ἀδελφῷ ἧδι τελευτηκῶτι [Theodoros I] λόγον ἐπικήδειον ἐξετραγῶδει δεξιῶν ἐπὶ τῷ τάφῳ αὐτοῦ. For a new edition and the first complete English translation of Khalkokondyles, cf. A. Kaldellis, ed. and trans., *The Histories*, *Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA and London, 2014). The same confusion also seems to appear in an unclear statement of Isidore himself, in his *Panegyric* to Manuel II and John VIII. Cf. *ΠκΠ* 3: 164: ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐκεῖνος [Manuel II] . . . ἤκεν εἰς Πελοπόννησον . . . τοῦ φίλου καὶ ἀδελφοῦ τῶν ὧδε ἀπάραντος καὶ πρὸς τὰ ἀμείνω πορείαν μεταστάντος . . . ὃν καὶ πενήθεις ἀξίως κατεκόσμησεν λόγοις ἐπιταφίσις, γενναίοις πάνυ δεξιοῖς. For selections from the text, cf. *infra*, Appendix. Influenced by these misleading statements, modern scholars have been led astray as well; cf. *MP*, p. 525.
- 44 A summary of the chronological problems and the confusion associated with this document is supplied in *MP*, Appendix 22 (pp. 525–527). The chronology has now become

easier to understand because of the “new” evidence; cf. *infra*, nn. 51 and 52. Armed with this new information, it now appears that the older view of Lampros is closer to the truth than the later conclusions of Zakythinos (cf. *infra*, n. 50). S.P. Lampros, “Μία Ἐπιμημόσυνος Τελετὴ ἐν Μυστρᾷ,” *Σπαρτιατικὸν Ἡμερολόγιον* 11 (1910): pp. 33–42, has concluded that the terminus ante quem for the recital was 1419, when Theodoros II married Cleopa Malatesta, that is, Isidore in his letter would have mentioned her among the audience, as she would have attended the ceremony. In fact, the arguments offered by Zakythinos in favor of a date of 1409 have now been effectively invalidated.

- 45 Lampros edited and published the text in *ΠκΠ* 3: 132–221. His student, I.K. Bogiatzides, after the death of his mentor, continued the editorial work for this and the later volume. Exactly when Isidore composed the speech is unknown, but, because of its contents, it must have been after the naval battle near the Ekhinades (Curzolari) islands in the Ionian Sea, near Naupaktos (Lepanto), in 1427. On this event and its historical circumstances, cf. Philippides, *Constantine XI Dragaš Palaeologus*, ch. 4, sec. II, since Isidore himself recounts the consequences of this naval victory over Carlo Tocco and his son Turnus/Turno. Cf. Isidore’s own statements, which assist us in providing a terminus ante quem for his speech, in *ΠκΠ* 3: esp. 196, 197. We should observe that his long speech clearly displays Isidore’s superior classical education and mastery of ancient Attic. It contains substantial references to antiquity and is composed in an admirable ancient Greek style, even though Bogiatzides unjustly criticized its style. We wonder whether Bogiatzides, p. γ’ of the introduction: μετ’ οὐκ ὀλίγων αὐτοῦ σολοικισμῶν καὶ βαρβαρισμῶν, would have expressed this criticism if he had known that it had been composed by Isidore. Bogiatzides attributes the text to an anonymous writer, since the ms. does not contain the author’s name in the incipit, added by a later hand that reads: *In Constantinopolitatum Imp. Et Constantinopolim ipsam encomion panegyricum; in quo praeter cetera, quod Imperator Constantinopoli a Turcis periclitante, ipse ad petenda ab Italis et Germanis auxilia profect. suscep.* The work was eventually attributed to Isidore by Mercati, pp. 2 ff. The authorship by Isidore and the approximate date of its composition 1429 are further confirmed by O.J. Schmitt, “Kaiserrede und Zeitgeschichte im späten Byzanz: ein Panegyrikos Isidors von Kiew aus dem Jahre 1429,” *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 48 (1998): pp. 211 and n. 11, and 241, 242. On p. 211, he states: “Was Länge und Inhalt anbetrifft, last sich nur eine zeitgenössische Rede mit Manuels II. Werk vergleichen der 1429 am Hofe Johannes VIII. vorgetragene Panegyrikos Isidors, des späteren Metropolitens von Kiew.” Cf. R. Estangüi Gómez, *Byzance face aux Ottomans. Exercice du pouvoir et contrôle du territoire sous les derniers Paléologues (Milieu XIV^e–milieu XV^e siècle)*, Byzantina Sorbonensia 28 (Paris, 2014): p. 451 n. 446. Bogiatzides, however, realized the exceptional importance of this work, e.g., p. γ’ of the introduction: πολυτιμωτάτου δὲ διὰ τὰς περιεχομένας ἱστορικὰς εἰδήσεις ἀγνώστους ἀλλαχόθεν. He recognized that it is more than a speech, for it provides us with precious historical information on the events of the period that are embedded in the rhetorical text. In addition to the battle of Ekhinades and the treaty that followed, which was sealed with the marriage of Constantine XI, the son of Manuel II, to the daughter of Tocco, it is the only Greek text that addresses in detail the long voyage of Manuel II to the west during the blockade of Constantinople by Bayezid I, thus providing us in a narrative form a detailed Greek view of the emperor’s journey abroad. It is a pity that modern scholarship has largely overlooked the precious historical details furnished by Isidore in this *Encomium*.
- 46 The funeral address has been edited and published on a number of occasions: *PG* 156 (Paris, 1866): cols. 181–308; Lampros, *ΠκΠ* 3: 11–119; and definitively, Julian Chrystostomides, Προθεωρία εἰς τὸν τοῦ βασιλέως Μανουὴλ Παλαιολόγου ἐπιτάφιον εἰς τὸν ἀδελφὸν Θεόδωρον. *Manuel II Palaeologus: Funeral Oration on His Brother Theodore*, CFHB 26 (Thessalonike, 1985).
- 47 Manuel’s letter to Chrysoloras, requesting improvements on the text, has survived. Cf. Dennis, *The Letters*, no. 56 (pp. 158–160). Also, e.g., the opening statements, p. 159: στέλλω σοι τὸν πρὸς τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἐπιτάφιον, ὃς ἐμοὶ δεδημιούργηται δακρύνοντι μᾶλλον ἢ γράφοντι . . . οὐκ οὐδὲ τουτὶ τὸ βραχύτατον γράφειν ἀδακρυτὴ δύναμαι.

- 48 His brief reply is simply titled Προθεωρία. On this work and its text, cf. Chrysostomides, pp. 67–69.
- 49 For a Greek–English bilingual edition, cf. C.G. Patrinelis and D.Z. Sophianos, *Manuel Chrysoloras and His Discourse Addressed to the Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus/Μανουήλ Χρυσολωρά Λόγος πρὸς τὸν Αὐτοκράτορα Μανουήλ Β΄ Παλαιολόγο* (Athens, 2001). The importance of this text had been indicated prior to the edition; cf. C.G. Patrinelis, “An Unknown Discourse of Chrysoloras Addressed to Manuel II Palaeologus,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 13 (1972): pp. 497–502.
- 50 The suggestions of Chrysoloras survive in one ms., Meteora, *Metamorphosis 154*, in seventy-five folios, the first of which is missing; the ms. had already been identified by Nikos Bees in 1967, but was not published until 2001 (*supra*, n. 49). On its history and “dormant period,” cf. Patrinelis and Sofianos, p. 38.
- 51 This is the sound conclusion reached by Patrinelis and Sofianos, and is based on internal evidence within the text, which employs future terms in regard to a potential audience; cf., e.g., p. 79: τίς δὲ καὶ τῶν ἀκουσομένων τούτου [sc. Ἐπιτάφιου] and again πολλῶν τῶν ἀκουσομένων . . . καὶ θαυμασομένων. At the same time, the new conclusion negates the arguments of D.A. Zakythinos, “Μανουήλ Β΄ ὁ Παλαιολόγος καὶ ὁ Καρδινάλιος Ἰσιδώρος ἐν Πελοποννήσῳ,” in *Mélanges offerts à Octave et Melpo Merlier, à l’occasion du 25^e anniversaire de leur arrivée en Grèce*. Collection de l’Institut Français d’Athènes 94 (Athens, 1957): p. 6, who was under the impression that the speech was pronounced in the spring of 1409, which Zakythinos believes was on the second anniversary of the death of Theodoros. Cf. Estangüi Gómez, pp. 377, 378 nn. 79–82 and 385 n. 121.
- 52 Before the publication and the analysis of Meteora, *Metamorphosis 154*, scholars had assumed that the emperor sent his letter and speech to Chrysoloras late in 1409 or early in 1410. It was also assumed that the speech was composed in 1409 as the earliest evidence for Plethon’s residence at Mistra. Moreover, scholars had further assumed that Isidore was already in the Morea in 1409, since he brought the Ἐπιτάφιος with him. Armed with the Meteora manuscript, Patrinelis and Sofianos quite reasonably conclude, p. 46: “the writing of Manuel’s funeral oration and letter to Chrysoloras, the earliest evidence of Georgios Gemistos Plethon’s presence and Isidore’s presence at Mistra . . . must be shifted to some years later.” Cf. Estangüi Gómez, p. 451 f.
- 53 Dennis, *The Letters*, p. 168 n. 1, points out that the date can be extrapolated from a letter that Guarino wrote in January of 1418. Dennis reviews the evidence and concludes that Manuel composed his letter before October 1417 (cf. the following note for specifics).
- 54 On this letter, cf. Lampros, “Μία Ἐπιμνημόσυνος Τελετή,” p. 40. The complete text of this letter appears in Dennis, *The Letters*, no. 60 (pp. 166–169). The request for a translation comes at the conclusion of the letter: φανέρου τε οἷς ἂν γνοίης καὶ πρὸς τὴν Λατίνων φωνήν, εἰ δὲ βούλει, τὴν ἰδίαν τοῦτο [Ἐπιτάφιος] μεταβάλλειν ἀξίου . . . σὺ . . . τοῦτο ποίει, δείξεις ἂν κἄν τῷδε τὸν εὐνοῦν. The translation would have been a difficult task. Guarino never attempted to comply with the request, but he passed it on to Ambrogio Traversari, as Dennis, *ibid.*, p. 18 n. 3, indicates, deriving his evidence from a letter of Guarino, whose pertinent text he quotes: *Ipse etiam imperator humanissimam quondam ad me nisit epistulam et funebrem pro eius fratre orationem quam ipse confecti; oratio est . . . copiosa et miro contexta verborum et sententiarum ornatu . . . ad fratrem Ambrosium nostrum mittam.*
- 55 His letter addressed to the emperor, τῷ βασιλεῖ κῦρ Μανουήλ, has been published as Letter 5 (pp. 65–69), in Regel.
- 56 In Regel’s edition, this letter is published and numbered as the fifth (pp. 65–69), and is next to last. This position in relation to the other letters is of course misleading, for it implies that it was written at a later time.
- 57 *Ibid.*, p. 65.
- 58 *Ibid.*: ὡς ταῦτη δὴ μοι μᾶλλον λυσιτελεῖν καὶ μὴ οὕτως ἀποκναίειν τὴν Ἀττικὴν ἀκοήν, πρὸς ἣν Πλάτωνος καὶ Δημοσθένους γλώτταν καὶ τῶν κατ’ αὐτοὺς μόνον προσήκει φθέγγεσθαι.
- 59 *Ibid.*: ἡδέως τοιγαροῦν ἀκούοις, ᾧ βασιλεῦ. πρότερον δὲ ἐρῶ σοι λόγον βραχὺν μὲν, γλώττης δὲ ἀρίστης δεόμενον καὶ μείζονος ἢ κατὰ τὴν ἐμὴν.