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The Use and Authority of Manuscripts in the Council of Ferrara–Florence (1438–39)

Anni Hella

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To my family

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ABSTRACT

The dissertation deals with the meeting of Eastern and Western Churches at the Council of Ferrara–Florence (1438–39). The focus is on the use and authority of manuscripts: how the material books were part of theological argumentation. The Council was supposed to end the prolonged East–West schism. Four main issues separating the Churches were discussed: *Filioque*, eucharistic bread, purgatory, and papal primacy. Of these, controversy about the legitimacy of the addition of *Filioque* to the creed and its orthodoxy took the most space. Arguments were based mostly on authoritative texts originating from the time of the undivided Church. This study shows that not only the commonly accepted texts mattered, but also the material objects, the manuscripts, had to be authoritative. To prove their authority, the Council’s participants adopted various methods.

The materiality of the manuscripts took an important role in the Council. Even before the Council’s opening, manuscripts were searched, collected and studied. It became evident in the Council’s sessions that quoting the authoritative texts by heart was not enough. Manuscripts were needed as physical objects. The texts and their possibly different readings had to be read and analysed. Manuscripts were even loaned and borrowed so that they could be compared with one another. Signs of the manuscript’s history were looked for. The manuscript’s age and writing support were important factors in determining its authenticity and, thus, its authority. What caused debates the most was the corruption found in the leaves of manuscripts. Questions of origin and provenance were also focal, as they could reveal possible mutilation of the text. All these discussions are analysed in this study using the original sources stemming from the Council, the Greek and Latin *Acts*, Syropoulos’s *Memoirs*, and correspondence, to name the most important ones.

This study offers a thorough perspective into manuscripts’ role in the Council’s preparations, discussions, and outcomes. The new humanistic methods that were used alongside other argumentative methods, such as scholasticism, not only affected the outcome of the Council but also shaped the individuals and communities that had come to the Council. As the study suggests, this *humanistic theology* found its arena in the Council, where it could spread.

KEYWORDS: the Council of Ferrara–Florence, cultural history, manuscripts, the Late Middle Ages, Italy, Byzantium, East–West schism, humanism

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Väitöskirja käsittelee idän ja lännen kirkkojen kohtaamista Ferrara–Firenzen konsiilissa (1438–39). Näkökulma on käsikirjoitusten käytössä ja auktoriteetissa: miten materiaaliset kirjat olivat osa teologista argumentaatiota. Konsiilin oli tarkoitus päättää pitkittynyt idän ja lännen kirkkojen skisma. Erityisesti neljä keskeisintä kirkkoja erottanutta asiaa nousi keskusteluissa: *Filioque*, ehtoollisleipä, kiirastuli ja paavin primaatti. Näistä *Filioque* – sen legitimiteetti osana uskontunnusta sekä ortodoksisuus – aiheutti eniten keskustelua. Argumentit pohjautuivat ensisijaisesti jakautumattoman kirkon aikaisiin auktoritatiivisiin teksteihin. Tämä tutkimus osoittaa, että yhteisesti hyväksyttyjen tekstien lisäksi myös materiaalisten käsikirjoitusten tuli olla auktoritatiivisia. Niiden auktoriteetin osoittamiseksi konsiilin osallistujat hyödynsivät erilaisia metodeja.

Käsikirjoitusten materiaalisuudella oli merkittävä rooli konsiilissa. Käsikirjoituksia etsittiin, kerättiin ja tutkittiin jo ennen konsiilin avaamista. Konsiilin sessioissa kävi selväksi, että auktoritatiivisten tekstien siteeraaminen ulkomuistista ei ollut riittävää. Käsikirjoituksia tarvittiin fyysisinä esineinä. Tekstejä ja niiden eri lukutapoja piti pystyä lukemaan ja analysoimaan. Käsikirjoituksista etsittiin merkkejä niiden historiasta. Käsikirjoituksen ikä ja materiaali olivat keskeisiä tekijöitä autenttisuuden ja auktoriteetin määrittelyssä. Eniten kiistaa aiheutti kuitenkin käsikirjoitusten lehdille jälkensä jättänyt korruptoituminen. Käsikirjoitusten alkuperä ja provenienssi saattoivatkin paljastaa tekstin turmelua. Näitä keskusteluja analysoidaan tässä tutkimuksessa lukemalla konsiilin alkuperäislähteitä, joista tärkeimpinä ovat kreikan- ja latinankieliset aktat, Syropouloksen muistelmat sekä kirjeenvaihto.

Tämä tutkimus tarjoaa kattavan näkökulman käsikirjoitusten rooliin konsiilin valmisteluissa, keskusteluissa ja lopputuloksissa. Uusia humanistisia metodeja käytettiin rinnakkain muiden argumentaation tapojen, kuten skolastisen dialektiikan, kanssa. Ne vaikuttivat konsiilin lopputulosten lisäksi myös konsiiliin osallistuneisiin yksilöihin ja yhteisöihin. Tämä *humanistinen teologia*, kuten tutkimus ehdottaa, löysi areenan konsiilista, josta se pääsi leviämään.

ASIASANAT: Ferrara–Firenzen konsiili, kulttuurishistoria, käsikirjoitukset, myöhäiskeskiaika, Italia, Bysantti, idän ja lännen skisma, humanismi

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Anni Hella

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1 Introduction

1.1 Research question

> 'Can Your Sacred Majesty assert on oath that the books that Your Majesty mentioned were published by those saints in the beginning as they are now found and that they have not been altered at all in the course of time? If this is not the case, how can we trust these books?'[1]

One of the appointed speakers of the Council of Ferrara–Florence, Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini, challenged the Byzantine Emperor, John VIII Palaiologos, by questioning the manuscripts the Greeks had. Cesarini asked whether the emperor could be certain that the books the Greeks used in their argumentation had preserved the original form written by the original authors. Cesarini's question captures one of the participants' main challenges at the Council: how one could trust manuscripts that were separated from their origins by centuries? This problem then led to the need to argue for the theological matters dividing the Churches and for using specific manuscripts that supported the theological arguments. These questions lie at the centre of the present study.

On November 24 and 25, 1437, the Byzantine Emperor, John VIII Palaiologos, and the Patriarch of Constantinople, Joseph II, embarked on ships in Constantinople. The Venetian galleys brought approximately seven hundred theologians, scholars, and civil servants from the Byzantine Empire and other Eastern regions to the Italian peninsula. In addition, the ships were packed with dozens of precious manuscripts and other personal belongings of the delegates. The ships headed for Venice, where the delegation disembarked on February 8 and 9, 1438. From there, the journey continued to the city of Ferrara, where also the representatives of the Roman Church

[1] "Δύναται ἡ ἁγία Βασιλεία σου μεθ'ὅρκου διαβεβαιῶσαι, ὅτι τὰ βιβλία ἅπερ ὁρίζεις οὕτως ἐξεδόθησαν τὴν ἀρχὴν παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων ἐκείνων, καθὼς εὑρίσκονται νῦν, καὶ οὐδόλως μετεποιήθησαν ἐν τοσούτοις χρόνοις; εἰ δὲ τοῦτο οὐ γενήσεται, πῶς ἡμεῖς τοῖς βιβλίοις πιστεύσομεν;" Syropoulos X, 2. All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

gathered. In March, the two delegations met, and on April 9, the Council was officially inaugurated by Pope Eugene IV.[2]

The Council of Ferrara–Florence (1438–39) was convened to unite the Churches of East and West. At this point, the Churches had been separated for several centuries.[3] The dividing issue debated most extensively at the Council was the question of the *Filioque*.[4] Other matters discussed in Ferrara and Florence were purgatory, the primacy of the pope, the sacramental bread,[5] and the *epiclesis*.[6] In these theological debates, manuscripts played a part that significantly affected the outcome of the Council. The role of the manuscripts, how they were used and given authority, and how they affected the negotiations and shaped the religious, cultural, and intellectual spheres of the Late Middle Ages, is the topic of this study.

It was not only numerous Greek delegates that brought a great collection of manuscripts with them; Latin theologians and humanists likewise had manuscripts with them in the Council. The manuscripts with their content played an essential role in the debates. The texts of Sacred Scripture, Church Fathers, and Acts of the

2 Gill 1959, 109.

3 The dating of the East–West schism is, in fact, not without its difficulties. Scholarship has acknowledged that the Schism of 1054, the traditional point of rupture, was not as significant an event for the contemporaries as it has been to the scholars and people of later centuries. On the one hand, the Churches of East and West began to develop in their own directions already before the Schism of 1054. On the other hand, only the Fourth Crusade (1202–1204) has been seen as a definite point of rupture between the Churches. On this rift, see Henry Chadwick's *East and West: The Making of a Rift in the Church: From Apostolic Times until the Council of Florence* (2003). How the participants of the Council thought of the beginning of the Schism, see note 561.

4 *Filioque*, "and from the Son," refers to the Creed and the procession of the Holy Spirit. In the fourth-century Nicene and Constantinopolitan Creed, there is no mention of the Holy Spirit proceeding "from the Son." It is a later addition or definition that gradually spread in the Western parts of Christendom. The Eastern Christians saw the addition as a violation of the Acts of the ecumenical Councils. These Acts stated that the creeds could and should not be altered, and the problem with the addition related to the problem of the Western misuse of authority. Besides this, the Filioque had to be discussed as a dogma, to discern whether it was correct to say that the Holy Spirit proceeded "from the Father and the Son." The *Filioque* and the other differences between the Churches are discussed in more detail in the chapter 2.4.

5 The Eastern Church used and still uses leavened bread, while the Western Church uses unleavened bread.

6 The question of the *epiclesis* relates to the transubstantiation (lat. *transubstantiatio*) or change (gr. *μεταβολή*), the moment when the bread and wine of the Eucharist were considered to change into the body and blood of Christ. In the East, the epiclesis, the invocation of the Holy Spirit in the eucharistic prayer, is regarded as the moment of change. The epiclesis comes after the *anamnesis*, the remembrance of Jesus' words, whereas in the West, it precedes the anamnesis. Thus, in the West, the epiclesis is not regarded as the moment of transubstantiation, but the Words of Institution mark this moment. On the Byzantine conception, see Meyendorff 1983, 206–207.

ecumenical councils of the first centuries were read and quoted in the debates. It was not enough to quote them by heart. It was essential to point out the actual passages in the manuscripts. Soon, the participants noticed that manuscripts had different readings, which caused problems and discord between the two Churches. Accordingly, the debates on theological and ecclesiastical matters expanded to struggles over the authority and authenticity of the manuscripts. To quote Basil was not enough; one had to quote the most authentic version of Basil available. In these debates, the material features of the manuscripts came into play; these could reveal corruption and other deficiencies.

In this dissertation, I study how the understanding of the history of the texts and manuscripts that was at a turning point in the Later Middle Ages shaped the theological debates in the Council of Ferrara–Florence and late-medieval and Byzantine religious and intellectual culture. My study explores how these discussions in the Council transformed the late-medieval and humanist conceptions and practices with regard to reading and understanding the texts and their material form, and how this understanding influenced the ways in which people understood themselves as part of religious and cultural communities. In order to understand the role of the manuscripts in the theological debates and more broadly in the cultures and communities participating in the Council, I employ the discussions in the written sources, rather than the material manuscripts.[7] In this way, the study offers new insights into the ways in which late-medieval persons understood the manuscripts. The study does not aim to analyse manuscripts in the way that a modern scholar analyses the palaeographical, codicological, or other features. The gaze into the manuscripts is not the scholar's, but that of the Council participants, interpreted by the scholar from the written sources.

There are three key concepts for this study and the research question: *manuscript*, *use* and *authority*. The changing approach and understanding of manuscripts and their material aspects that were attached to their history were linked to the ways in which the Council participants used manuscripts in the theological debates. The actual use and discussions of the proper and improper use of the manuscripts were related to the questions of authority. I first discuss what I mean by the term *manuscript* and how I use the concept in this study. I then analyse the other two key concepts, *use* and *authority*.

There were and are many words for the material object consisting of textual and pictorial contents,[8] such as *book, manuscript, codex, volume.* Both the Latin *liber*

7 Tracking down the manuscripts used and analysing their material features together with the evidence produced in this study is a possibility for a future study.

8 Miha Kovač, Angus Phillips, Adriaan van der Weel and Rüdiger Wischenbart have reflected on what a book is and how it can be defined. Books have evolved over time

and the Greek *βίβλος* or *βιβλίον* (used interchangeably) could refer to a book as a text, as a subdivision of a literary work, or as an object.[9] While in the Greek sources, the word is almost always either *βίβλος* or *βιβλίον*, with few exceptions,[10] the Latin words for the book vary. While *liber* is unquestionably the most commonly used, we also find the terms *codex*, *volumen* and *libellus*. *Libellus* is a diminutive form of the word *liber* and thus refers to a small book, usually a pamphlet or some other kind of short writing.[11] The terms *codex* and *volumen* point more clearly than *liber* to the physical form of the book. *Volumen* derives from the word *volvere,* meaning *to roll*, *to turn*. In Antiquity, *volumen* referred to a roll, and thus also to a subdivision of a work that was written on a scroll. The humanists used this term in a manner similar to *liber*.[12] *Volumen* was also used in the medieval inventories.[13] One of the Council participants, Ambrogio Traversari, uses the term extensively in his correspondence when describing the manuscripts and their contents that he had found, or was looking for. *Codex* refers to the most frequently used form of medieval manuscripts, where the sheets of parchment or paper were stacked together, similar to the way in which modern books are bound together.[14] *Codex* was thus the term that referred most evidently to the physical form of the book.

I will apply the word *manuscript* in this study to the material form of the book. The term does not appear as such in the sources,[15] but in my opinion it works best for this study, for three reasons. First, the word *manuscript*, deriving from the Latin words *manus*, meaning hand, and *scriptum*, meaning writing, reflects one of this study's main starting points, namely, that the manuscripts brought into the Council were made and written by hand. They were tangible objects recognized by the Council participants as having been made by human hands and thus also prone to human errors. Secondly, the word manuscript is used widely in medieval studies and

and took new shapes and formats. In this study, the traditional use of term 'book' as a textual object works well. See Kovač, Phillips, van der Weel, and Wischenbart 2019, 313–326.

9 *Greek lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine periods*, 308.

10 Syropoulos uses the word *τετράδιον*, a *quaternion*, and refers to a short pamphlet in this material form. See Syropoulos VI, 8. In two instances, Syropoulos uses the word *σχεδάριον* referring to a draft-like notebook. See Syropoulos V, 31 and VIII, 5.

11 Rizzo 1973, 8–9.

12 Rizzo 1973, 4, 6.

13 Rizzo 1973, 47, 52. Silvia Rizzo gives many examples of the humanistic and inventorial use of the word *volumen*, see Rizzo 1973, 47–56.

14 The first *codices* were made of wooden boards that were put together. *Codex* was the word for a tree trunk. See Clemens & Graham 2007, 5.

15 There is one instance in both *Acts* where Mark of Ephesus claims that two books were "written by the same hand": "Iste liber noster est eadem manu scriptus ut liber vester." See AL 168; "Τῆς αὐτῆς χειρός ἐστι τὸ προκομισθὲν βιβλίον, ᾗς ἦν καὶ τὸ ἕτερον." See AG 326.

is understood by scholars in a similar way. The third reason, which partly combines the first two factors, is that the concept is clear. In contrast to the concept of *book*, which can mean both the material object and the textual content, *manuscript* refers unequivocally to the physical form of the book.[16] In the cases where the word *book* is used in the sources to mean the text rather than the object, I use either *work* or *book*, and I use *book* in cases where the word refers to a subdivision of a larger work of an author.

Besides the material form of books, it is important to know the concepts relating to the texts that were an integral part of the books. In recent philology, three concepts are used: the *work*, the *text* and the *artefact* (or *document*). *Work* is used of the originally intended outcome of the author for their textual product. This is often difficult, if not impossible, to track down.[17] At the Council, the participants wanted to discuss works, but realised that what they had were in fact texts. Works had the authority, since they were thought to be inspired by the Holy Spirit, but the texts varied. With regard to differing texts, it was necessary to define which text could be said to best represent the original work, the original intentions of the divinely inspired author. In this, the *artefact* came into play. The "text-bearing object", as Matthew J. Driscoll describes the *artefact*,[18] and its features were the key in analysing and evaluating the text in the physical book. Since these concepts are tools for a philologist, and Driscoll admonishes the scholar to remember that a manuscript is a cultural artefact and a vehicle for a text,[19] these concepts and the ideas behind them resonate in the discussions at the Council. Although the terminology is not identical and the theories are not formed in this way, the problems that the manuscripts posed had to do with the many layers that manuscripts had: ideally, they were authoritative works, but were preserved as diverse texts in physical objects made and used in different times and cultures (and religious traditions).

Next, I will consider the way I understand the term *use* in my study. According to Michael Johnston and Michael Van Dussen, manuscript scholars have concentrated more on the production process than on the manuscripts' afterlife and reception. One of the theses in their study is that a manuscript is not only a product, but equally a process.[20] When studying the use of manuscripts in a medieval

16 Another term referring to the material form used in the original sources would be *codex*, but another advantage of using the word "manuscript" is that it fits better with the English text than the Latin *codex* (which in plural form would be *codices*).

17 Driscoll 2010, 93–94. See also Shillingsburg 1996, 41–51.

18 Driscoll 2010, 94.

19 Driscoll 2010, 102.

20 Johnston & Van Dussen 2015, 4–6. Their second thesis is that the entire life cycle of the manuscript needs to be studied. Johnston & Van Dussen 2015, 6–9. Scholars of printed books have studied the book culture as a whole to a greater extent than the

context, *use* must be understood as human interaction with the manuscript that affected both the manuscript and its user.[21] What I mean by *use* is formulated aptly by Seth Lerer, who aims to understand in his studies "what was done *with* and *to* books." For Lerer, this was more than just reading.[22] Naturally, I understand *use* in the case of manuscripts as the reading of the texts in them, but also as the ways in which the manuscripts were utilized as material evidence in argumentation. The participants not only read the texts from the manuscripts, but commented on the material features and compared the manuscripts, their reading and qualities that were interpreted as clues to their past use and users. The use left traces on the manuscripts, when the owners and readers commented and changed the text, or drew pictures, or touched the leaves, leaving fingerprints and dirt.

Use is closely linked to the person using the object, the manuscript. The users make choices about what they do with and to manuscripts. These choices are shaped by cultural and religious habits and practices, personal manners, and objectives. Use leaves traces on the matter, and these traces can be witnessed and analysed for centuries. In my study, the use and users are not limited to the time of the Council and its participants. Although we do not know – just as, in most cases, the participants of the Council did not know – who were the past users, the traces and other hints revealed details about the past use and users. Past and present use and users then shaped the authority of the manuscript.

Another way of approaching the question of use is to divide it into practical and symbolic use.[23] At the Council, the manuscripts were mainly used for practical reasons: the manuscripts contained important works that were cited and analysed in theological debates. The authenticity and authority of the reading of the texts in the manuscripts were determined and disputed by analysing the material features, but with practical purposes and ways. Although most use of manuscripts was practical by nature, the participants also used the manuscripts for symbolic purposes. The manuscripts acted as symbols or signs when the participants swore an oath.[24] The manuscripts also had a symbolic meaning for their owners and possessed a value that was not limited to its usability in theological debates. While these themes are not as

scholars of manuscripts. See Johnston & Van Dussen 2015, 10–12. Kathryn Rudy has also emphasised that the medieval book was an "object whose content and structure were dynamic." The new owners "adjusted the contents of their books to reflect changed circumstances." See Rudy 2016, 1–2. Her whole book *Piety in Pieces: How Medieval Readers Customized Their Manuscripts* (2016) deals with the question of how manuscripts were customized by the readers in the late-medieval Netherlands.

21 Johnston & Van Dussen 2015, 2.

22 Lerer 2015, 17–18.

23 Grassby 2005, 594.

24 See for example Syropoulos VIII, 22.

central as the themes concerning the practical use, it is important to keep them in mind. Manuscripts that were used in argumentation, or whose authority was challenged, could at the same time had a symbolic meaning, or a personal (or communal) importance, and a practical value. This discrepancy between the two types of use of one and the same manuscript could have an effect on the ways in which manuscripts were given authority, thus defining their usability in theological discussions.

Authority has been studied extensively in many disciplines and in a variety of historical and cultural contexts. Mary Carruthers has pointed out that there are two stages in the making of an authority. In the first stage, there is the individual, who is authoring or composing. In the second stage, the community authorizes the work.[25] My approach to authority is similar to that of Carruthers. Authority is not something that exists of itself. Authority is created in culture and is dependent on the society and community that define authoritative status. Individuals and communities give authority to someone or something, but an authoritative position can also be lost. In addition, authority shapes the surrounding culture and society. At the Council of Ferrara–Florence, there were two cultures present. These cultures and individuals in these cultures had their own ideas of authority, but at the same time, shared many aspects with regard to what were to be considered appropriate authorities for theological discussions.

Auctoritas in medieval context referred to either the author or their authority, or, as in many cases, to both of these. Furthermore, *auctoritas* was used for the text of an author. These *auctoritates* could then be used in theological argumentation.[26] In the Council's sources, the word is used repeatedly, referring to all these meanings, but in most cases, the word *auctoritas* (or in plural form, *auctoritates*) seems to refer to a certain text or even a passage of a text that was cited or used in argumentation. If we look at the Greek words used for *auctoritas*, we find several words and meanings equivalent to the Latin concept. Most commonly, the word used in Greek is *χρῆσις*. This can be translated as 'quotation' or 'citation.'[27] Similarly, the word *ῥητόν* is employed.[28] Another word is *δύναμις*, which means 'power,'[29] and seems to be connected especially to papal power or authority. Authority *qua* 'honour' is expressed with the word *τιμή*.[30] A similar meaning for authority as 'dignity' is the Greek word *ἀξίωμα*,[31] which is reserved for saintly authorities, and thus mainly for

25 Carruthers 2008 (1992), 234.
26 Välimäki 2019, 71; Levy 2012, 24.
27 *Greek lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine periods*, 1170.
28 *Greek lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine periods*, 969–970.
29 *Greek lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine periods*, 398.
30 *Greek lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine periods*, 1082.
31 *Greek lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine periods*, 197.

Church Fathers in the context of the Council's discussions. Lastly, the words *αὐθεντία* and *ἐξουσία* are used. For both of these, the Byzantine Greek lexicon gives 'authority' as one possible translation.[32]

Sacred Scripture had an authority that everyone in the Late Middle Ages recognized. The difficulties arose when the texts were interpreted.[33] At the Council, the role of Sacred Scripture was not challenged or understood differently, but certain passages that the Latins used in their argumentation on the Latin doctrines of purgatory and papal primacy were interpreted differently by the Greeks. The Sacred Scripture was the principal authority and a source for truth, *auctoritas* without a doubt.

Sacred Scripture on its own, however, could not resolve the issues between the Churches. In particular, the question of the *Filioque,* and whether it was illegitimately added to the Creed, was based on other authorities. Church Fathers were authorities who were commonly considered to be inspired by the Holy Spirit, and thus their writings were sacred. They were thought to have a deep understanding of the matters of faith and doctrine.[34] Byzantine theology was largely patristic in nature. This meant that the works of Church Fathers were authorities that were used to explain the Sacred Scripture and orthodox doctrine. For the Greeks, "Christian theology must always be consistent with the apostolic and patristic witness."[35] For the Latins, the Church Fathers were also important, and they were widely used in theology. The glossed Bible, *Glossa ordinaria*, that was the primary textbook in the late Middle Ages, consisted of biblical commentaries, in which Church Fathers had a significant role.[36] At the same time, for some communities or individual authors, Church Fathers were not significant authorities, and their use and authority were limited or even disputed.[37] At the Council of Ferrara–Florence, Church Fathers were quoted by both Greek and Latin representatives, and they were certainly *auctoritates* to all the participants who presented arguments. Nevertheless, there were differences in the ways in which the Greek and Latin participants knew and utilised Church Fathers and their texts.

Although the Church Fathers represented the thoughts and ideals of the unbroken Church of the first centuries of Christianity, the Church Fathers were still either Western or Eastern Fathers. Of the Eastern Fathers, the most cited was Basil of Caesarea, while the Latin Fathers were still almost unknown to the Greeks in the

32 *Greek lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine periods*, 276, 487.
33 Levy 2012, xi.
34 Levy 2012, 24.
35 Meyendorff 1991, 8–9.
36 Levy 2012, 24; Ginther 2015, 417–418.
37 On the Waldensian controversy over the use of Church Fathers and reactions to that, see Välimäki 2019, 76–77.

fifteenth century.[38] In the West, the situation was a little different. While Western theology was largely based on Western Church Fathers, Eastern Church Fathers were also used to some extent.[39] Before the Council, the pope had commissioned humanists to collect the manuscripts of Basil and others and to study them in advance.[40] Since Basil had an important position in the East, it was useful for the Latins to be able to argue with the texts of Basil and find support for their own views.

In addition to Sacred Scripture and Church Fathers, the ecumenical councils of the first centuries and the texts related to them were considered authoritative by both Churches. Decrees and acts and other related documents produced in these councils were used in argumentation. They were, however, interpreted differently in the East and in the West. The decrees of the ecumenical councils bound every Christian, and hence both the Eastern and the Western Churches. If the Council of Ferrara–Florence was to be ecumenical, it had to be linked to the tradition of these old councils, and the decisions had to be made in the same way, by mutual understanding.[41] By employing the manuscripts and texts of the ecumenical councils, or 'ecumenical' Church Fathers, the participants created an ecumenical space in Ferrara and Florence and made the council authoritative.

All these texts, which had a common authority bestowed on them by both Churches, were testimonies to the truth. The word *testimonium* or *μαρτυρία* is used many times in the Council's documents.[42] *Auctoritates* were, in a manner of speaking, called to testify and reveal the truth that they held in them. These *testimonia* were collected, delivered and inspected. And while the Church Father and his work, or another text considered authoritative, was accepted by both sides as *auctoritas*, the material manifestation, the manuscript that was brought to the Council as a *testimonium*, did not necessarily share the status of an *auctoritas* or *testimonium* with the immaterial content it was supposed to represent.

Thus, I consider the relations between texts, by which I mean the immaterial and in one sense imagined content, and the manuscripts holding the content and how they affected the authority. Different variations of the same text caused problems in interpretation and even in the definition of the authentic content of the text. In this

38 Ševčenko 1955, 298. See also Price 2019, 347–348.

39 The chapters on *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Patristics* (ed. Ken Parry, 2015) show that many Eastern Church Fathers were translated into Latin and adapted to Western theology in compilations of key passages, or influenced the argumentation of some later doctors of the Church, such as Thomas Aquinas.

40 Stinger 1977, 203–222. The collection activity of manuscripts is discussed in chapter 3.1.

41 The Greeks' demand for an ecumenical council, and what this meant for them, is discussed in depth in chapter 2.1.

42 See for example AL 136: "testimonia scripturarum et sanctorum patrum" and AG 252: "τάς μαρτυρίας τῶν γραφῶν καὶ τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων."

study, I argue that the manuscripts were accorded authority based on their reliability. I study the emerging textual criticism of this period and how the manuscripts were or were not accorded authority. Key aspects in this were the writing support, dating or the age and place of origin of the manuscript, and the quantity of manuscripts. Because the texts in the manuscripts were written in two languages, Greek and Latin, translations were also needed and used. I consider the authority of translations and the problems generated by the presence of many languages.

The question of which texts had authority in the theological debates also entailed the question of who had the authority to determine the authority of certain texts, or rather of certain reading of texts. The choice of those who had the right to speak in the Council, to translate, to interpret the texts, and to analyse the manuscripts was a matter of chance. Pope Eugene IV chose certain persons, scholars, humanists, and theologians, to work with manuscripts. However, those who read and compared the manuscripts did not necessarily have the authority or position to speak in the Council, at least in the official sessions. The Byzantine Emperor, John VIII Palaiologos, and the Patriarch of Constantinople, Joseph II, chose the speakers and other persons working with the texts and manuscripts in similar ways.[43] The presence of individuals who knew both languages, Greek and Latin, was a vital precondition for the convening of the Council. When only a minority of participants could understand the other language (although the speeches were interpreted throughout the course of the Council), this caused a situation where the majority relied on the few who were given responsibility to translate and interpret the texts and speeches that were the basis of the Council's decisions and of the future decree of union.

The study of the role of manuscripts in the Council with these concepts in mind offers a new perspective on the study of Council of Ferrara–Florence. The use and authority of manuscripts as research concepts also broaden our understanding of the

43 Nelson H. Minnich discusses the role of theologians compared to the role of bishops in the late-medieval and early modern general Councils. While bishops traditionally held an important position in the general (and ecumenical) Councils and had the right to vote and sign conciliar decrees, they sometimes lacked the theological expertise required to discuss doctrinal issues. Theologians, doctors of theology and canon law had the knowledge and expertise, but were not always given permission to vote and sign the decrees. They could, however, act as advisors or give either consultative or even deliberative votes, as was the case at the Councils of Basel and Ferrara–Florence. Joseph II, Patriarch of Constantinople, however, stipulated that the theologians were not eligible to sign the final decrees, since that was against the ancient practice. Both leaders of the delegations, Pope Eugene IV and the Byzantine Emperor, John VIII Palaiologos, used professional theologians, but only the bishops and archimandrites were given the right to speak in the Greek delegation. All the learned men were, nevertheless, obliged to give their votes in written form on the issue of the *Filioque*. See Minnich 1998, 420–441, and of Council of Ferrara–Florence, see Minnich 1998, 427–429.

late-medieval material and intellectual culture in the West and the East. Use and authority were closely connected to the communities for whom the manuscripts were important. Manuscripts were part of religious and intellectual communities and shaped their identities. Manuscripts had a role in how people in these communities understood both themselves[44] and the world they lived in. The discussions about manuscripts at the Council, in turn, help us to understand the material, intellectual, and religious cultures that were present and were reshaped at the Council.

1.2 Earlier research

Studying the cultural history of manuscripts

In this dissertation, I study the ideas and concepts about manuscripts and their authority in the Council of Ferrara–Florence. Manuscripts are not only objects bearing the text,[45] but material artefacts that are produced and used in culture.[46] People gave meaning to them in both categories. Ryan Perry describes medieval codex as a "synthesis of book *and* text."[47] Books should be studied not only for their contents, but as material and cultural objects.[48] In this study, I suggest that this dual nature was recognized by the Council participants.

This study deals with the cultural history of manuscripts. In the introduction to the book *The Medieval Manuscript Book: Cultural Approaches*, the editors Michael Johnston and Michael Van Dussen discuss what the cultural history of manuscripts is and its relation to other research fields that study medieval manuscripts.[49] The study of manuscripts has long been conducted in the special fields of palaeography and codicology.[50] While these are important fields, Johnston and Van Dussen have called for a new perspective on the study of manuscripts: cultural history. For Johnston and Van Dussen, the cultural history of manuscripts deals with the question

44 See also Grassby 2005, 594.
45 Lerer 2015, 18.
46 Johnston & Van Dussen 2015, 2. See also Driscoll 2010, 102.
47 Perry 2010, 310.
48 Lerer 2015, 17–18.
49 Johnston & Van Dussen 2015, 1–16.
50 In the concluding chapter of the same book, Kathryn Kerby-Fulton returns to the research tradition of paleographers and codicologists. She quotes James Simpson, who has noted that "paleographers and codicologists for the most part stick to paleography and codicology. They provide an invaluable service industry, but themselves eschew the translation of their findings into literary criticism and cultural history." See Kerby-Fulton 2015, 243. According to Kerby-Fulton, however, the picture is not as simple as this: the paleographers and codicologists have worked on the social history of books as well. See, Kerby-Fulton 2015, 243–254.

of how manuscripts work within culture.[51] This approach to manuscripts is central in this dissertation too. Manuscripts were produced and used, commented on and revised, and even burned and destroyed, in cultures and in historical contexts. Persons gave meaning to manuscripts, and the manuscripts could shape their users' lives, especially with regard to knowledge and belief or disbelief.[52]

The field of book history has already considered questions of materiality and the role of books in the past. David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery described the book historians' objective as "to understand what place books and reading had in the lives of people and society in the past, in the present, and even in the future."[53] This coincides well with the thoughts of Johnston and Van Dussen about the cultural history of manuscripts. In this study, the role of the books, or manuscripts, is examined in the context of the cultural encounter between the two Churches. The deeper meanings and places that the manuscripts as objects had in the lives of the Council's participants nevertheless influenced the Council, and vice versa.

In addition to the cultural history of manuscripts, the study of material culture offers great insights into the study of manuscripts.[54] Jules David Prown has defined material culture as "the manifestations of culture through material productions." The study of material culture is then "the study of material to understand culture, to discover the beliefs—the values, ideas, attitudes, and assumptions—of a particular community or society at a given time."[55] Mark Cruse defines the study of material culture in similar terms, as the study of "the ways in which humans manipulate their material environment, the uses to which they put objects, and the meanings they assign to them."[56] Scholars of material culture, who come from the fields of archaeology and anthropology, have sometimes criticised the narrow view in previous scholarship of material culture as a mere reflection of the culture. For them,

51 Johnston & Van Dussen 2015, 1, 12. On "how the material features of books work in their cultural context", see Johnston & Van Dussen, 2015, 1–2.

52 This aspect is the starting point for the article collection *Golden Leaves and Burned Books: Religious Reform and Conflict in the Long European Reformation* (eds. Teemu Immonen & Gabriele Müller-Oberhäuser, 2020). The editors, cultural historian Teemu Immonen and book historian Gabriele Müller-Oberhäuser describe as one of the book's objectives "to place book history in the broader context of cultural history." For the authors, the book is "at the same time a product of culture and an argument in a discussion about reforming a culture." See Immonen & Müller-Oberhäuser 2020, 10.

53 Finkelstein & McCleery 2005, 4.

54 Harvey Green notes that "material culture can expand and enrich cultural history." See Green 2012, 73.

55 Prown 1993, 1. See also Grassby 2005, 592.

56 Cruse 2010, 836. Cruse continues "[i]t presumes that any object, adapted, decorated, or otherwise produced for human use represents larger cultural dynamics, be they related to social relationships, economic structure, ritual practice, warfare, or any other dimension of human activity."

it is clear that the material culture has shaped the culture and people and not only the other way around.[57] This is the starting point for this study as well, and an essential part of the research question. The manuscripts were seen by the Council's participants as products of culture and people, but at the same time the manuscripts influenced the people and their understanding of themselves.

Harvey Green has noted that one challenge for a historian studying the material culture is to grasp the "ways artefacts embody the beliefs and values of those who made and used them."[58] This is another starting point for this study. Medieval persons not only used the manuscripts; often, they were also involved in the production process. This involvement applied to both the contents and the material choices that were related to, or that embodied, the beliefs and values, as Green noted.[59] Another equally important aspect in the relation between the artefact – the medieval manuscript - and its maker's or user's beliefs and values is that the artefact could also have an influence on, and even change, the belief system of its user. The manuscript not only embodied the cultural meanings. It could also shape them.

Another challenge to the scholar of material culture is often the randomness of the objects that have survived to our days. The objects that have survived might not give information on their historical and cultural context.[60] For Richard Grassby, the "[a]rtifacts cannot reveal underlying cultural values without other evidence."[61] In this study, however, the challenge is the opposite. The artefacts, the manuscripts, are present in the textual sources, but for the most part not identifiable as material objects. In this study, the focus is on the discussions of manuscripts and what they reveal about the values and meanings that were given to the material objects. At the same time, manuscripts are a group of objects, defined by a collection of shared material aspects, and individual objects with their own unique history of production and use. The manuscripts were given meaning in both categories, as a group and as unique objects.

The object, with its diverse meanings, is one of the most defining elements of this study. Jacques Maquet has divided objects into two categories: objects as instruments and objects as signs. While the instrumentality of an object is not cultural-specific, even if cultural patterns influence the ways in which the objects are

57 Brower Stahl 2012, 151, 153–154; Fowler 2012, 355–358.
58 Green 2012, 61–62.
59 Perry 2010, 309.
60 Grassby 2005, 597–598. For Grassby, the problem is partly generated by the museums that have lost the information about the object's provenance.
61 Grassby 2005, 599. Grassby also sharply criticises the explanation of the world in theories that lack empirical evidence. See Grassby 2005, 600.

made,[62] the objects as signs, standing for something else, and the meanings given to an object cannot be read from the object alone. Meanings are bestowed by the people who find the object(s) relevant.[63] When we search for the meanings that the past humans gave to material objects, I agree with Maquet that we must turn to written records.[64]

Maria G. Parani has also emphasised the importance of textual sources in the study of material culture. Documents offer "information on artefacts, on their typology and function, on their distribution, but also on the more elusive conceptual framework of their production, dissemination and use."[65] Manuscripts can be sources and objects of study in the study of material culture. In the sources studied here, documents of the Council of Ferrara–Florence, manuscripts are discussed in great detail. These discussions help us understand the role that material objects had in people's lives as well as in intercultural and religious contacts and encounters.

I study the material objects in textual sources. Theological debates about doctrines and other religious and ecclesiastic matters may seem to us abstract and difficult to grasp, but they were present in the material form, even if they dealt with immaterial truths. The words that defined the theological dogmas and eternal truth were strokes of quill, and sometimes these words were explained in margins and between the lines, altered and even erased with a knife, leaving a mark on the parchment. The holy truth in the works of Church Fathers and ecumenical councils and in the Sacred Scripture travelled with people, on board ships and horses. The immaterial was present and revealed in the material.

Studying the cultural history of manuscripts

Over the past decades, the Council of Ferrara–Florence has been studied by many scholars, mainly historians and theologians. Their studies, however, have strongly concentrated on either the theological or the political dimensions of the Council. The basic research of the Council's history is Joseph Gill's *The Council of Florence* (1959) in which Gill presented the historical outline of the Council, its arrangements and its repercussions, and described the main contents of each session held in Ferrara and Florence. Gill published many studies on the East–West relations between the

62 As an example, Jacquet Maquet uses an object that has a sharp blade and a handle, which is a knife. In any culture, this kind of object is meant for cutting. See Maquet 1993, 30–31.

63 Maquet, 1993, 30–40, see especially 30–31, 34–35.

64 Maquet 1993, 35. See also Maquet 1993, 40: "Their reading of objects always has to be supplemented by what people say and write about them. Objects can illuminate words; they cannot replace them."

65 Parani 2008, 349.

thirteenth and the fifteenth century.[66] His work has formed a foundation for studies of the Council of Ferrara–Florence and is an important starting point for the present study as well.

The texts and manuscripts at the Council of Ferrara–Florence have been studied by several scholars in the past two decades. These studies have, however, focused on particular texts that were used and debated at the Council. The Byzantine philologist Alexander Alexakis has concentrated on the Greek patristic texts and their use in the Council of Ferrara–Florence, which (according to him) has received only little attention.[67] For Alexakis, the challenges of textual variation that the participants of the Council faced, are more a starting point for a scholar to study the known manuscripts of the texts in question and determine the most authentic and original readings, in other words, to solve the question, whether the Greek or Latin reading was the correct one. The discussions at the Council are introduced as well, and matters such as age and even material are mentioned, but they are not the primary object of Alexakis's analysis.[68] The eyes with which he sees the manuscripts is more the eyes of the scholar than those of the Council participants.

Church historian Richard Price has focused on the use of patristic texts at the Council of Ferrara–Florence. The manuscripts or the discussions concerning material aspects are, however, not a part of his analysis. Price's main argument concerns the lack of preparation on the part of the Greeks, especially in the discussion of the question of *purgatory*.[69] I myself initially observed that while the Latins had collected manuscripts, translated Greek works, and made all kinds of preparations for the Council, the Greeks seemed to come unprepared to the Council. When I began to understand the Greek side better, I realised that this was not the whole truth. Although if the Greeks did not prepare as thoroughly as the Latins for the Council, they too searched for manuscripts and read texts that they thought would help them at the Council. As we shall see, however, the Latins were more familiar with the Greek patristics than the Greeks were with works of Latin Fathers or later Western authors.

The themes and perspectives on the role of manuscripts in the Council's discussions most similar to my approach are offered in Jacob N. Van Sickle's research article on the texts of Basil's *Adversus Eunomium* and Maximus' *Letter to Marinus*. Van Sickle looks at the discussions that the Council participants had about

66 Gill's *The Council of* Florence (1959), Gill's *Eugenius IV, Pope of Christian Union* (1961), Gill's *Personalities of the Council of Florence and Other Essays* (1964).
67 Alexakis 2000, 149–150.
68 Alexakis 2000, 149–165; Alexakis 2020, 431–447.
69 Price 2013, 125–136.

these texts and the difficulties caused by the variant readings in the manuscripts.[70] For Van Sickle, these issues concerning the textual transmission "stymied productive discussion at Ferrara–Florence on the doctrine of the Filioque."[71] This viewpoint, that the discussions about the differences in the manuscripts were more of a hindrance to the theological debates, is perhaps explained by the fact that Van Sickle himself is a theologian focusing on the history of the doctrine. I do not see the manuscript debates as restraining the theological discussions or as separate to the theology in the way that Van Sickle does. I believe, rather, that the textual variations and material aspects opened the participants' eyes and minds to look at their theological and cultural traditions and teaching in a new way. The participants saw the discussions about the age or materials of the manuscripts and other similar aspects as a part of theological reasoning and argumentation.

While these studies offer great insights and arguments, partly similar to mine, they do not deal with the subject comprehensively. My argument is that the manuscripts were important for the Council and its participants in a variety of ways. The examination of one or two texts that were debated at the Council doubtless leads to a significant understanding of these texts and their importance for the Council's discussions; but the aim of the present study is to give a big picture of the ways in which the participants used and gave meanings to manuscripts in this Council. A thematic, rather than text-specific, approach thus works better for writing the cultural history of the use and authority of manuscripts at the Council of Ferrara–Florence. Questions such as owning, borrowing and reading, as well as identity and meanings, are better grasped by looking at the discussions concerning the manuscripts broadly, but naturally also in detail.

The Council of Ferrara–Florence was a meeting of intellectuals. Theologians, humanists and other learned men gathered together to discuss theological matters, but also shared manuscripts and thoughts on matters not directly related to the Council's main objective. The Council's significance for the movement of manuscripts has been noticed by Ihor Ševčenko, Judith Herrin and Stuart M. McManus, as well as by Marie-Hélène Blanchet.[72] Ševčenko acknowledged that the Latin humanists were interested in the Greek works that the Greek participants had brought with them. He also paid attention to the philological discussions at the Council, but did not consider these discussions to be important for the course of

70 Van Sickle 2013, 431–350.
71 Van Sickle 2013, 431. See also Phidas 1991, 322.
72 Ševčenko 1955, 291; Herrin & McManus 2012, 36; Blanchet 2017, 560. The Councils of Constance and Basel have also been regarded as important *fora* for the production and dissemination of books and texts. See for example Van Dussen & Soukup 2013, 1, 5, 8; Van Dussen 2013, 189–190. The Councils also expedited the production of manuscripts. See Van Dussen 2012, 1–3; Neddermeyer 1998.

humanism. Ševčenko's arguments are based mainly on the translation and linguistic activity that preceded the Council.[73] It is true that the Greek learning and the teaching of the language had already been brought to Italy before the Council, and some Latin humanists and intellectuals had gone to Constantinople to learn the language.[74] I nevertheless suggest that the Council had an impact on humanism. The emerging questions and concerns of some humanists about the languages, textual tradition and history of the manuscripts found an arena at the Council where these issues were important and relevant. Theological matters were important for the participants and new methods, together with the more traditional ones, were applied in a way that inspired many humanists. When the Council ended, the participants went back to their homelands and some of them continued to work with the manuscripts and ponder the fresh aspects.

There are two scholarly narratives of the Council of Ferrara–Florence and, more broadly, of medieval East–West relations. On one hand, there is the story of schism and estrangement. On the other hand, there is the story of cultural interaction and mutual interests.[75] In the Council, these two narratives overlap. It was the schism that drove the two Churches together, but at the same time, the Council offered a time and place for two cultures to meet, discuss and exchange material, intellectual, and spiritual culture. Josef Macha has seen the Council in a similar manner, as a situation that promoted changes in attitude, especially because the Greeks were "outside of their normal environment."[76] The Council compelled the participants to discuss and find solutions. Another question is how well the two cultures understood each other and wanted to encounter the other.

The question of the differing intellectual cultures and theological traditions of the Eastern and Western Churches is present in the scholarly work on the Council. For many scholars, the Greeks and Latins in the Council represented two very divergent intellectual cultures and theological traditions, and the ways in which arguments were composed differed greatly.[77] Marie-Hélène Blanchet has offered

73 Ševčenko 1955, 291–292.

74 See for example Geanakoplos 1962; Monfasani 1994.

75 Judith R. Ryder begins her essay on Demetrius Kydones by describing a common problem in the field of Byzantine studies with regard to East–West relations: "[t]here has, at times, been a tendency amongst Byzantinists to think primarily in terms of polarization between Byzantine 'East' and Latin 'West', with regard to both Orthodox-Catholic relations and more general cultural and political attitudes." See Ryder 2012, 159. Ryder continues that this often leads to generalizations. Taking the example of a Byzantine, Demetrius Kydones, who took a positive stand on the Latins without losing his connections to Byzantine society, Ryder points out that there were people and attitudes between the opposites. See Ryder 2012, 159–174.

76 Macha 1974, 110.

77 Meyendorff 1991, 153–175, see especially 163, 167, 175.

another perspective to this prevailing perception of two cultures unable to understand one another and their argumentation. For Blanchet, the issue at the Council of Ferrara–Florence was not the participants' inability to understand the arguments of the other party. Rather, the problem was that they did not accept these arguments.[78] I concur with Blanchet on the understanding of arguments. The participants understood one another better than has been acknowledged in many previous studies. Even argumentative methods were largely accepted, but the interpretations and the manuscripts that these interpretations relied on were not as easily approved.

Many scholars have concentrated on the East–West relations and the differences in the ways in which the two Churches and their members approached and treated theological questions. Theology was not an academic discipline in the Byzantine world. An expert on Byzantine theology, John Meyendorff, described it "as a system of truths, learned by reading Scripture (or listening to it in Church), by praying either liturgically or personally, by hearing sermons, or by studying under a teacher whose competence was not only intellectual but also spiritual."[79] Theology was defined primarily as experience or communion. The relation between mysticism and theology was close, and the theologian was someone who saw and was aware of the divine truth, rather than an intellectually motivated scholar.[80]

In the Western tradition of theology, scholasticism had a prominent place. Theology was systematised and, in addition to Sacred Scripture and Church Fathers as sources and authorities that were cited, logical argumentation, on the model of ancient philosophers, especially Aristotle, was applied as an accepted theological method.[81] At the time of the Council, humanism had begun to gain ground alongside, or later against, scholasticism. Surprisingly little scholarly attention has been paid to the humanism at the Council of Ferrara–Florence. This is probably partly because humanism has often been seen as mainly, if not exclusively, a revival of the study of classical Antiquity, so that studies have overlooked the religious side of humanism. One exception is historian Charles Stinger's study *Humanism and the Church Fathers: Ambrogio Traversari (1386-1439) and Christian Antiquity in the Italian Renaissance* (1977), in which the Council of Ferrara–Florence is also discussed.[82] Ambrogio Traversari has an essential role in my study as well.

The discussions of the manuscripts reveal the differing intellectual cultures and theological traditions of the Eastern and Western Churches. Arguments drew on all

78 Blanchet 2017, 561.
79 Meyendorff 1996, 32.
80 Meyendorff 1996, 33–34.
81 Leinsle 2010, 7.
82 Stinger discusses the Council of Ferrara–Florence especially in the fifth chapter, see Stinger 1977, 203–222.

these religious and intellectual traditions. What has been lacking in previous scholarship is the estimation of the validity of argumentation, in the eyes of the participants, based on material aspects of the manuscripts. Two Churches with their own intellectual and theological traditions met at the Council, but they were also two book cultures, with their own material cultures. Manuscripts were part of both Churches' histories and living traditions. The Greeks and the Latins gave meanings to the manuscripts they themselves owned and used. At the Council, they had to take a stand on the material culture of the other party as well. My study explains the role that the manuscripts had in these two cultures and in their theological thought, and how these conceptions met and worked at the Council.

1.3 Primary sources

Many important sources dealing with the Council of Ferrara–Florence have been collected in the series *Concilium florentinum: documenta et scriptores*. This collection contains eleven volumes of texts related to the Council, written both in Latin and in Greek. These volumes contain letters, bulls, speeches, theological disputes, protocols, decrees, diaries, and treatises by various authors. Of these documents, the *Acts* form the most important material for the study of the use and authority of manuscripts.

The Greek Acts, also known as *Practica*,[83] is the official document of the Council. The Acts begins with the arrival of the Greeks in Venice and ends with their departure from Venice. Joseph Gill, the author of the *Council of Florence* (1959) and editor of the Greek Acts, has specified three elements, or the combination of three historical documents, that determine the Acts. The greatest part of the Acts consists of the discussions in the public sessions that were held in Ferrara and Florence. These discussions were written down by three Greek notaries as the speeches were held and then compared to the accounts of the Latins.[84] Gill correctly states that this part of the Acts is what makes the document Acts, and can be regarded as "authentic protocol of the sessions."[85] Another segment of the Acts comprises explanatory accounts of what happened before the Council and after the public sessions were held, until the departure of the Greeks after the promulgation of the union. Another part of the *Acts* is a section on the negotiations about the Council's transfer from Ferrara to Florence, which, according to Gill, was added by an early copyist, John Plousiadenos. This *Description*, as Gill calls the section, is not written by a Council participant, but is copied from a larger work, now lost, authored by a participant,

83 *Practica* is the Greek word for Acts.
84 This practice is also explained by Sylvester Syropoulos, see Syropoulos VI, 32.
85 Gill 1959, ix.

possibly Dorotheus of Mitylene.[86] The third part is a short introduction, written by a scribe about whom Gill does not give further details.[87] For this study, the protocol of the sessions in which the manuscripts were used and discussed forms the most important part.

The Latin Acts differ from the Greek Acts, not only in their language, but also in the way the work was composed. The editor of the Latin Acts, Georg Hofmann, has noticed that the official Latin Acts, based on the accounts of the notaries, is lost,[88] and the version we call the Latin Acts is in fact an account of the Council written by Andrew of Santa Croce. The Latin Acts is written as a dialogue between the author, Andrew of Santa Croce, and a protonotary of the pope and an adversary of the Council, Ludovico of Pontano. In addition to the speeches of the participants, it comprises the questions and comments of Ludovico and Andrew's answers and descriptions of the discussions and events of the Council.[89] Andrew of Santa Croce, who himself took part in the Council, was a papal protonotary, but it is not certain whether he was one of the three notaries whose accounts were compared to the Greek versions of the discourses.[90] The text of Andrew, according to Gill, is then based on Andrew's recollections and notes he made during the Council, and was not compared to other versions.[91] Gill, however, notes that the Greek and Latin Acts, in spite of this difference, are similar to one another. The two Acts are complementary, as some sessions are recorded in more detail in the other *Acts*, as some in the other *Acts*.[92]

Both Acts were written, for the most part, by people who took part in the Council. The speeches were written down by the notaries and the Greek and Latin versions

86 Gill 1959, ix–x. Dorotheus of Mitylene was part of the Byzantine delegation. Although he did not speak in the official sessions, he brought some manuscripts to the Council and was part of the smaller committee of Greeks responsible for producing Greek arguments. See Gill 1959, 114, 162, 191. In his later studies, Gill considered it improbable that Dorotheus would have authored the second part of the text because of its inferior Greek. See Gill 1964, 526–533, see especially 533.

87 Gill 1959, x.

88 It has been searched for since the beginning of the sixteenth century. See Gill 1959, x.

89 Hofmann 1955, v.

90 Lapo da Castiglionchio mentions Poggio of Florence (Poggio Bracciolini), Cencio the Roman (Cencio de' Rustici) and Flavio of Forlì (Flavio Biondo) as the Council's papal protonotaries. See Lapo da Castiglionchio V, 5.

91 Andrew affirms about his methods of writing in the Acts that he "wrote down faithfully the words of the Greeks as communicated by means of the interpreter and those of the Latins as they came directly from the mouths of the speakers." Translation in Gill 1959, x. The original Latin text reads as follows: "Res grandes cum conspexissem, calamum sumpsi, onusve ad scribendum prolata suscipiens id prosecutus sum, referam nulla mutata substantia Grecorum dicta ex interpretis organo, Latinorum vero ex ipsorum exponentium originali emissione verborum." See AL 39.

92 Gill 1959, x.

were compared. This process of comparison of the notes and a similarity between the Greek and Latin Acts increase the credibility of both documents and diminish the reason to doubt a fundamentally Greek or Latin authorial position in the narrative. Naturally, however, the cultural and religious backgrounds cannot be ignored.

Another important source for this study is the *Memoirs* of Sylvester Syropoulos. Syropoulos was a deacon and official of the Great Church of Constantinople, and he took part in the Council with the Byzantine delegation.[93] The memoirs consist of twelve books, the first of which is lost. In these books, he treats first the negotiations and events that took place before the Council, then the Council, and lastly what happened in Constantinople after the union had been proclaimed. According to Gill, Syropoulos could not have written the memoirs before 1444.[94] Since the union did not get a warm reception in Constantinople when the delegates returned, Syropoulos wrote his memoirs as a way of explaining the oppressive circumstances which led to the acceptance of the union. Syropoulos himself, although he signed the decree of union, did not support it.[95] The memoirs depict the attitudes and the persons and events extensively and in a very different tone and style than the Acts. Syropoulos mentions the problems caused by the different versions of the texts and the ways in which the manuscripts were used and discussed at the Council. Moreover, the memoirs give a glimpse of what happened in the private meetings of the Greeks, and give a voice to the Greek members who were not active speakers in the official sessions but took part in the private meetings of the Greeks.

Syropoulos's *Memoirs* is a story of the Council, its preparation, proceedings, and aftermath. In addition, it is an autobiographical document by its author, a narrative of the events in the way Syropoulos chose to write his memoirs. Syropoulos declares in his memoirs that he has written down everything truthfully, but at the same time notices and reminds his readers that not everything is written down, since he was not present on every occasion.[96] It is, however, clear that Syropoulos' account of the Council cannot be taken as an impartial record. Syropoulos wrote his memoirs as a narrative after the Council had ended and he had had time to rethink his own stance on matters concerning the Council and the union that followed it. If we compare the account of Syropoulos to the *Acts*, there are many similarities, and the main outline of the Council looks basically the same, although the dates differ somewhat. In Syropoulos' narrative, we can, however, find information on the discussions inside

93 A short introduction to Syropoulos, his life and *Memoirs*, see Kondyli, Andriopoulou, Panou & Cunnigham 2014, 1–7.
94 Gill 1959, xi.
95 Gill 1964, 147; Gill 1969/70, 227; Kondyli, Andriopoulou, Panou & Cunnigham 2014, 2.
96 Syropoulos XI, 9; XII, 15.

the Greek delegation, and the many feelings and disagreements that the Council's events and debates caused.

These three sources are the main sources for the events of the Council. The series *Concilium florentinum documenta et scriptores* contains other writings that deal with the Council in one way or another. Of these, we should mention Bessarion's treatise on the Holy Spirit, which he wrote after the Council, probably in 1445. In this treatise, he recounted the Council and explained to Alexios Lascaris that he had studied the manuscripts in Constantinople after the Council.[97] This source, together with other sources written after the Council, also sheds light on the importance and influence that the manuscripts had on individuals and on the communities and cultures that used manuscripts and based their belief and knowledge on them. These sources also make evident the change and impact that the Council had on participants.

From the Latin side, important source material is the correspondence. In the letters, various matters were discussed. They reveal details about the circumstances and formalities related to the Council. They also uncover the power struggles between different parties and individuals, not only between East and West, but also between the Council of Ferrara–Florence and the Council of Basel,[98] and give information about active persons in the Council and the relations between them. Many matters concerning the manuscripts, such as their collection and translation, were discussed in the correspondence. The correspondence of Ambrogio Traversari forms the most important element for understanding the role of manuscripts at the Council.

In addition to the sources discussed above, I use various types of sources, such as chronicles and theological treatises, from before, during and after the Council, which give context to the events or otherwise broaden the analysis of the role and importance of the manuscripts for the Council and its participants. These sources are introduced when they are used for the first time.

Many texts give useful information about the relations and attitudes of the Greeks and Latins, and thus help us to understand the problems faced in the debates over manuscripts. Frankie Nowicki, who has studied the music and ritual in the Council of Ferrara–Florence, has noted that "[t]hose who witnessed the Council of Florence remembered it according to their attitudes towards the union."[99] Although

97 Gill 1975, 388.

98 The Council of Basel was the conciliarist, or anti-papal, Council that was convened before the Council of Ferrara–Florence and continued to assemble during the Council of Ferrara–Florence. *A Companion to the Council of Basel* (eds. Michiel Decaluwe, Thomas M. Izbicki and Gerald Christianson, 2016) offers a wide array of scholarly articles on the Council. The rivalry between the two Councils is discussed in chapter 2.

99 Nowicki 2011, 337.

this idea is a concluding remark in Nowicki's study, I find it useful with regard to textual criticism as well. Council participants witnessed and experienced the Council, its discussions, events and outcomes in various ways and expressed their thoughts and memories according to their attitudes towards the union and also more generally according to their understanding of themselves, the other, and the reality in which they were living.

1.4 Methods

I borrow the analogy philologist Matthew James Driscoll uses in his research article on how an editor should conduct their work. Just as children studying mathematics at school are obliged not only to give the result, but also to display the process that leads to this result, so too the editor must show their thinking and the interpretations they make.[100] I would say that this is a requirement for a scholar as well. We cannot simply offer the results, either in writing or in speaking; we should also explain how we reach our conclusions. How can this process be made transparent, when most of the study is conducted by reading and writing?

Despite the challenges caused by the characteristic nature of historical study based firmly on reading and writing, there are still many ways to display the process. Careful references to both primary sources and research literature is, of course, evident. It should be clear to the reader when sources and other scholars' works are cited or used, and when interpretations are made on the basis of them. I also find it important, indeed necessary, to offer direct quotations from the original sources occasionally. This gives the reader a clearer idea of how the scholar reads and interprets the research material and of how the interpretation is formed based on the original material compared to what the reader would get by merely reading the scholar's analysis. In this study, primary sources are written in Greek and Latin, and quotations are given both in an English translation and in the original language. This is part of displaying the process. Translation is always an interpretation, and perfect or absolutely correct translations do not exist. Displaying the translations together with the original is important, but not enough. Central terms and concepts need to be explained, and this too belongs to the methodological work. Translations and research concepts are choices. They can guide the study, but the scholar needs to re-evaluate them from time to time. When the understanding deepens, the interpretations can change.

I see reading as integral in acquiring knowledge, but also as a way to make interpretations, as the cultural historian Hannu Salmi affirms. A cultural historian

[100] Driscoll 2010, 103.

seeks to find meanings from written sources. These meanings are not, however, fixed directly to the texts.[101] Charles Darnton has likewise noted that the meaning is deciphered by the readers of the text.[102] Reading is also a process of getting information, but the information "must be sifted, sorted, and interpreted."[103] When we work with texts that are both the source of information and the object of study and interpretation, we need methods that help us to navigate the past and its sources. Here, I find it useful to move "back and forth between the narrative and the surrounding documentation," using Darnton's words.[104]

This 'back-and-forth reading'[105] can help us to grasp the past and its people, their experiences and their understanding of the world. For the cultural historian Tom Linkinen, the back-and-forth reading is important in the process where the scholar checks, set things in perspective, doubts, and then checks again and in this way constructs the context. At the same time, the scholar clarifies the research questions they have posed to the research material.[106] The process that Linkinen describes sounds familiar. Reading for the first time the Council's documents gave me the basic idea of the Council: who were present there, where they were, what topics they discussed, and so on. At the same time, I read the basic research literature, such as Joseph Gill's *The Council of Florence* (1959). Gill's study of the Council together with other studies of the Council, late-medieval East–West relations and theology helped me to understand the reasons behind the Council's arrangements and the difficulties that the theological issues brought to the participants. The Council's primary sources already looked a little different than during the first reading. The importance of the manuscripts was not self-evident when I was still reading and discerning the basic outline and topics of the Council and interpreting the dynamics and relations between the Greek and Latin representatives. When I chose to ask what kind of strategies the delegations of the East and West had in the negotiations, I began to notice the great importance of the manuscripts. The focus of interpretation shifted, and the presence of manuscripts in the sources made me reshape my research questions and read the sources time and again.

When manuscripts and the Council's discussions of them became the focus of my questions and interpretation, the context had to be enlarged. The context was not

101 Salmi 2022, 37–50, see especially 43–44.
102 Darnton 2001, 173.
103 Darnton 2001, 177. See also Salmi 2022, 44.
104 Darnton 1986, 228.
105 A cultural historian Tom Linkinen has used this term "back-and-forth reading" (in Finnish "edestakaisin lukeminen"), inspired by Robert Darnton. See Linkinen 2005, 54. The entire essay is a 'dialogue' between Linkinen and his reading of Robert Darnton. See Linkinen 2005, 51–66.
106 Linkinen 2005, 54.

only the late-medieval Council, the East–West relations and encounters, or the late-medieval and Byzantine theology. The participants were not only part of the Christian cultures or Churches that had brought them to the Council, but they also represented and shaped the book cultures that had affected the ways in which they read and interpreted the texts and gave meanings to books as material artefacts. This shift in the focus and the rethinking of the research question and context is a useful reminder that neither the meanings nor the contexts are fixed directly to the texts or the sources that we study. They must be construed in a way that is relevant and useful to the interpretation, and are thus research results.[107]

Contextualisation can be used as a historical method.[108] However, the cultural historian Juhana Saarelainen emphasizes that it is a method only when new knowledge is produced by contextualising.[109] Context is evidently connected to meaning. By construing the context, the past meanings can be attained. The meaning is formed in the context built by the scholar.[110] The discussions of the qualities and features of the manuscripts at the Council's sessions would not appear so important if they were not interpreted in the context of late-medieval and Byzantine book cultures, in addition to the theological context and, more precisely, the discussions concerning the particular theological texts and doctrines. The participants' ideas about the material or age of the manuscripts in which the debated passages are found become meaningful only in the appropriate context. They were not only descriptions of manuscripts; they had their own meaning and importance, which appear crucial only when interpreted in the context. These might not be intuitional or self-evident to the readers or scholars who are separated from the original moments and events in which the people of the past participated.

Many times, the question is: What is this about? The unfamiliarity of the things we find in the sources leads us to find connections between a part and the whole that explains the unknown.[111] I think that dealing with something that is unknown, difficult to grasp or even strange to us, keeps the research sharp and forces the scholar to read more and think about the cultural context that has contributed to the production of the sources. The peculiarity caused by the temporal and cultural distance presents a good challenge, but also helps to keep the interpretation specific to culture and time. Familiarity, then, can lead the scholar to anachronisms and 'easy'

107 Hyrkkänen 2008, 192; Saarelainen 2013, 245; Ahonen, Heikkilä, Mähkä, Ollitervo & Räsänen 2022, 13.
108 The intellectual historian Quentin Skinner has elaborated contextualisation as a method. See Skinner 1972, 393–408; Skinner 1975, 209–232.
109 Saarelainen 2013, 246, 255.
110 Saarelainen 2013, 251, 255.
111 Saarelainen 2013, 253.

interpretations that would make sense in our time and culture, but were in fact alien to the contemporaries.

An important basis for interpretation is the profound understanding of the sources. To achieve this understanding, we arrive at the fundaments of historical research, namely, source criticism. Source criticism has been part of historical research for centuries,[112] and it is so integral part of history that as a method it is often not explained or even mentioned.[113] As a method, it remains even today a necessary part of historical study, and it should not be abandoned. But it is important to acknowledge the shifts that have occurred in source criticism over the centuries. Initially, emphasis was placed on evaluation of the sources' reliability, while nowadays this approach is often considered outdated.[114] For the cultural historian Marjo Kaartinen, it is not the definition of the authenticity of the source that is essential, but rather to ponder what questions can be put to it.[115] I see this rumination of possible research questions as part of source-critical work. As professional historians, we are obliged to understand the temporal and spatial origins and the cultural contexts of the sources that we use. These help us to situate the source in time and place and cultural context(s), which are then the key to determining what kind of questions the source can tell us, and what are its limits.

Information about the origins, including the author, date and place of composition or later phases, and about the cultural context that defines the shape and contents and interpretation of the sources, is not always evident or explicitly presented in the sources. Thus, source criticism is not only something that must be considered and 'done' before reading the sources or at the beginning; it must be part of reading and interpretation throughout the research process. Even if previous scholars have done the preliminary work on the sources we use, the different approaches, research questions and contexts may demand and produce new critical perspectives on the sources. A source may not be reliable in terms of recounting

112 Already in the sixteenth century, Jean Bodin discussed source criticism as a historical method in his treatise *Methodus ad facilem historiarium cognitionem* (1566). For Bodin, source criticism was primarily a method for establishing reliable knowledge by checking and comparing the sources. See Lorenz 2001, 6870.

113 The historian Pirjo Markkola has made a similar observation, and analyses source criticism as an integral part of historical research, albeit one that is often 'silent' and 'unnoticeable.' See Markkola 2008, 168–177. The cultural historian Pauliina Pekkarinen, in her essay on Jacob Burckhardt's *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien* (1860), speaks of the historians who are "committed to source criticism" and their critique of Burckhardt's amateurish use of sources. See Pekkarinen 2005, 116.

114 Ahonen, Heikkilä, Mähkä, Ollitervo & Räsänen 2022, 11; Markkola 2008, 168–177; Kaartinen 2005, 174–175.

115 Kaartinen 2005, 175.

historical events, but nevertheless be a valid source for understanding religious and cultural attitudes.

1.5 Terminology and research ethics

My study contributes to the research on the East–West relations, although the research aim is the discussions and understanding of the manuscripts. The study operates with the terminology of East and West. I am aware of the problematic aspects of these concepts.[116] They have a long history and contemporary meanings attached to them that I do not wish to transfer to the late-medieval encounter between the Churches. This is why I believe it is important to explain why and how I use these and other related terms in this study.

While I acknowledge that the modern Churches are successors of the ancient and medieval ones, I have decided not to use the terms (Roman) Catholic or (Greek) Orthodox, either of the Churches or their members in my study. Instead, I use the terms *Eastern* and *Western Churches*. This is partly because catholicism and orthodoxy were concepts that both Churches used and associated with themselves.[117]

116 Besides this, the terms East and West have changed over time and shifts in (geographical) power relations. John Meyendorff has analysed the concepts with the following reflections: "Of course, today – especially in our twentieth century – the categories of East and West are historically and culturally obliterated: the position occupied by the two American continents, Africa and Asia; the disappearance, long ago, of the Byzantine empire and the de facto universal adoption of intellectual methodologies established in Western Europe in the nineteenth century, make a clear distinction between Christian 'East' and 'West' somewhat artificial. This new situation gives us the necessary tools to understand better our common history of the first millennium, and also the nature of the tragic estrangement that followed." See Meyendorff 1991, 153.

117 *Catholic*, deriving from the Greek word *καθολικός* and Latin *catholicus*, can be translated as *general* or *universal*. Thus, the Catholic Church is the universal church. This universality is, however, something with which both Eastern and Western Churches identified themselves. Before the schism, there were Eastern and Western Catholics. All these followed the same doctrines defined in the ecumenical Councils. After the schism, the situation changed. The concept of Catholicity did not vanish, but the separated churches reserved the attribute *catholic* to themselves. The other Church and her members were no longer catholic. See Kolbaba 2008, 151. Catholic was in fact one of the Four Marks of the Church established in the Nicene–Constantinopolitan Creed: "[we believe] [i]n one holy catholic and apostolic Church" (gr. "Εἰς μίαν, ἁγίαν, καθολικὴν καὶ ἀποστολικὴν Ἐκκλησίαν; lat. "Et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam"). See Dulles 1987, 13. For a historical overview of the Four Marks of the Church, see Madges 2006, 7–21; Dulles 1987, 13–29. The Byzantine historian Averil Cameron also points out that using the terms Orthodoxy and Catholicism when speaking of Byzantine Christendom and Western Church in the Middle Ages is anachronistic. See Cameron 2017, 4–5, 82.

The other reason is that I want to draw a distinction between the medieval and modern Churches, and give the medieval institutions a voice of their own and an identity distinct from their modern counterparts. The third reason is explained by the sources and the language in which medieval people referred to their Churches. Lastly, while the concepts Catholics and Orthodox can be found in the studies, the terms Eastern and Western Churches, or Churches of East and West, are widely used by scholars of medieval and Byzantine studies.

I have decided to use the terms *Greeks* and *Latins* for those who represented the Churches of East and West. The terms Easterners and Westerners are sometimes used by scholars, but they build a polarized map of people belonging to either West or East. Of course, the terms Greeks and Latins can be said to divide people into two groups just like the terms Easterners and Westerners, but the terms Greeks and Latins work better for this study, in my view. These terms are connected to the languages, which were not necessarily the mother tongues or the spoken languages of all the participants, but were the languages on which the theology and literary tradition of these two groups were mostly based. These terms are often used in studies, especially of the religious cultures. In the sources, the situation is not as clear as in the research language. The Greek identity of some members of the Eastern Church and Byzantine Empire was only emerging at the time of the Council, and the term *Greek* could have been even taken as an insult by some.[118] The Greeks identified themselves as *Romans*, as did the Latins. And in many cases, the Latins were *Franks* for the Greeks. The use of the terms Latins and Greeks, despite their imperfection, solves the problem of having two groups of Romans, or of some other terms[119] that are more connected to the Empires than to the religious affiliations.

When I made the decision to include both Churches and cultures in my study, my aim was to deal with both Churches on equal and ethical terms. Previous scholarship has not always succeeded in presenting the results in a manner that treats both Churches, or their representatives, equally. Marie-Hélène Blanchet has made the same point.[120] In some cases, it seems to be a matter of language and choice of

118 Syropoulos II, 21. This is analysed in chapter 3.5.

119 When I use the term *Byzantines*, these persons are referred to as being part of the Byzantine Empire rather than of the Church, even if the connection of the Empire and the Church was close. The term *Franks*, I do not use in this study.

120 Blanchet 2003, 5: "The attempts at reunion of the Roman and Orthodox Churches, from the antecedents of the Council of Lyons (1274) to the Council of Florence (1439), have brought forth an abundant historical literature characterised for a long time by the confessional commitment of its authors in Western as well as Eastern Europe. Historical interpretations of the Union have been heavily influenced by the various politico-religious contexts in which they were produced, following closely the evolution of the relations between Rome and Orthodoxy down to the Ecumenism of the second half of the twentieth century." See also Blanchet 2017, 559.

words that give the impression of unequal treatment. In other cases, the research frame seems to be built in such a way that the one side is considered to have acted badly in the past, while the other side was a victim. Both present-day sore spots and hope for ecumenism and mutual understanding find their way into the scholarly narratives, sometimes on purpose, sometimes unintentionally. In particular, this unintentional or innate presence of modern or contemporary ideas and beliefs on questions concerning the relations between the Churches of East and West reminds us that research literature too is produced in time and space, in cultures that approach these questions with their own interests, conceptions and beliefs.

To speak of 'equal terms' does not always mean that precisely the same amount of analysis will be carried out on both Churches. This is due in part to the available sources. While there are *Acts* of the Council in both Greek and Latin versions, from the Greek side there is the large memoir of Syropoulos, in which the Greek attitudes and concerns are discussed. From the Latin side, the correspondence reveals Latin ideas from another perspective. A perfect neutrality or objectivity is probably unachievable, because the culture and the individuals always interpret texts, choice of words and expressions differently. This does not give the scholar permission to take attitude of indifference. The aim must be a respectful approach to the past. The objective must be a study that is firmly grounded in well-established arguments and contexts.

2 "Therefore, let there be a universal, unbreakable, and strong union of the Churches"[121] – A meeting of two Churches and cultures

> Indeed, the Byzantine Emperor has come – I say, before now he has not been seen in Italy, let alone in the curia. He has been followed by priests, high priests, legates, and many translators from all the Eastern peoples and nations among whom the name of Christ is worshiped. The variety of their language, their character, their adornment, their dress, their bearing, and, finally, their bodies themselves leads not only to delight but also to laughter and wonderment.[122]

One of Pope Eugene IV's secretaries, Lapo da Castiglionchio,[123] described the arrival of the Greeks in Italy as an exceptional event. He concentrated on their different *habitus,* which even provoked a reaction of "laughter and wonderment."

121 "Itaque fiat universalis unio et infrangibilis et firma Ecclesiarum." Cecconi, doc. IV.

122 "Venit enim Bysanthinus imperator, nunquam ante hoc tempus non dico in curia, sed in Italia visus. Hunc omnium orientalium gentium ac nationum, apud quas Christi colitur nomen, sacerdotes, antistites, legati, interpretes plurimi consecuti sunt, quorum varietas linguae, morum, cultus, habitus, incessus, corporum denique ipsorum non delectationi modo, sed etiam risui, admirationi sunt." Lapo da Castiglionchio VII, 6. Translated by Christopher S. Celenza, see Celenza 1999, 171.

123 Lapo da Castiglionchio was born in 1406. He pursued a career in the curia and was involved in humanistic studies. He made translations from Greek to Latin, mostly of classical works. His *De curiae commodis*, which is quoted above, deals with the Roman curia and its benefits. Lapo wrote the work in the summer of 1438, and finished it in August at the Council in Ferrara. Lapo died the same year, probably in October, of the plague in Venice. See Celenza 1999, 1–25. Lapo was in the service of Francesco Condulmer, the nephew and chamberlain of Pope Eugene IV. Lapo followed Condulmer to the Council, where Lapo's duty was to translate conciliar documents from Greek to Latin, which caused him dissatisfaction. See Celenza 1999, 9, 57–58, 61–62.

The presence of the Byzantine emperor in Italy was a wonder in itself,[124] and the presence of several hundred Greeks, who looked and sounded different, was certainly an exceptional occasion for the Latins. Similarly, the travel to the West, and the encounter with people from the West, was an unusual event to the Greeks.

The Council of Ferrara–Florence in 1438–39 brought Pope Eugene IV and the Byzantine Emperor, John VIII Palaiologos, and the Patriarch of Constantinople, Joseph II, with their delegations together to discuss the union of the Churches and to end the schism that had been troubling East–West relations for several centuries by that time. Before an extensive and correctly organized meeting of the two Churches could take place, many details and practical issues concerning the future council had to be negotiated and solved. In this chapter, I will discuss the preparations for the Council and the context in which the Council took place for the two parties and central individuals. I will introduce the main topics that were discussed in the Council and the overall course and circumstances of the Council. Finally, I will present the most important individuals from both the Eastern and the Western delegations and their role and duties in the Council.

[124] Lapo da Castiglionchio exaggerates a little in his narrative about the exceptional presence of the Byzantine emperor in the West. For long, it was not the practice of the Byzantine emperor to visit the West in diplomatic affairs, but already Emperor John V Palaiologos (1332–1391) had changed this practice and travelled to Buda and Rome in 1366 and 1369 and acted as an ambassador himself. His aim was to request military help from the West, from both secular and ecclesiastical leaders, and in this the union of the Churches, or rather the emperor's conversion, played a key role. An ecumenical Council was not planned, nor were there any representatives of the Patriarch of Constantinople in the Byzantine delegation. See Andriopoulou 2010, 8, 191–194. The son of Emperor John V, Manuel II, continued with the diplomatic travels to the West and in addition to many embassies he sent to the West, he visited the Western cities and their leaders in 1399–1403. Stavroula Andriopoulou has listed the embassies and the destinations and notes that Manuel II was focused on building diplomatic relations with, and seeking military and financial aid from, secular leaders more than the papacy, whereas his father John V sought help primarily from the papacy. Manuel's embassies and personal diplomatic travels coincide with the Great Western Schism, and Manuel was aware of the internal problems of the Western Church. Nevertheless, Manuel visited and kept in contact with popes of the Roman, Avignon, and Pisan obediences. Manuel's Byzantine delegation even took part at the Council of Constance, which ended the Western Schism and chose Martin V as pope, but the Church union was not the only or even primary way for Emperor Manuel to gain Western aid. See Andriopoulou 2010, 195–211. The presence of the Byzantine emperor in the Council of Florence, and on an occasion of this magnitude, was nevertheless a remarkable and historic event.

2.1 Towards an ecumenical council

For several centuries, between the fourth and eight centuries, members from the Western and Eastern patriarchates met in ecumenical Councils. In these councils, the Church's dogmas were discussed and formulated, and heresies were condemned. Many noteworthy Church Fathers, who became one of the cornerstones of Christian theology and tradition, participated in these Councils and defined the true and orthodox teaching of the Church. Seven Councils were considered ecumenical at the time of the Council of Ferrara–Florence by both Eastern and Western Churches (and are still considered ecumenical today).[125] Already during this period, the Churches in the West and the East began to form their own traditions and local practices, and especially after these ecumenical Councils, the differences began to widen and cause challenges in East–West relations. The Schism was on its way.

The year 1054 was traditionally considered in historiography as the culmination of a process of rupture between the Eastern and the Western Churches. Scholars in recent decades have, however, noticed that the differences between the Churches had much more far-reaching roots than just the moment when Cardinal Humbert and the Patriarch of Constantinople, Michael I Keroularios, pronounced the excommunications in 1054.[126] In recent scholarship, the Fourth Crusade (1202–1204) and the Latin Empire of Constantinople (1204–1261), which followed it, have often been seen as the definite point of rupture between the Churches and the most influential event in (medieval) East–West relations.[127] The Fourth Crusade resulted

125 For example, Roger Scott has listed these ecumenical Councils, their dates, and the number of bishops who attended. The Councils were: First Council of Nicaea (325); First Council of Constantinople (381); Council of Ephesus (431); Council of Chalcedon (451); Second Council of Constantinople (553); Third Council of Constantinople (680–681); Second Council of Nicaea (787). See Scott 2015, 364.

126 Hamilton 2003 (1986), 141; Chadwick 2003, 206–218. On 7 December 1965, the mutual excommunications between Cardinal Humbert and Michael I Keroularios were withdrawn by Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras I of Constantinople at a public session of the Second Vatican Council in Rome and at a special ceremony in Istanbul. See the joint declaration in https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/speeches/1965/documents/hf_p-vi_spe_19651207_common-declaration.html.

127 See for example Geanakoplos 1976, 82; Hamilton 2003 (1986), 141; Chadwick 2003, 233–237, 259; Siecienski 2017, 9, 282, and Papadakis 2011, 23. Bernard Hamilton argues that already the previous crusades had affected East–West relations, because of the appointments of the Latin patriarchs at Jerusalem and Antioch after the conquests in Syria and Palestine. This was unacceptable for the Byzantine emperor and the Patriarch of Constantinople. See Hamilton 2003 (1986), 141. Aristeides Papadakis explains that it was the Fourth Crusade that made it clear to the Greeks what the papacy's autocratic primacy meant. See Papadakis 2011, 23. A. Edward Siecienski has emphasised the same aspect, see Siecienski 2017, 282. Of the deep impact that the Fourth Crusade left in East–West relations tells nearly eight hundred years later, in

in the sacking of Constantinople, and (to note one example) thousands of relics and other religious and precious objects were brought to the West.[128]

The Schism also led to negotiations for the unification of the Churches. The Byzantine historian Louis Bréhier calculated that from 1054 to 1453, roughly thirty attempts were made to restore union. In principle, the union was achieved three times, once under compulsion in 1204 in the Fourth Crusade and twice later, in the frameworks of Councils, in 1274 in Lyons and in 1439 in Florence.[129] Although the union was solemnly declared on these occasions, it did not last, because the situations changed rapidly, and support was lacking "on the ground."

The popes and emperors were the most active in trying to achieve the union. For Byzantine emperors, the grand motive for the union was usually political. That is why the initiatives for negotiating the union came from the emperors during times of crisis, when the Ottoman threat was alarming. The zeal for union likewise faded when the threat was over or significantly diminished. Although the motives may have been rather political, the questions of dogma and religious practices were important, and the same discussions, and the same dividing issues, occurred in all the negotiations during the Middle Ages.[130] The Patriarch of Constantinople was not usually the one who took the initiative to start the negotiations, but his presence and activity were required, especially once the Council was organized.

These roughly thirty attempts toward the union are scattered quite evenly in the centuries between 1054 and 1453, but the most prominent are the Second Council of Lyons in 1272–1274 and the partly simultaneous and rival Councils of Basel (1431–1449) and Ferrara–Florence. The union was in fact achieved at the Second Council of Lyons, which was convoked by Pope Gregory X, but it was short-lived, because

2001, Pope John Paul II made an apology to Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople. He regretted the deep impact left on East–West relation nearly eight hundred years later, and mourned for the terrible events that his papal predecessors had caused in the city of Constantinople and its people. See the address in https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2004/june/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20040629_bartholomew-i.html. Avery Dulles emphasised not the Fourth Crusade but the Council of Ferrara–Florence, saying that "[a]fter the Council of Florence the separation between the Eastern and Western churches, which had previously appeared to be a temporary rupture of communion, became definitive." See Dulles 1987, 15.

128 See for example Siecienski 2017, 285; Camille 1989, 271–277; Lester 2014, 311–328; Perry 2015.

129 Bréhier 1923, 594. On the negotiations between the Churches, see also Chadwick 2003 and Siecienski 2017.

130 Bréhier 1923, 594–595; Meyendorff 1991, 157. See also Andriopoulou 2010, who discusses the role of the last Byzantine emperors, their stance and diplomatic practices that aimed in securing Constantinople against the Ottomans. In some cases more than in others, the union of the Churches was seen more clearly as the means to achieve this.

it faced so much opposition in Constantinople. After the death of the union-minded Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos, the union ended entirely.[131]

During the Great Western Schism, the division of the Western Church after the contested election of Bartolomeo Prignano as Pope Urban VI in 1378 and the consequent formation of rival papal obediences in Rome and Avignon, negotiations became complicated, since the West had deep internal troubles.[132] However, this did not put a stop to all negotiations or attempts to discuss the possible union. The clearest example is diplomatic travel to the West, which the Byzantine emperor Manuel II Palaiologos himself undertook in 1399–1403, and other embassies Manuel sent to the West during his reign. For Manuel, the Church union was not as important as it had been for his father, Emperor John V, nor was it the only (or perhaps the hoped-for) key to receiving aid to the Empire in distress. Manuel was in contact with the popes of all three obediences. Stavroula Andriopoulou sees this as due to Manuel's tireless determination to acquire help from anyone possible.[133] Nonetheless, the union of the Eastern and Western Churches was brought up in discussions.[134] He wrote a treatise *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* during his visit, in which he mentioned that the difficult situation in the West made the negotiations challenging. In this treatise, he also discussed other issues separating the Churches, such as the papal primacy, and he had little belief that the Latins would yield on the matters of union.[135]

The Great Western Schism ended at the Council of Constance (1414–18). The main objective of the Council was to end the schism and elect a new pope.[136] The Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos was invited to the Council by the King of the Romans, Sigismund. Manuel sent representatives who opened a discussion about union with the newly elected Pope Martin V.[137] Martin put his heart into this matter and began to prepare for the future Council with the Greeks. Both the pope and the Byzantine emperor sent delegations back and forth in the following years. At first, it

131 Bréhier 1923. See also Chadwick 2003, 248–250.

132 Barker 1969, 158. See also Halecki 1937, 477–532, in which Halecki discusses the relations between Rome and Byzantine Empire during the Great Western Schism.

133 Andriopoulou 2010, 199. On Manuel II Palaiologos and his mission to the West, see also Dendrinos 2011, 397–422; Barker 1969.

134 Bréhier 1923, 618; Gill 1959, 17; Andriopoulou 2010. Manuel Chrysoloras was Emperor Manuel's agent. See Gill 1964, 250.

135 Van Sickle 2017, 44. See also Barker 1969, 193.

136 The Council also aimed to reform the Church and suppress heresies. See for example Philip Stump's *The Reforms of the Council of Constance (1414–1418)* (1994). The Council of Constance also condemned Jan Hus as a heretic. On the reasons behind this condemnation, see Fudge 2017, 29–44.

137 Gill 1964, 233. Otto Colonna was elected on 11 November 1417 and took the name Martin V.

seemed that the union could be reached quite easily, and Martin believed that the Greeks were ready for the union. This view, however, changed when Antonio da Massa, whom he had sent to Constantinople, wrote to the pope that the Greeks were, in fact, demanding an open discussion on the matters dividing the Churches.[138] The first idea was to organize the Council in Constantinople, since the Byzantine emperor did not want to leave his Empire behind. But after discovering what the Greeks were rally demanding with regard to the nature of the future Council, Martin was unwilling to go to Constantinople for the union, since he feared that the potentially small number of Latins would be in a weak position vis-à-vis the massive number of Greeks who would be present.[139] Accordingly, negotiations were opened for the Council to be held in the West.

If we look at the preparations of this early stage from a Byzantine perspective, the picture is slightly different. Emperor Manuel, who was still optimistic when he travelled to the West at the turn of the century, was not as hopeful in his later years as he had been earlier on. A Byzantine official and diplomat, George Sphrantzes,[140] who worked for both Manuel II and his son John VIII, included Manuel's instructions to his son and co-emperor John on how to deal with the Latins in his *Chronicle*. According to Sphrantzes, Manuel spoke the following:

> 'My son, we truly, certainly know that the impious [Ottomans] dread the day we come to terms and unite with the Franks; they believe that if it happens, they will suffer because of us a great misfortune at the hands of the Christians of the West.
>
> Well, then, as far as this synod is concerned, continue to study and plan it, especially when you need to frighten the impious. But do not bring it about, as I perceive our side as unable to find a way of uniting and achieving peace and harmony; they will attempt to restore the original state. As this is impossible to achieve, I fear that a worse schism may develop and we will have nothing to protect us from the impious.'[141]

138 Gill 1964, 233. The Great Western Schism had changed the situation significantly for the Greeks who were demanding an ecumenical Council for the union discussions. Pope Martin V was required to obey the Council, as the new decree *Frequens* declared. See Meyendorff 1991, 159–161.

139 Gill 1964, 233.

140 George Sphrantzes himself did not take part at the Council.

141 Sphrantzes, *Chronicon* XXIII, 5–6. Translated by Marios Philippides, see Philippides 1980, 50. Charalambos Dendrinos begins his article with the same quotation. See Dendrinos 2007, 131–132.

For Manuel, the constant preparations for the Council were the best way to frighten the enemies surrounding Constantinople, the Ottomans. A central topic in the Chronicle was the relations between the Byzantine and the Ottoman Empire. The Chronicle was, in fact, written after the fall of Constantinople, and in many places, the fault of the fall was laid on the Council and the union and its rejection by the Eastern Church.[142] One can naturally question how exact this quotation from Manuel was, but I believe that Manuel's message to his son John in the final years of his reign was the one presented by Sphrantzes. The union and the cry for help from the West were Manuel's missions in life, but he also faced serious disappointments in these endeavours. He probably thought that the best way to keep the Ottomans on their toes was to keep the contacts with the West ongoing but without relying on actual help from there, even if the union succeeded.

Emperor John VIII Palaiologos saw the matter differently from his father. Sphrantzes gave an account of John's reaction to his father's counsel: "It seemed that the emperor [John] disagreed with his father [Manuel], as he said nothing but got up and left."[143] It was John who actively sought to find a way in which the union could succeed, first with Pope Martin V and, after his death in 1431, with Pope Eugene IV. He was not, however, ready for any kind of meeting. He stipulated certain conditions that were negotiated within the Byzantine group and with the pope and his delegates.

The Byzantine Emperor John VIII Palaiologos informed Pope Martin V of the conditions for the general council on 14 November 1422:

> The sacred Council should be held according to the order and custom of the past seven holy universal Councils and the truth to be sought without contention. Whatever will be revealed through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in this holy Council should be acceptable to both parties, and all the ends of the earth will follow along. Therefore, let there be a universal, unbreakable, and strong union of the Churches.[144]

The emperor made it clear that the meeting should be organized according to the model set by the ancient ecumenical Councils. This was also brought up many times

142 Philippides 1980, 3. Sphrantzes, *Chronicon* XXIII, 4.

143 Sphrantzes, *Chronicon* XXIII, 7. Translated by Marios Philippides, see Philippides 1980, 50.

144 "conveniente sacro Concilio secundum antiquum sanctorum universalium Conciliorum septem praeteritorum ordinem et consuetudinem, et veritate sine contentione quaesita, quidquid revelatum fuerit inspirante Spiritu Sancto in hoc sancto Concilio, utrique parti placitum sit et subsequatur etiam omnis terminus mundi. Itaque fiat universalis unio et infrangibilis et firma Ecclesiarum." Cecconi, doc. IV.

during the Council too, when its procedures were discussed.[145] The hope of the pope and his delegates' hope for a simple "bringing back of the Greeks" (*reductio Graecorum*)[146] was not going to be realized.

For the Greeks, therefore, it was vital that the Council was ecumenical. This meant that representatives from all five patriarchates should be present at the Council. The presence of the pope as a leader of his Church, and as one of the patriarchs, was essential for the Byzantines. For reasons of history too, the presence of the Byzantine emperor was crucial.[147] The first seven ecumenical Councils, which were accepted by both Churches, had been convened by the Roman emperor, and thus it was important for the Byzantine emperor – who considered himself as the Roman emperor – to be the one who convened the council.[148] The pope, however, considered that it was his duty and honour to convene the ecumenical council.[149]

One of the most prominent Greek spokesmen at the Council, Mark of Ephesus, noted that although all the patriarchates were represented in Ferrara, and thus the ecumenicity was granted, there was also a major difference that distinguished the present Council from the ancient ecumenical Councils. In Ferrara, there were present two opposing parties, not one Church. This accordingly caused modifications to certain procedures. Mark's biggest fear was that the voting system used in the early Councils would not work in the same way as it had worked in the time of one Church. Mark stated that the Greeks wanted the votes to be counted in such a way that the Latin Church represented one unit and the Greek Church another one, and not in terms of the sheer numbers of voters.[150] While the emperor and the patriarch discussed this concern with the Pope, the sources do not relate how this matter was

145 Papadakis 2011, 30–31; Maleon 2009, 24, 30. Both Aristeides Papadakis and Bogdan-Petru Maleon emphasize that discussions concerning the nature of, and the demand for, an ecumenical Council were not new, but were already present in previous attempts of union, as in 1274 in Lyon and in 1369 (when Emperor John V was in the West). Also, certain individuals, such as Kantakuzenos, were speaking of the model the first ecumenical Councils offered and had laid down for future Councils.

146 *Reductio Graecorum* or *reductio orientalis ecclesiae* meant that the Greeks and their Church would have been annexed to the mother Church of Rome without formal discussions. On 1 February 1431, Pope Martin V had given Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini, the president at the Council of Basel, the task of pursuing the *reductio orientalis ecclesiae*. See Mariano 2016, 312; Gill 1964, 254.

147 Gill 1959, 128. See also Meyendorff 1991, 154–156.

148 Maleon 2009, 24.

149 Gill 1964, 236. For the pope, it was important to convene the Council in order to demonstrate the position that belonged to him, vis-à-vis not only the Byzantine emperor, but also the rival Council of Basel. See Stinger 1977, 205; Maleon 2009, 24.

150 Gill 1959, 127–128; Gill 1964, 240–241. See also Van Sickle 2017, 53. See also Gilomen 2016, 167–228, who describes the voting system used at the Council of Basel.

settled. At the same time, there is no evidence that the Council voted in the course of negotiations.[151]

The negotiations continued despite the difficulties and differing opinions about the form of the Council, its location, and other practical issues. Another turn of events was the opening of the Council of Basel in the beginning of 1431. Pope Martin V had opened the Council, but he died shortly afterwards, on 20 February 1431.[152] The Greeks had already decided with Martin that the Council would be held in an Italian city. The Greeks appealed to the new Pope, Eugene IV, to keep Martin's promises.[153] At this point, Eugene wanted to transfer the Council of Basel to Bologna. The final rupture between the pope and the conciliarist Council of Basel took place in the following year, when Eugene declared in a bull that the Council of Basel has been dissolved in January 1432.[154] The Council, however, disobeyed the bull, and continued until the year of 1449, thus partly meeting at the same time as the Council of Ferrara–Florence. This rivalry between the pope and the Council of Basel affected the negotiations with the Greeks, especially prior to the opening of the Council of Ferrara–Florence and the arrival of the Greeks, and many Latin representatives had been in Basel before they came to Ferrara. Accordingly, the Council of Basel functioned as a background for many central participants of the Council of Ferrara–Florence, and this Council too profited from some of the intellectual and theological preparations that had been made for Basel.

The Council of Basel and Pope Eugene began to compete on solving the schism with the Greeks.[155] The Hussite heresy had been the main concern of the Council of Basel,[156] and was initially more important than the union negotiations with the Greeks.[157] The fathers at the Council of Basel, however, changed their minds. Ivan

151 Gill 1964, 241. The Greeks, however, voted in their own decision-making. See for example Syropoulos VIII, 13. The Council of Basel had adopted a system of voting that gave each nation their own vote. See Gill 1964, 243. In fact, the Council of Constance had already voted by nations, instead of individuals. See Geanakoplos 1989, 266.

152 Mariano 2016, 319.

153 Mariano 2016, 313.

154 Mariano 2016, 313.

155 Stieber 1991, 57–73. It is important to notice that not all the members of the Council of Basel supported the supreme authority of the Council over the pope. Cardinal Cesarini and Nicholas of Cusa and others were 'power-sharing conciliarists', as Michiel Decaluwé and Gerald Christianson describe them, who wanted a certain balance of power between the Council and the pope. See Decaluwé & Christianson 2016, 18.

156 Already the Council of Constance had condemned the Hussites. The execution of Jan Hus in 1415, however, did not resolve the issue, but caused revolt in Bohemia. Crusades against the Hussites were launched, but after these failed attempts, the Hussites were invited to take part in the Council of Basel. See Decaluwé & Christianson 2016, 10, 13.

157 Cardinal Cesarini, at this point still a conciliarist and the president of the Council of Basel, announced that the union with the Greeks was not urgent. Instead, the Hussite

Mariano has identified two reasons for the change of attitude in Basel regarding the question of the Greeks. First, the competition with the pope was intensifying, and secondly, the Hussites at the Council were eager to invite the Greeks to the Council.[158] On 2 January 1433, the first embassy of the Council of Basel was sent to Constantinople. At the same time, the pope was negotiating with the Greeks and had sent his own emissary, Cristoforo Garatone, the bishop of Corone, to Constantinople.[159]

In the following years, envoys of the Council of Basel and of the papacy negotiated both with one another and with the Greeks.[160] In May 1437, the majority of the fathers at the Council of Basel had supported Basel, Avignon or Savoy as the site for the Council, while a minority supported Florence, Udine or a city that would be acceptable to the pope and the Greeks. The pope was asked to accept the proposal of the minority. The minority left Basel and came to Ferrara, which the pope had chosen as the site of the Council.[161] Ferrara had promised to take care of the participants. The city also had connections to Greek learning, since Guarino Guarini and Ugo Benzi taught Greek and Latin at the University of Ferrara.[162] The Greek learning and possible collections of Greek manuscripts may have been one reason for the choice of Ferrara.

The pope issued the bull *Doctoris gentium* on 18 September 1437, transferring the Council from Basel to Ferrara.[163] At this point, the Greeks remained unsure whether they were to go to Ferrara or Basel. First of all, in September 1437, the papal galleys and three delegates of the minority of the Council of Basel together with Cristoforo Garatone arrived in Constantinople. Next month, on 3 October, the conciliar delegates also disembarked in Constantinople.[164] Finally, the Greeks agreed to go with the papal delegates to Venice and from there to Ferrara.[165]

heresy and the reform should be dealt with. See Mariano 2016, 313. See also Christianson 1979, 35–36.

158 Mariano 2016, 314.

159 Mariano 2016, 314. See also Halff 2020, 91–151, see especially 105–109 and Pesce 1974, 23–93.

160 On these phases, see Mariano 2016, 314–316.

161 Mariano 2016, 316. Decaluwé & Christianson 2017, 23.

162 Gill 1959, 92–93; Visconti 1950, 12–13.

163 Stieber 1991, 71.

164 Mariano 2016, 316–317; Decaluwé & Christianson 2017, 23-24.

165 John Meyendorff has analysed the reasons behind the Greeks' decision to go with the papal delegation. One reason was that Ferrara was much closer to the sea than Basel. The Greeks had expressed earlier on the importance of being near the sea. Another reason was the way in which the pope's Council would meet in contrast to the Council of Basel, where the Byzantine emperor was afraid that his position would be diminished. See Meyendorff 1991, 166–167. See also Geanakoplos 1989, 266–268.

When the site for the Council had been confirmed, preparations for transport needed to be made. Approximately seven hundred men from the East had to be brought to the West. Safe-conducts were prepared, giving the Eastern delegates protection on their journey to the papal territories.[166] The ships were finally ready to set sail on the 24 and 25 of November 1437. After a stormy and eventful journey, the ships arrived in Venice on 9 February 1438. Before the Council could start, there were still issues to be solved. In the next subchapter, I will analyse the events that took place before the Council officially met.

2.2 Protocol problems

In Venice, two cultures and two Churches met. The Greeks had come to discuss issues that separate the Churches in an ecumenical Council with the pope and his people. The Council in Ferrara had already been officially opened in the Cathedral of St George on 8 January 1438 by Cardinal Nicolò Albergati, where the Council's transfer from Basel to Ferrara was confirmed. Eugene V arrived in Ferrara later in January, and the Council met several times before the Greeks arrived. The power struggle with the Council of Basel continued.[167] New challenges were waiting for the pope and his retinue. The Byzantine emperor and the Patriarch of Constantinople were approaching Venice, and Eugene V had plans for the meeting of the leaders. These plans did not coincide with the ideas of the Greeks about the conditions for the meeting.

Two major issues turned out to be challenging for the pope and the Byzantine emperor and the Patriarch of Constantinople. First, the meeting of the two heads of the Churches caused a problem. When the Greeks had arrived in Venice and preparations were made for a solemn meeting of Pope Eugene IV and Patriarch Joseph II together with the Emperor John VIII Palaiologos, Joseph was informed that the pope was expecting the patriarch to kiss his foot. The second issue at the beginning of the Council dealt with the seating arrangements.[168]

For Patriarch Joseph II, the pope's insistence on kissing the foot was unacceptable. Joseph could not see any reason that entitled the pope to demand the kiss. The patriarch answered the Latin bishops who delivered the message from the pope,

166 Pope Eugene signed a safe-conduct (*salvus conductus*) for the Byzantine emperor and the Patriarch of Constantinople together with up to seven hundred men with their belongings on July 6, 1437. See *Epistolae pontificiae ad concilium florentinum spectantes*, vol. I, doc. 75.

167 Gill 1959, 94–98.

168 Gill 1959, 105–107. See also Siecienski 2017, 328–330.

> 'Where does the Pope have this from or which of the councils gave it to him? Show where he has it from and where it is registered. Nevertheless, the Pope says that he is the successor of St Peter. If then he is the successor of Peter, we also are successors of the rest of the apostles. Did the apostles kiss the foot of St Peter? Who has heard of that?'[169]

Joseph refused to consent to the pope's demand to kiss his foot and thereby accept his primacy and supremacy over the patriarch and his Church. He saw no scriptural authority for this action. Even if the pope was the successor of Peter, he was not allowed to demand this, since the Eastern patriarchs too were successors of the apostles, and there was nothing in the Scriptures that showed the apostles acting this way.

The Latin bishops explained the pope's demand to the patriarch,

> that it is an ancient custom of the Pope and that everybody bestows this kiss on him, both bishops and kings, the Emperor of the Germans and the Cardinals who are greater than the Emperor and are also ordained.[170]

Ancient customs and ecclesiastical traditions played an important role in both Churches' practices. In this case, both Churches had their own ancient customs (*ἀρχαῖον ἔθος*) in the light of which they understood the relations of their Churches. Hermann Kamp, who has studied medieval rituals, has emphasized their role in stabilizing and (re)creating the political order. Rituals were important for the cohesion of societies and communities. The binding nature of a ritual was inherent, and this was made apparent in public rituals.[171] The kissing of the pope's foot by the Patriarch of Constantinople was regarded as a very important ritual that would both demonstrate and recreate power relations between the two Churches and their heads for those who witnessed the ritual. The kissing would have been even more powerful and binding as a public event than as a private gesture behind closed doors.

169 "Πόθεν ἔχει τοῦτο ὁ πάπας ἢ ποία τῶν συνόδων δέδωκεν αὐτῷ τοῦτο; Δείξατε πόθεν ἔχει αὐτο καὶ ποῦ καταγράφεται; Ὅμως ὁ πάπας λέγει ὅτι ἔστι διάδοχος τοῦ ἁγίου Πέτρου. Εἰ οὖν ἐκεῖνός ἐστι τοῦ Πέτρου διάδοχος, ἐσμὲν καὶ ἡμεῖς διάδοχοι τῶν λοιπῶν ἀποστόλων. Ἠσπάζοντο οὖν οἱ ἀπόστολοι τὸν πόδα τοῦ ἁγίου Πέτρου; Τίς ἤκουσε τοῦτο;" Syropoulos IV, 33. Translated by 'the Syropoulos Project', see the English Translation of The Memoirs of Sylvester Syropoulos, Section IV.

170 "ὅτι ἀρχαῖον ἔθος ἐστὶ τοῦ πάπα, καὶ πάντες ἀπονέμουσιν αὐτῷ τὸν τοιοῦτον ἀσπασμὸν καὶ ἐπίσκοποι καὶ ῥῆγες καὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἀλαμανῶν καὶ οἱ καρδηνάλιοι, οἳ καὶ μείζους τοῦ βασιλέως εἰσὶ καὶ ἱερωμένοι." Syropoulos IV, 33. Translated by 'the Syropoulos Project'. See the English Translation of The Memoirs of Sylvester Syropoulos, Section IV.

171 Kamp 2020, 12–14.

The patriarch, however, could not accept this ritual. He even threatened to leave the city and go back home and not attend the Council at all if the kissing of the feet was made an absolute condition. Joseph too relied on the customs of his Church, and suggested a gesture that corresponded with that and was acceptable, *id est*, the brotherly kiss on the cheek.

> The Patriarch said, 'This is an innovation and I will never submit to doing it. But if the Pope wishes me to kiss him like a brother, according to our ancestral and ecclesiastical custom, I shall go to him. If he does not accept this, I am renouncing everything and turning back.'[172]

The patriarch's threat to leave the city, and the risk of a failed Council and union, made the pope yield in this matter. Accordingly, the plans for the ritual were changed. When the pope and the patriarch finally met, the solemn reception that had been planned was scaled down to a private meeting in the pope's lodgings.[173] The confrontation between the participants was the first power struggle of the two Churches and their leaders. Although the manuscripts were not yet brought out, questions of authority were already emerging. What was the basis of the papal right to demand that his foot be kissed? The patriarch saw this request as an innovation, not based on ancient sources; however, the kiss on the cheek could be found in ancient customs. The pope saw the kiss on the foot as the continuation of an ancient custom.[174]

172 "Καὶ ὁ πατριάρχης εἶπεν, ὅτι· Τοῦτο ἔνι καινοτομία, καὶ οὐ στέρξω οὐδὲ ποιήσω τοῦτό ποτε· ἀλλ΄ εἰ μὲν θέλει ὁ πάπας, ἵνα ἀσπάσωμαι αὐτὸν ἀδελφικῶς κατὰ τὸ ἡμέτερον ἔθος τὸ ἀρχαῖον καὶ ἐκκλησιαστικόν, οὕτω καὶ πρός αὐτὸν ἀπελεύσομαι· εἰ δὲ τοῦτο οὐκ ἀποδέχεται, παραιτοῦμαι πάντα καὶ ὑποστρέφω." Syropoulos IV, 33. Translated by 'the Syropoulos Project'. See the English Translation of The Memoirs of Sylvester Syropoulos, Section IV.

173 Syropoulos IV, 33. The Latin bishops informed the Greeks of the procedure: "'His Holiness the Pope, for the good of the peace and so that there should be no obstacle in this divine undertaking of the Union because of this reason, sets aside his own right and behold, he invites your great Holiness to come. However, he stipulates that he wished to prepare his reception of you in a different manner, for he thought to make this in public in the gathering of officials and with a great display. [--] Instead he will receive you in his own apartment, with only the Cardinals present. So come first with six of your own men with whom you wish to come and, after they have made their obeisance, let another six come and make their obeisance and, when they have left, again let another six come and make their obeisance, and let as many as you ordain make their obeisance in the same manner.'" Translated by 'the Syropoulos Project'. See the English Translation of The Memoirs of Sylvester Syropoulos, Section IV. The proposed procedure was followed, see Syropoulos IV, 35.

174 Kiss on the foot could also be part of a contract of vassalage. In this rite, the vassal could kiss the foot of his lord. See Perella 1969, 129.

The second issue at the beginning of the Council was the seating arrangements.[175] The seating of the participants was not irrelevant to the negotiations. Just as the meeting of the heads of the Churches and the kissing was a ritual demonstration and creation of power relations, so was the meeting and positioning of the participants and the leaders. This time, the meeting could not be arranged behind closed doors, but had to take place in front of hundreds of persons who were part of the event and arrangements.

The pope had demanded a place in the middle of the two parties and their representatives. Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini told the Greeks,

> 'Since there is one group of Latins and one group of Greeks, and since one will sit on one side of the church and the other on the other, it is necessary for the Pope to sit in the middle as the first and unifier of all, in order that he may join together each of these groups.'[176]

For Cesarini, as for the rest of the Latins who supported the pope, it was essential that the pope should be in the middle. He was the powerful figure and the one who was supposed to bring union to the Church. The Council of Ferrara–Florence was, after all, an arena for Eugene IV to demonstrate his power and authority, in contrast to the conciliarists in Basel. Bogdan-Petru Maleon, taking up the ideas of John Boojamra, has described the difference between the Byzantine and the Western traditions of understanding the nature of ecumenical Councils. For the Byzantines, ecumenical Councils were imperial, ecclesiological, and charismatic. For the Latins, they were "the most eloquent expression of the Pontifical supremacy."[177]

Cesarini's demand did not receive a warm reception from the Greeks. The Greeks saw the pope primarily as the leader of the Latins, not as a head of both Churches or the sole unifier of the Churches. Accordingly, Eugene ought to sit "among his own group, just as the Emperor and the Patriarch <should> again be with

175 The seating arrangements had caused disputes at the Council of Basel as well. There, it was the place of the representatives of the European princes that caused the problem. See Decaluwé, Izbicki & Christianson 2016, 3; Burkart 2020, 141–153. On the seating arrangements at the Council of Basel, see also Heimpel 2015, 1–10. More generally, on seating arrangements in the Middle Ages and their relation to questions of order, see Kamp 2020, 22–23; Goetz 1992, 11–47; Spiess 1997, 41–50, 53.

176 "Ἐπειδὴ ἓν μέδος ἐστι τῶν Λατίνων, ἓν δὲ τῶν Γραικῶν, καὶ τὸ μὲν ἐκ τοῦ ἑνὸς μέρους καθίσει τοῦ ναοῦ, τὸ δ΄ ἐκ τοῦ ἑτέρου, δεῖ τὸν πάπαν μέσον καθίσαι ὡς πρῶτον καὶ συνοχέα πάντων, ἵνα καὶ ἑκάτερα τὰ μέρη συνέχῃ." Syropoulos IV, 39. Translated by 'the Syropoulos Project'. See the English Translation of The Memoirs of Sylvester Syropoulos, Section IV.

177 Maleon 2009, 24; Boojamra 1987, 59–61.

their own <group>."[178] Cesarini, however, insisted on there being a link between these two groups. To the Greeks' suggestion that, in that case, the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Byzantine emperor should also be in the middle, Cesarini responded that there could be only one link, and that should be the pope.[179] In the end, it was decided that the pope would sit with his people, and the Byzantine emperor and Patriarch of Constantinople with their people. The pope requested a seat for the Holy Roman Emperor, although Sigismund had died in December 1437, and the seat was left empty. The Byzantine Emperor, John VIII Palaiologos, was baffled by this request but acquiesced to the proposed arrangement. In the end, the throne of the pope was placed on the right-hand side of the Church before the empty seat of the Holy Roman Emperor, with the Cardinals behind the empty seat; the throne of the Byzantine emperor was placed on the same line as the Holy Roman Emperor, with the Patriarch of Constantinople behind the emperor.[180]

As these two incidents show, it was crucial for the Greeks that the Council was a meeting of equals, of sister Churches. The two heads of the Churches should greet one another as brothers. The pope should not declare himself the sole head of the Church and the Council and take the credit for the union that was sought. The Byzantine emperor was the defender of the Church and, according to the ancient ecumenical Councils, the one convening them. For the Latins, however, the Council was a stage for the pope to show his leadership, power, and authority – not only to the Greeks, but also to the conciliarists in Basel. The rituals and the meeting of the pope and the patriarch with his entourage were intended to display and create the power relations in the way that the pope and the papalists understood them. Similarly, the places in the church where the Council met, were intended to coincide with the authority and prestige, the order and relationships, of the members who took part in the Council.

2.3 Council sessions and private meetings

The benches were finally arranged, and it was time to open the Council with the Greeks also present. Hundreds of Latins and Greeks were sitting in the Cathedral of St George in Ferrara and ready to begin the Council. The Council was opened officially on 9 April 1438. The throne set for the Patriarch of Constantinople was

178 "μετὰ τοῦ ἰδίου εἶναι καὶ καθῆσθαι μέρους, ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ τὸν βασλέα καὶ τὸν πατριάρχην αὖθις μετὰ τοῦ ἰδίου." Syropoulos IV, 40. Translated by 'the Syropoulos Project'. See the English Translation of The Memoirs of Sylvester Syropoulos, Section IV.

179 Syropoulos IV, 40.

180 Syropoulos IV, 40. According to Syropoulos, these debates and the arrangements, such as the calculations, took more than twenty days. See Syropoulos IV, 41.

empty, because Joseph was ill.[181] The Council was opened with speeches in Greek and Latin, emphasising the desire for the union.[182] An interval of four months was settled, during which they would wait for the arrival of western princes to take part in the Council. In the meantime, it was decided that theological issues were not to be discussed.[183] This request was made by the Greeks. The Latins were eager to begin the discussions as soon as possible, since they were paying the expenses of the Eastern delegation. Also, a functional Council was important for the pope, who in his struggle over power with the rival Council of Basel over power, was in a dire need of it.[184] Joseph Gill has pointed out that during the interval, personal relations were established: Cardinal Cesarini asked Greek representatives to dinner to discuss philosophy and other topics.[185] Cesarini had hosted dinners earlier on, when he was the president of the Council of Basel. Cesarini was thus prepared when the whole Council met, since he had already had discussions with key representatives.[186] I find it possible or even probable that during these dinners and discussions, books that the Greeks had brought with them interested Cesarini and perhaps other Latins who may also have been present.

In May 1438, the pope's repeated requests for discussions were heard, and the Council took steps forward. Both sides elected committees of ten persons who represented the Churches. The following Greeks were chosen, Mark of Ephesus, Dositheus of Monembasia, Bessarion of Nicaea, Sophronius of Anchialus, Michael Balsamon the Chartophylax, Syropoulus the Ecclesiarch, two superiors of Constantinopolitan monasteries and the monk Moses of Mount Athos. However, the emperor selected only two of these, Bessarion and Mark of Ephesus, to be the speakers. The Latins chosen for the committee were Giuliano Cesarini, Domenico Capranica, Andrew of Rhodes, John of Torquemada, and six others. In addition to these selected speakers, there were notaries on each side and an interpreter, Niccolò Sagundino. It was also decided that the Council should meet thrice a week in the church of St Francesco in Ferrara.[187]

181 Gill 1959, 109; AL 29. Gill goes through the list of participants who were present at the Council's opening. In addition to the Council's participants, there were local notables present. Gill 1959, 109–110.

182 Gill 1959, 111.

183 Gill 1959, 111–112; Syropoulos V, 13.

184 Gill 1959, 113.

185 Gill 1959, 111–114. At least Bessarion, Gemisthus Plethon and Amiroutzes were invited, as were Mark of Ephesus with his brother John the Nomophylax and Dorotheus of Mitylene. An interpreter was also present. See Gill 1959, 113–114.

186 Housley 2020, 210–211. Housley has used Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini's *Pentalogus* (1443) as a source.

187 Gill 1959, 114–115. Syropoulos V, 7.

Before the theological disputes could begin, it was necessary to decide which issue would be discussed first. This was negotiated in four meetings.[188] The Latins wanted to discuss dogmatic questions, but the Greeks were reluctant to do that. Cardinal Cesarini enumerated four main issues separating the Churches, which needed to be discussed: the procession of the Holy Spirit, the eucharistic bread, purgatory, and the primacy of the pope. Of these, the Greeks eventually chose purgatory as the first topic to be discussed.[189]

After the opening of the Council and the four meetings in which it was decided to take the subject of purgatory as the first issue to be discussed, the Council began to meet regularly, at least twice a week,[190] and on certain terms. The main forum for discussions in the Council was the sessions in which both the Greeks and the Latins were present. It was not, however, necessary for all the participants to be present at all the sessions. In fact, not even the presence of the pope, the Byzantine emperor, or the Patriarch of Constantinople was mandatory. This was partly because of the old age of the patriarch and the illnesses that were troubling the participants, especially the patriarch and emperor. If the speaker was ill, the session could only be moved on to the next day.[191] It was always necessary to have representatives of all five patriarchates, so that the Council could be considered ecumenical.[192]

There were approximately ten public sessions in both Council cities.[193] In the public sessions, the selected topic was discussed by the appointed speakers. Usually, only one or two speakers from both sides delivered speeches and answered the other party's arguments and questions. Frequently, the speeches were long and full of arguments and citations from authoritative texts – a matter on which the participants sometimes commented.[194]

188 Gill 1959, 115.

189 Gill 1959, 115–116. A. Edward Siecienski points out that the same four issues (or five if the procession of the Holy Spirit is dealt as two issues) are already listed in the 1252 *Tractatus contra Graecos* ("Against the Greeks"). See Siecienski 2022, 175, 276.

190 Gill 1959, 119.

191 Gill 1959, 129–130. The patriarch missed even the Council's opening, as mentioned above. His absence was covered with a pronouncement stating that he consented to the opening. See Gill 1959, 110–111.

192 This became an issue when the plague ravaged the city of Ferrara, and not all wanted to stay in the city. The emperor had granted Anthony of Heraclea, Mark of Ephesus, and John the Nomophylax permission to leave the city and the Council, but Patriarch Joseph II reminded him that Anthony's and Mark's presence was compulsory for the Council, since they were representatives of the patriarchates of Alexandria and Antioch. Accordingly, they could not leave. See Gill 1959, 127.

193 The number and in some cases the dates of the Council's sessions do not perfectly coincide in *Acta Graeca*, *Acta Latina* and Syropoulos's *Memoirs*.

194 Isidore of Kiev pointed out that Giovanni da Montenero had spoken for over eight hours. See AL 222. Mark of Ephesus complained that he could not remember

Besides the public sessions of the Council, there were private meetings of the participants. It is probable that only some of these private gatherings were recorded in the sources. The notaries were not present at the private meetings of the other party. Records of the private meetings are important sources for understanding the gravity of matters discussed in these closed meetings. There were two kinds of private or unofficial[195] meetings: some that consisted of only Latin or Greek participants, and others where representatives of both parties were present. First, let us look at the private meetings with small delegations of both Greeks and Latins present.

The main purpose of the private meetings recorded in the *Acts* seems to have been the comparison of the texts that the secretaries had written down on the basis of the discussions in the public sessions. This ensured that the records of the Council would be accurate. This comparison of the notes and the fact that the speeches were written down then helped the participants to establish their arguments for the following sessions. In addition, manuscripts had an important role in these private meetings. The speaker who quoted authoritative texts had to show the manuscripts to the appointed members of the other party. It is, however, unfortunate that only a few of these private meetings are recorded in the *Acts*.[196] Nevertheless, the few mentions give us the idea of the practice that was applied to the manuscripts and spoken and written speeches.

When we read the *Acts* and Syropoulos's memoirs, it seems probable that the participants had the essential manuscripts – for the day's session – at hand during the official sessions. Although quoting by heart was a common practice in the medieval world, and medieval people had developed methods for remembering biblical and other important texts,[197] it is feasible that at least most quotations in the Council were read from a manuscript. This is because the actual and accurate readings of the authoritative texts were important; they needed to be quoted *verbatim*. However, it seems that the close analysis and comparison of the manuscripts, and the texts they contained, were carried out in the private meetings.

everything the Latins had said and argued earlier on: "Your argumentation was so long that it escapes the memory and leads to endless discussion." Translated by Joseph Gill, see Gill 1959, 211. See AG 383. Similarly in AL 192. See also AG 388. In particular, Syropoulos states many times in his memoirs how the Latins were giving long speeches. In one session, even the interpreter, Niccolò Sagundino, commented that he was tired, see AL 119.

195 By unofficial, I mean that they were not organized according to the rules set by the Council members.

196 Gill 1959, 150. See for example, AG 88–89.

197 Carruthers 1992.

When there were participants of only one party present in a meeting, the matters discussed were different in nature. Usually, people gathered in order to find an answer to the questions, or counterarguments to the arguments, presented by the other party in the previous session(s). Our sources do not reveal whether these kinds of meetings were held after every session or only when the situation was especially challenging. There are, in any case, clues that help us understand the context of the private meetings when these are reported in the sources. I find it likely that these half-official meetings, summoned by someone with authority, were not held after every session or at regular intervals, but only when there was a special need to bring together the most learned men to discuss the current issue(s) without the presence of the other party. Nevertheless, besides these meetings, the members of the Council probably discussed the issues in an even more unofficial way when there were no representatives from the other party present. These discussions are not, however, visible in the sources, unless we consider the correspondence during the Council to fall into this category.[198]

If one reads the original sources of the Council, one gets an impression that the Greeks had more private meetings than the Latins. The reason for this lies partly in the sources. While the *Acts* reported only the private meetings where members from both parties took part, from the Greek side, there is also the memoir of Syropoulos, in which he recorded the movements and thoughts of his compatriots. Obviously, he would not have known as much about the Latin actions as he did about the Greek ones. He himself participated in most, if not, all of the Greek meetings.

The private meetings held by the Greeks are mentioned on a few occasions. These are important for the study of the Council and especially for the study of the use and authority of manuscripts there. Already in the early phases of the Council, when purgatory was discussed, the emperor, together with the patriarch, held private meetings. In the public sessions, Mark of Ephesus had been almost the only one who spoke to the Latins on this topic, but the emperor wanted to hear the opinions of other Greeks as well, and he wanted these opinions in writing. On the following day, they would decide about the formatting of their standpoint, which the Latins were waiting for.[199] Private meetings without the presence of Latins helped the Greeks to form a coherent stance on debated topics. In particular, the subject of purgatory did not have

198 In particular, Ambrogio Traversari sent letters during the Council asking for manuscripts with crucial texts and material evidence. In addition, members who had left the Council to run personal errands or for other reasons were contacted by the members still present in the Council when they needed their presence or the manuscripts. This topic is discussed in chapter 3.1.

199 Gill 1959, 120–121; AG 25–26.

the same firmly established place in the Byzantine theology as other topics, such as the Filioque.

For John VIII Palaiologos, it was crucial that the Council was open to discussion. He saw himself, as emperor, as the guardian of the Church.[200] As a defender, he claimed his duty

> 'the one to preserve and defend the dogmas of the Church and to furnish liberty to those who wish to speak on their behalf so that they may bring forward without hindrance whatever sound doctrine they like to pronounce, and to restrain and rebuke those who assail it in a contentious and hostile spirit: the other to hold together and preserve ours in concord those, that all may agree in one decision and opinion.'[201]

Jacob N. Van Sickle has understood these words of the emperor, recorded by Syropoulos, to mean that the liberty of dialogue would reveal the truth, and the consensus would follow.[202] I agree with Van Sickle. The emperor's aim was to secure free discussion, which he held to be important in the formation, or revelation, of the truth. John had taken with him delegates with differing opinions and stances towards the union, namely Bessarion and Mark of Ephesus, and even chose them as the main speakers on behalf of the Greeks. However, the emperor had prevented other Greek participants from speaking in the public sessions. In the private sessions, there are more voices and perspectives than in the official meetings. Yet even in these private meetings, especially towards the end, not everyone's standpoint is welcome. Syropoulos recalls a private meeting in the patriarch's house while the emperor was away hunting. A quarrel broke out between the official speakers and himself:

> In one of these circumstances, as I had begun to say a few words about the matter in question, the Bishop of Nicaea immediately said to me: 'If you are one of the delegates, speak; otherwise, not a word!' I said: 'Since we are not allowed to speak either here or in the meeting, our presence here is unnecessary. Let us be given permission to return home. If we stay silent, as you want, you will probably end up making your own decision and presenting it as you see fit

200 Gill 1977, 72.

201 "ἓν μὲν τὸ τηρεῖν καὶ δεφενδεύειν τὰ δόγματα τῆς Ἐκκλησίας καὶ παρέχειν ἐλευθερίαν τοῖς βουλομένοις λέγειν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν, ὥστε προφέρειν ἀνεμποδίστως ὅπερ ἂν ὡς ὑγιὲς δόγμα λέγειν προέλωνται καὶ ἐπέχειν καὶ ἀποσκώπτειν τοὺς φιλονείκως καὶ ἐχθρωδῶς ἀντιλέγοντας· ἕτερον δ´ἐστὶ τὸ δυνέχειν καὶ συντηρεῖν πάντας τοὺς ἡμετέρους ἐν ὁμονοίᾳ, ὡς ἂν ἅπαντες ὑφ´ ἑνὶ βουλεύματι καὶ μιᾷ συμφωνῶσι γνώμῃ." Syropoulos VIII, 11. Translated by Joseph Gill, see Gill 1964, 119.

202 Van Sickle 2017, 47. See also Meyendorff 1991, 162.

> without us agreeing.' On another occasion, when I reminded the Bishop of Ephesus of something at the Council, the Bishop of Nicaea said: 'We do not want anyone to say anything here except those who have been designated.'[203]

The fact that this was written by Syropoulos has to be taken into account. In this passage, there is probably some bitterness and resentment that he, as well as the other members of a similar opinion, was not heard. Syropoulos did not support the union, especially at the time of the writing of his memoirs, and supposed that he had an opinion that mattered and could have even shaped the Council's outcome. Nevertheless, I would not assert that no truth lies behind his account of this incident. What is noticeable here is the absence of the emperor during these quarrels. The emperor had supported open dialogue and even differing opinions. When he was absent, things could go differently.

The situation is different with regard to our knowledge of the meetings of the Latins. Besides the *Acta Latina*, there are certainly other sources, such as correspondence and chronicles, but these fail to mention private meetings. There were almost certainly meetings of that kind on the Latin side as well. The Latins needed to collect passages and manuscripts and prepare their arguments and choose the speakers for each session and issue at hand. It was not only the speaker who had studied the matters that were discussed in the session. The speaker or speakers in several sessions presented arguments that seem to have been formed or even formulated jointly before the sessions and sometimes even after the sessions, since the Greeks sometimes asked for the Latin speeches and arguments in written form. We do not know precisely who was responsible for the preparation of the written versions of the speeches, but I suggest that it was probably the speakers with other eminent participants and the scribes/secretaries of the Council. One fact suggesting that the arguments were prepared jointly is the occasional quotation of other persons cited by the speaker.

Another indication that there were private meetings in which matters of the Council were discussed can be found in the correspondence during the Council. When Cesarini and the pope wrote to Ambrogio Traversari and asked him to come back to the Council and take all the Latin and Greek manuscripts with him, they

203 "Ἀρξαμένου δὲ χἀμοῦ ἐν τοιούτῳ τινὶ καιρῷ εἰπεῖν τι πρὸς τὸ ζητούμενον, εἶπέ μοι εὐθὺς ὁ Νικαίας · Εἰ μὲν τῶν ἐκλελεγμένων ὑπάρχεις, εἰπέ · εἰ δ΄ οὐχ ὑπάρχεις, μὴ λέγε τι. Ἔφην δ΄ ἐγώ, ὡς · Ἐπεὶ οὔτε ἐνταῦθα οὔτε ἐν ταῖς συνόδοις ἔχομεν ἄδειαν εἰπεῖν τι, περισσόν ἐστιν εἶναι ἡμᾶς ὧδε. Δότωσαν ἡμῖν ἄδειαν ἀπελθεῖν οἴκαδε · εἰ δὲ καρτεροῦμεν σιωπῶντες, ὡς καὶ αὐτος θέλεις, οὐ μὲν ἴσως κατασκευάσεις καὶ ἐρεῖ ὡς βούλει τὴν σὴν ἀπόφασιν, ἵς δὲ ἀσύμφωνοι εὑρεθησόμεθα · Καὶ ἄλλοτε γὰρ ἐν τῇ συνόδῳ εἰπόντος μού τι πρὸς ἀνάμνησιν τῷ Ἐφέσον, ἔφη ὁ Νικαίας · Οὐ θέλομεν λέγειν ἐνταῦθά τινα πλὴν τῶν ἐκλελεγμένων." Syropoulos VI, 37.

needed Traversari's presence and his knowledge of the manuscripts; and they needed the relevant manuscripts. It is not impossible that the pope and Cesarini acted separately, but I believe it is more probable that they had discussed these issues jointly, with other Latins, and then wrote to Traversari.

Next, I will introduce the matters that were dividing the Churches and were discussed in the Council. I will explain these theological and ecclesiological issues, their importance in East–West relations, and how extensively each topic was discussed in the Council. In addition, this section reflects on the role of the manuscripts and authoritative texts in each theological issue.

2.4 Doctrinal matters in Ferrara and Florence

By the time of the Council of Ferrara–Florence, the Eastern and Western Churches had led separate, though also intertwined, traditions. Centuries had brought differences in religious and cultural practices, dogmatic questions and theological learning. On the one hand, medieval contacts had made these differences visible and had created tensions between Latins and Greeks. On the other hand, contacts also made possible fruitful discussions and meetings between people with similar interests and mutual hopes for co-operation and a harmonious living side by side.

Tia M. Kolbaba, who has studied the Greek polemical writing and attitudes towards the Latins, points out how difficult it is to separate theology, or religion, from culture. Religion is part of the culture, and "more than theology and dogma."[204] In her studies, where she has concentrated on the Greek lists of Latin errors, the topics vary from Latins eating unclean animals to not revering icons or the Virgin Mary, and from Latin priests shaving their beards to adding the *Filioque* to the Creed.[205] While many of the topics, or differences between the traditions and practices of the two Churches, were not discussed in the Council of Ferrara–Florence, they offer a more comprehensive picture or context with regard to how the Greeks saw Latins as schismatics or even heretics.[206] However, during the Council of Ferrara–Florence, only the most significant discrepancies between the two Churches were addressed, which were essentially selected by the Latins. Cardinal

204 Kolbaba 2000, 1–4.

205 For all the topics and the lists in which these 'errors' occur, see Appendix 3 in Kolbaba 2000, 189–202.

206 Kolbaba notes that the Greek lists of Latin errors tell us, not so much about the Latins, as about the fears of the Greeks. See Kolbaba 2000, 5. See also Siecienski 2022, in which he deals with three subjects, two also discussed at the Council of Ferrara–Florence, namely the eucharistic bread (see Siecienski 2022, 79–186) and purgatory (see Siecienski 2022, 189–312), but also the controversy over beards (see Siecienski 2022, 15–76).

Cesarini introduced the four main topics which were discussed: the procession of the Holy Spirit, the eucharistic bread, purgatory, and the primacy of the pope.[207] I will give a brief introduction to these topics and their history and relevance in the East–West relations and consider their importance in the Council of Ferrara–Florence, and especially the role that the manuscripts played in each of these topics. I will start with purgatory, the first topic that was discussed at the Council.

Purgatory

Discussions on purgatory went on from June 4, 1438 to July 17, 1438.[208] In these meetings, the main speakers from the Latin side were Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini, John of Torquemada, and Andrew of Rhodes and from the Greek side, Mark of Ephesus and Bessarion, although the latter had affirmed that he had little to say about the subject. Mark, on the other hand, claimed that he had things to say about purgatory.[209] The discussions, nevertheless, followed a pattern in which the Latins quoted authorities, scriptural and patristic passages, to which mostly Mark of Ephesus, but also Bessarion, responded.[210]

The theology of purgatory had its roots in the patristic age.[211] Gregory the Great (c. 540–604) was the first to use the expression of the purifying fire (*purgatorius ignis*), which then became central in medieval treatises of purgatory.[212] The basic idea in the theology of purgatory was that purgatory was a stage between life on earth and heaven, in which minor sins could be purified by the means of prayer for the dead.[213] While praying for the dead was practiced both in the West and the East, the theological approaches differed, especially with regard to the question of salvation. While, according to Byzantine theology, praying for the dead meant

207 Gill 1959, 115–116.

208 On the discussions concerning purgatory at the Council Ferrara–Florence, see Siecienski 2022, 276–291.

209 Gill 1959, 118.

210 Gill 1959, 119. The Latins reproached the Greeks for not stating the Greek view on the dogma and only answering the Latin arguments, or more precisely, refuting them. Before 30 June (this is the date given by Syropoulos), however, Mark gave an account of the Greek dogma. See Gill 1959, 119. See also Gill 1959, 121–122.

211 The most important authors were Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Augustine of Hippo. For a short introduction to the theme, see McGrath 2016, 441–442. For a more profound study of the history of purgatory, see Le Goff 1981. See also Siecienski 2022, 189–232.

212 McGrath 2016, 441.

213 McGrath 2016, 441; Mîrşanu 2008, 181.

bringing them closer to God, it neglected the relationship between this prayer and salvation.[214]

A specialist in Byzantine theology, John Meyendorff, has noticed that it was at the Council of Ferrara–Florence that purgatory was for the first time discussed in detail by the Eastern and Western Churches, although the aspect of salvation was still not treated.[215] The first time when the Latin teaching of purgatory came to the knowledge of the Greeks was in 1231, when the Greek Metropolitan of Corfu, George Bardanes, discussed with a Fransiscan friar, Bartholomew, the fate of the departed who had not performed acts of repentance before dying. While Bardanes believed that the souls awaited their destiny until the Last Judgement, Bartholomew explained that the minor sins were cleansed by the purifying fire. For Bardanes, Bartholomew's understanding of the existence of purgatory was reminiscent of Origen's *apokatastasis*, a doctrine that all would ultimately be saved.[216] After this, treatises and other kinds of texts on this topic began to circulate in the West and in the East. In the Greek writings, the Latin doctrine of purgatory was condemned, and the Latin writings denounced the Greek rejection of purgatory.[217]

Purgatory became an issue that needed to be solved during the preparations for the union of the Churches at the Second Council of Lyons in 1274. Popes Clement IV and his successor Gregory X wanted the Greeks to accept the Latin formulation of the confession of faith prior to the actual Council. Only after this acceptance would it be possible to organize the Council at which the union treaty would be signed. George Acropolites, acting on behalf of the Byzantine Emperor, Michael VIII Palaiologos, agreed on the terms of the union, including the Latin teaching on purgatory. Thus, there were no discussions on purgatory at the Council of Lyons, nor indeed of any other matters.[218] In his study of the Eastern understanding of the Latin doctrine of purgatory in the thirteenth century, Dragoş Mîrşanu points out that the discussions or writing activity on the question of purgatory in the East were still rather undeveloped. It was only at the Council of Ferrara–Florence that more profound discussions of the subject occurred.[219]

At the Council of Ferrara–Florence, the Latins used the Profession of Faith of the Byzantine Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos as the basis for their written stance

214 Meyendorff 1983, 96; Mîrşanu 2008, 183, 191.
215 Meyendorff 1983, 96.
216 Mîrşanu 2008, 180–182. This teaching had been anathematised at the Council of Constantinople in 553.
217 Mîrşanu 2008, 182.
218 Mîrşanu 2008, 185–186.
219 Mîrşanu 2008, 190.

on purgatory.[220] In the Profession of Faith, the arguments were rooted in the Scripture,[221] and the Church Fathers.[222] In addition, the Latins appealed to the tradition of the Church, as well as to the authority of the Roman Church. As a *ratio theologica*, they stated that according to the divine justice, all evil must be expiated.[223] Bessarion's response pointed out that neither the Scriptures nor the Church Fathers mentioned *fire*. Bessarion did not accept the authority of the Roman Church on this question. It was the Council that was meant to decide the issue.[224]

The Greek uncertainty and the lack of tradition in theological writings on the subject of purgatory was obvious. Mark of Ephesus had finally offered an account of the Greek dogma of purgatory to the Latins, who had reproached the Greeks for merely refuting the Latin arguments.[225] Gill notes that Mark's response was not a representation of the theology of the Eastern Church, but rather his own interpretation. The emperor had organized a meeting of the Greeks on 16 July, where they read the Fathers and discussed their position on the subject. In the answer they gave on the following day, they still did not mention purgatory.[226]

The last discussions of purgatory in Ferrara on July 17, 1438 are documented.[227] No agreement on purgatory was reached in Ferrara, but the discussions were re-opened in Florence the next summer. At this point, the major issue concerning the procession of the Holy Spirit had been solved and the rest of the issues were discussed at a rather fast pace. In the formulation process of the final decree of union, the Greeks were hoping that purgatory could be left out, but the pope and the Latins insisted that it must be part of the definition.[228] Finally, the Latin teaching was put into the decree;[229] however purgatory was not used as a noun but as an adjective and an attribute (lat. *in penis purgariis*) and as a verb (lat. *purgari*).[230]

220 Joseph Gill has noticed that the Latin document follows the Profession of Faith of the emperor at the Second Council of Lyons almost *verbatim*. See Gill 1959, 120.

221 1. Macc. 12:46; Matt. 12:32; 1. Cor. 3:13-15.

222 Of the Latin Fathers, the Latins used Augustine and Gregory the Great, and of the Greek Fathers, Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, John Damascene and Theodoret. See Gill 1959, 121. See also Mîrşanu 2008, 191; Siecienski 2022, 277.

223 Gill 1959, 121; Siecienski 2022, 277.

224 Gill 1959, 121.

225 Gill 1959, 119. On Mark's account of the purgatory, see Siecienski 2022, 278–279.

226 Gill 1959, 119–120.

227 See Gill 1959, 125.

228 AG 441–447; Siecienski 2022, 290.

229 AG 463; AL 261; Siecienski 2022, 290–291.

230 Dragoş Mîrşanu has noted the same formulation in the union decree of the Second Council of Lyons and interpreted it to mean that the use of the adjective left room for neutrality. In this way, by avoiding the word 'purgatory', the Latins were perhaps trying to make the union easier for the Greeks to accept. See Mîrşanu 2008, 187.

The Filioque and the Procession of the Holy Spirit

The debates on the question of the *Filioque* took up the largest segment of the Council. Both the addition and its legitimacy and the doctrine itself, namely, whether the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father only or from the Father and the Son, were discussed at a total of sixteen sessions, from October 8, 1438 to January 10, 1439.[231]

The Council Fathers formulated a Creed at the First Council of Nicaea (325) and amended it at the First Council of Constantinople (381). In the Creed of Nicaea, only the following is stated about the Holy Spirit: "And [I believe] in the Holy Ghost."[232] In the Niceno–Constantinopolitan Creed, the paragraph about the Holy Spirit is more precise than the previous one: "And [I believe] in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, and Giver of life; Who proceedeth from the Father [and the Son]; Who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; Who spake by the Prophets."[233] What turned out to be the major matter separating the Churches, causing disputes from the Middle Ages down to the present day, was the part about the procession of the Holy Spirit, and whether the Holy Spirit proceeded only from the Father, or also from the Son (lat. *Filioque*), which was the Latin version of the Creed.

The Addition, or Explanation (depending on the interpretation) to the Creed, *Filioque*, was first introduced into the Creed in Spain in the sixth century. The *Filioque* was not added at the same time in all parts of the West. It was probably only in 1014 that the *Filioque* was accepted in the Creed in Rome.[234] By the time of the Council of Ferrara–Florence, it was obvious that the Latin Church was using the Creed with the *Filioque*.

For the Greeks, the *Filioque* was problematic for two reasons. First, they considered it an addition, or an interpolation, of the original Creed formulated at the first ecumenical Council(s). The Greeks interpreted the seventh canon of the third ecumenical Council, the Council of Ephesus (431), to mean that it was forbidden to alter the creed.[235] According to the Greeks, therefore, the Latins were violating this

231 Siecienski 2017, 330. Only two public sessions dealt with a subject another than the *Filioque*. See Gill 1964, 239.

232 Schaff 1877, 49.

233 Schaff 1877, 49.

234 Meyendorff 1983, 92; Kolbaba 2008, 51.

235 "When these documents had been read out, the holy synod decreed the following. It is not permitted to produce or write or compose any other creed except the one which was defined by the holy fathers who were gathered together in the Holy Spirit at Nicaea." ("Τούτων τοίνυν ἀναγνωσθέντων, ὥρισεν ἡ ἁγία σύνοδος ἑτέραν πίστιν μηδενὶ ἐξεῖναι προφέρειν ἢ γοῦν συγγράφειν ἢ συντιθέναι παρὰ τὴν ὁρισθεῖσαν παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων τῶν ἐν Νικαέων συναχθέντων σὺν ἁγίῳ πνεύματι·"; "His igitur recitatis decrevit sancta synodus aliam fidem nulli licere proferre vel conscribere vel componere praeter illam quae definita est a sanctis patribus qui Nicaeam per spiritum sanctum conuenerunt;") Translated by Anthony Meredith in Tanner (ed.) 1990, 65.

canon by adding a clause to the holy Creed. The second problem for the Greeks was the actual doctrine behind the word. Even if it were lawful to add a clause to the Creed, was it theologically correct to state that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son?[236] This second issue was not as clear to the Greeks as the first one. It required a profound understanding of the meaning of the words in Latin and Greek and their equivalence or differences. The question of the procession of the Holy Spirit was discussed in the Council of Ferrara–Florence from both perspectives.

Scholars of East–West relations agree in affirming that the *Filioque* was the most important point of disagreement between the Eastern and Western Churches, especially after the 1270s.[237] Already Patriarch Photios I of Constantinople (c. 810/820–893) had condemned the Latins for this interpolation. At the local council of Constantinople, the original wording of the Creed was confirmed and any alterations to it anathematised. After the official acceptance by Rome of the *Filioque*, the addition was always raised in the encounters between the Churches.[238] The addition was included in almost all the Greek lists of Latin errors.[239]

For the Greeks at the Council of Ferrara–Florence, it was clear that it was the addition to the Creed that had caused the Schism and was the primary obstacle to of the union.[240] Cardinal Cesarini wrote to Ambrogio Traversari from the Council: "First, they [=the Greeks] declared that the Roman Church had added *Filioque* into the Creed. From this emerged the cause of this scandal and schism."[241] The way in which Cesarini formulated this Greek stance reveals that he, and presumably the other Latins too, did not see the *Filioque* as the reason for the schism, nor the Latins as the cause.[242] Besides, if the doctrine was correct and the *Filioque* a necessary explanation to the clause, it could not have been the reason behind the schism. The schism should not have even happened.

236 Kolbaba 2008, 50. See also Syropoulos VI, 21, where the Greeks are discussing among themselves what should be the first topic to take up with the Latins at the Council. Some Greeks argued as follows: "What separates us from the Latins is the addition. We must therefore first examine the cause of the separation, then the point of doctrine." ("Διὰ τὴν προσθήκην διέστημεν ἀπὸ τῶν Λατίνων. Δέον οὖν ἐστι ζητηθῆναι πρῶτον τὸ τῆς διαστάσεως αἴτιον, εἶτα τὸ περὶ τῆς δόξης.")

237 Meyendorff 1983, 91; Kolbaba 2000, 40.

238 Meyendorff 1983, 92. See also Kolbaba 2000, 40, 91.

239 Kolbaba 2000, 34.

240 Syropoulos III, 8, VI, 21.

241 "Proposuerunt in Primis cur Ecclesia Romana addit Filioque in Symbolo: quod exstitit huius scandali, & schismatis caussa". Traversari, lib. XXIV, ep. 5. Andrew of Rhodes made a similar remark, see AG 62.

242 See also Syropoulos VI, 35, where he writes that Andrew of Rhodes also argued that the addition was not the reason for the schism.

Most sessions at the Council of Ferrara–Florence, were devoted to the questions of the *Filioque* and the procession of the Holy Spirit. Because both Churches had a great number of authoritative sources on which they based their arguments either for or against the addition and the doctrine, the manuscripts played a significant role in these discussions. The documents from the ecumenical Councils, as well as the many Church Fathers, both Latin and Greek, were cited during the winter months of 1438 and 1439.

In the end, the *Filioque* was confirmed as an orthodox doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit. It was affirmed that some Church Fathers, when speaking of the Holy Spirit proceeding "from the Father through the Son" meant the same as the Fathers who spoke of the Spirit proceeding "from the Father and the Son." The decree of union also explicitly stated that the Latin addition was a licit addition to the Creed.[243]

After the *Filioque* issue had been settled, the Greeks hoped for a quick end to the Council and a return to their homelands. The Greeks had hoped that when agreement had been reached on the most important issue, the other issues could be bypassed in relation to the union. However, the Latins still insisted that other differences between the Churches must be discussed. These were purgatory – which had been discussed in preliminary sessions, but not settled – the eucharistic bread, the consecratory formula, and the primacy of the pope.[244] These issues were treated differently than the question of Filioque. The public sessions had ended in March 1439 and the remaining issues were settled in private or informal meetings of small committees. The Latins were already formulating the drafts for union, *cedulae*, and based their speeches on the remaining issues with regard to these *cedulae*.[245] At this point, the discussions centred on the speeches and the drafting of the union formula, not on the texts and manuscripts as had been the case in the discussions on *Filioque*.[246]

The Eucharist

The Eucharist was a central part of the Christian liturgy or mass, a ritual that made Christ present. The form of the eucharistic bread, whether it should be unleavened or leavened, was a focal issue between the Churches in the High and Late Middle Ages. While the Latin Church was not always strictly opposed to the Greek use of leavened (although they themselves used unleavened bread), the Greeks condemned

243 Tanner (ed.) 1990, 525–527.
244 Siecienski 2017, 327, 332; Schmidt 1961, 36, 38.
245 Schmidt 1961, 38; Gill 1964, 240–241.
246 Siecienski 2017, 333.

the Latin practise of using unleavened bread.[247] This matter was discussed at the Council of Ferrara–Florence as well.[248] Another matter touching the Eucharist was the doctrine of transubstantiation or the *epiclesis*. The moment when the bread and wine of the Eucharist were believed to change into the body and blood of Christ was the point of dispute. This too was discussed in Florence.

The debates on the eucharistic bread began in the eleventh century.[249] In the Schism of 1054, the use of unleavened versus leavened bread created a major issue between the Patriarch of Constantinople, Michael I Keroularios, and Pope Leo IX. Before the mutual excommunications between Patriarch Keroularios and Cardinal Humbert of Silva Candida, acting as a papal legate, Greek Archbishop Leo of Ohrid and Patriarch Peter of Antioch had written treatises against the Latin use of unleavened bread in the Eucharist.[250]

Latin theologians usually validated their use of unleavened bread by stating that the bread that Christ used in the Last Supper was unleavened.[251] The Greeks understood the bread as symbolic, and the yeast fermenting the bread as an action of the Holy Spirit. The bread was supposed to be ordinary bread, which was in line with Christ's humanity and Incarnation.[252] Keroularios's argument against the Latin use was that the Latin Vulgate had a translation error which had led to the divergent interpretation. When in the Greek New Testament, the "leaven… leavens", in the Vulgate the same passage is translated "leaven… corrupts."[253] While the Greeks accused the Latins of heresy because of the use of unleavened bread, the Latins did not consider the Greek use of fermented bread to be so grave that it constituted a heresy.[254] However, some Latins could have regarded the Greek accusation of heresy on the part of the Latins in this respect as itself being heretical.[255]

247 Kolbaba 2000, 37; Izbicki 2015, 67; Hinterberger & Schabel 2011, 9; Schabel 2011, 96–97.
248 Siecienski 2022, 175–180.
249 Meyendorff 1983, 204; Kolbaba 2000, 37.
250 Kolbaba 2000, 25. See also Erickson 1970, 155–176.
251 Izbicki 2015, 50.
252 Meyendorff 1983, 204; Schabel 2011, 98; Izbicki 2015, 67.
253 Kolbaba 2000, 37.
254 In reality not all Greeks necessarily thought that the Latins' use of unleavened bread was heretical. At the Council, Mark of Ephesus was accusing the Latins of this heresy and the Latin speaker John of Torquemada was asking for Greeks' acceptance (thus implying that the Greeks were accusing the Latins) of Latin rite as the Latins were accepting the Greek rite. See Siecienski 2022, 176. However, even after the promulgation of union, which accepted both rites, the Greeks, according to Syropoulos, did not accept the unleavened bread in the liturgy. The Greeks asked that they could celebrate the liturgy according to Greek rites after the Latin one, but this was not accepted by the pope. See Siecienski 2022, 177.
255 Izbicki 2015, 77.

At the Council of Ferrara–Florence, the union decree finally stated that the "the body of Christ is truly confected in both unleavened and leavened wheat bread, and priests should confect the body of Christ in either, that is, each priest according to the custom of his western or eastern church."[256] Thus, both traditions could be continued.

Papal primacy

The question of papacy and papal primacy was an issue that had been causing friction between the Churches for centuries by the time of the Council of Ferrara–Florence. It is difficult to define the exact moment when the issue of the papacy begun to cause trouble. A. Edward Siecienski has noted that while the Latin apologists state that the Greeks began to reject the idea of the pope's unique position only in the ninth century during the reign of Patriarch Photios,[257] the Greeks claim to have never recognised the papal primacy, but only the "primacy of honor."[258] The events of the Fourth Crusade and the sack of Constantinople were crucial for the Greek attitudes towards the papacy. They showed the Greeks what the pope was capable of.[259] For the popes, from the twelfth century on, the chief obstacle to union was seen as the Eastern Church's refusal to acknowledge the papal primacy.[260] While there were no theological discussions in depth about the papal primacy at the Council of Ferrara–Florence, we have already seen that the position of the pope had caused tension already before the Council and in the opening arrangements. The discussion about the kissing of the pope's foot and the seating arrangements were part of the negotiations about the relationship between the bishop of Rome, the pope, and the other patriarchs.

256 "Item, in azimo sive fermentato pane triticeo, corpus Christi veraciter confici, sacerdotesque in altero ipsum Domini corpus conficere debere, unumquemque scilicet iuxta sue ecclesie sive occidentalis sive orientalis consuetudinem." Translated by Joseph Gill, see Tanner (ed.) 1990, 527.

257 This period is also known as the Photian Schism (863–67). Photios was Patriarch of Constantinople first in 858–67, then in 877–86. See Siecienski 2017, 2. Siecienski notes that even if the question was not yet about the papal primacy, the problem was "about the jurisdictional limits of papal power and the right of the pope to sit in judgment over the other patriarchs." Pope Nicholas I had "required universal acceptance of his role and obedience to his will." See Siecienski 2017, 8.

258 Siecienski 2017, 2.

259 Siecienski 2017, 292; Kolbaba 2000, 13.

260 Hamilton 2003, 141.

The key texts in the doctrine of papal primacy were, and are, Matthew 16:13–20[261] and John 21:15–19.[262] These texts were interpreted differently in the West and in the East. For the Latins, the texts proved that the papal office was a divine institution, granted to Peter and his successors, the bishops of Rome. Peter and his successors had an authority higher than the other apostles. The Greeks read the texts as meaning that while Peter was important, he shared the authority with other apostles. Peter could also be understood as the model of all bishops. These interpretations were grounded on the patristic commentaries.[263]

For Pope Eugene IV, the question of papal primacy was important. The entire Council and the union were, for him, manifestations of his power as a pope. He was proving to the Council of Basel and the conciliarists that the pope was the highest authority of the Church. There was no time to discuss the primacy in the sessions at the Council of Ferrara–Florence and since the Greeks were inclined to accept the papal primacy, it was finally included in the union decree.

Why the other issues separating the Churches were discussed and argued about differently than *Filioque*, is a question worth discussing here. While the focus in this dissertation is on the manuscripts, their use, and authority, the lack of manuscripts in the last discussions must be acknowledged. One reason I propose is the already-mentioned fatigue and desire of the Greeks to return home. The

261 Matthew 16:13–20: "[13] When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say the Son of Man is?' [14] They replied, 'Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' [15] 'But what about you?' he asked. 'Who do you say I am?' [16] Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' [17] Jesus replied, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. [18] And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. [19] I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.' [20] Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah."

262 John 21:15–19: "[15] When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?' 'Yes, Lord,' he said, 'you know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Feed my lambs.' [16] Again Jesus said, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' He answered, 'Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Take care of my sheep.' [17] The third time he said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, 'Do you love me?' He said, 'Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Feed my sheep. [18] Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.' [19] Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, 'Follow me!'"

263 Siecienski 2017, 3, 6. Papadakis 2011, 22, 24, 27; Meyendorff 1991, 168.

prolonged Council had caused anxiety, both for their personal reasons and their shared fear for the survival of the Empire. Besides this, the Latin financial support for food and subsidies had been delayed many times.[264] Another reason is that the main difference, for the Greeks, had already been settled. The acceptance of the *Filioque* in the Creed, and thus the acceptance of the dogma at the same time, meant, for many Greeks, that the concessions made were already drastic. The Greeks had hoped that this would have been enough, but this was not the case for the Latins.

2.5 Council participants

Finally, it is time to introduce the main characters of the Council. First, I give a short introduction of the leaders of the Eastern and Western delegations, starting with Pope Eugene IV, and then move on to the Byzantine Emperor, John VIII Palaiologos, and the Patriarch of Constantinople, Joseph II, and discuss their role and importance in the Council. After the leaders, I introduce the main speakers and other active individuals who played a part in collecting, translating, and analysing the texts and manuscripts.

Gabriele Condulmaro was born in Venice around the year 1383. Before he was elected pope, Condulmaro entered the monastery of St Giorgio in Alga. He was made Bishop of Siena by his uncle, Pope Gregory XII, in 1407 and created cardinal already the next year. He took part in the Council of Constance and in the election of Martin V. When Martin V died in 1431, Condulmaro was elected pope and took the name Eugene IV. Eugene had to continue the matters that his predecessor Martin had begun. Martin had opened the Council of Basel in 1431 and initiated the negotiations with the Greeks regarding the future Council and union.[265] For Eugene, union with the Greeks was an important issue and he strenuously endeavoured to get the Greeks to come to the Council and then to sign the union decree that would acknowledge the papal primacy as well as other Latin doctrines. Eugene was active before, during and after the Council, although he did not take part in the Council's discussions at the official sessions. When one reads the *Acts*, his presence easily escapes one's attention, but the correspondence and other

264 See for example Syropoulos VI, 34; VII, 10; VII, 31; VIII, 16; IX, 5; X, 25. The emperor spoke to his people and explained the troubles the pope was facing with money: "The pope is short of money! That's why he couldn't provide us with the subsidies and why we are five months short; that's also why you and all of us are suffering." ("ἔχει στέρησιν χρημάτων ὁ πάπας· διὸ οὐδὲ τὸ σιτηρέσιον παρέχειν δύναται, καὶ λείπεται ἡμῖν μενῶν πέντε, καὶ πάσχετε καὶ ὑμεῖς καὶ οἱ ἡμέτεροι πάντες.") See Syropoulos VII, 25.

265 Gill 1964, 35.

sources, such as Syropoulos's *Memoirs*, remind us of the role he took during the Council. He was the leader of the Western Church and hoped to be the pope and leader of the unified Church.

John VIII Palaiologos was born on 16/17 December 1392. He was the son of the Byzantine Emperor, Manuel II Palaiologos,[266] and like pope Eugene, John inherited the issues that his predecessor had already worked on. The Ottoman threat was alarming, and just as his father had sought for help from the West, John too negotiated with the pope and the Council of Basel in order to acquire monetary and military help against the Ottomans. These negotiations always involved the idea of the Church union in return for help. For John, then, the Council and the union were important, but mainly because of the help that it would have brought to his Empire. This did not mean that John was uninterested in theological matters or that he was indifferent to matters of faith. He demanded an ecumenical council where the theological issues would be discussed freely, and the truth revealed.[267] Like Eugene, John did not take an active part in the Council's official sessions, but he was the leader of the Greeks. He saw himself as the defender of the faith.

The Patriarch of Constantinople, Joseph II, collaborated with John VIII Palaiologos. Joseph was already an octogenarian when he left Constantinople and came to the Council. Of his life, little is known. John was probably born in Bulgaria around the year 1360. Before he was elected Patriarch of Constantinople on 21 May 1416, he was the Metropolitan of Ephesus.[268] At the Council, Joseph was often ill and could not fully participate in the Council's meetings.[269] He was, nevertheless, an important figure for the Greeks and, together with John VIII Palaiologos, he took responsibility for the private meetings that the Greeks had. Joseph died during the Council in Florence on 10 June 1439 before the promulgation of the union leaving a 'Last Profession', a dubious document, in which he accepted the teaching of the Western Church. This profession is part of the *Acts* but not mentioned by Syropoulos.[270]

Besides the leaders of the two parties, there were several important characters. Starting with the Eastern side, the two most important figures were Bessarion of Nicaea and Mark of Ephesus. Mark of Ephesus (1392–1444)[271] was born in Constantinople circa 1392. He became a monk in 1418/1420 and later returned to

266 Gill 1964, 104.
267 Gill 1964, 104–124.
268 Gill 1964, 15.
269 For example, Joseph missed the Council's opening session, see Syropoulos IV, 44. See also Syropoulos VI, 43 and Gill 1964, 17.
270 See AG 444 and AL 225.
271 Mark of Ephesus is also known as Mark Eugenicus.

the capital and was ordained priest. Just before the Council of Ferrara–Florence, he was made bishop of Ephesus, and in this position, he represented the patriarchate of Antioch.[272] Mark of Ephesus was the only one, together with the bishop of Stavropolis who had fled from the Council before its end, who did not sign the decree of union in Florence in 1439.[273] Especially at the beginning of the Council, in Ferrara, Mark was given great responsibility as a speaker of the Byzantine delegation. He was the main speaker for the Greeks, speaking in all but two public sessions.[274]

On the Greek side, another important figure is Bessarion of Nicaea (1402–1472). Bessarion was born in Trebizond on 2 January 1402. He became a monk in 1423 and took the name Bessarion, and was ordained priest in 1431. He also participated in some diplomatic missions. Just before the Council, Bessarion was made the Metropolitan of Nicaea.[275] He had a large collection of personal manuscripts, both religious and secular, and he brought some of these to the Council. Although he was originally an anti-unionist, he became a unionist in the Council, and he fought for the union both at the Council and after it. Together with Mark of Ephesus, with whom he came into conflict, he was given the greatest responsibility in the Council. He established good relations with the pope and other Latins and was created cardinal by Eugene IV shortly after the Council.[276]

On the Latin side, there were more persons directly involved in the discussions and especially in the preparations for the Council and its sessions. Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464) was born in Kues in 1401. He was educated at the school of Deventer in central Holland, from which he later transferred to the University of Padua and received a degree in canon law.[277] Nicholas was initially active in the Council of Basel and supported conciliarism, but later joined Pope Eugene together with Cardinal Cesarini.[278] Nicholas's responsibilities mostly preceded the Council. He had been appointed to go to Constantinople and to buy and collect Greek manuscripts

272 Gill 1964, 55, 60. Originally, he was chosen as the representative of the patriarchate of Alexandria, then became the representative of the patriarchate of Jerusalem, before becoming the representative of Antioch. See Gill 1964, 60.
273 Gill 1959, 292.
274 Gill 1964, 61.
275 Gill 1964, 45–46.
276 Gill 1964, 50.
277 Sigmund 1963, 21–23.
278 Stinger 1977, 43.

before the Council.[279] He was present at Ferrara when the Council was opened but left for Germany on 6 June 1438.[280]

In addition to Nicholas of Cusa, Ambrogio Traversari (1386–1439) was the person to whom the pope entrusted the preparations regarding the manuscripts. Traversari was born in the village of Portico di Romagna in 1386. At the age of fourteen, he left for the Camaldulensian monastery of S. Maria Angeli and became a monk.[281] Although Traversari did not enter a university, he was interested in studies of ancient texts, both classical and patristic. He was in close contact with the Florentine humanists and realised the importance of the Byzantine Manuel Chrysoloras, who had come to Florence to teach Greek in 1397.[282] Traversari searched for Greek manuscripts and utilized his intellectual circles in the West and sent letters in which he asked for certain texts. He also translated excerpts of texts from Greek to Latin and analysed different readings of the same texts.[283] Traversari, like Nicholas of Cusa, was present when the Council was opened in Ferrara. He, however, left the city in the middle of the debates but returned before the Council was closed. He drafted the union decree together with a few other participants.

The speakers of the Western delegation, mostly Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini (1398–1444) and Giovanni da Montenero, were responsible for the argumentation. Andrew of Rhodes and John of Torquemada were also speakers in some sessions. They worked closely with Traversari and it could be said that they presented to the Greeks the results of studies Traversari's studies. These scholars and theologians formed a team that was led by the pope. The roles of different individuals and their effects on the development of religious humanism and textual criticism form an important part of this study.

279 Geanakoplos 1955, 332; Stinger 1977, 215–216; Maarten Halff has also studied the pope's legation to the East before the Council and stated that Nicholas of Cusa did not, in fact, have a central diplomatic role even if he was sent to the East. According to Halff, his centrality has erroneously been emphasised probably because of his suitability for diplomatic missions: he knew Greek and was a learned man. The original sources do not, however, speak of his diplomatic importance. See Halff 2020, 96–101. Halff can be right that Nicholas of Cusa was not as important a diplomatic figure as has been claimed, but I would emphasise that this does not exclude the interpretation of the important role he had in collecting Greek texts and manuscripts.

280 Stinger 1977, 43.

281 Stinger 1977, 1.

282 Stinger 1977, 6–8, 16–18, 30.

283 Stinger 1977, 203–222.

3 "Give us the books and testimonies of the saints you are citing"[284] – Use and users of the manuscripts

> The texts by many doctors writing in Greek were introduced, such as Athanasius, Cyril, Didymus, Chrysostom, and very significantly Basil the Great, who commands excellent veneration in sanctity and doctrine among them [=the Greeks] and who in his book to Eunomius on the Holy Spirit evidently declared that the Holy Spirit proceeds not only from the Father but [also] from the Son. [--] Many manuscripts of Basil addressed to Eunomius were brought, written in Greek, of which some were among the Greeks, some were in possession of us, the Latins, who had knowledge of the Greek language.[285]

284 "Δότε ἡμῖν, ἔφη, τὰς βίβλους καὶ τὰ ῥητὰ τῶν ἁγίων ὧν εἰρήκατε, ὅπως σκεψώμεθα τοῦ ἀπολογηθήναι." AG 398.

285 "Introducte sunt auctoritates multorum doctorum grẹce scribencium ut Athanasii, Cyrilli, Didimi, Crisostomi, et permaxime magni Basilii qui habetur aput eos in magna ueneratione sanctitatis et doctrinę qui in libro ad Eunomium de spiritu sanctu [sic] expresse asserit sp(iritu)m sanctum procedere non solum a patre sed a filio. [--] Adducti sunt plures codices Basilii ad Eunomium grẹce exarati quorum aliqui erant aput grẹcos aliqui penes latinos nostros grẹci sermonis peritos." Vat. lat. 1968, f. 326v. All the authors mentioned by Antoninus discussed the Holy Spirit and thus were focal to the discussions at the Council, which were mainly about the procession of the Holy Spirit and the addition of the *Filioque* in the Creed. This was the most significant issue between the Eastern and Western Churches and was sometimes seen as the reason separating them from the very first. Athanasius of Alexandria's (c. 296–373) *Letters to Serapion* (also known as *On the Holy Spirit*) deal mainly with the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Cyril of Alexandria (c. 376–444) treated the *Filioque* in his many letters. Besides this, his *Thesaurus* was quoted, and the differences between the manuscripts were noticed and discussed. Didymus the Blind (c. 313–398) might seem a curious choice for Antoninus to mention here, but despite his lower reputation, he wrote about the Holy Spirit and was known in the Western world through Jerome's Latin translation of the text. John Chrysostom (c. 347–407) was quoted in the preliminary discussions of purgatory, another issue separating the Churches, but also in the discussions of the Holy Spirit. As Antoninus describes it, however, the role of the writings of Basil of Caesarea

Antoninus of Florence was one of the several participants of the Council of Ferrara–Florence who, in his chronicle, recalled the events of the Council. He himself did not play any significant part in the negotiations,[286] but he followed the discussions and turns of events of the Council. The quotation is from his *Chronicon partibus tribus distincta ab initio mundi ad MCCCLX*,[287] in which the Council is described in folios 325v–326v of manuscript Vat. Lat. 1968. These folios consist of three columns. The texts and the codices brought and discussed in the Council take up most of the space in Antoninus's narrative. This indicates not only Antoninus's erudition, but also the nature of the Council and the role that the manuscripts played in the Council. Not only were the authoritative texts important, but the manuscripts containing the texts were of great importance as well. Authoritative works were crucial for theological arguments, but the interpretations relied heavily on the material form of the texts.

In this chapter, I examine the use and users of the manuscripts and the works in them. I begin with the manuscript collectors as regards the Council. The focus is thus on the period before the Council, without, however, forgetting the Council as one motive in the collecting activity. In addition, the search for manuscripts continued during the Council. The collectors were active users of the manuscripts, and in certain cases, they were owners as well. In the second subchapter, I focus on the role that the manuscript owners and the concept of owning a manuscript played in the Council. In the third subchapter, the question of ownership is discussed in relation to the idea of the free lending and borrowing of the manuscripts at the Council. The borrowing made comparison of the manuscripts possible. In the fourth subchapter, the reading practices and the methods applied to the manuscripts and texts are discussed. Finally, the role of translators and interpreters and the presence of two languages are in the focus. All these aspects are related to the use and authority of manuscripts and aim to show the importance of the manuscripts for the Council participants as well as for the theological argumentation and discussions.

(330–379) was of the greatest importance. His *Adversus Eunomium* was cited many times, as well as his other writings dealing with the Holy Spirit.

286 He was not one of the chosen speakers for the Council's sessions. This does not, however, mean that he did not discuss with his fellow Latins or with the Greek members of the Council outside the official sessions.

287 The title sets the beginning of the chronicle at the creation of the World, as was the usual practice in historiography, and the end at the year 1360. However, Antoninus of Florence (1389–1459) continued to describe the events of his lifetime, which was also a common practice in chronicles.

3.1 Collectors searching for texts and manuscripts

To understand the debates about the authority of manuscripts in the Council, we first need to explore the collecting activity of manuscripts in the years preceding the Council. Accordingly, the time span of this section is not limited to the period when the Council met in Ferrara and Florence, but includes the time before the Council as well. In addition, when investigating the correspondence from the time of the Council, it becomes evident that the collecting process did not end at the opening of the Council. On the contrary, it seems that some manuscripts were lost or were wanted in the sessions, and the active participants continued to search for them, or used their contacts to find them, during the meetings. In this subchapter, I argue that the collecting activity of both sides was closely connected to the preparation for the Council and its sessions. The collected manuscripts then helped the participants and their delegations to build up their arguments, not only for their contents but also for their material aspects.

The manuscripts used by the Council participants were brought and owned by someone. The manuscripts might have been part of collections that the participants had had for a long time; or in some cases, the Council was the main reason behind the searching activity. While the sources seldom reveal this information, there are some manuscripts and works whose movements can be connected to the individuals working for the Council. Personal motives also played a part. In many cases, it is difficult, if not impossible, to separate the personal motives from the commonly shared objectives.

I begin with the Latin collectors. One of the most active collectors of the Council was Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464). He studied canon law at the University of Padua, receiving the degree in 1423. It is possible that he also began his studies in Greek in Padua.[288] Nicholas continued his studies at the University of Cologne, studying philosophy and theology.[289] In Padua and Cologne, he made personal contacts with fellow humanists, such as another important figure at the Council, Giuliano Cesarini.[290] From early on, he was known for his interest in classical manuscripts. The political historian Paul E. Sigmund notes in his study of Nicholas of Cusa that

288 Vittorino da Feltre was a professor of rhetoric at Padua from 1420 to 1422, and although it is not certain whether Nicholas of Cusa attended classes other than canon law, it is possible that he learned Greek there. See Sigmund 1963, 23.

289 Nicholas's years in Cologne affected his philosophical thinking and made him a Christian Neo-Platonist. See Sigmund 1963, 24.

290 At Padua, he had personal contacts with Giuliano Cesarini, whom he described as his teacher. Cesarini was not a professor at Padua, but probably taught at some level. See Sigmund 1963, 24.

Nicholas was primarily interested in history and Church law, and not merely an enthusiast for classical culture.[291]

Nicholas had already worked for the Council of Basel together with Cardinal Cesarini in the first half of the 1430s. As a papal legate in the Council of Basel, he sought to find a way to reconcile the propapal and antipapal positions. He dealt with the subject in his *De auctoritate presidendi in concilio generali* (1434) and *De concordantia catholica* (1434), which he submitted to the Council.

What Nicholas of Cusa started in Basel continued in the preparation for the Council of Ferrara–Florence. When the final rupture took place in Basel on May 7, 1437,[292] Nicholas of Cusa, together with two bishops, first went to Bologna to get the papal seal to the decree inviting the Greeks to a council, then continued to Constantinople with two papal emissaries. Nicholas's primary duty was to gather manuscripts, and Sigmund states that Nicholas's knowledge of canon law, together with his collecting activity, were the reasons for his presence in the delegation.[293]

As Sigmund points out, Nicholas of Cusa's mission was primarily to gather more manuscripts while in Constantinople. The fame of Nicholas's collections and his erudition was widespread during the 1430s, as can be seen from the correspondence between him and other humanists, such as Ambrogio Traversari, another important figure of the Council.[294] It is probable that Pope Martin V was familiar with Nicholas of Cusa's work and that he saw great potential in the Greek manuscripts that Nicholas had and knew so well. It is, however, possible that Nicholas of Cusa himself had expressed this idea. He saw the original manuscripts, which he had already used when writing *De concordantia catholica*, as an essential source for argumentation. In addition, at this point he had also proved that the *Donation of Constantine* was a forgery, as stated in his *De concordia catholica*, in 1433.[295]

The *Donation of Constantine* is perhaps the best-known forgery of the Middle Ages. It was written probably in the eight century by an unknown author. In the *Donation*, Emperor Constantine the Great transfers the authority of the Western Empire to Pope Sylvester I. During the Middle Ages, it was used, in particular, to prove and strengthen the papal power over the emperor. The Byzantine reading and interpretation of the *Donation* differed from the traditional Western reading, in that

291 Sigmund 1963, 30.
292 This is discussed in chapter 2.1.
293 Sigmund 1963, 231; Halff 2020, 96–101. See also note 279 above.
294 Sigmund 1963, 27–29. Nicholas of Cusa kept up correspondence, for example, with the Italian humanists Poggio Braccioli and Ambrogio Traversari. With them, as well as with other humanists, he shared and asked for information on mostly classical but also religious works. See Sigmund 1963, 27–29.
295 Angelov 2009, 124. Lorenzo Valla proved and confirmed that the *Donation* is a forgery in 1440. See Angelov 2009, 124; Renna 2014, 1–28.

while the *Donation* was seen to confirm papal power, it demonstrated at the same time that the papal power originated from a person, Emperor Constantine, and thus not from heaven. This, then, meant for the Greeks that the papal power ought not to be considered superior to other powers.[296] The different interpretations of the *Donation* collided between the groups, and this case is made even more interesting by the fact that it was proved to be a forgery just before the Council. In 1433, Nicholas of Cusa was still part of the Council of Basel, and the refutation of the *Donation* fitted well with the conciliarist idea of the Council against the pope and the papalists. However, Nicholas of Cusa later came to the Council of Ferrara–Florence and sided with the pope.

In his *De concordantia catholica*, Nicholas depended heavily on records of ecumenical Councils.[297] In the preface, he even stated that he had gathered his authorities "not from any abbreviated collection but drawing from original materials."[298] The library in Cologne offered more than eight hundred manuscripts for Nicholas's studies.[299] From these manuscripts and the works of many authors, he proved that the *Donation* must be a forgery. Nicholas had read historical works, records of the church Councils, writings of the saints and Church Fathers, Jerome, Augustine, Ambrose, and Pope Damasus, and there was no mention of the *Donation* in these. He continued that while the legend of St Sylvester included the story of Emperor Constantine and Pope Sylvester, the legend contradicts Jerome and his narrative of the baptism of Constantine. Even more dubious for Nicholas was the fact that there was no mention of the *Donation* in the original *Decretum* of Gratian, but only in a later addition.[300] The historical criticism of Nicholas and the ways in which he challenged the authenticity and authority of this important work of the Middle Ages show Nicholas's approach to ancient works and manuscripts. He trusted the writings of the Church Fathers and early church Councils and put their authority above the legend of Sylvester and the problematic *Decretum* of Gratian with later additions. As a canon law student, he must have known the *Decretum* well and been aware of its history. Lorenzo Valla has usually been credited with the refutation of the *Donation*, and especially his philological methods have been assessed very highly in this work, whereas Nicholas of Cusa, if acknowledged at all, has been noticed mainly for his historical criticism.[301] It seems clear that there are already seeds of textual criticism in Nicholas's thought as well. In the *Decretum*, he

296 Angelov 2009, 91–157.
297 Sigmund 1963, 228.
298 Quoted from Sigmund 1963, 35.
299 Sigmund 1963, 35.
300 Sigmund 1963, 196.
301 Renna 2014, 7.

identified different temporal strata, later additions to the original work, and used this as an argument in his historical criticism. This critical approach to authoritative works as capable of undergoing changes in the course of history and in different manuscripts proved to be useful at the Council of Ferrara–Florence.

In the *Acts* of the Council of Ferrara–Florence, there is some indication of the manuscripts that Nicholas of Cusa found and brought with him from Constantinople. Although Nicholas was present at the Council only at the beginning,[302] he was referred to in the discussions at the Council, when the procession of the Holy Spirit was discussed. Giovanni da Montenero explained to the Greeks that the manuscript at hand "was brought by Master Nicholas of Cusa from Constantinople last year."[303] The book that Giovanni da Montenero was referring to in this passage was Basil of Caesarea's *Contra Eunomium*. It was one of the primary works used in argumentation, both for and against the doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit, and its importance for the whole Council is seen in the quotation from Antoninus of Florence at the beginning of this chapter. The third book of *Contra Eunomium* deals with the Holy Spirit, as the first book deals with the Father and the second the Son. The heated debates about the trinitarian theology were part of the fourth-century Councils. The Council of Constantinople condemned the Eunomian heresy in 381.[304] Basil's *Contra Eunomium* was, if not forgotten, barely known later in the Middle Ages. The theologian and patristic scholar H. Ashley Hall has explained the relatively little interest in the text by saying that as it was a "dogmatic work on a topic that was soon settled and accepted as orthodox, there was not much interest in (or need) to study the work."[305] Hall noticed that in the Council of Ferrara–Florence it received a lot of attention and that the Latins saw it as suitable for their understanding of the *Filioque* dogma.[306] The sudden attention to the work might be explained by Nicholas's activity and the specific manuscript he had brought from Constantinople.

The Basil codex was not the only manuscript that Nicholas of Cusa had brought from Constantinople. Although the *Acts* mention him by name only in the third

302 Nicholas had left for Germany in June 1438. See Sigmund 1963, 232.

303 "iste liber de anno preterito de Constantinopoli ductus est et dominus Nicolaus de Cusa portavit." AL 155. Similarly in AG 297: "ἡ βίβλος αὕτη ἐν τῷ χρόνῳ τῷ παρεληλυθότι ἀπὸ τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ὧδε μετηνέχθη. καὶ ὁ κύριος Νικόλαος Δεκούζα τὴν βίβλον ἔφερε."

304 Eunomius of Cyzicus had supported the Arian view of Christ's nature as being of a different nature than God. This is also known as heteroousianism. This controversy has been seen as a pivotal point in the history of trinitarian theology and in the "emergence of dispute over proper theological methodology and epistemology." See DelCogliano 2010, 1.

305 Hall 2015, 316.

306 Hall 2015, 316–317.

session of Florence, the correspondence between Cardinal Cesarini and Ambrogio Traversari reveals that Nicholas of Cusa had brought with him other manuscripts as well. The difficulty with the other manuscripts was that they were not present at the Council. Cesarini wrote to Traversari from the Council on 18 October 1438:

> I remember that, among the books of Nicholas of Cusa, there is a volume in Greek where the sixth, seventh and eighth Councils are. [--] I do not know what you have done to this volume. [--] I believe that he bought it in Constantinople.[307]

Both Nicholas of Cusa and Ambrogio Traversari were absent from the Council at this point,[308] and it seems that Cesarini's hopes were in vain, and the manuscript never arrived at the Council. In any case, the passage quoted here reveals the great need for manuscripts in the Council's sessions.

What kind of libraries or manuscript collections did Constantinople or the Byzantine Empire have to offer for Nicholas of Cusa and others who were searching for manuscripts? Nicholas of Cusa's case proves that acquiring manuscripts was possible, although probably not easy. Nigel Wilson, who has studied Byzantine libraries, has divided the public libraries of Constantinople into four groups: imperial library,[309] university library, city library, and monastic libraries. The collections and the opportunities for individual people to use the manuscripts varied. Besides the capital's public libraries, there were provincial libraries and monastic libraries, of which the collections in the monastic libraries of Mount Athos were the most eminent, consisting of thousands of manuscripts.[310] In addition, there were private collections of some wealthy citizens.[311]

There is no clear indication of where and how Nicholas of Cusa acquired the manuscripts in Constantinople. In any case, the evidence from the *Acts* and the correspondence tells us that Nicholas of Cusa did, in fact, buy the manuscripts, not just copy from a manuscript in front of him, which was a common practice during

307 "Memini quod inter libros Domini Nicolai de Cusa erat unum volumen in graeco, ubi erat VI. VII. VIIl. Concilium. [--] Nescio quid feceritis de dicto volumine. [--] Credo etiam quod emerit illum Constantinopoli." Traversari, lib. XXIV, ep. V.

308 Pope Eugene had given Traversari an admission to leave the Council for two weeks when Ferrara was ravaged by plague. Traversari ended up being absent from the Council from mid-June to November. He went to care for his ill mother but continued working on the reform of his monastery. See Stinger 1977, 211.

309 Pero Tafur, in his travel to Constantinople in 1437, mentioned the imperial library: "Here [in the chambers at the emperor's Palace] are many books and ancient writings and histories." See Pero Tafur, 145.

310 Wilson 1967, 53–80.

311 Wilson 1967, 53.

the Middle Ages.[312] To some extent, the monastic libraries sold their manuscripts, and according to Wilson, this happened especially if there were illiterate monks in charge.[313] Nevertheless, for Nicholas of Cusa, the copying of the texts was not enough. It was evidently necessary to gather the manuscripts and take them to the West.

Constantinople and the eastern libraries were not the only places to be searched for manuscripts. While Nicholas of Cusa bought the manuscript from the Byzantine capital, it is probable that he did some searches in the western collections as well. Nicholas was famous for his extensive book collections, as has already been mentioned. In the appraisal of many humanists, the classical texts, such as Cicero, receive the most attention,[314] but Nicholas of Cusa collected patristic and other theological texts as well. His main interest, after all, was in history and Church law.[315] It is still difficult to determine which manuscripts Nicholas collected with the Council in mind, especially in the West.

312 Humanists, theologians and other men of letters acquired and searched for texts and books as objects. Books were loaned for reading and copying. Pascale Bourgain observes that books were valuable objects and the search meant that the searcher had to be ready to pay the price. See Bourgain 2015, 145–146.

313 This was seen as a problem when the monks sold their books or even loaned them, with a risk of theft. Sometimes, the manuscripts had the name of the owner together with a curse. The three hundred and eighteen fathers of the Council of Nicaea would curse the person stealing or (re)selling the book. See Wilson 1967, 79. In the twelfth century, Eustathius of Thessalonica criticized the monks for selling their manuscripts: "You treat this as a matter of trade, selling off this advantage you possess, indeed listening to the suggestions of the evil spirit who tells you 'Sell these books of yours, spend the money as you please and follow me' ... You illiterate fellow, why ever do you wish to reduce the library to the level of your own character? Just because you have no trace of culture, must you empty the library of the books that transmit it?" Translated by Nigel Wilson, see Wilson 1967, 63. Books could also be important objects for their owners, whether institutes or individuals, and selling them was not always the desirable or even possible option. Giovanni Aurispa wrote to Ambrogio Traversari in 1430 that he had sent to Sicily the religious works that he had acquired in the East, because for him they were not as precious as the classical works. Besides this, he wrote that "a number of malicious persons often brought charges to the Greek Emperor, accusing me of pillaging the city of sacred books. With regard to the heathen books it seemed to them not such a great crime." Translated by Charles Stinger, see Stinger 1977, 37. Original text reads as follows: "regi Graecorum nonnulli malivoli me saepissime accusarant, quod urbem illam libris expoliassem sacris; gentilibus enim non tam grande crimen videbatur", see Carteggio, Ep. VII. The importance of manuscripts as objects for communities is discussed in more depth in chapter 5.2.

314 Sigmund 1963, 27–29.

315 Sigmund 1963, 30. See also Stinger 1977, in which he emphasises how the search of classical works was central for many humanists.

While Nicholas of Cusa could find and get hold of some manuscripts, the situation was not as good for everyone else. He was not the only one searching for manuscripts in the Byzantine capital in the 1430s. John of Ragusa, who was one of the key members of the Council of Basel, was sent to Constantinople with two other envoys, Heinrich Menger and Simon Fréron, in mid-June of 1435 and reached Constantinople on 4 September that same year.[316] Their main objective was to convince the Byzantine emperor and the Patriarch of Constantinople to come to Basel instead of going to Pope Eugene IV to negotiate for Church union.[317] During these negotiations, John sent letters to the Council and reported about the negotiations. On 9 February 1436, he wrote:

> We search as much as we can for the original books of the Greeks to verify the authoritative texts which we have of them. We will not, however, give up searching [for them].[318]

This letter shows that John of Ragusa, together with Heinrich Menger and Simon Fréron, had tried to hunt down Greek manuscripts of the central theological works, but could not find any. John did not specify which texts they were looking for, but these were probably writings of the Greek Church Fathers. These texts were familiar to them, and some versions of the texts were also present in the West, which they wanted to compare with Eastern manuscripts. He had commented earlier in the same letter that theologians should examine the controversial matters, especially the procession of the Holy Spirit, the sacramental bread, the papal primacy, and purgatory.[319] Although the search had proved to be difficult, John of Ragusa clearly had not lost his hope, since he also asked the Council of Basel to send another notary to Constantinople, because the notaries they had were either ill or dead.[320]

316 Gill 1959, 60, 63.

317 Gill 1959, 60. Syropoulos described John of Ragusa as "a wise and a cunning man", who tried to persuade the patriarch by the gifts and honour that were waiting for him in Basel, having noticed that the "patriarch loved glory, honours, and decorum." See Syropoulos III, 2: "Ὁ γοῦν Ἰωάννης νουνεχὴς ἀνὴρ ὢν καὶ ποικίλος καὶ καταλαβὼν τὸν πατριάρχην χαίροντα τῇ φιλοδοξίᾳ καὶ τῇ τιμῇ καὶ τῇ δοκούσῃ εὐκοσμιᾳ."

318 "Querimus quantum possumus originales libros grecorum ad verificandum auctoritates quas habemus ab eis, et nullo modo possumus invenire; nec tamen desistemus ab inquisitione." Cecconi, doc. LXXVIII.

319 Cecconi, doc. LXXVIII.

320 Cecconi, doc. LXXVIII.

John of Ragusa's mission in the East took over two years, as they headed back disappointed on 1 November 1437.[321] Apparently, the search had not born fruit. At any rate, the cases of Nicholas of Cusa and John of Ragusa point to the fact that collection was already taking place during the Council of Basel. Manuscripts and Greek works were needed in preparing the theological arguments. The difference between the Council of Basel and the Council of Ferrara–Florence is that, in Basel, these preparations were never fulfilled in the sessions, since the Greeks chose to go to Ferrara. It is also important to remember that Nicholas of Cusa, as well as Cardinal Cesarini, had first been at the Council of Basel but then changed sides, left Basel, and came to Ferrara. This meant that the preparations made for the Council of Basel in relation to issues separating the Eastern and Western Churches were not all in vain, but saw a new light in Ferrara and Florence.

Yet another important Latin humanist, Ambrogio Traversari (1386–1439), was an active collector of manuscripts. His background was different from that of Nicholas of Cusa. Traversari entered the Camaldolese Order in the Monastery of S. Maria degli Angeli in Florence in 1400. He never attended a university and thus did not study the trivium and quadrivium. The absence of formal studies in university also meant that his intellectual and theological thought was not shaped by scholasticism. Stinger has argued that this made it possible for Traversari to study the Fathers and the ancient Christian past freely, with a humanist approach.[322] The large humanist circle that met regularly in Florence was essential to his studies.[323] Another important figure for Traversari was a Byzantine émigré, Manuel Chrysoloras, who was in Florence for the first time from 1397 to 1400 and later from 1413 to 1414. Chrysoloras, when he was a Greek teacher in Florence, did not teach Traversari the language, but his influence on Traversari was still significant.[324]

Traversari served as a papal legate to the Council of Basel and fervently supported the papacy. Pope Eugene IV trusted Traversari and gave him responsibilities. Traversari was active in giving advice to the pope, especially

321 John of Ragusa's frustration at the outcome of the mission is expressed pointedly in his words to the Council of Basel: "Young and beardless you sent me, and behold, you receive me back an old man, grey-haired and bearded like a Greek." Gill 1959, 83.

322 Stinger 1977, 25.

323 Stinger 1977, 6–8, 16–18, 30.

324 Stinger 1977, 16–18. Manuel Chrysoloras was an important figure for the entire Greek revival in the West during the Late Middle Ages. He taught Greek in Florence from 1397 onwards. See Geanakoplos 1976, 234. Deno John Geanakoplos, who has studied East–West relations widely, even states that Chrysoloras "almost single-handedly, launched in the West a revival of Greek learning." See Geanakoplos 1976, 5, 267. See also Geanakoplos 1962, 26–28.

regarding the Greeks and how to act and communicate with them.[325] Traversari's knowledge of the Greek language and the Greek patristic texts was particularly important for the pope and the Council as a whole. His approach to manuscripts and texts was similar to that of Nicholas of Cusa. It was not only the works that mattered, but the manuscripts as well.

Traversari had travelled through Western monasteries earlier in the 1430s. During his travels, he was interested in the libraries in particular and in manuscript collections of the monasteries, and wrote about them in his *Hodoeporicon*. In thirteen books, he described the manuscripts in detail, the contents and the quality, materials, age, and other matters concerning the manuscripts. He did not hide his disappointment if a monastery did not offer as good or as many manuscripts as he had hoped.[326] It is, however, not known whether Traversari bought or borrowed manuscripts from these monasteries. It is also possible that he copied some material while in the monasteries, but he does not say this clearly.

During the Council, Traversari remembered some manuscripts that he had seen in the monasteries he had visited and tried to acquire them through his humanist contacts. He wrote from Ferrara during the Council to a fellow Camaldolese monk, Michael:

> I am thinking of having a rest from work in the midst of the highest negotiations. I am contemplating finishing Chrysostom's [homilies] on Matthew. It would be of great value, if you could send it here from Grottaferrata, since my dearest friend has the second part of this work.[327]

325 Traversari urged the pope not to pay too much attention to the Greeks' forms of address or other kinds of matter of forms, but to show them respect and patience. See Stinger 1977, 209.

326 See, for example, *Hodoeporicon*, 194–195. Traversari had visited a monastery in Ravenna and commented: "The Sacrarium preserves the evident and multiple signs of antiquity, but the library is much inferior to its fame. Almost nothing remarkable is discovered there, except a codex of Cyprian, in ancient writing, which contained a sylloge of his works in greater number than those known." Traversari commented similarly on this same event in his letter to Michael, a fellow monk. Traversari, lib. XIII, ep. 4. In Verona, he visited the monastery of San Zeno and its library and the Capitular Library in the Cathedral of Verona. There was a rich collection of sacred texts in the former, and in the latter, there were many ancient codices, but nothing that he did not already know. *Hodoeporicon*, 143.

327 "Cogitamus inter summa negocia arte nobis moliri otium; & Chrysostomum super Matthaeum perficere meditamur. Erit gratum, si volumen illud ex Crypta Ferrata perlatum huc miseris; quia secundam hic eius operis partem amicus nobis optime carus habet." Traversari, lib. XIII, ep. 17. It is unclear who this friend is that Traversari is talking about. In his other letter to Niccolò de' Niccoli sent from Grottaferrata, he wrote

It is difficult to say whether Traversari was interested in the manuscript in which Chrysostom's *Homilies* on Matthew were because of the Council and its discussions, which focused on the addition at the time he wrote the letter. Irena Backus, in her survey of the (Greek) Fathers and the Reformation, deals with the Council of Ferrara–Florence and the study of the Fathers, and especially the procession of the Holy Spirit. She mentions that Chrysostom's *Homilies* on Matthew 16 (and John 21) were used in support of Peter's primacy.[328] When speaking of Chrysostom, she does not clarify which time period she is talking about, so this makes it difficult to affirm whether Chrysostom was read and used in this way at the Council, or whether this was in Traversari's mind when he asked about the manuscript in Grottaferrata. The letter, in any case, reveals that he was familiar with the work on some level, since he talked about finishing reading the work.

It is probable that Traversari acquainted himself with the work through a Greek, Demetrio Scarano, who entered the same monastery where Traversari lived, S. Maria degli Angeli, in 1406 and lived there as a monk from 1417 to 1426 until his death. Traversari wrote that Scarano was transcribing Greek texts for him, including Chrysostom's Homilies on Matthew.[329] It is also possible that he knew the text from a Latin translation. The first 25 homilies were translated as early as 419–420 by Annianus of Celeda.[330] An indication of the use of Chrysostom's text, or of interest in it, is the fact that Bessarion commissioned George of Trebizond to translate Chrysostom's Homilies on Matthew 26–88.[331] George of Trebizond, who was also part of the Byzantine delegation in the Council and later an émigré member of Bessarion's humanist circle, translated into Latin – on Bessarion's orders – mostly Greek texts that were debated in the Council.[332] There are no mentions in the *Acts* of use or citations of Chrysostom's *Homilies* on Matthew, but it is possible that the text or even a manuscript of it, if Traversari ever received it, was discussed outside the

about Pietro Vitali, who had newly been made abbot, and whose erudition Traversari appreciated. See Traversari, lib. XIII, ep. 42. However, Vitali was present at the Council, and thus in Ferrara, as was Traversari at this point. See Syropoulos IX, 20.

328 Backus 2015, 430–431.

329 Stinger 1977, 20.

330 Mayer 2015, 145.

331 Backus 2015, 430.

332 George of Trebizond translated Basil's *Contra Eunomium* and *De Spiritu Sancto* in 1442 and Cyril of Alexandria's *Thesaurus*, all of which were used at the Council. See Backus 2015, 430. In Traversari's letter to Michael, in which he asks for the manuscript, it seems that Traversari was interested in translating the work, or the second part – perhaps from homily 26 onward. Why then would Bessarion commission George of Trebizond to translate it? It is not as strange as it might seem, since Traversari died in 1439, and it is possible that he did not finish the translation. It is not even known whether the manuscript was sent from Grottaferrata to Traversari.

official sessions. Even if Traversari, or the pope, was interested in the homilies because of the possibility of using them to support the primacy of the pope, there was not necessarily sufficient time for them to be examined more closely. Most of the Council's sessions focused on the question of the *Filioque*, first the addition and then the dogma. The primacy of the pope was discussed only at the end, when the most prominent issue separating the Churches had been settled, and the union was in preparation. On this point, patristic or other authorities were not discussed in the same way as in the discussions of the procession of the Holy Spirit. Besides this, Traversari was no longer present at the Council in the summer of 1439, when the issue of primacy was discussed.

That Traversari was interested in Chrysostom and his *Homilies* on Matthew may also be a sign of a preparation for even more extensive discussions of theological and ecclesiological matters than those that took place at the Council. Works and manuscripts of all the matters dividing Greeks and Latins were probably searched for and examined before the Council.

The value of Traversari's knowledge of Greek language and especially Greek manuscripts became perhaps the most evident when he was not present at the Council. Both Cardinal Cesarini, who played a major role in the sessions and was one of the chosen speakers of the Latins, and Pope Eugene IV himself wrote from the Council to Traversari pleading for his return. The pope had asked him to bring "the Greek and Latin books, whatever they are about."[333] Cesarini wrote to Traversari on October 17, 1438:

> I ask by your honor and duty that you come here immediately, because in truth, your presence is absolutely essential. I fear that these matters will suffer greatly unless you are present. See if you can obtain in Florence another codex of the Seventh Council, because if there is agreement with our book it would lend great strength to our side. Bring with you all your Greek volumes and those of Niccoli's and others' as well, which touch on these points of dispute, especially the other ones Kalekas mentions, which you have described in a note. Bring also Cyril's *Thesaurus*. The transport will cost you nothing, because it has been arranged with the Medici Bank to send here immediately whatever books you consign to them. Forget Camaldoli and the whole Order, and come. Make haste for the faith of Christ.[334]

333 "libros graecos, & latinos omnes rei, de qua agitur, opportunos tecum deferendi." Traversariana, lib. XXIV, ep. 4.

334 "Rogo pro honore tuo, & debito statim venias huc: quia in verbo veritatis praesentia tua est supra modum necessaria: & timeo quod res istae patientur magnum praeiudicium,

Cesarini knew that Traversari had Greek manuscripts and the networks for finding more manuscripts that could help the Latins in the Council's debates with the Greeks. Cesarini's request for "another codex of the Seventh Council" indicates that Cesarini and the Latins were interested not only in all the possible works that existed, but also in manuscripts with other texts that could enhance the Latin arguments. The Latins already had a manuscript with texts of the Seventh Council, but more manuscripts in agreement with the one they already had would help them. The importance of manuscripts and Traversari's skills was so important for Cesarini and the Latins that the transportation and financial issues had been settled with the Medici family.[335]

Another noteworthy point in this quotation is Cesarini's mention of Kalekas. Manuel Kalekas was a Byzantine unionist during the reign of Manuel II Palaiologos, who carried out missions in the West during unfavourable times, when the Western Church was in the middle of its own Schism.[336] Kalekas was a disciple of another

nisi adsis. Vide si posses habere Florentiae aliquam VII. Synodum, quia, si concordaret cum libro nostro, esset nobis ad magnum robur. Ferte vobiscum omnia illa volumina graeca tam vestra, quam Nicolai, vel alterius, quae tangunt istos differentiarum articulos, & praesertim volumina illa, quae allegat ille Kaleka, quae alias descripsisti in una schedula. Portes inter alia librum Thesaurorum Cyrilli. Nihil tibi constabit vectura; quia ordinatum est cum Banco de Medicis quod libros per te ei assignandos statim huc mittat. Dimitte Camaldulum, & totum Ordinem, & veni: propera propter fidem Christi." Traversari, lib. XXIV, ep. 5. Translated by Charles Stinger, see Stinger 1977, 212–213, n. 20. Traversari had left the Council to deal with matters of his Camaldolese Order. See Stinger 1977, 221. The Camaldolese order and monastic reform were close to Traversari's heart. Other humanists, however, wanted Traversari to focus on other matters, as can be seen in the above quotation of Cesarini. The humanist Niccolò de' Niccoli also told Traversari that he should concentrate on patristic studies, not on monastic reform. See Stinger 1977, 24.

335 The Medici were the great family and power in Florence at the time, and they played a significant role in supporting humanist studies in Florence, especially in financial terms. They secured the transport of manuscripts and formed great libraries in Florence. See Stinger 1977, 33. They were played a vital role in the transfer of the Council from Ferrara to Florence. The economic contribution was especially significant, already when the Council was in Ferrara, but even more so in Florence. See Gill 1959, 175, 177–179.

336 The Great Western Schism lasted from 1378 to 1417 and caused the Western Church to divide into two and subsequently even into three obediences. Although Manuel II Palaiologos was welcomed in the Western courts during his mission between 1399 and 1403, and he was promised some aid for the threatened Byzantine Empire, little was ultimately gained from his mission. The Byzantine chronicler George Sphrantzes relates that Manuel had advised his son John (VIII) about the union with the Latins: Manuel thought that while it was good to study and plan the Council – as that would frighten the Turks – it should not be put into practice, since the union was not going to happen. Moreover, the Turks would take advantage of this failure. See Sphrantzes XXXIII, 6 and chapter 2.1 of this thesis. As Sphrantzes wrote his chronicle only after the Fall of Constantinople, 29 May 1453, it can be argued that Sphrantzes, as an admirer

unionist, Demetrius Kydones, who had translated Latin works, especially works of Thomas Aquinas, into Greek. Kalekas even became a Dominican around 1404.[337] He continued the work of his teacher and translated Latin works, such as Boethius's *De Trinitate*.[338] Kalekas had also written a text attacking the Greek errors, *Περὶ τῆς τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἐκπορεύσεως,* dealing with the procession of the Holy Spirit. An Italian humanist, Antonio da Massa, had brought a manuscript containing this work from Constantinople in 1422, and Pope Martin V had asked Traversari to translate this.[339] Cesarini must have known, as this letter indicates, that Traversari was familiar with this work of the late Byzantine unionist and hoped that Traversari could bring more manuscripts with the texts Kalekas had cited and used in his work.

In the *Acts* of the Council, Kalekas, and other late-medieval or Byzantine authors, do not get much space. They are not cited or used in argumentation. The letter of Cesarini is, however, a clear indicator that the later authors were also present in the minds of the participants. They were a good source for the patristic and other authoritative sources, but they themselves were not authoritative enough in an ecumenical Council. In the internal debates in the Western or Eastern Church, the situation was different. There, the theological debates and treatises used other later authors; but these were not appropriate when the Churches tried to find a way to go back to a Church before these later authors were even born. These authors could, nevertheless, show the way to the authoritative texts and key passages that the Churches used in their theological argumentation on debated doctrines.

On the Latin side, the most important figures in the collecting activity in regard to the Council, were probably Ambrogio Traversari and Nicholas of Cusa. How did then the Greeks prepare for the Council? There is not so much material concerning their activities as there is from the Latin side. Syropoulos, nonetheless, offers some insights into this.

While the Latins searched for manuscripts from Constantinople and utilized their intellectual networks on Italian soil, the Greeks were mainly collecting manuscripts in their own territories. The above-mentioned Mount Athos – which even today is the most important centre of Eastern monasticism – consisted of many monastic

of the then late Emperor Manuel II, might have changed the exact wording of the emperor in order to explain the unfortunate events in the Capital. Nevertheless, Manuel must also have been genuinely disappointed with the Latins after his diplomatic mission.

337 Tinnefeld 2015, 16.

338 Tinnefeld 2015, 16.

339 Garin 1985, 5; Stinger 1977, 206. Pope Martin V had begun the negotiations for a future Council between the Greeks and the Latins in the 1420s. It is thus probable that the task of translating of Kalekas was already connected to the preparations for a Council. See Gill 1959, 16–45; Cecconi, doc. III.

communities with manuscript collections. According to Nigel Wilson's estimations, there were several thousand manuscripts in the medieval period.[340] Before the Council, not only the Latin theologians were searching for manuscripts and checking the passages, but the Greeks too were making preparations for the Council. The Emperor John VIII Palaiologos, together with his imperial and ecclesiastical members, underlined the importance of preparation for the actual debates. The emperor told a small committee of Greeks,[341]

> Undoubtedly, when the time comes, the state of affairs will then teach us more exactly how to start discussions with the Latins and how to proceed. But, so that we do not waste our time doing nothing altogether, it seemed good to me that we think about this and that we practice in advance what such a great subject requires. That is why you are here today. Let each one say what he thinks about this.[342]

The emperor wanted to speak with his own people about the theological matters and to know where his people stood, before opening the debates with the Latins. The first to answer, according to Syropoulos's narrative, was Demetrios Palaiologos Kantakuzenos, the mesazon[343] of the emperor. For Kantakuzenos, it was crucial that the appointed speaker of the Greeks should remind the Latins "in a tone of gentleness and friendship" that the addition to the Creed, the *Filioque*, was the cause of the schism.[344]

340 Unfortunately, there are no book inventories of the libraries on Athos. See Wilson 1967, 66.

341 Present were Mark of Ephesus, Antony of Heracleia (as the representative of the patriarchate of Alexandria), two staurophoroi, Gregory the Confessor, a monk-priest, mesazons, Scholarios, and Kritopoulos.

342 "ἴσως μὲν ὁ καιρὸς ἐκεῖνος καὶ τὰ πράγματα διδάξουσιν ἡμᾶς ἀκριβέστερον τότε πόθεν ἂν ἀρξώμεθα καὶ πῶς πρὸς Λατίνους διαλεξώμεθα· ἀλλ' ἵνα μὴ πάντη ἀργοὶ τὸν καιρὸν ζημιώμεθα, ἔδοξέ μοι καλὸν ἵνα καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν σκεπτώμεθα περὶ τούτου καὶ προγυμναζώμεθα εἰς τὰ περὶ ὧν ἡ τοιαύτη ἀπαιτεῖ ὕλη. Ἤδη οὖν χάριν τούτου συνήχθητε καὶ εἰπάτω ἕκαστος τὸ δοκοῦν αὐτῷ." Syropoulos III, 8.

343 The mesazon (*μεσάζων*) was a high imperial official working for the emperor. Kantakuzenos, who was the cousin and mesazon of the Emperor John VIII Palaiologos, did not accompany the emperor to Italy, but stayed in Constantinople. During the Council, George Doukas Philantropenos and Manuel Iagaris Palaiologos were the emperor's mesazons.

344 "ὁ ταχθησόμενος τοὺς πρὸς ἐκείνους ποιεῖσθαι λόγους εἴπῃ ἡμέρως καὶ φιλικῶς μετὰ τῆς προσηκούσης κατασκευῆς καὶ τιμῆς καὶ οἰκονομίας ὅτι τὸ αἴτιον τοῦ σχίσματος ἐγένετο ἀπὸ τῆς ἐν τῷ συμβόλῳ προσθήκης." Syropoulos III, 8.

The Greeks generally acknowledged the addition to the Creed as the cause of the schism.[345] Nevertheless, Kantakuzenos's suggestion generated discussion. George Scholarios reflected that it would perhaps be unnecessary to go on a long and perilous voyage with a large entourage if the negotiations were not very dogmatic by nature. Ultimately it was decided that research into the dogma should be done.[346]

> After many such speeches, however, it seemed appropriate to read the book of Saint Kabasilas, extract from it, and examine the necessary passages. The monk-priest Mark Eugenicus [of Ephesus] and the aforementioned Scholarios took on this work. They met in the presence of the emperor, in the company of a small number of the persons mentioned above. They were examining, training for the questions, and collecting books in the hope of getting from Athos those they could not find here. So, they sent monk-priest igumen of Kaleas, Athanasius, there, both to invite the local notables and to bring back all the books they were looking for. But he did not bring back a book and only brought two monk-priests, Moses of Laura and Dorotheos of Vatopedion, supposedly as representatives of all the Hagiorites.[347]

Syropoulos does not state why the Greeks at this point saw it appropriate to read Kabasilas, but it is probable that they wanted to investigate what he had to say about the issue that Kanzakuzenos had mentioned a little earlier, namely, the addition to the Creed, the *Filioque*. Neilos Kabasilas (1298–1363) was a Palamite theologian who had written about the procession of the Holy Spirit in his *Περὶ τῆς τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἐκπορεύσεως κατὰ Λατίνων* ("On the procession of the Holy Spirit against the Latins"). This text was a *florilegium* which consisted of patristic excerpts and citations of the decrees of the Councils with regard to the subject in the title. The patristic citations are taken from Greek Fathers, although Kabasilas also commented

345 On the *Filioque* as a cause of the schism, see chapter 2.4 of this study.

346 Syropoulos III, 9–10.

347 "Ὅμως δὲ μετὰ πολλοὺς λόγους τοιούτους ἔδοξε καλόν, ἵνα ἀναγινώσκηται τὸ βιβλίον τοῦ ἁγίου τοῦ Καβάσιλα, καὶ ἐξ ἐκείνου ἐκλέγωνται καὶ σκέπτωνται ἐν οἷς δεῖ. Ἀνεδέξαντο οὖν τὸν τοιοῦτον ἀγῶνα ὁ ἱερομόναχος κῦρ Μάρκος ὁ Εὐγενικὸς καὶ ὁ δηλωθεὶς Σχολάριος, καὶ συνήρχοντο ἐνώπιον τοῦ βασιλέως μετὰ καὶ ὀλίγων τινῶν ἐκ τῶν προειρημένων καὶ ἐσκέπτοντο καὶ ἐγύμναζον τὰ ζητήματα, καὶ περὶ συναγωγῆς βιβλίων ἐφπόντιζον, ὧν τὰ μὴ εὑρισκόμενα ἐνθάδε ἐκ τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὄρους εὑρεῖν ἤλπιζον. Διὸ καὶ ἔστειλαν τὸν ἡγούμενον τοῦ Καλέως ἱερομόναχον κῦρ Ἀθανάσιον, ἵνα προσκαλέσηται τοὺς κρείττονας τῶν ἐκεῖσε, φέρῃ δὲ καὶ βιβλία ὅσα ἐζητοῦντο. Ὁ δὲ βιβλίον μέν διεκόμισεν, ἔφερε δὲ μόνον δύο ἱερομονάχους, Μωϋσῆν ἐκ τῆς Λαύρας καὶ Δωρόθεον ἐκ τοῦ Βατοπεδίου, ὡς δῆθεν τοποτηρητὰς πάντων τῶν Ἁγιορειτῶν." Syropoulos III, 10.

on Thomas Aquinas's propositions in the *Summa Theologica*.[348] Scholars have noticed that the citations in both the pro- and anti-Latin treatises and *florilegia* usually consist of the same citations, just interpreted differently. One of the most common themes in *florilegia* was the procession of the Holy Spirit.[349]

It is not surprising that it was Mark of Ephesus and George Scholarios who were entrusted with the task of studying Kabasilas. They were both anti-Latinists, as was Kabasilas, and they already knew Kabasilas's work(s). Mark had, in fact, used Kabasilas for his *Capita Syllogistica*, in which he dealt with several theological matters, the most important of which was the procession of the Holy Spirit.[350] As mentioned above, Kabasilas's treatise on the Holy Spirit constituted of citations of patristic authorities and excerpts from ecumenical councils. Kabasilas's *florilegium* offered easy access to the discussions and arguments of the early authors on the *Filioque*.[351] *Florilegia* were popular among the Byzantines.[352] I, however, interpret Syropoulos's words to mean that although Kabasilas was used and analysed, Mark of Ephesus and George Scholarios were searching for other books that also discussed this topic. Kabasilas was only the starting point, and the works and passages of the authors he quoted were the next step in the process. It seems strange that the work of Kabasilas, which was a popular text among the Greeks, could not be found in Constantinople and had to be searched for on Mount Athos. The quotation from Syropoulos suggests that they began by scanning the work of Kabasilas and then were busy seeking books, possibly the works Kabasilas had used, on Mount Athos. Besides this, Syropoulos uses the plural, 'books', which indicates that Mark and Scholarios were genuinely looking for many books and even rare books, which could not be found in Constantinople, or at least not easily, and therefore sent Athanasius to Mount Athos, although (as Syropoulos recounts) apparently in vain.

These men were probably the most active collectors before and during the Council. This, nevertheless, does not mean that other participants did not collect manuscripts, nor that they did not have a significant role in the use of the manuscripts. In many cases, we do not know the story behind a single manuscript or even the owner. Other participants at the Council, not discussed in this subchapter, may also have played a part in acquiring manuscripts. In addition to the participants, it must be remembered that other eminent figures likewise played a role when their collections were probably used or loaned for the Council, as has been seen in

348 Kislas 2001.
349 Alexakis 2015, 39–43.
350 Athanasopoulos 2017, 77, 79. John Monfasani has dated Mark of Ephesus's *Capita Syllogistica* to before the Council of Ferrara–Florence. See Monfasani 2011, 167–168.
351 Alexakis 2015, 15.
352 The use of *florilegia* is discussed in greater depth in chapter 3.4.

Traversari's correspondence and Mark of Ephesus's mission to Mount Athos. In addition, some manuscripts and works that were important for the Council's discussions were already part of personal collections of the Council's participants, as we shall see in the next subchapter.

3.2 Council participants as manuscript owners

Manuscripts could be useful, whether they had been searched for with the Council in mind or whether they were already owned by a Council participant. What mattered was, naturally, not only the content but also the material authority of the manuscripts. In this subchapter, I analyse the Council participants as manuscript owners. When possible, I decipher who owned which manuscripts and how ownership may have affected the ways in which the manuscript at hand was valued and given, or denied having, authority in the context of the Council and its discussions. Particular attention is given to the aspect of communal ownership.

After the collection of the manuscripts, they had to be brought to the Council. The ships transported not only the seven hundred Greek participants, but also their belongings, including books.[353] Likewise, book-owning participants of the Latin side brought manuscripts with them, which they used in the Council. The sources do not relate systematically who owned or brought which manuscripts, but there are times when the owner or other active agent of the manuscript is mentioned. What was the relation between the owner(s) and the manuscript, and how did this relationship affect the ways in which manuscripts were used and given authority at the Council?

To own a manuscript meant many things in the medieval context, as it does in modern cultures. It was not only passive, in the sense that the manuscript belonged to an owner. The act of owning a religious manuscript or manuscripts and showing them in public could have been an expression of the owner's piety and status. Books were brought to churches and a certain performativity was linked to the owning and showing of one's manuscripts.[354] The owning of books could have brought delight to the owner.[355] Similarly, the books containing ancient works were admired especially by humanists, and the owners were closely linked to the books and works that they owned. Besides the admiration, the ownership could have been regarded as unnecessary and the owners as vainglorious.[356]

353 The participants also brought with them clothes and other personal items. Horses were also transported in the ships. See Kondyli 2014, 135.

354 Perry 2010, 317. Richard Grassby, in his studies on material culture, talks on a general level about the role which material culture has had in displaying the status and hierarchies in cultures. See Grassby 2005, 595–596.

355 Amtower 2000, 17.

356 Amtower 2000, xiv.

Owning usually meant an active agency vis-à-vis the object that was owned, in this case, the manuscript. The owner used the manuscript and left their imprint on it. These imprints could have been *marginalia* or *glossae* or other kinds of marks written on the leaves of the manuscript, perhaps the owner's coat of arms or other kinds of signs of the owner. Ownership and the leaving of personal traces on the manuscripts were thus related to the question of individuality, as Brigitte Bedos-Rezak has argued in her studies of medieval signs and identity.[357]

By making notes and other marks, the owners left information about themselves on a manuscript. It was a way of showing one's learning or devotion or other personal traits, just as much as clothing, symbols of power, or other property. Even the scuff marks and the overall condition of the manuscript speak about its owners and users.[358] By looking at the works only, one gets only a general idea about the owner, and for instance, about their theological or philosophical standpoint, but by looking at the manuscripts, the marks of the owner, and even the material aspects of the manuscripts, one can grasp better the inner world of the owner. Naturally, however, this depends on the amount and quality of the marks that the owner has left in the manuscripts.

Besides the agency of the owner vis-à-vis the manuscripts, I aim to point out the influence the manuscripts had on their owners and others.[359] The texts in the manuscripts affected the owner or the reader in many ways. They may have influenced the owner's thinking or even religious stance. The texts and the effect they had may also have motivated the owner to collect more texts of the same author or same topic. Defects or other matters in a specific textual form may even have caused the owner to collect more manuscripts of the exact text.

The manuscripts, as containers of textual works but also as material objects, had an effect on their owner. The production of a manuscript was a multiphase and expensive process, and thus the cost of a manuscript was high. Naturally, there were many factors, such as the illustration, the writing support and other material choices of the manuscript, and in some cases the covers, which affected the price but, in any case, books were counted as valuables and thus also vulnerable to theft.[360] This is

357 Bedos-Rezak 2000, 1489–1533.

358 Naturally, the condition relied on other factors as well, especially the preservation. The fingerprints and other traces of use can reveal which passages of the text in the manuscript were read more often or used for a devotional or another purpose. The dirtiness correlates with the intensity of use. See for example Rudy 2010.

359 See also Brower Stahl 2012, 151, 153–154; Fowler 2012, 355–358. I share the affirmations by Ann Brower Stahl and Chris Fowler that material culture is not merely a reflection or the product of the culture, as some previous scholars have claimed. Instead, the material culture shapes people, and vice versa.

360 After the election of Bartolomeo Prignano as Pope Urban VI in 1378, the chronicler Dietrich of Niem reported that the pope "moved his books and other valuables into a

probably one reason for the transportation of even extensive book collections to the Council as well. At any rate, we know that Bessarion brought his personal collections with him, leaving a great part of them in the city of Methone.[361] The Byzantine Empire was in great turmoil at the time of the Council, and the Greek participants could have felt that they might not be able to return home. The fear of theft or other kinds of loss of one's valuable possessions made many take with them as much as possible.

The value of a manuscript was also more than just its pecuniary value. The works in the manuscripts had a meaning for the owner in many cases.[362] The author, present or past, could have a special meaning in the owner's life. The owner could have even been mentioned in the dedication text. Especially if the manuscript was (or was thought to be) an autograph of the author, the value and importance of the manuscript could have been even greater for its owner. A book could even be regarded by its owner or user as a relic or relic-like object.[363] Even the former owners or users could have made an impact on the present owner. Since traces left by former users might have meant problems with regard to the question of authority,[364] these may have been important and meaningful for the owner. A multi-layered history was present in the manuscript – for better or for worse.

So far, I have dealt with individual owners. Even if the manuscript belonged to an individual, a larger community could have felt the content and even the outward appearance of the manuscript to be their own or a part of their shared religious culture. One reason behind the difficulty in determining the owners of the manuscripts that were used at the Council is that the manuscripts were, in almost all cases, referred to with possessive forms: They were either 'our' (*noster*/*ἡμέτερον*) or

safe place, so that they would not be stolen, as is the Roman tradition if the rumour were spread abroad that he had been elected." See, Rollo-Koster 2015, 246. This case exemplifies the turbulent conditions that surrounded the papal election, as Rollo-Koster has noticed, but it also demonstrates the value that the books had. Nigel Wilson has studied the Byzantine books, including their prices. He described books "as a commodity beyond the reach of the ordinary man." See, Wilson 1975, 3. Stephen G. Nichols, however, states that most medieval manuscripts were not luxury items; it is those that have survived to this day that are often luxurious. See Nichols 2015, 44–45.

361 Gill 1959, 164.

362 One manuscript could, however, contain many works, and not all of them were necessarily of equal importance to the owner. In Bessarion's collection, for example, there were many manuscripts that, according to John Monfasani, Bessarion collected primarily because of one particular work in them. See Monfasani 2011, 8–9, 14–15.

363 In her studies on Thomas Aquinas, the cultural historian Marika Räsänen has analysed the books of the saint and argued that they were understood as an extension of his holiness and thus considered as holy objects, relics. See Räsänen 2021, 64–65. See also Frazier 2005, 2–6.

364 This topic is dealt with in chapter 4.3.

'your' (*vester*/*ὑμέτερον*) books. This reminds us of what mattered most in the discussions: namely, whether the manuscripts were of Latin or Greek possession and, in most cases, of the same origin. In addition to the fact that the speakers did not necessarily even know who the owner was, there was no need to emphasise the individual. The battle between the manuscripts was a battle between 'us' and 'you' (or 'them'). Uniformity was the objective of both sides, although not always perfectly achieved.

The use of plural possessive pronouns is understandable from this point of view. The participants' focus on the manuscripts was mainly on their history. The plural pronouns tell about the historical and cultural cradle of the manuscripts. At the same time, a broader history of the manuscript was included in the collective pronoun. One or other party was responsible for the entire history of the manuscript.

Even if the manuscripts were someone's own before the Council, at the Council, they were in a sense transformed into the collective property of the delegation. The manuscripts represented the entire religious culture of East or West. At the same time, monastic communities shed light on this question of private and collective ownership. The cultural historian Meri Heinonen has noticed in her study on Dominican nuns in Nuremberg that although private property was strictly forbidden in the reformed houses, nuns brought their own books to the convent. These books were catalogued according to ownership, and nuns could even inherit books from each other.[365] Byzantine idiorhythmic monastic communities in the late Middle Ages allowed private ownership.[366] I regard the Council as a unique space that was a combination of individuals with their private collections and religious ideas, and religious or textual communities that shared their understanding of the Church's dogmas and with it, the material – understood both as the authoritative texts and the concrete manuscripts – which was the basis for their interpretation.

The owner's connection and responsibility vis-à-vis the manuscripts become evident in the discussions of corruption. While the question of corruption is discussed in a separate subchapter,[367] it can be noted here that in determining the origin of the corruption, the present and past owners were the main suspects. Even if the past owner was not known as an individual, the culture that had owned and used the manuscript could be blamed. Giovanni da Montenero commented to Mark

365 Heinonen 2021, 125–126, n. 21. Julie Hotchin has made similar observations in her study of late-medieval nuns, see Hotchin 2011, 260. See also Perry 2010, 318. Pascale Bourgain adds that although personal possessions were not allowed in monastic communities in principle, monks were often granted permission to use the manuscripts they had copied or owned prior to becoming monks. The books were also taken on travels. See Bourgain 2015, 145–146.

366 Každan & Constable 1982, 91.

367 Corruption of manuscripts is discussed in chapter 4.3.

of Ephesus that it had already been a Greek vice to corrupt manuscripts at the time of the ecumenical Councils.[368] The Greeks as owners and users of the manuscripts were questionable, according to Giovanni da Montenero, and probably in the eyes of other Latins as well.

The manuscripts were either Latin or Greek by origin, but the content – in most cases – was shared and originated from the period of the undivided Church. The same pronouns or adjectives, such as Western and Eastern, were used for the Church Fathers. Although all the Church Fathers were authorities for all the Christians, on principle, the origin and the tradition, in which language had a central role, had made the Fathers Eastern or Western. Even the language in which the Fathers had written had an effect on this. Nevertheless, there was one crucial difference in the way these pronouns or adjectives were used to describe the manuscripts or the Fathers and their works. When the manuscript was one's own, it always represented the better one for the speaker, compared to the other's manuscript(s). In the case of the Fathers, one's 'own' Fathers were not necessarily more authoritative or used or quoted in this manner; and they were simply better known to the speaker and his party.

The Latins' idea, as I propose, was to assure that even the Church Fathers of the other party, the Greeks, agreed with the Latin ones and other authoritative texts on Church dogma. The next step was to assure the Greeks that the manuscripts of the Latins were more authentic and authoritative and contained the truth within the words inked in the leaves of the manuscript. This was the strategy by which it was possible to win over the Greeks, at first only a few, and finally nearly all the Greeks.

The manuscripts had not preserved the memory of the time of the Church Fathers in the same form. This made it necessary to see and compare the other manuscripts in addition to one's own manuscripts. The system of lending and borrowing was introduced in the private session, which was held between the third and fourth sessions of Ferrara on 16 October.[369] The lending preserved the ownership but made the contents and material form open to inspection by the appointed speakers. At the ecumenical Council, the definition of the ecumenical and common truth was the goal, and in order to reach the definition, the basis for the truth, the manuscripts of the authoritative texts ought likewise to be shared.

368 "It appears clearly from your books and ancient councils, that the vice of corrupting books and removing [passages from the books] is found in your areas." ("ex vestrismet libris et ex synodis antiquissimis apparet manifeste, quod vitium corrumpendi libros et auferendi [--] fuit deprehensum in partibus vestris.") See AL 155. Similarly in AG 297. Giovanni da Montenero continued his argument by citing Cyril of Alexandria, who had reminded John of Antioch of the corruption made by heretics to the letter of Athanasius of Alexandria to Epictetus of Corinth. The Letter of Cyril of Alexandria to John of Antioch was translated into Latin already in the fifth century. See Van Loon 2015, 175.

369 AG 88–89.

The situation was different when the participants discussed outside the Council and its debates. In the Council, the speaker was representing his party, although there were dissensions inside the parties. When the participants were discussing informally or exchanging letters, it is understandable that the manuscripts became more personal. The participants were humanists, theologians, and collectors speaking to one another. They were interested in each other's collections and wrote about the manuscripts and the works in them to other people as well.

Before the Council started,[370] the negotiations about the place, expenses, and other practical issues had been discussed for several years. Initially, the Byzantine Emperor, John VIII Palaiologos, and the Patriarch of Constantinople, Joseph II, together with many other Byzantines, favoured the idea that the Council should be held in Constantinople. There were many reasons for this, but the financial and security-related issues were the most important.[371] After long negotiations, Ferrara was chosen, and the pope promised to take care of the expenses incurred by the travels of all the Byzantine and other Eastern participants and their sojourn in the West. And not only the participants needed ships and money for transportations, but their manuscripts and other personal belongings as well. Unfortunately, there is no information about the exact numbers of manuscripts or any other objects that were brought by the Eastern participants.[372] Ambrogio Traversari wrote to Ugolino Pieruzzi after the arrival of the Greeks in Ferrara before the opening of the Council and described some of the books the Greeks had brought with them. He began with the Byzantine Emperor, John VIII Palaiologos:

> I saw three most excellent volumes with the Emperor of the Greeks: one of Plato, which had all his works written in most beautiful letters; (then) of Plutarch rather a mass of texts than a volume, which as well had all his writings; and Aristotle, not as beautiful, in which were his most famous works.[373]

370 That is to say, in respect of the Greeks. The Council had already been active in Basel and had been transferred to Ferrara by the pope on 8 January 1438.

371 The emperor and the patriarch also feared that if the Council was held in a Latin land, this could influence its outcome if the numbers of the Latin and Greek participants were not equal. See Syropoulos VI, 19.

372 Eugene IV granted a safe conduct (*salvusconductus*) for Emperor John VIII Palaiologos, Patriarch Joseph II and up to seven hundred men with their belongings. See ep. 75 in *Epistolae pontificiae ad concilium florentinum spectantes*, I. In Eugene's safe conduct for Isidore of Kiev, books are mentioned explicitly as part of the belongings that are guarded. See ep. 203 in *Epistolae pontificiae ad Concilium florentinum spectantes*, II.

373 "Tria me volumina vidisse apud Graecorum Imperatorem significabam praestantissima: Platonis unum, ubi omnia ipsius venustissime scripta haberentur;

In this passage, all the texts mentioned are classical texts, or in fact, corpora of three classical authors. Traversari was interested in the contents of the texts, but he also made remarks about the appearance of the manuscripts. Traversari's description of the emperor's manuscripts should not, however, be understood as complete. At this point, Traversari had seen these three volumes, but from other sources, it is possible to get a somewhat more complete idea of other manuscripts that the emperor had brought with him. Bessarion, in his text on the procession of the Holy Spirit, written after the Council, wrote about the Council and a specific text discussed in the sessions, Basil of Caesarea's *Adversus Eunomium*. He said that there was a total of six manuscripts of this text in the Council, and that one of the paper manuscripts belonged to the emperor.[374] This means that not all the manuscripts belonging to the Emperor were classical texts. It is difficult to say why only these three were mentioned by Traversari in this letter. The exact date of the letter is unknown, and Giovanni Mercati suggests a date between March 11 and April 7, 1438.[375] The Greeks arrived in Ferrara on March 3, 1438. In particular, if it was written shortly after the arrival of the Greeks, it is probable that Traversari had not yet seen every book that the emperor and other Greeks had brought with them. Moreover, as the description insinuates, the manuscripts of the classical texts were more prestigious in terms of their appearance, although the Aristotle manuscript was not as beautiful as perhaps the paper codex of Basil.

Besides the reasons mentioned above, it must be remembered that the letters usually mirrored not only their writers but their recipients as well. When writing to other humanists, the writer, in this case, Traversari, probably shared matters that were important and meaningful for him personally, but he also concentrated on matters that he thought would interest his friend.[376]

As for the date of the letter, Traversari's description of Bessarion's manuscripts hints that it could not have been written immediately after their arrival.

> I have got well acquainted with the archbishop of Nicaea [Bessarion], a man of great erudition and merit. I have understood by diligently exploring his books that – for being ardently erudite though he is younger than others, only in his thirties – he took only a few of his books with him but left a massive collection

Plutarchi potius molem quam volume, in quo itidem omnia ipsius haberentur; et Aristotelis non aeque pulchrum, ubi in omnia ipsius opera notiora." Mercati (ed.), *Traversariana*, 24.

374 Bessarion ad Alexium, 7.

375 Mercati (ed.), *Traversariana*, 24.

376 At the end of his letter after mentioning only briefly Mark of Ephesus and his books, Traversari in fact in a way explained his choices by stating that "of the foreign [books], you want to hear." ("sed peregrina audire cupis.") See Mercati (ed.), *Traversariana*, 26.

> of books in Methone. [--] He had a great volume of Cyril the Great's [of Alexandria] contra Iulianum Apostatam.[377]

In the same letter, Traversari mentions many classical works that Bessarion had brought with him.[378] These were mostly unknown to the Latins at that time, according to Traversari. The *Contra Iulianum Apostatam* was a rare work of Cyril of Alexandria. It is a refutation of Julian the Apostate's polemic against Christianity. While Traversari was probably unfamiliar with this work of Cyril, he knew other works that the Latins used in their argumentation. Perhaps he thought that the work could add something to their arguments. Another possibility is that he was simply excited to find a new work of a Greek Church Father. In the letter, he continued that he would have wanted to copy the work if he only had had enough parchments.[379] It is a mystery whether Traversari ever copied the work, but the first Latin translation of the work was made only in 1528 by John Oecolampadius.[380]

Traversari went on to speak in the same letter about a third Byzantine member. This time, he was very brief. The fragmentary section in the letter about Mark of Ephesus does not reveal much, except that Mark had many books,[381] but it is possible that Traversari knew something about his collection, as he did with the other Greeks he had described. It is also plausible that the relations between Traversari and Mark were not as good as between Traversari and Bessarion, since Mark was a fervent anti-unionist. I suggest that it was important for both Traversari and the pope to get to know the Byzantine anti-unionists and their thoughts and arguments, so that they knew how they could be won over.

There were certainly other manuscript owners in the Byzantine party. The Patriarch of Constantinople, Joseph II, brought at least some manuscripts, as we can see from the work of Bessarion already discussed above, written after the Council. Basil of Caesarea's *Adversus Eunomium* was owned and brought to the Council not only by the emperor, but by the patriarch as well. This was indeed an important work that played a significant role in the discussions on the procession of the Holy Spirit. This same work was owned by Dorotheos of Mitylene in three parchment copies.[382]

377 "Cum Niceno Archiepiscopo singularis eruditionis ac meriti viro magna mihi familiaritas est. Eum, quoniam ardet ingenio licet ceteris iunior, est enim tricenarius, de re libraria cum diligenter inquirerem, pauca secum detulisse deprehendi, sed magnam librorum molem Mothone reliquisse... Cyrilli magnum volumen contra Iulianum Apostatam habet;" Mercati (ed.), *Traversariana*, 25–26.

378 Traversari mentions Strabo, Euclid and Ptolemy. See Mercati (ed.), *Traversariana*, 26.

379 Mercati (ed.), *Traversariana*, 25–26. Traversari says that fifteen parchments would probably be enough.

380 Malley 1964, 70.

381 Mercati (ed.), *Traversariana*, 26.

382 Bessarion ad Alexium 7.

It does not transpire why Dorotheos owned three copies of the same work, but it could be explained by the other works that may have been contained in these manuscripts. Another explanation could be Dorotheos's interest in the possibility of comparing and analysing other versions of the same work. A study of the manuscripts, if these could be discovered, could shed light on this matter, but for now, it is impossible to present better interpretations.

The problem with almost all these cases described above is that the owner is not clearly visible in the sources. At any rate, the owners are not emphasised in the text or in the written speeches of the participants. What mattered was whether the manuscript was produced and owned by Greeks or Latins. It is not, in fact, surprising that the speakers did not speak about their personal feelings or attitudes towards their manuscripts. It could have made them look more 'unprofessional' in the eyes of the others. The superiority of one manuscript over another was not supposed to be based on personal commitments, but on aspects concerning the manuscript's qualities, which are discussed in the next chapter. It remains possible, however, that the personal attachments to the manuscripts had no effect on the participants and their attitudes towards different manuscripts and thus different interpretations of the subjects.

3.3 Loaning and borrowing manuscripts

Manuscripts were owned and brought to Council by individuals. The previous subchapter discussed the collective aspect of the ownership besides the individual owners. In this subchapter, I continue with the idea of a Council as a space of communal use, if not communal ownership, of the manuscripts through the act of borrowing and loaning the manuscripts. What is especially important in this subchapter is how the borrowing affected the Council and gave the participants a new way of arguing and counter-arguing the theological issues. The borrowed and loaned manuscripts were not only textual objects, but also objects that revealed the defects and the human touch in the text.

To lend a manuscript meant that the manuscript belonged to someone in the first place, an individual or an institution. The owner or other person in charge usually had the right to lay down conditions concerning the loaning. For example, western universities had developed a *pecia* system, in which "the university's authoritative copies of textbooks consisting of unbound quires or *peciae* could be hired out for the purpose of making copies for students."[383] Loaning in exchange for money, that is to say, renting, and the right to copy and even the intention of copying the text made

[383] Clemens & Graham 2007, 23. This system originated probably in Bologna in c. 1200 and spread to other universities. See also Bourgain 2015, 146, 151.

the texts more widely available for the students. In Byzantine Empire, it seems that the *pecia* system was not in use.[384] Nevertheless, there were other systems of loaning as well, in the West and in the East. Monasteries with a scriptorium copied texts and were often ready to loan the manuscripts. Some monasteries kept lists of their possessions and marked their books, sometimes with curses on those who would steal or sell the manuscript. In any case, now and then the loaning led to the loss of manuscripts.[385]

Loaning allowed people of less wealth, such as students, to have access to different texts and copy them, which also helped the universities. Loaning can also be seen as a means of building connections between institutions and individuals. These connections were not only positive, since the loaning process was not always successful. Theft and the (re-)selling of the manuscripts caused friction and distrust and affected the collections of individual persons and monasteries or other owners.[386] These violations of loaning, together with attitudes towards possible loaners, had an impact on the actual loaning process. The participants of the Council may have had similar fears and distrustful attitudes.

How can these attitudes be seen in the sessions of the Council? Next, I discuss the situation in which the common rules for loaning and borrowing were made and how these were not always followed.

The third session in Ferrara was held on 16 October 1438. Especially the decrees of the first seven ecumenical Councils were quoted by both Latin and Greek speakers. The addition to the Creed was the topic of conversation. Cardinal Cesarini had used an old codex, which had the Latin form of the Creed with the addition.[387] The Greeks, with Mark of Ephesus as their speaker, had their own manuscripts without the addition. Although Cesarini argued on behalf of his manuscript and its reading by emphasising that the manuscript was made of parchment, the Greeks were not convinced at this point; or at least, no one admitted this aloud. After this session, which was mostly filled with quotations, there was a private meeting between some of the members from both sides. In this meeting, which was held on 18 October, the need for comparison and even borrowing of the manuscripts was discussed. Cesarini, who had been the main speaker of the Latins in the previous session, said:

384 Wilson 1967, 58.
385 Wilson 1967, 79.
386 Bourgain 2015, 145.
387 The addition was the *Filioque*, but in this codex in the form of *et ex Filio* means the same, but with different wording.

> 'We ask that you give us your books when we are in need of them. And, likewise, we shall give you our books when you need them.'[388]

Bessarion answered, perhaps a little offended or concerned, that the Greeks were not hiding the truth. He may have understood Cesarini's suggestion as a gesture of distrust. The slightly reluctant attitude of the Greeks towards the idea of free loaning and borrowing of the manuscripts may have caused distrust in the minds of the Latins as well. In her studies of the medieval circulation of books, Pascale Bourgain has dealt with medieval lending practices. Because books were valuable objects, their lending usually created suspicion and mistrust and even reluctance to lend manuscripts because of the fear of losing the manuscripts, which sometimes happened.[389] Nevertheless, the participants in this private meeting decided that both parties should lend manuscripts when the others were in need of them.[390]

Despite the agreement on the loaning and borrowing of the manuscripts, the *Acta Graeca* reports that in the next session, two days later on 20 October 1438, Cardinal Cesarini began the speeches and showed his disappointment with the Greeks.

> 'We promised that if there were a need for books, which the most blessed pope had, we would gladly give [the book] to you. Likewise, you promised that if you had a book of this kind, you would give that book to us for an hour so that we could inspect it. But, when I asked [Mark of] Ephesus and [Bessarion of] Nicaea, that they would lend me this book which has the Acts of the Eighth Council for an hour, they did not give it to me. If you brought this book here, good. But if you did not, send someone to bring it.'[391]

388 "Ζητοῦμεν τὰ βιβλία ὑμῶν ὅσα εἰσὶν εἰς χρείαν ἡμετέραν ἵνα δίδωτε ἡμῖν· καὶ ἡμεῖς πάλιν τὰ ἡμέτερα μέλλομεν διδόναι ὅταν χρῇζητε." AG 88. This private meeting is not recorded in Acta Latina.

389 Bourgain 2015, 145. On one hand, people of high status were considered dubious, since they were not sufficiently careful with the manuscripts they had borrowed. On the other hand, sometimes the wealthy status was even a condition to be able to borrow manuscripts. See Bourgain 2015, 145–146. On reluctance to lend manuscripts, see also Kerby-Fulton 2015, 248. Pascale Bourgain also explains that towards the late Middle Ages, the reluctance to lend manuscripts led to stricter rules on borrowing and, in a sense, to certain rights of the possessor over their manuscripts. See Bourgain 2015, 148.

390 AG 88–89.

391 "καὶ ὑπεσχέθημεν, ἐὰν ᾖ χρεία βιβλίων, ὅσα εἰσὶν εἰς τὴν ὑποταγὴν τοῦ μακαριωτάτου πάπα, ἵνα δῶμεν αὐτὰ μετὰ χαρᾶς. ὡσαύτως ὑπεσχέθητε καὶ ὑμεῖς, ἐὰν ἔχητε βιβλίον, ἵνα δώσητε αὐτὸ νὰ τὸ ἴδωμεν μίαν ὥραν. καὶ ἐγὼ ἠξίωσα τὸν Ἐφέσου καὶ τὸν Νικαίας διὰ τὸ βιβλίον, νὰ μᾶς τὸ δανείσωσιν ἡμῖν αὐτό, ὅπου ἔχει τὰ πρακτικὰ τῆς ὀγδόης συνόδου, νὰ τὸ ἔχομεν μίαν ὥραν, καὶ οὐδὲν τὸ ἔδωκαν. καὶ εἰ μὲν ἐφέρετε τὸ βιβλίον, ἰδοὺ καλόν· εἰ δὲ μή, ἀποστείλατε νὰ τὸ φέρωσιν." AG 90.

Cesarini began with the promise they had made to the Greeks and then recalled the same promise that the Greeks had made but had reneged upon. Cesarini had wanted to inspect a manuscript that Mark of Ephesus had quoted in the earlier session. Mark of Ephesus had, in fact, not quoted the Acts of the Eighth Council, which Cesarini mentioned in his speech, but the Acts of the Sixth and Seventh Councils in the same manuscript. For the Greeks, only the first seven Councils were ecumenical in nature, and Councils and their Acts after those were not authoritative.[392] As Cesarini's complaint reveals, the Greeks had not lent this manuscript to Cesarini. The answer by Mark of Ephesus illustrates the reasons behind the Greeks' reluctance to lend the manuscript.

> 'There is no impediment for us to give the manuscript, whenever needed. But it is difficult to give you this book that we are left without. This book is not easy to give to you; If we had the manuscript, we would not be forced to count as ecumenical a Council, which is not at all accepted, but is devoid of authority. Since in this Council, which you are talking about, there are Acts against Photios during the pontificate of Nicholas [I] and Adrian [II]. Later, another Council was held, which restored Photios. This Council was held under Pope John [VIII] and the Council restored Photios and condemned the previous Council. The letters of this pope supporting Photios are extant, and the Council is called the eighth. This same Council examined the addition to the Creed and decided that it should be taken away [from the Creed]. But we think that you are not ignorant of the Council or the letters of Pope John. When the acts of the former Council were revoked, it is not right to seek that, but rather the one that came after it.[393]

The problem indeed was the eighth Council and the Acts in this precise volume. Mark of Ephesus explained why he, and the other Greeks, did not consider this

392 Scott 2015, 364.

393 "οὐδὲν θέλει ἐμποδισθῆναι, νὰ δείξωμεν βιβλίον, ὅταν ἔνι χρεία. τὸ δὲ νὰ δώσωμεν νὰ λείπῃ ἀφ΄ ἡμῶν ἕνι δύσκολον· περὶ δὲ τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου, οὐδέν ἐστιν εὔκολον νὰ τὸ δώσωμεν. εἰ δὲ καὶ ἔχομέν το, οὐδὲν ἔχομέν ἀνάγκην ἵνα συναριθμήσωμεν ταῖς οἰκουμενικαῖς ἄλλην σύνοδον, ἥτις οὐδὲ ἐστέρχθη ὥλως, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ἠκυρώθη. αὕτη γὰρ ἡ σύνοδος ἣν λέγεις ἔχει πράξεις κατὰ τοῦ Φωτίου ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τοῦ πάπα Νικολάου καὶ τοῦ πάπα Ἀδριανοῦ. μετὰ ταῦτα ἐγένετο ἄλλη σύνοδος ἥτις ἀνώρθωσε τὸν Φώτιον. αὐτὴ ἡ σύνοδος ἐγένετο ἐπὶ τοῦ πάπα Ἰωάννου καὶ ἀνώρθωσε τὸν Φώτιον καὶ ἠκύρωσε τὴν πρώτην σύνοδον· οὗ τινος πάπα Ἰωάννου εὑρίσκονται ἐπιρστολαὶ ὑπὲρ τοῦ Φωτίου, ἥτις ὠνομάσθη καὶ ὀγδόη σύνοδος. ἐζήτησε δὲ ἡ σύνοδος αὕτη καὶ περὶ τῆς προσθήκης τοῦ συμβόλου αὕτη καὶ περὶ τῆς προσθήκης τοῦ συμβόλου, καὶ ἔκρινεν ἵνα ἐξαιρεθῇ παντελῶς. καὶ νομίζομεν ὅτι οὐδὲ ὑμεῖς ἀγνοεῖτε οὔτε τὴν σύνοδον οὔτε τὰς ἐπιστολὰς τοῦ πάπα Ἰωάννου. καὶ ἐπειδὴ ἠκυρώθησαν τὰ τῆς συνόδου ἐκείνης, οὐδέν ἐστι δίκαιον ἵνα ζητῶμεν αὐτήν, ἀλλὰ τὴν μετ΄ αὐτὴν μάλιστα." AG 90–91.

Council ecumenical. For the Western Church, the eighth Council was the Fourth Council of Constantinople held in the Byzantine capital in 869–870. It had condemned Photios, who had been the patriarch of Constantinople and who in a local council in 863 had excommunicated the pope because of heresy. The heresy was the double procession of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, the Greeks were embroiled in the internal struggle known as Iconoclasm, which condemned icons and images. Many supported the iconodule Photios and did not accept the Council of 869–870 and the dismissal of Photios from the patriarchate. The Greeks reacted to the measures in a new Council in 879, known as the Fourth Council of Constantinople by the Greeks, and restored Photios.[394] The Eighth Council, as understood differently by the eastern and western Churches, was certainly a difficult point for both and had marked the end of the period of the ecumenical Councils. That is why it is no wonder that the manuscript consisting of documents from this controversial Council caused a problem for the Greeks.

Cesarini knew how to answer Mark of Ephesus and explained that Mark need not be worried about the manuscript in the Latin hands. Cesarini said that they would not look at the Acts of the Eighth Council, but only the Acts of the Sixth and Seventh Councils. Cesarini's answer made Mark of Ephesus change his mind, and he let the Latins borrow the manuscript. This might suggest that Cesarini was, in fact, mainly interested in the quotations of the sixth and seventh Councils. Probably he checked the quotations from these Councils, but as Joseph Gill has also noticed, the discussion about the eighth Council was not restricted to this session. Already in the next session, held on 25 October, Andrew of Rhodes, speaking for the Latins, brought up the Eighth Council in his speech.[395] Although he did not quote the *Acts* or mention the Greek or any other manuscript, this shows that the Latins were interested in the manuscript also because of the contents of the Eighth Council.

A letter from Cesarini to Ambrogio Traversari sheds more light on the reason why Cesarini was so enthusiastic about this particular Greek manuscript. The Latin manuscript had the form *et ex Filio* in the profession of faith of Tarasius, who was the Patriarch of Constantinople at the Seventh Ecumenical Council, also known as the Second Council of Nicaea, in 787. Tarasius was known to have used the form "through the Son", so the Greeks were not convinced of this.[396] It must be noted that the dogma itself was not discussed at this point, only the legitimacy of the addition.[397]

394 Baranov 2015, 342.
395 Gill 1959, 151; AG 133.
396 Gill 1959, 148.
397 The Greeks had decided that first, it should be discussed whether the addition of the *Filioque* was legitimate. Only then should one discuss the dogma of the procession of the Holy Spirit, and whether the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father only or from the Father and the Son (*Filioque*). See Gill 1959, 145; Syropoulos VI, 21.

Cesarini had a recollection of a Greek manuscript that had the texts of this Council and that Tarasius's profession of faith in it had the words *et ex Filio,* but the words were erased. The traces of the erasure were still visible. In a letter to Traversari, who was at that moment in Florence, Cesarini reported about the Council and the third session which had been held the previous day.

> First, they [=the Greeks] declared that the Roman Church had added *Filioque* into the Creed. From this emerged the cause of this scandal and schism. They started to prove that there was no permission to make this addition, and they brought forward the Creeds of Nicaea and Constantinople and again repeated this in Ephesus, Chalcedon, as well as in the prohibitions of the fifth, sixth and seventh Councils. When the seventh Council was read, we read this, which we had in our Latin volume, in old writing, and which has the sixth and the seventh Council, which I think you have seen (since it came from the convent of Dominicans in Rimini). Because in that [manuscript], the text reads *Filioque*. Furthermore, they [=the Greeks] were astonished at this. We added that they could not think this was made out of error or that it was a scribal error because Martin's chronicle, which was published a long time ago, narrates similarly that in the sixth Council, *Filioque* was added.[398]

In the above passage, the mention of Martin's chronicle catches the eye. The author of the chronicle, Martin of Opava, was a Dominican who lived in the town of Opava in the thirteenth century and is the author of *Chronicon pontificum et imperatorum*. The work circulated widely in the Middle Ages and was used as a school text. According to Pascale Bourgain, it was the only historical text whose copies exceeded 500 in the Middle Ages.[399] Even if it was such a widely-used text, it is not evident why Cesarini felt that the chronicle would function as an authority on the events of the sixth Council. As Cesarini mentioned in the letter to Traversari, the Latins had referred to Martin and his chronicle in the Council's discussions, and thus it was

[398] "in Primis cur Ecclesia Romana addit Filioque in Symbolo: quod exstitit huius scandali, & schismatis caussa. Inceperunt velle probare quod non licuit nobis illam facere additionem, produxeruntque in medium Symbolum Nicaenum, & Constantinopolitanum, & utrumque repetitum in Ephesino, Chalcedonense V. VI. & VII. ac prohibitionibus expressis, indictisque Conciliis ne liceret cuique addere. Dum legeretur VII. Concilium, nos habentes nostrum in latino de litera antiquissima in uno volumine, in quo est VI. & VII. quod puto te vidisse (venit enim ex Conventu Praedicatorum Arimini) legimus ipsum: in eo enim dicitur Filioque: de quo fuerunt admirati. Adiecimus ne putent hoc factum culpa, vel errore scriptoris, quoniam Chronica Martiniana, quae iamdiu edita est, narrat qualiter in Concilio VI. fuit addita illa particula Filioque." Traversari, lib. XXIV, ep. V.

[399] Bourgain 2015, 156.

mentioned not only in the correspondence between Cesarini and Traversari, but also in the discussions. Both the Acts[400] and Syropoulos likewise recorded this use of Martin. In Syropoulos's narration, Martin is brought up in the discussions the following way:

> Giuliano [Cesarini] himself said: 'The volume is one of the oldest and it is impossible to suspect that there has been any change. We also have an historian, an old and learned author, who wrote on many other subjects and tells us on this subject that the symbol was recited in this state at the Seventh Council. From his sayings, we put this together.'[401]

While Cesarini used Martin of Opava as an author and authority in the question of the legitimacy of the addition, Gemisthos Plethon, a Greek philosopher of the Byzantine delegation, saw an opportunity to use another Latin author and authority, Thomas Aquinas. Plethon's argument was that if the addition had already been in the Creed in the Seventh Council, as Martin of Opava claimed, then what Thomas Aquinas, and others before him, had demonstrated – that the Roman Church had made the addition with reason – would be superfluous.[402] Plethon summed up:

> 'It would have been enough for them [Thomas and other authors], instead of all the arguments and syllogisms they had invented, to affirm that the addition was formerly in the Creed and that it was read and approved with it at the Seventh Council. But the proof that it was not put forward at all at the Seventh Council, as you claim, is that those who wrote in favour of the Latins did not mention it.'[403]

400 AL 45; AG 133. See also John of Torquemada, *Oratio*, 64.

401 "Εἶπε δὲ καὶ ὁ Ἰουλιανός, ὅτι· Τὸ βιβλίον ἔνι παλαιότατον καὶ ἀδύνατόν ἐστιν ὑπονοῆσαι γενέσθαι τινὰ ἐναλλαγὴν εἰς αὐτό· ἔχομεν σὲ καὶ ἱστορικὸν ἄνδρα παλαιὸν καὶ σοφὸν γεγραφότα περὶ ἄλλων πολλῶν, διεξιόντα δὲ καὶ περὶ τούτου, ὅτι τὸ σύμβολον οὕτως ἐξετέθη ἐν τῇ ἑβδόμῃ συνόδῳ, καὶ συνιστῶμεν τοῦτο καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἐκείνου σωφῶν." Syropoulos VI, 31.

402 Monfasani 2015, 20–21. Giannis Demetracopoulos interprets that Plethon was also familiar with Anselm of Canterbury's *De processione spiritus sancti*, a work, that Demetrius Kydones had translated from Latin to Greek. See Demetracopoulos 2006, 281. Both Monfasani and Demetracopoulos highlights the importance of Thomas Aquinas to Plethon. Monfasani 2015, 19–34; Demetracopoulos 2006, 276–341.

403 "ἤρκει γὰρ ἀντὶ πάντων ὧν ἐφεῦρον ἐπιχειρημάτων τε καὶ συλλογισμῶν εἰπεῖν ὅτι προῆν ἡ προσθήκη ἐν τῷ συμβόλῳ καὶ μετὰ θῆς προσθήκης ἀνεγνώσθη καὶ ἐστέρχθη ἐν τῇ ἑβδόμῃ συνόδῳ· ὅτι δὲ οὐδόλως προέβη ἐν τῇ ἑβδόμῃ συνόδῳ, καθώς ὑμεῖς λέγετε, διὰ τοῦτο οὐδὲ οἱ γράψαντες ὑπὲρ Λατίνων περὶ τούτου ἐμνήσθησαν." Syropoulos VI, 31.

After this speech, the session ended, and it seems that Martin of Opava was not brought back into the discussions after this. The use of this medieval chronicler is a good reminder that not all the argumentation was based on manuscripts or even the commonly accepted authors of both Churches. These different ways of using authors and their works and manuscripts could have been employed simultaneously, albeit with varying success. For Cesarini, the chronicle of Martin was probably of great importance and had assured him of the validity of the addition. Martin was used as an additional argument supporting even more convincing proofs that stemmed from the manuscripts. In Cesarini's mind, Martin offered historical evidence for the manuscripts and their reading, although this did not work out as he had planned. Even Cesarini knew that the best proofs and arguments were connected to the manuscripts with the authoritative texts in them, and this becomes evident in his correspondence during the Council.

In his letter to Traversari, already quoted above, Cesarini hoped to get from him a manuscript with the texts from the ecumenical Councils.

> I remember that among the books of Nicholas of Cusa, there is a volume in Greek where are the sixth, seventh, and the eighth Councils. [--] I do not know what you have done with this volume. [--] I believe that he bought it in Constantinople. [--] I know that I heard from Master Nicholas himself, and that I saw it with my own eyes that in that book, that the addition *Filioque* was scraped off, but not finely, as the vestiges of this word in Greek could still be seen. I believe that you also saw that.[404]

Did Cesarini consider it possible that the manuscript the Greeks had used in the previous session was the same he had himself seen before, and which had the erased *Filioque*? The letter reveals that Cesarini did not know what had happened to the manuscript, and he could ask neither Nicholas of Cusa nor Ambrogio Traversari, since they were both absent from the Council at the moment.[405] Even if Cesarini did not think that the manuscript was the same one, he must have been interested in

404 "Memini quod inter libros Domini Nicolai de Cusa erat unum volumen in graeco, ubi erat VI. VII. VIIl. Concilium. [--] Nescio quid feceritis de dicto volumine. [--] Credo etiam quod emerit illum Constantinopoli. [--] Scio me audisse ab ipso Domino Nicolao, & vidisse propriis oculis quod in illo libro, ut mihi videtur, erat ista adiectio Filioque abrasa, sed non tam subtiliter, quin viderentur vestigia huius dictionis in graeco. Te credo etiam vidisse." Traversari, lib. XXIV, ep. V.

405 Nicholas of Cusa did not, in fact, take part at the Council at all. He had worked as a delegate in Constantinople and came with the Greeks to Venice, but had already left for Germany in June 1438. See Sigmund 1963, 232. Ambrogio Traversari was in Florence taking care of business of the Camaldolese order, of which he was the prior general. See Stinger 1977, 221.

seeing the other Greek codex as well, in case it also had the vestiges of erasure in it. These vestiges would have offered Cesarini and the Latins a strong argument supporting their stance on the matter. This argument, however, relied on the manuscript's presence as an object. The materiality and the human traces had shaped the text and interpretation. After that, the text lived its own life, but going back to the old manuscripts could reveal the ancient truth behind the text and the correct interpretation.

Another important point in this letter from Cesarini to Traversari is the visual memory of a manuscript. Cesarini told Traversari very clearly that he had seen the scraped manuscript with his own eyes and that he believed that Traversari had also seen it. Mary Carruthers, who has studied medieval memory, has emphasized the visuality of medieval memory.[406] While Cesarini knew that the manuscript he had seen would support his argumentation, he also seemed to acknowledge that he needed the manuscript to be present in his hands. For him and probably for the other Latins, the memory of the manuscript was enough as an argument, but his memory and description of it would not be authoritative for the Greeks he was supposed to convince. He needed the manuscript so that the Greeks could see the erasure of the *Filioque* with their own eyes, in front of them. The Greeks had no need or reason to trust Cesarini's or any other Latin's memory of a manuscript that contradicted their view on theological matters. Although it seems that this manuscript was never found or brought into the Council, as has already been pointed out, all the lending and borrowing speaks of this same matter: In order to determine the validity, authenticity, and authority of a specific manuscript and its reading by the other party, it was crucial to be able to see the manuscript in its material form in front of oneself. In addition, lending one's own manuscript with convincing evidence of antiquity or other authoritative factors could help in convincing the other party of one's own theological stance.

The next day after Cesarini wrote to Traversari, a private session was held. Cesarini asked to see the Greek manuscript, and an agreement on mutual loaning was made. As has already been seen, the Greeks did not lend the manuscript in spite of the agreement, before Cesarini had assured them that they would not inspect the contested Acts of the Eighth Council. Moreover, after the promise made by Mark of Ephesus that they would loan the manuscript, there are no more mentions of the manuscript in the Council's documents. Presumably, it was loaned, but it probably did not offer the answers Cesarini had sought for. He certainly would have pointed that out, if it had contained *Filioque* in any form, written or erased. The other manuscript that Cesarini so badly yearned to see could not be found, since otherwise,

406 Carruthers 1992, passim. See for example Carruthers 1991, 31.

it would certainly have been used as well. The potential the manuscripts had in the argumentation is nevertheless pointed out clearly in the same letter of Cesarini to Traversari.

> I would have paid down a hundred ducats if yesterday I could have displayed in a public session along with our book of the seventh Council a Greek codex of the same Council with the phrase mentioned above clearly and manifestly erased.[407]

Cesarini's disappointment is almost tangible. The manuscript with crushing evidence was somewhere there, but he could not find or use it. His suggestion of mutual lending of the manuscripts, could, at best, offer a new base for arguments. I argue that it clearly shows that the authoritative force was not only in the texts but in the manuscripts as well. The Latins already had the texts of the Councils; why would they have wanted to inspect and use the Greek manuscripts too, unless they wished to argue on the basis of these manuscripts?

There was also at least one other instance when the Latins had to remind the Greeks of the agreement on mutual loaning of the manuscripts. This happened in Florence on March 10, 1439. In this fourth session of Florence, the debate still dealt with the procession of the Holy Spirit, and a work of Basil of Caesarea was discussed. At the beginning of the meeting, Cesarini addressed the Byzantine Emperor, John VIII Palaiologos, and reminded him of the mutually agreed policy of loaning:

> 'Lord emperor, it was previously said that we would present our books to those in need of them and that you do that respectively. Yesterday a debate on the words of Basil rose, and it was said that the words are in one way in our books and in another in your books. We know that one of the Greek Fathers[408] has [this work of] Basil, and we ask him to present it, and this Father is the Lord of Mitylene.'[409]

407 "Solvissem centum ducatos, si heri in publico conventu potuissem cum libro nostro latino VII. Conciliis ostendere librum graecum eiusdem Concilii cum dicta dictione evidenter, & ad oculum abrasa." Translated by Joseph Gill, see Gill 1959, 148–149.

408 Cesarini refers here to the Greek Fathers present at the Council of Ferrara–Florence, not the Greek Church Fathers.

409 "Domine imperator, alias fuit dictum, quod vobis indigentibus de libris nostris nos exhiberemus et e contra ipsi facerent. Pridie venit in disceptatione de verbis Basilii et dicebatur, quod aliter stat in libris nostris et aliter in suis. Nos scimus, quod unus ex

Basil of Caesarea's *Adversus Eunomium* was a crucial work in the discussions on the procession of the Holy Spirit. From Bessarion's later work on the procession of the Holy Spirit, in which he recalled the events and discussions of the Council, he mentioned that there were altogether six manuscripts of the *Adversus Eunomium* at the Council.[410] While the Greeks had brought five of these six manuscripts, three of which belonged to Dorotheos of Mitylene, the Latins had only one.[411] The above passage reveals that, one way or other, the Latins knew about the manuscript and that it was owned by Dorotheus of Mitylene.

The Latins were not the only ones borrowing and asking for manuscripts. The Greeks were borrowing manuscripts from the Latins as well. In the ninth session on 24 March in Florence, the emperor said: "Give us the books and testimonies of the saints you are citing so that we can ponder on an answer."[412] The agreement was made, and the books of both parties were compared in the sacristy of San Francesco the next morning.[413] After this, the nature of the Council changed, since it was agreed to end common sessions. Instead, meetings of individuals and small groups were organized to find a quicker solution – before Easter – to the union.[414]

The discussion above has concentrated on the fact that the lending centred on the manuscripts and the comparison of the different readings in them. In addition, it is probable that some manuscripts were also borrowed because of the works in them, not just because of the different readings. The Latins with the greatest responsibility were familiar, for the most part, with the Greek texts used and cited in the Council. They had collected them and even translated some of them already, before and during the Council. For the Greeks, the situation was, however, different. Their knowledge of the Latin Fathers was limited.[415] This unfamiliarity with the other tradition, its texts, and manuscripts is attested in Syropoulos's memoirs. During a meeting of the Greeks at which they discussed certain Latin patristic texts, Syropoulos contributed to the discussion:

> 'If, then, in the writings of Chrysostom, which we read from childhood to old age and whose expression and mindset we know, we are unable to discern clearly the false from the true, what will become of the Western saints whose works we

patribus Grecis habet Basilium nos petimus, ut illum exhibeat, et est pater dominus Mitilenensis." AL 165.

410 These have already been introduced in the previous subchapter.

411 Bessarion ad Alexium 7.

412 "Δότε ἡμῖν, ἔφη, τὰς βίβλους καὶ τὰ ῥητὰ τῶν ἁγίων ὧν εἰρήκατε, ὅπως σκεψώμεθα τοῦ ἀπολογηθήναι." AG 398.

413 AG 399.

414 On the decision to end the public sessions, see AG 399.

415 Ševčenko 1955, 298.

> have never known or read (since we have never had them in our possession and they have never been translated from the beginning, and that is why they are totally unknown to us). Where would we dare to declare authentic or false texts whose expression, idea, structure, and order of discourse we cannot grasp?'[416]

The problem was, as Syropoulos expressed it, that if it was difficult to be sure about the texts of Eastern Fathers, how could they determine whether the unknown texts of the Western saints were authentic, and thus authoritative? In the Greek *Acts*, however, we read that the Greeks – without identifying who was speaking for them – noted:

> 'We had never seen [the writings of] Western saints, nor had we read them. But now we know them, and we have read them, and we have accepted them.'[417]

The verb *ἀναγιγνώσκω*[418] can be translated either as 'to read' or 'to know', so it does not necessarily mean that the Greeks had, in fact, read the texts and thus had borrowed the manuscripts in order to do so. I find it probable that they also borrowed the manuscripts from the Latins to read more closely the texts, or the critical passages of them. The patriarch used the verb *ἀκούω*[419] (meaning 'to hear') when describing the Western Fathers, but this does not either exclude the actual borrowing and reading of the texts. The patriarch could not, in any case, himself read the Latin texts,

416 "Εἰ οὖν ἐπὶ τῶν Χρυσοστομικῶν λόγων, οὓς ἐκ νεότητος καὶ μέχρι γήρως ἡμῶν ἀναγινώσκοντες καὶ εἰδότες τὴν φράσιν καὶ τὴν ἰδέαν αὐτῶν οὐκ ἔχομεν ὁμολογουμένως διακρῖναι τὸ νόθον τε καὶ τὸ γνήσιον, πῶς ἂν ἐπὶ τῶν δυτικῶν ἁγίων, ὧν τὰ συγγράμματα οὔτε οἴδαμεν οὔτε ἀνέγνωμεν ποτε (οὐδὲ γὰρ εἴχομεν αὐτὰ οὔτε ἀρχῆθεν μετεγλωττίσθησαν κἀντεῦθεν οὐδόλως εἰσὶν ἡμῖν γνώριμα), θαρροῦντες εἴποιμεν γνήσια ταῦτ' εἶναι ἢ νόθα, ἐν οἷς οὔτε φράσιν οὔτε ἰδέαν οὔτε ὑφὴν ἢ ῥυθμόν τινα τοῦ λόγου γνωρίσαι ποθὲν ἔχομεν;" Syropoulos IX, 7. Syropoulos had written just a little earlier that "books are falsified in many ways, and this is found in certain speeches of St. John Chrysostom." ("Εἰ οὖν κατὰ πολλοὺς τρόπους νοθεύονται τὰ βιβλία καὶ ἐπί τινων λόγων τοῦ θείου Χρυσοστόμου τὸ νόθον εὑρίσκεται.") See Syropoulos IX, 7.

417 "Οὐδέποτε εἴδομεν τοὺς δυτικοὺς ἁγίους, οὐδέποτε ἀνεγνώσαμεν αὐτούς. νῦν οὖν καὶ οἴδαμεν καὶ ἀνεγνώσαμεν καὶ στέργομεν αὐτούς." AG 427. A little later patriarch of Constantinople Joseph II also says: "We have heard the writings of the Holy Fathers, both Eastern and Western, one saying that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son, the other from the Father through the Son." ("Ἐπειδὴ ἠκούσαμεν τὰ ῥητὰ τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων τῶν ἀνατολικῶν καὶ τῶν δυτικῶν, τὰ μὲν λέγοντα, ὡς ἐκπορεύεται τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ, τὰ δέ, ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς δι΄ Υἱοῦ"). See Syropoulos IX, 19. The patriarch's speech is recorded in very similar terms in *Acta Graeca*, see AG 432.

418 In this excerpt the verb is an aorist: *ἀνεγνώσαμεν*.

419 This verb too is an aorist: *ἠκούσαμεν*.

and thus, like the majority of the other Greeks, he was listening to the text read out loud.

The need and aspiration to borrow and see the manuscripts of the other party is a clear evidence of the important role of the manuscripts as objects. Not only the texts mattered. Even if part of the borrowing is explained with a need to familiarise oneself with unknown texts of the other party, the other part illustrates a need to see and compare manuscripts with a text already known to the party that wanted to borrow the manuscript. The borrowed manuscripts offered a new way to argue theological issues. The ways in which manuscripts, both one's own and borrowed from others, were used in argumentation is dealt in the next subchapter.

3.4 Reading texts, analysing manuscripts

Manuscripts were collected, owned, and borrowed for many reasons, as we have already seen in previous sections. Participants collected manuscripts to read the authoritative texts in them, in order to build up their argumentation on theological matters. By loaning and comparing manuscripts, they could enhance their argumentation, which relied on the textual content. I elaborate on these themes further in this subchapter. The focus is on the ways in which the Council's participants used manuscripts: when they read the texts and certain passages, and when they, in fact, analysed the other features of the manuscripts and built their arguments that way.

In the discussions held at Ferrara and Florence, participants from both the Eastern and the Western sides were given different responsibilities. Only six persons from both sides had been chosen as speakers,[420] but this did not mean that the other several hundred persons did nothing but listen to the entire Council. The participants had different responsibilities and tasks in the Council depending on their background, including their learning and religious affinities, and their interest and capability in politics and diplomacy. Besides this, they were individuals with their own interests in theology and literature, which could be reflected in their manuscript

[420] From the Greek side, the following six were chosen: Mark of Ephesus, Bessarion of Nicaea, Isidore of Kiev, Gemisthos Plethon, Michael Balsamon, and Theodore Xanthopoulos. Of these six, only Mark and Bessarion were authorised by the emperor to speak. From the Latin side, the following six were chosen: Giuliano Cesarini, Andrew of Rhodes, Giovanni da Montenero, Aloysius de Pirano, Petrus Perquerii, and Giovanni di S. Toma. Of these, the first three were the most significant. Later, one of the Latin orators was John of Torquemada, who had returned from Germany. See Gill 1959, 130; Syropoulos VI, 22; Van Sickle 2017, 49. See also chapter 2 in this dissertation for more information on the speakers and their selection.

collections and in how they argued for and against the questions under discussion at the Council.

One of the most important intellectual movements of the time was humanism, whose influence on the ways in which manuscripts and texts were used and approached was significant. At the same time, scholasticism had not lost its importance either. The Greeks had their own philosophical and theological backgrounds. For this reason, the participants, even those on the same side, did not always follow or accept the argumentation used in the Council's sessions. Nor should we exaggerate the difference in intellectual and theological traditions. Before taking up this matter in detail, I go over the ways in which manuscripts were used, how the works were read out loud in the Council, and what happened outside the official meetings.

"Give us the books and testimonies of the saints you are citing so that we can ponder on an answer,"[421] said the Byzantine Emperor John VIII Palaiologos, in the ninth session held in Florence on 24 March 1439. Giovanni da Montenero had spoken for over eight hours about the doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit in the session, citing many authors, mainly Greek Fathers, but some Latin Fathers as well.[422] The pattern for the Latin argumentation was that Giovanni da Montenero quoted the authors and explained the passages in favour of the Latin dogma, and then the passages were read in Greek.[423] Besides the reading of the passages quoted, it must be remembered that Niccolò Sagundino was translating the speeches of Giovanni da Montenero and the other speakers. Furthermore, the notaries were working and writing down the discussions.[424]

For the Greeks,[425] it was necessary to see the passages used by the Latins. While they had the opportunity to listen to the quotations, which "sufficed the ears", as Isidore of Kiev put it,[426] it was not a sufficient basis for argumentation. In particular, they needed the Latin works with which the Greeks were unfamiliar. Giovanni da Montenero accepted this request, and the participants agreed that the manuscripts would be brought to the sacristy of San Francesco on the following Tuesday, when the records of the notaries could also be compared.[427]

421 "Δότε ἡμῖν, ἔφη, τὰς βίβλους καὶ τὰ ῥητὰ τῶν ἁγίων ὧν εἰρήκατε, ὅπως σκεψώμεθα τοῦ ἀπολογηθῆναι." AG 398.

422 AL 222; AG 398.

423 The Acta Latina records this by stating that Giovanni da Montenero held the long speeches, and there are around twenty "legit in Greco" mentions between them.

424 Gill 1959, 143.

425 In the Acta Latina, the entire answer to the Latins was given by Isidore; in the Acta Graeca, the first part was given by Isidore, and the demand for giving the books by the emperor. The contents are, however, very similar.

426 "auribus sacietas", AL 222.

427 Gill 1959, 150.

What happened in this session tells us something about the ways in which the manuscripts and works were used and what kind of authority was accorded to the works and to their material form, manuscripts, at the Council. The Latins used a great number of patristic as well as other authoritative sources in their argumentation. They did not only use the authoritative works; they also had the manuscripts of the texts, if not at hand during the Council's sessions, at least with them at the Council. They quoted the texts in both languages. It was not enough that the texts were read aloud; the participants needed to examine the passages carefully. The reasons for this were many. They could not remember everything that the Greeks had spoken and argued, as Giovanni da Montenero explained. Some of the cited texts were unknown or only little known to the others and needed to be examined in the manuscripts. In addition, the exact formulations of the passages were important to the participants, and they wanted to compare the passages and manuscripts which they had in the Council. The records of the notaries were thus not sufficient.

When the participants read the works, they searched for key passages in which the doctrines were discussed. The theological and learned tradition of analysing these texts had an enormous impact on the ways in which the passages were read and interpreted. The culture in which one was raised and educated formed a basis for the analysis. In addition, the participants all had their personal favourite authors from a wider period than the one that had produced the works used at the Council. These later authors or doctors of the Church were not used or cited in great numbers but were present in the participants' thinking. Thus, the participants were not only reading the passages in front of them but reflecting on other works they had read.

The theological traditions of the eastern and the western Churches had taken different directions for centuries prior to the Council. As we have seen, besides the Sacred Scripture and Acts of the ecumenical Councils, the Church Fathers whose works were read and used were different, even if they were understood to be consistent in their teaching of the dogma. Before analysing the ways in which different participants of the Council read the texts in their material frames, it is important to understand the intellectual and religious movements and traditions that shaped the thoughts and argumentation of the participants.

In the West, scholasticism had been defining the theological and intellectual world for several centuries. Scholastics approached theological questions through dialectical disputation. The aim was to systemize theology by finding a synthesis from the ostensibly contradictory passages or arguments about theological matters. Passages from Sacred Scripture and other authoritative sources, *auctoritates*, were collected and put side by side. These passages and their right interpretation were then explained and supported by *rationes*, that is to say, arguments based on reason

(*ratio*). In particular, Aristotle's logics were applied to the reasoning on theological matters.[428]

Most Latin participants who had an active role in the Council had a background in theological studies at university and were thus trained in scholastic methods. They used syllogisms, arguments based on deductive logic, in their argumentation and made use of compilations of passages. For example, Andrew of Rhodes validated the Latin use of the *Filioque* with a syllogism.[429] This way of argumentation was, if not traditional for the Greeks, still not totally unknown to the most learned Greek representatives, Bessarion and Mark of Ephesus.

Translations especially of texts of Thomas Aquinas by Greeks in the fourteenth century, had introduced Scholasticism to the Greeks. Demetrius Kydones translated two major works of Thomas Aquinas, the *Summa contra gentiles* and the *Summa theologiae,* in the 1350s. These works, then, had an influence on many Greek theologians.[430] Panagiotis C. Athanasopoulos has analysed the ways in which Bessarion and Mark of Ephesus used scholastic works, Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus, in their treatises. He remarked that above all the form of the scholastic *quaestio* had entered the late Byzantine theology as an accepted model for discussion.[431] Mark of Ephesus and Bessarion understood and could discuss with the Latins in scholastic terms at the Council.

The patristic and other passages from authoritative texts were often read and learned from compilations or *florilegia* on a specific theme. This was common in both traditions.[432] The Byzantine historian Averil Cameron has specified two main aims of the use of *florilegia*: "first, to appeal to authority and tradition, and second, in case of a challenge, to provide a correct exegesis."[433] The procession of the Holy

428 Monagle 2017, 1–18; Rummel 2008, 1; Scott 2003, 41–42; Demetracopoulos 2012, 334; Välimäki 2019, 74–75.

429 Gill 1959, 151–152.

430 Glycofrydi-Leontsini 2003, 177–179. Athanassia Glycofrydi-Leontsini mentions Prochoros, Manuel Kalekas, Andreas and Maximus Chrysoberges, Bessarion and Gennadius Scholarius. See Glycofrydi-Leontsini 2003, 177.

431 Athanasopoulos 2017, 77–91, see especially 84. See also Athanasopoulos 2021, 89–123; Demetracopoulos 2012, 334–344; Demetracopoulos 2021, 23–87.

432 Cameron & Hoyland 2011, xviii. The use of *florilegia* emerged in the fifth century and was an important tool of argumentation. Doctrinal *florilegia* were used in debates by opposing parties. They consisted of scriptural and patristic quotations that supported a particular argument. *Florilegia* were used and circulated widely in the Byzantine world. In addition, there were polemical and spiritual *florilegia*. The use of *florilegia* instead of the complete works also led to losses of the original works. See Cameron 2011, 277–278, 282–283. On the Western use of *florilegia*, see for example Carruthers 1992, 217–229.

433 Cameron 2011, 278.

Spirit was one of the most common themes in *florilegia*.[434] In the Byzantine practice, the unionists and anti-unionists usually used different *florilegia*. While unionists relied on the works of John Bekkos, anti-unionists counted on Neilos Kabasilas. Scholars have noticed that different *florilegia* or compilations often used the same quotations of the fathers but presented them in opposite lights. It is not surprising that the compilator's own stance in the battle between unionists and anti-unionists defined the main users of the compilations. John Bekkos was a thirteenth-century unionist living who had first opposed the union proclaimed in the Second Council of Lyons in 1274, but then changed his mind. After reading Basil, Cyril of Alexandria, and Epiphanius, he was convinced that the Latin view of the procession of the Holy Spirit was the right one.[435] The same works and passages were discussed at the Council of Ferrara–Florence. Neilos Kabasilas lived in the fourteenth century and wrote treatises against the *Filioque*. The importance of Kabasilas for the anti-unionists of the Council of Ferrara–Florence, especially Mark of Ephesus, has already been discussed in the first section of this chapter. It should, however, be noted that although Kabasilas, like the other later Byzantine writers, was not cited at the Council, his influence was nevertheless remarkable.

Kabasilas was also a Palamite theologian. Palamism took its name from Gregory Palamas, a fourteenth-century monk on Mount Athos. Palamas practiced contemplative prayer and hesychast spirituality, which was a mystical movement in the late Byzantine period. Palamism or hesychasm was a debated subject in the East, and it was alternately confirmed and rejected in local councils. During the Council of Ferrara–Florence, it still caused dissent among the members of the Byzantine delegation. The Emperor John VIII Palaiologos was acquainted with the movement and saw that it might mean trouble for the Byzantine delegation, if it was brought up in discussion with the Latins. That is why he even forbade his delegation to speak about it in front of Latins.[436] The main reason was that the Latins could have attacked the Greeks about a dogma that was not formulated by the early Church Fathers. In addition, the emperor's wish was to have a united Greek front at the Council.[437] But although hesychasm was not brought up at the Council, as far as our sources indicate, Deno J. Geanakoplos does not exclude the possibility that hesychast ideas might have been discussed in the informal meetings between the members of hesychast

434 Kislas 2001; Alexakis 2015, 39–43.
435 Papadakis 2011, 36.
436 On Palamism and the hesychast movement, see Mantzaridis 1984; Strezova 2014, 9–62.
437 Geanakoplos 1976, 221.

movements and Western monks who were interested in mystical movements, such as Bernardine of Siena.[438]

The Greeks were not the only ones to use compilations. In fact, the Latins also used compilations deriving from the Byzantine tradition in their argumentation. In particular, a late Byzantine author Manuel Kalekas and his text about the Greek errors were important. Ambrogio Traversari had translated Kalekas's text into Latin before the Council.[439] Traversari had also made a compilation by himself, which contained, in addition to the passages by Kalekas, many other passages supporting the Latin view of the dogma of the procession of the Holy Spirit.[440] A Byzantine collection of patristic excerpts was an effective way to find authoritative evidence for the dogma from the Eastern side, which in turn would work more effectively than the Latin passages in convincing the Greeks.

I suggest that at the Council of Ferrara–Florence, the use of *florilegia* and compilations occurred more in the preparation and behind the scenes than in the official sessions. The collections of passages dealing with a specific dogma or subject certainly helped the participants to prepare for the discussions, but they lacked authority in defining the true form and meaning of the matter under discussion. In fact, the problem with the use of *florilegia* was not totally new. Already at the Second Council of Nicaea, in 787,[441] the quotations had to be made from the complete books because of misuse of the *florilegia.*[442] The decrees and documents from the early ecumenical Councils were read and studied closely before and during the Council of Ferrara–Florence. I propose that this activity partly increased the awareness of weaknesses in employing the collections of extracts in theological argumentation. One could also explain this by the humanist approach to the texts and their use, where the original represented the most authentic and authoritative source in argumentation.[443] However, I find it possible that the close reading of the decrees and other documents of the early Councils, where similar concerns had been raised about the authenticity and corruption of texts, as well as the preference for using the complete works, enhanced the humanist literary approaches and practices regarding the texts.

The compilations of relevant passages still had their place at the Council of Ferrara–Florence. Traversari's role as an expert in the Greek language and Greek

438 Geanakoplos 1976, 221.
439 Garin 1985, 5.
440 Stinger 1977, 210–211.
441 This was the seventh and last ecumenical Council accepted by both Churches.
442 Cameron 2011, 278–279. However, the icoloclastic *florilegia* were prepared already for the Council discussing Iconoclasm in 815. See Cameron 2011, 278–279.
443 Leinsle 2010, 244. See also Scott 2003, 39–53; Rummel 2008, 1–3.

patristics can hardly be overstated.[444] His work in acquiring the knowledge of the Greek texts, in collection, analysis, translation, and compilation, all helped the other Latin members to present their arguments. Traversari's compilation functioned as an introduction to the key passages of the Greek Fathers for the other Latin speakers, especially Giovanni da Montenero and Giuliano Cesarini, and the profound knowledge that Traversari had was available when Greeks opposed the Latin arguments. The point of the compilation was thus to be, not an authoritative source for the argumentation, but a tool for composing arguments.

Traversari's work on the Greek patristic texts was important. Geanakoplos has even stated that "his knowledge of Byzantine theology derived from his study of the Greek Fathers."[445] While this is certainly true, this was not the whole reason behind Traversari's knowledge of Byzantine theology. The Greek Fathers and their works *per se* are not Byzantine theology. The centuries-long reading and interpretation of the Fathers and the formulation of the dogmas and practices are theology. Reading the Greek Fathers, who were in any case supposed to be in harmony with the Latin Fathers, did not suffice to make anyone an expert of Byzantine theology. Traversari, however, had familiarised himself with the later Byzantine tradition – something that only a few Latins did – when, for example, he read and translated Manuel Kalekas. Also, the contacts with the Byzantine clergy and other learned persons had probably increased his knowledge of the Byzantine culture and theological tradition.

The difference between using collections of passages and complete works made it easier to analyse the context where the passages belong. At the Council, I propose that the participants also pointed out many times the context of the work they were using. They connected the Church Fathers, the authors of these authoritative texts, to specific ecumenical Councils and heresies that they were addressing in their texts. This became apparent in the discussion of purgatory.

If the original context of the text and the contemporary cultural-religious movements were important, what was the situation of the original context of the manuscripts? Although the participants could, in most cases, agree on the authoritative status of the authors and their works, the manuscripts did not necessarily gain everybody's trust. The manuscripts had their context in which they were produced and used, and this too is a matter that was discussed at the Council and that affected the ways in which the participants argued.

In the works and manuscripts, the participants searched for the truth. The truth was closely connected to the concept of authority. The authoritative works were

444 In the studies of Stinger and Geanakoplos, Traversari's importance has been well noticed. See Stinger 1977; Geanakoplos 1976.

445 Geanakoplos 1976, 270.

considered to contain the truth. Moreover, it was the truth that was meant to be the basis for any argument:

> Among the many excellent arguments, he [=Bessarion] put forward was this one: 'We have no other basis for agreement than the truth. However, since we have the truth with us, we will take it as a basis for agreement, and we do not need any other since we could never find a better one than the truth.'[446]

This quotation is from Syropoulos's memoirs from an early session held in Ferrara, at which purgatory was discussed. The same point was made several times by the Greeks and usually with the part that it was the Greek works and teaching that had the truth in them. Syropoulos describes the discussion between the Patriarch Joseph II and scholar Gemisthos Plethon on the theme as follows:

> He [=the patriarch] said to him [=Plethon]: 'You are a doctor and a scholar who has a perfect knowledge of these matters both by long experience and by the study you have made of them. Moreover, you are an old man, a good man who prefers the truth to everything. That is why it seemed good to me to call you in particular so that you could satisfy me on the points about which I have doubts. I ask you graciously: Which of the two theses before you seems to be the truer?' Gemisthos replied: 'No one among us must doubt what our own people say. For this is the teaching which we ourselves have, first of all from our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and then also from the Apostle, those foundations of our faith on which all our teachers rely. Since then our teachers adhere to the foundations of the faith and do not deviate from them in any way, and these foundations are most evident, no one must doubt what they say. If anyone has any doubt about this, I do not see how he could be manifesting the faith. For not even those who differ from us doubt what our Church holds and teaches, for they confess that what we teach is right and most true, and they feel obliged to prove that their beliefs are in agreement with ours.'[447]

446 "Μεσότητα δὲ ἄλλην ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἔχομεν εἰ μὴ τὴν ἀλήθειαν· ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀλήθειαν μεθ´ ἡμῶν, αὐτὴν ἕξομεν ἡμεῖς [sic] καὶ μεσότητα, καὶ ἑτέρας οὐ δεησόμεθα, ἐπεὶ οὐδὲ δυνησόμεθά ποτε εὑρεῖν κρείττονα τῆς ἀληθείας μεσότητα." Syropoulos V, 11.

447 "Σὺ ὑπάρχεις διδάσκαλος καὶ σοφὸς καὶ ἔχεις εἴδησιν ἀκριβῆ ἐν τοῖς τοιοῦτοις καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς πολυχρονίου πείρας καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς σπουδῆς ἧς ἐσπούδασας εἰς αὐτά· πρὸς τούτοις δ´ εἶ καὶ γέρων καὶ καλὸς ἄνθρωπος καὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν πάντων προτιμᾷς. Διὰ τοῦτο ἐφάνη μοι καλὸν προσκαλέσασθαί δε ἰδίως, ἵνα πληροφορήσῃς με περὶ ὧν ἀμφιβάλλω. Εἰπέ μοι οὖν καθαρῶς, νὰ σωθῇς, ὁποῖόν, σοι δοκεῖ ἀληθέστερον τούτων; πρὸς ἃ ἀπεκρίνατο

The faith in one's own teaching and interpretations of the works was strong. It even seems that this was the premise in the discussions, probably among both the Greeks and the Latins, but it is best described in Syropoulos's text. He was a strong anti-unionist, and his memoirs have been interpreted as apologetic in nature.[448] Thus, it is understandable that Syropoulos probably wanted to emphasise his strong belief in the correctness and veracity of the Greek dogmas and teachings. In addition, Syropoulos stressed many times that he himself had reported everything truthfully.

> God, who sees everything, knows that everything happened as the story has just told it. I do not change anything that has been done in this place, and I do not write anything in this book that is not the truth.[449]

The idea that the strong support of one's own understanding of the dogma was a premise at the Council does not mean that it lacked any foundation. It was based on the reading and studying of Church Fathers, early councils and Sacred Scripture. Although the fundamental truth was the same for Greeks and Latins, their patristic traditions and learned approaches to dogma and religious practices differed. The truth was in the authoritative works, but those defining and discovering the truth were learned persons reading and analysing the works. A Georgian ambassador had spoken to the Patriarch Joseph in a private meeting:

> 'Now our Church keeps exactly all the truths which it has received from the teaching of Our Lord Jesus Christ, from the tradition of the Holy Apostles, from the ecumenical Councils, and from those among the saints who have been proclaimed Doctors of the Church. The Church has in no way deviated from its teaching and has neither added to nor subtracted from it, while the Church of

ὁ Γεμιστός, ὅτι· Οὐ δεῖ ἀμφιβάλλειν τινὰ ἐξ ἡμῶν εἰς ἅπερ λέγουσιν οἱ ἡμέτεροι· ἰδοὺ γὰρ ἔχομεν τὴν διδασκαλίαν, πρῶτον μὲν ἀπ΄ αὐτοῦ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, εἶτα δὲ καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἀποστόλου, ἅπερ εἰσὶ θεμέλια θῆς πίστεως ἡμῶν, ἐφ΄ οἷς ἐδράκσονται πάντες οἱ ἡμέτεροι διδάσκαλοι. Ἐπεὶ οὖν οἱ διδάσκαλοι ἡμῶν τῶν τῆς πίστεως ἀντέχονται θεμελίων καὶ οὐ παρεκκλίνουσι κατά τι, οἱ δὲ θεμέλιοι σαφέστατοί εἰσιν, οὐ δεῖ τινα ἀμφιβάλλειν ἐν οἷς αὐτοὶ λέγουσιν· εἰ δ΄ ἐν τούτοις ἀμφιβάλλει τις, οὐκ οἶδα ἐν τίσι τὴν πίστιν ἐνδείξηται. Καίτοιγε οὐδε οἱ διαφερόμενοι ἡμῖν ἀμφιβαλλούσιν εἰς ὃ κατέχει καὶ κηρύττει ἡ Ἐκκλησία ἡμῶν· καὶ αὐτοὶ γὰρ ὁμολογοῦσιν ὅτι ὅ λέγομεν ἡμεῖς, καλόν ἐστι καὶ ἀληθέστατον, τὰ δὲ ἑαυτῶν βιάζονται σύμφωνα δεῖξαι τοῖς ἡμετέροις·" Syropoulos VII, 17.

448 Gill 1964, 147; Gill 1969/1970, 227; Kondyli, Andriopoulou, Panou & Cunnigham 2014, 2.

449 "Θεὸς ὁ τὰ πάντα ἐφορῶν, ὅτι πάντα οὕτω προέθησαν ὡς ὁ λόγος φθάσας ἐδήλωσε, καὶ οὐ παραλλάσσω τι τῶν γεγονότων ἐκεῖσε, οὐδὲ ἄλλο τι παρὰ τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν τῷδε συγγράφομαι τῷ συγτάγματι." Syropoulos XI, 9.

> Rome has made additions to it and has transgressed the limits set by the Holy Fathers. That is why all of us who keep the teaching of the Fathers in its purity have either removed or distanced ourselves from it.'[450]

A specific topic in this speech is the addition to the Creed. The texts without the addition represent the truth for the Georgian, as for the other traditional Greeks, whereas the Roman Church was presented as transgressing against the truth.

The problem was that not all the manuscripts contained the works in their exactly original form, and were thus prone to defects and errors. What, then, were the ways in which a certain passage or wording was argued to be an error? The qualities the manuscript had and the argumentation relating to these are discussed in the next chapter, but one key factor was the culture behind all these qualities and explanations. What I have said about the trust in one's own textual tradition can be applied to the manuscripts too. Just as the familiar authors and their works, as well as their interpretations, represented the truth, so too the manuscripts of one's own culture were considered more trustworthy than the products of the other culture. This, at least, is the general picture.

The manuscripts have a cultural history, and the participants did realize this, even if they did not put it in these terms. Although they possessed authoritative and even sacred content, the manuscripts were made by humans of different cultures and historical traditions. They were produced at a certain time and place and within a culture. Accordingly, when there were differences in the manuscripts, there had to be a human error to explain them. The sacred and authoritative works could not have mistakes or errors in themselves. A Church Father could not err in matters of faith. An accusing finger was pointed at the human producing or using the manuscript either in the distant or in the recent past. Nevertheless, there were only a few cases where one specific person was called to account. A more common way was to search for the reason for differences and mistakes in the cultures. Roughly speaking, the Greek culture and the Latin culture were thought by the other to be consistent and continuous with the past, one entity. While the participants trusted their own ancestors, they did not trust the other party, neither its present nor its past representatives.

[450] "ἡ ἡμετέρα οὖν Ἐκκλησία κατέχει καλῶς ὅσα παρέλαβεν ἀπό τε τῆς διδασκαλίας τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τῆς παραδόσεως τῶν ἁγίων Ἀποστόλων καὶ τῶν οἰκονουμενικῶν συνόδων καὶ τῶν ἁγίων τῶν ἀνακεκηρυγμένων τῆς Ἐκκλησίας διδασκάλων, καὶ οὐ δόλως παρεξῆλθεν ἀπὸ τῆς διδασκαλίας αὐτῶν καὶ οὔτε προσέθηκέ τι οὔτε ἀφείλετο τὸ τυχόν· ἡ δ΄ Ἐκκλησία τῆς Ῥώμης προσέθηκε καὶ παρέβη τὰ ὅρια τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων. Διὸ καὶ ἀπεκόψαμεν αὐτὴν, ἢ καὶ ἀπέστημεν ἀπ΄ αὐτῆς ὅσοι τηροῦμεν τὰ τῶν πατέρων καθαρά." Syropoulos IX, 27.

Nicholas Constas has studied the Council of Ferrara–Florence with the aspect of culture as a central element. For him, the Council was "a complex human transaction in which a range of cultural, political, and religious factors were misunderstood in a clash of largely incommensurable paradigms and values."[451] There were many times when the two cultures did not understand each other and acted in a way that was not desirable or even acceptable.[452] Moreover, many times, there was not even a desire to understand the other culture. The Latins were chiefly interested in the Greek past, its ancient authors and texts. For the Greeks, the relationship with the Latins and the Latin religious tradition and practices and their culture was difficult, especially after the Fourth Crusade (1202–1204) and the subsequent western occupation of Constantinople (1204–1261).[453] When this common attitude towards the other culture is taken into account, it is easy to understand the intensity with which the other culture was blamed for mistakes and interpolations.

After the Greeks had argued that the Latins had added the *Filioque* to the Creed and accused Latins of mutilation of manuscripts, Giovanni da Montenero emphasized that corruption was typical, not of the Latins, but rather of the Greeks. Thus, he extended his argument to explain, not only one specific manuscript, but all the manuscripts by stating that the origin of corruption as a phenomenon was Greek, not Latin.[454] He said to Mark of Ephesus:

> [T]he origin of this addition, which you are talking about, cannot be attributed to the Latins. The reason is that so far (I say this in peace), mutilation and erasure of the books can be seen as your vice from the old Councils.[455]

451 Constas 2004, 39.

452 Nicholas Constas gives as an example the infamous case of the meeting of the pope and the Patriarch of Constantinople before the opening of the Council. The pope expected the patriarch to kiss his foot, whereas the patriarch had a fraternal embrace in mind. Another example is the difference in liturgical calendars and the consequences that they entailed. When the Greeks arrived in Venice, there was a feast, as it was Carnival time in the West, while in the East, Lent had already begun. See Constas 2004, 45.

453 Constas describes the Western occupation as an "event which the Greeks experienced not only as a disavowal of their religious tradition, but as a threat to their emerging national and cultural identity." Josef Macha has argued that the "fear of the loss of their cultural identity made the Greek people violently react to anything Latin." See Constas 2004, 44.

454 AG 301.

455 "ὁ λόγος ταυτησὶ τῆς προσθήκης, περὶ ἧς λέγετε, οὐ φαίνεται δύνασθαι ἀπονεμηθῆναι Λατίνοις. ὁ δὲ λόγος, ὅτι μέχρι τῆς παρούσης, ὡσανεὶ μετὰ συγγνώμης λέγοιμι, ἀπὸ ὑμετέρων ἀρχαιοτάτων συνόδων φαίνεται φανερὸν ὅτι ἡ κακία αὕτη τοῦ διαφθείρειν τὰς βίβλους καὶ ἀφαιρεῖν ἀπὸ τῶν βίβλων, ἅτινα ἐποίουν οἱ τῇ πίστει μαχόμενοι, ἐν ἐκείνοις τὰς μέρεσιν ἐφωράθη." AG 297.

This passage reveals a very common Latin attitude towards the Greeks. The reason for mutilation in the manuscript could be understood to be endemic in the culture and the character of the people of that culture. This is, however, explained not only by an attitude of hostility but also by the use of common history and its sources. In the first millennium of the Churches, there were times when the pope had guided the Eastern patriarchs, and the question of corruption was also brought up.[456] Giovanni da Montenero employed both the exemplary actions of the Latin ancestors and the bad habits of the other culture's ancestors in his argumentation. It was irrelevant that these ancestors had lived in a different time and place than the later makers and users of the manuscripts.

The reading of manuscripts was not a purely intellectual activity, especially in the case of religious texts. Reading was closely connected to the senses. The common practice in the Middle Ages, both in the West and in the East, was to read texts aloud. In the Byzantine culture, at least when letters were read aloud, the situation was considered a dialogue.[457] Although Herbert Hunger, who has studied the reading practices of the Byzantines, wrote only about the correspondents and the powerful presence that reading around could create, I propose that this experience could be extended to the Sacred Scripture and other religious writings. They could hear God speaking when passages of the Sacred Scripture were read aloud. Alternatively, they could sense the saint or holy father of the Church when reading and listening to their words.[458]

I shall look into holy images before explaining more closely the idea of hearing or sensing the holy when listening to the sacred and religious texts. A participant at the Council, Gregory Melissenos, who was the emperor's confessor, visited a Latin church before the Council. He described his experience as follows:

> 'When I enter a Latin church, I venerate none of the [images of] saints depicted there because I recognize none of them. Although I do recognize [the image of] Christ, I do not venerate him either because I do not know in what terms he is inscribed (ἐπιγράφεται). Instead, I make the sign of the cross and prostrate

456 Giovanni da Montenero used Cyril of Alexandria as an example. This is discussed in chapter 4.3.

457 Joseph Rhakendytes describes a letter as "the conversation of a friend with a friend." Jos. Rhakendytes, Σύνοψις ῥητορικῆς, Kap. 14: ὁμιλία φίλου πρὸς φίλον. Walz III 558 f. See also Hunger 1989, 125–129 on Byzantine habits of reading. Similarly of the western practices, see Constable 1976.

458 See also Amtower 2000, 47.

> myself, not to anything that I see in their churches, but only to the cross that I have made myself.'[459]

In the church, Melissenos saw pictures of the (Latin) saints, but did not recognise them and thus did not sense the holiness. Moreover, for this reason he venerated neither them nor even the image of Christ. Constas speaks of an "aesthetic response.[460] The response was, however, not solely aesthetic but had also a theological meaning. He ought not to have had a problem with venerating Christ, but the Latin context made Melissenos make the sign of a cross in a way that was familiar to him. He avoided taking the risk of venerating Christ according to the Latin manners.

As with seeing the holy and needing to be able to recognise it in order to venerate it and appreciate the holiness, I argue that the works in the manuscripts, seeing and listening to them, acted in a similar way for some Council participants. Especially for the Greeks, authors or works they were unfamiliar with were cited a few times, and their reaction was similar to Melissenos's aesthetic response to the holy images. Syropoulos quotes his own words:

> '[W]hat will become of the Western saints whose works we have never known or read (since we have never had them in our possession and they have never been translated from the beginning, and that is why they are totally unknown to us).'[461]

Although Syropoulos or the other members of the Byzantine delegation did not repudiate the Latin Fathers completely, they did not know how to approach them. The quotation above is part of the discussions in which the Greeks ponder whether the quotations of the Latin Fathers, which supported the *Filioque*, were falsified or not. While they agreed that the Saints and Fathers all had to follow the same truth and be in agreement (*consensus patrum*),[462] they did not know them and could not compare them or their texts to their own versions. When they heard the passages,

459 "Ἐγὼ ὅτε εἰς ναὸν εἰσέλθε Λατίνων, οὐ προσκυνῶ τινα τῶν ἐκεῖσε ἁγίων, ἐπεὶ οὐδὲ γνωρίζω τινά· τὸν Χριστὸν ἴσως μόνον γνωρίζω, ἀλλ΄ οὐδ΄ ἐκεῖνον προσκυνῶ. διότι οὐκ οἶδα πῶς ἐπιγράφεται, ἀλλὰ ποιῶ τὸν οταυρόν μου καὶ πρσκυνῶ. Τὸυ σταυρὸν οὖν, ὅν αὐτὸς ποιῶ, προςκυνῶ καὶ οὐχ ἕτερόν τι τῶν ἐκεῖσε θερουμένων μοι." Syropoulos IV, 46. Translated by Nicholas Constas, see Constas 2004, 45–46.

460 Constas 2004, 46.

461 "πῶς ἂν ἐπὶ τῶν δυτικῶν ἁγίων, ὧν τὰ συγγράμματα οὔτε οἴδαμεν οὔτε ἀνέγνωμεν ποτε (οὐδὲ γὰρ εἴχομεν αὐτὰ οὔτε ἀρχῆθεν μετεγλωττίσθησαν κἀντεῦθεν οὐδόλως εἰσὶν ἡμῖν γνώριμα)." Syropoulos IX, 7.

462 On *consensus patrum* or *symphōnia* of Greek and Latin Fathers, see for example Parry 2015, 7–9; Meyendorff 1986, 112; Ryder 165–166.

they could not hear the saint. All they heard was the Latin speaker, in the same space and time with them, reading a quotation.

In this case, when the religious dogma was discussed, the holiness was connected strongly to the truth and linked to the authority. Holiness could only produce truth, and truth was the basis for authority and argumentation. Nevertheless, how could one recognize the holy or separate the true from the false? Holiness was experienced differently in the two cultures and even by individuals, and the truth lay in different manuscripts. The culture offered the explanation for the differences and errors in the manuscripts and thus in the readings of the works they contained. The discussions of manuscripts were a battlefield between two cultures: which culture had a more honourable history that had saved the truth in its material products, the manuscripts.

3.5 Translators and interpreters

The Council of Ferrara–Florence was a bilingual meeting. Greek and Latin were present on the leaves of manuscripts and on the lips of speakers. The speeches of the participants were continuously translated into the other language by the interpreter and written down by the notaries in both languages. Quoted passages were originally written in one of these languages but were used in both original and translated versions. Quoted texts were also translated at the Council. In this subchapter, I discuss the role that Greek and Latin as spoken and written languages played in the Council. Interpreters and bilingual participants, and their authority as linguistic experts, play a central role. How did participants approach the presence of two languages in the Council’s discussions and in the manuscripts that were used and quoted in the sessions?

The participants were exposed to languages throughout the Council. For some, this must have been a situation of great joy, but for some, perhaps the majority who did not understand the other language, this may have been frustrating, boring or even suspicious. This is important because the relationship between the language and the culture that is using the language, and especially the connections that outsiders might create between the language and its user, were factors that influenced the ways in which participants approached the other culture and its written tradition. The Greek and Latin identities were connected to the languages.

For us, the term Greek or Latin can mean both the language and a person of a specific culture, speaking the language and most likely using that as a primary language of writing. For late-medieval persons, the situation was not identical, but nevertheless there were similarities: Greek or Latin could be a language or a person with a specific cultural and religious identity. Moreover, the language a person used was not a neutral matter but, in many cases, had an effect on the ways in which this person was approached and how their culture and their products were seen and

treated. The language was closely related to the culture and religious beliefs, and thus the attitudes towards a language could sometimes be similar to the attitudes towards the culture and what it represented. In this way, the language was also related to the concept of authority. I stated in the introduction that authority is given in culture and does not exist *per se.* Thus, authority was not necessarily accorded to the manuscripts nor even to textual works written in the 'wrong' language. If a manuscript's language did not create an insurmountable barrier to authority, profound linguistic argumentation was probably needed. This is what I will consider more closely in this subchapter.

Languages were and are closely connected to the cultures in which they are used. The Greeks and the Latins referred to each other as Greeks and Latins. These terms did not, however, simply refer to the language these persons used. The terms had a deep cultural meaning in them and even caused trouble between the groups. In particular, the term 'Greeks' when used by the Latins was not accepted lightly by everyone. Syropoulos recalled a discussion between the emperor and the bishop of Medeia, Stephen, who complained about Pope Eugene IV:

> 'He outraged us because he calls us Greeks and that is an insult. How then can we go there, since he insults us?'[463]

This happened before the Council itself, when the pope's ambassadors were in Constantinople. Syropoulos's account shows that there was some disappointment with the new Pope Eugene IV at this point. Pope Martin V, who had begun the negotiations for the Council, had died in 1431, and Eugene continued his predecessor's work with the Greeks. The papal letters contained some "harsh features" and "several terms which were not intended for any good purpose," according to the Greek listeners.[464] This might have caused even greater irritation about the use of the word *Greeks*, at least to the bishop of Medeia. Unlike the bishop, and probably other Greeks as well, the Emperor John VIII Palaiologos, was not insulted by this term, and he found the reaction of his compatriots strange.[465]

This ambivalent attitude towards the Latin use of the term 'Greeks' can be explained by the contemporary culture of Byzantium.[466] For a long time in the

463 "Ὑβρίζει ἡμᾶς· καλεῖ γὰρ ἡμᾶς Γραικούς, καὶ τοῦτο ἐστιν ὕβρις. Πῶς οὖν ἀπελευσόμεθα ἐκεῖ, ἐπεὶ ὑβρίζει μας;" Syropoulos II, 21.

464 Syropoulos II, 21.

465 Syropoulos II, 21.

466 The term *Graecus* or *Graeculus* was used already by ancient authors, usually in a pejorative sense. M. Dubuisson has analysed these terms and their use in the classical period. See Dubuisson 1991, 315–335. He based his statement that *Graecus* was understood as a pejorative term on four arguments. First, the Greeks themselves

Middle Ages, the Byzantines connected the term 'Greek' to ancient Greece, its pagan culture and authors. Since they themselves were Christians, they did not see the term as appropriate to them. They wanted to be discernibly different from that past. However, in the Late Middle Ages, the attitude to this term and its use and meaning started to change. The humanists and admirers of the ancient past of Greece wanted to be part of that history and heirs to the great classical authors.[467] The use and approval of the term 'Greeks' seemed to be more difficult for the traditional clergy and monks, who continued to separate the classical and the Christian pasts, than for the Greeks who had begun to find their ancestors in the classical past.

While the term 'Greeks' was certainly ambivalent, this was not equally true of the term 'Latins'. Nevertheless, there seem to be different uses and approaches to it. When analysing the use of the term in Syropoulos, I noticed that the term *Latin(s)* was always used of the contemporaries of Syropoulos, and hence of the Council participants. When Syropoulos spoke of the Latin Church Fathers or saints, he did not use the term *Latin,* but rather 'western' or 'occidental' (*δυτικοί*) instead. Similarly, for Syropoulos, the Greek Fathers and saints were either Eastern or oriental (*ἀνατολικοί*). These terms were linked to the sunrise (*ἀνατολίκος* deriving from the verb *ἀνατέλλω* meaning 'to rise') and sunset (*δυτίκος* deriving from the verb *δύω* meaning 'to set') and thus corresponded to the geography rather than the language. I see the reason for this distinction between contemporary Latins and the past saints and fathers in the attitude on the one hand towards the Latin language and, on the other hand, towards the culture that used it.

The relations between the Eastern and Western Churches and cultures had worsened, especially after the Fourth Crusade and the subsequent Latin occupation of Constantinople in the thirteenth century. The *Latinization*, which included "the forced education of Latin on one child in every Greek household,"[468] had left a deep repulsion towards anything Latin in most Greeks' minds. The language played an important part in the Latinization, and I would say that Latin, as a language, was felt to be forbidding and even dangerous.[469] Not all the Greeks felt this way, of course, and there were Greeks in the later Middle Ages who studied Latin voluntarily or

understood the term as an insult. Secondly, the Latins, especially poets, seem to use the word in a negative sense, and use other words for Greeks in other cases. Thirdly, the italic etymology of the word. Lastly, the word *Graecus* can be found together with other pejorative attributes. See Dubuisson 1991, 329–334. Especially the first argument with the late-medieval use and understanding of the word *Graecus*, though not all the Greeks understood the word as negative as in earlier centuries.

467 Steiris 2016, 173–199. Already the Fourth Crusade had spurred some Greeks to find their own identity, which was based on their 'Greekness.' See Constas 2004, 44.

468 Constas 2004, 44; Macha 1976, 92–96.

469 See for example, Syropoulos XII, 9.

seemed to enjoy the language and the Latin writings.[470] Nevertheless, the term 'Latins' and the term 'Latinized' applied to Latin-minded Greeks were used pejoratively.

While the Greeks, for the most part, did not see the Latins, their culture, and their recent past in a positive light, and used the term they associated them with negative connotations, it seems that the situation was different with the Latin Fathers of the past. The Church Fathers were not Latins, even if they wrote in Latin and were important for the Latins: they were authors inspired by the Holy Spirit and authorities of the common Christian past. The Greeks referred to them with the same words that, for example, Basil of Caesarea had used of them.[471] Although they had written in Latin, they did not represent the same culture as the Latins whom the Greeks met at the Council, nor were they linked to the stories of the last centuries, which had left painful memories. Nevertheless, the fact that they used Latin, lived in different regions than the East, and had their own followers and literary traditions, naturally had an impact on the use and usability of their works. The Greeks were not familiar with the Latin works and authors; at most, they knew only the most renowned names and some works. However, the Greeks approached the Latin Church Fathers as authors from the time of the one Church. They had been present and active in the ecumenical Councils and had formed, together with the Greek Fathers, the dogmas of the Church and fought heresies.

For the Council participants, therefore, all the Church Fathers were basically authors who represented the holy truth. In a passage in Syropoulos's narration of the Greek meeting at which they discussed whether some quotations from Western saints were true or false, the authority of all the saints is clearly visible. Syropoulos recalled a private discussion of the Greeks, at which the emperor and a Greek whose name is not mentioned shared their thoughts on quotations that the Latins had used. The emperor spoke first:

> 'If you declare them [=the passages of the Latin Fathers] to be false, you insult the saints, you create a quarrel and conflict between Eastern and Western saints, and a great scandal will ensue.' He replied: 'I will not insult the saints, but since we do not possess the writings in which these quotations are found and since they are not even known to us - for we have not heard of them until now - I will,

[470] The fourteenth-century scholar and statesman Demetrius Kydones is a good example of a Greek who took a positive stand vis-à-vis the Latins and wanted his compatriots to adopt this attitude. See Ryder 2012, 159–174.

[471] *Greek lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine periods*, 407.

> in doubt, only have to reject these texts, since I did not know about them. As for the saints, I will give them the veneration due to them.'[472]

The saints earned the shared respect of the Greeks and Latins. It was the contemporaries, both the Latins and the Greeks, that did not necessarily earn respect or authority. The Latin language of the saint was not a problem, but the Latin in a manuscript and the Latin used by those with a different interpretation of the dogma. The Greeks did not have the tools or knowledge to analyse the language and its authenticity. However, they had some, though limited, ways to impugn the manuscript and thus the validity of the Latin content. These methods are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

At any rate, both Latin and Greek were used at the Council, and the manuscripts that were the basis for argumentation were written in both languages. Some manuscripts were written in the original language, either Latin or Greek, while others were translations from one language to the other. It is not always evident in the sources whether the text cited was read in the original language or in a translation. The quotations were, in any case, translated either by a speaker or an interpreter. In addition, Ambrogio Traversari read the Greek quotations at least in the ninth session held in Florence on 24 March, and Andrew of Rhodes did so on several occasions.[473]

The use and usability of the manuscripts were connected to the Council participants and their level of linguistic, humanistic, and theological learning. Only a few of the participants, and not even all the speakers, knew both Latin and Greek.[474] There was a great need for interpreters and translators throughout the Council, and naturally already in the preparation of the Council. It appears that the speakers and other participants had to rely on those few persons who had knowledge of both languages.

The role of these individuals at the Council was, thus, important. There was one common interpreter, Niccolò Sagundino, whose responsibility was to translate the speeches of the participants from one language to another. Sagundino was born in

472 "Εἰ εἴποις αὐτὰ νόθα, ὑβρίζεις τοὺς ἁγίους καὶ ἐγερεῖς δυχόνοιαν καὶ διαμάχην μεταξὺ τῶν ἀνατολικῶν καὶ τῶν δυτικῶν ἁγίων καὶ γενήσεται σκάνδαλον μέγα. Ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· Οὐχ ὑβρίζω τοὺς ἁγίους, ἀλλ΄ ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἔχομεν ἡμεῖς τοὺς λόγους ἐν οἷς εὑρίσκονται ταῦτα τὰ ῥητά, οὐδὲ ἡμῖν εἰσι γνώριμα (οὐδὲ γὰρ ἠκούσαμεν αὐτὰ μέχρι τοῦ νῦν), τὰ μὲν ῥητὰ παραγράφωμαι ὡς ἀμφιβάλλων, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἤδειν αὐτά, τοῖς δὲ ἁγίοις τὸ ὀφειλόμενον ἀποδώσω σέβας." Syropoulos VIII, 6.

473 AL 216. Traversari had left the Council when it was transferred from Ferrara to Florence and came back on November 1438. See Stinger 1977, 211.

474 There were also others who may have known both languages but were not given major responsibilities. For example, the abbot of the monastery of Grottaferrata, Pietro Vitali (or Peter of Calabria), knew both languages but played only a small part in the negotiations. See Syropoulos IX, 20.

Negroponte, which was a Venetian colony at the time around 1402. His mother tongue was Greek, but he also gained knowledge of Latin and vernacular Venetian and was employed as an interpreter already in his hometown by the Venetian authorities. His skills were noticed, and he was chosen for the Council, possibly at the suggestion of the Venetian government to Pope Eugene IV, who was of Venetian origin himself.[475]

At the Council's sessions, Sagundino sat in the middle, between the speakers.[476] Although he is not mentioned frequently in the sources, his work, the translations of the speeches, can be read in the *Acts*. The secretaries, who were three according to *Acta Latina* and Fantinus Vallaresso, wrote down the discussions, which later formed the *Acts*. Besides this, Sagundino actively participated in the discussions, at least in a few instances, and made remarks on the interpretation by Andrew of Rhodes. This is analysed more closely later in this section.

It is noteworthy that Sagundino, though mentioned only a few times in the sources, was always presented in a positive light by both Latins and Greeks. The writer of the Latin *Acta*, Andrew of Santa Croce, praised Sagundino's aptitude in interpreting and translating both languages.[477] The Florentine chronicler Matteo Palmieri described Sagundino with flattering words in his chronicle:

> Nicholas of Euboia[478], who has the most excellent elegance in Latin and Greek languages and who helped as an intermediator when the Council was meeting with many learned men listening, and also myself seeing and listening, translated

475 Caselli 2019, 226–230.

476 When describing the seating arrangements of the Council, Syropoulos relates that the interpreters and the secretaries of the Latins and the Greeks sat on the floor in front of the speakers. See Syropoulos VI, 26. In *Acta Latina*, the interpreter Nicholas's place is said to have been on a footstool placed between the debaters. See AL 39. Fantinus Vallaresso recorded similarly in his *Libellus de ordine generalium conciliorum et unione Florentina*, 21: "And the interpreter stood in the middle of everyone, reporting everything in Greek and Latin, which were spoken on both sides. Three trustworthy reporters were appointed for each party, who faithfully wrote down all the events in Latin and Greek." ("Interpres autem stabat in medio omnium, refferendo cuncta in Greco et in Latino sermone, que a parte utraque dicebantur. Tres vero fideles notarii erant constituti pro qualibet parte, qui omnia gesta in Latino et Greco fideliter conscribebant.")

477 Andrew's praise, see AL 39. Andrew praised Nicholas, especially for his translation accuracy.

478 The Greek name for the island of Negroponte.

> the words and thoughts of the disputants, both Greek and Latin to and fro, with marvellous quickness and excellent style.[479]

As this passage reveals, Palmieri himself had participated in the Council. He did not, however, have a major role in the discussions; but he included the Council in his *Liber de Temporibus*, which was a world history from the year 1 to 1448. Palmieri treats the events of the Council only briefly, but for that reason, it is noteworthy that he described the Council's interpreter at such length. Ambrogio Traversari is the only one of the Council participants to be presented by Palmieri in a similar way. Other events of the Council are discussed only briefly, and the role of individuals is mainly limited.[480]

The space that Sagundino is given in Palmieri's chronicle can be explained by Palmieri's personal preferences, but also by the important role that Sagundino and the two languages had in the Council. The mention that Palmieri was himself there in the Council to listen and watch the interpreter in his work may perhaps have been made to emphasise Palmieri's role as an eyewitness and thus increase the credibility and authority of his narration, but also to point out the great impact Sagundino made on him personally. Sagundino's excellence in Greek and Latin and the fast but faithful way of interpreting both languages in the presence of many erudite men made the Council's discussions possible. Besides this, these erudite men are only a group of witnesses to Sagundino's excellent work. The exception is Traversari, whom Palmieri presents briefly, describing him as "having been accurately taught in Latin and Greek."[481] The knowledge of Greek and Latin in Palmieri's narrative occupies a key position.

Sagundino actively participated in the discussions, at least in a few instances that are mentioned in the *Acts*. In the fifth session in Ferrara on 25 October 1438, Sagundino remarked that the Latin speaker Andrew of Rhodes, had interpreted a Greek text badly. Sagundino did not remain silent, but rose and pointed out Andrew's error: "You are not interpreting this text well, father."[482] The Greek verb *ἑρμηνεύω* could relate to the act of interpreting or translating, or even explaining.[483] I suggest

479 "Nicolaus Eiboicus, latinae et graecae linguae atque elegantiae princeps laudatissimus habetur, qui frequenti concilio medius assistens, multis et eruditis viris audientibus, me quoque teste visente audienteque, disputantium verba atque sententias, tum graece, tum latine probatas mira celeritate ultro citroque in utraque lingua fidelissime et summo ornatu reddebat." Palmieri, 125.

480 Only Pope Eugene IV, the Byzantine emperor, and the Patriarch of Constantinople (without names) are mentioned.

481 "Ambrosius [--] latinae graecaque linguae accurate doctus." Palmieri, 125.

482 "Οὐ καλῶς ἡρμήνευσας, πάτερ, τὸ ῥητὸν." AG 132.

483 *Greek lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine periods*, 523.

that Nicholas criticised the entire delivery of Andrew in his comment, his translation of Maximus' letter to Marin, which had been read in Latin and then in Greek by Andrew. Sagundino was not only interpreting the speeches, but also took an active part if he noticed that a speaker was translating or interpreting a text wrongly. He, however, took his stand, not on the theological points, but on the linguistic issues. It is, at any rate, noteworthy that it was even possible for the interpreter to interrupt the speeches of the official speakers of the Council. The speakers were already appointed beforehand, and it was not self-evident that even the interpreter could speak this way. The *Acta Graeca* relates that Niccolò Sagundino rose and spoke. I interpret this scene as meaning that when Sagundino rose, he was not merely an interpreter listening to speakers, in this case, the speech by Andrew of Rhodes, and preparing to interpret it to the Greeks sitting on his footstool. Rather, he took on the role of a speaker and made his view known to everyone present. This is also supported by the fact that he is mentioned by name here, whereas he is mostly referred to as an interpreter without his name. In the end, it appears that Andrew of Rhodes continued with his speech and his interpretation of the text in hand, without giving way to Sagundino. The way in which Sagundino challenged his authority as a Latin theologian who knew Greek did not please Andrew.

In addition to Sagundino, there were secretaries and notaries who wrote down the discussions, which the *Acts* were later based on. Fantinus Vallaresso writes that there were three secretaries on each side, but does not specify who they were.[484] Lapo da Castiglionchio mentions Poggio Bracciolini as the "pope's domestic secretary" and two other papal secretaries, Cencio de' Rustici and Flavio Biondo.[485] All of these are central figures in fifteenth-century Italian humanism.[486] We do not know the names of the Greek notaries, probably three in number, as Vallaresso states.[487] Moreover, there were people in charge of other related activities. Lapo da Castiglionchio was responsible for some translations at the Council, but was disappointed in this role, according to his own words.[488] Alongside Niccolò Sagundino, probably the most important figure and linguistic authority was Ambrogio Traversari.

484 Vallaresso, XXIII.

485 Lapo da Castiglionchio V, 5. Lapo da Castiglionchio calls Poggio Bracciolini Poggio of Florence. He calls Cencio de' Rustici Cencio the Roman, and Flavio Biondo Flavio of Forlì. Flavio Biondo became a secretary in 1434. See Holmes 1969, 85.

486 George Holmes states that papal curia was a central place for humanists and a kind of research institute for the humanists. Many humanists aimed to work at the curia. See Holmes 1969, 83–84.

487 Vallaresso, XXIII; Gill 1953, xlviii.

488 Celenza 1999, 9.

Ambrogio Traversari was described in many places as an erudite man who knew both Greek and Latin.[489] He worked more behind the scenes than in the actual sessions but had an important role at the Council. He himself described his duties in a letter sent to a fellow Camaldolese monk from Ferrara during the Council the following way: "I am handling nearly all negotiations with the Greeks, translating from Greek into Latin and from Latin into Greek all that is said or written."[490] Even Syropoulos, who was against the union and was disappointed by Traversari's actions at one point,[491] did admit that Traversari was "highly eminent in Hellenic education".[492] Traversari collected and translated Greek texts for the Latins and interpreted them to the other Latins.

Traversari was an active translator already before the Council. It is not always easy to determine which translations reflect his own interests and which were commissioned to him. At any rate, Traversari was interested in the Greek Church Fathers and had both collected the manuscripts with Greek texts and translated them into Latin.[493] At first sight, perhaps the most unexpected text that Traversari translated is *Four Books against the errors of the Greeks* by Manuel Kalekas. Although the topic may not be surprising, the late Byzantine author Kalekas is a more unexpected choice for translation. It is commonly thought that the Latins in the Middle Ages were not interested in the Byzantine authors or theology. While this is probably true in general, one must bear in mind the special character of this project. Pope Martin V had ordered Traversari to translate this work of a late Byzantine author.[494] Kalekas supported the union, as did his teacher Demetrius Kydones. Antonio da Massa had brought a manuscript with this text from Constantinople to Italy in 1422.[495] I assume that Pope Martin V, who played a great part in the preliminary discussions of the future Council to bring the Eastern and Western Churches together, had hoped to get information about the Greek unionist view of theological matters. This information could then be used in the negotiations. Because Kalekas's (main) audience was the Greeks, and the objective was to convince the anti-unionists about the Latin position on the dogma of the Filioque, it offered

489 See for example, Lapo da Castiglionchio V, 5 and Palmieri, 125.

490 "Negocia ista Graecorum omnia ferme ipsi confiscimus, vel ex graeco in latinum, vel ex latino in graecum convertendo, quae dicuntur, ac scribuntur omnia." Traversari, lib. XIII, ep. 34. Translated by Charles Stinger, see Stinger 1977, 210.

491 Syropoulos V, 20. Syropoulos recalls how the Greeks were worried about Constantinople and the threats it had to endure all the time and how they grew impatient when the Latins did not give help before the union and just asked for the Greeks' patience.

492 "ἑλληνιχῆς παιδείας εἰδημονέστερος." Syropoulos X, 5. See also Syropoulos VII, 1.

493 Stinger 1977.

494 Stinger 1977, 206.

495 Garin 1985, 5.

insights into the ways in which the Latins could also argue for their view against the Greeks in such a manner that their compatriots too could argue with the same passages and arguments.

Kalekas was not, however, employed in the Council's sessions per se, although his patristic citations and thoughts were present in the speeches. In addition to Kalekas, Traversari translated many earlier Greek authors, among whom the patristic authors are of importance here. One of these is Epiphanius, who lived and wrote in the fourth century. His main work, the *Ancoratus*, was cited many times in the Council. In the second session held in Florence on 2 March 1439, the appointed speaker of the Latins, Giovanni da Montenero, stated that

> 'the Holy Spirit receives being from the Son is proved by a statement of Epiphanius in that volume entitled Ancoratus, translated from an ancient Greek codex by Ambrogio [Traversari]. He says, 'I call him Son who is from Him [i.e. the Father], but Holy Spirit him who alone is from both.''[496]

Stinger analysed this passage and the following discussions of Giovanni da Montenero and Mark of Ephesus as proof of Giovanni da Montenero's trust and dependence on "Traversari's authority as a Greek patristic scholar."[497] Giovanni da Montenero made it clear that the translation, which he had in hand, was made not by just anyone, but by Ambrogio Traversari, whom the participants at this point already knew and where friends with.[498] Giovanni da Montenero probably understood that his own authority was not enough to convince the Greeks when a Greek work was being discussed and analysed closely. Traversari, on the other hand, had already been recognized as a learned man who knew the languages and was familiar with Greek patristics as well. Traversari served as a linguistic authority for Giovanni da Montenero's speech.

496 "Spiritum Sanctum a Filio ipsum esse accipere probatur ex dicto s. Epiphanii qui in illo volumine, quod inscribitur Ancoratus, ex antiquo Graeco codice ab Ambrosio in Latinum converso, de persona Patris locutus: Filium illum dico, inquit, qui ex ipso est; Spiritum vero Sanctum, qui solus ex ambobus est." AG 256. Translated Charles Stinger, see Stinger 1977, 214–215.

497 Stinger 1977, 215.

498 Syropoulos referred to Traversari as one of the friends to whom the Byzantine delegation appealed for help when they received bad news from home during the Council. See Syropoulos V, 20. Traversari had become acquainted with many Greeks already in Venice, where the Byzantine delegation first came. Traversari was especially interested in Bessarion's manuscript collections. See Mercati (ed.), *Traversariana*, 25–26. Both were inspired by each other's learning and physical collections. The fact that Traversari could speak with Bessarion and other Greeks in Greek must have made the situation even more pleasurable to Bessarion and perhaps to many others as well.

Another noteworthy matter in the passage quoted is the mention of the Greek manuscript that was used. Giovanni da Montenero said that Traversari translated the work "from an ancient Greek codex" ("ex antiquo Graeco codice"). The competent translator and scholar Traversari had made the translation not from any manuscript, but from an ancient codex.[499] Even if Giovanni da Montenero used a translation, it was based on a Greek manuscript that was ancient. Moreover, even if the translation was not old nor the manuscript on which this translation was inscribed, the manuscript with the original text – or the text written in its original language – was old and thus authoritative. When translations were in question, they did not possess the same authority as the texts or the manuscripts with the text written in the original language. While the translations were an easier way to study the other culture's texts, they were problematic when specific passages were analysed. How and by whom the translation was made was the key to determining the authority of the translation.

Even if the Greeks recognized Traversari's knowledge of Greek, they noticed some problems with the passage from the *Ancoratus* in the version the Latins were using. The major problem was related to the use of the verb 'is'. Again, Giovanni da Montenero relied on the authority of the translators,

> 'When you replied to me, you said it was my habit to gather testimony from many places, as I did in that previous session with certain arguments produced from St. Epiphanius, in which the verb 'is' does not belong. I will therefore return to these texts. Since there are present here many translators, many extremely expert, including above all the Emperor, I call upon all these to testify whether in these places which I cited 'is' is understood. I did not put the word there, but rather Ambrogio [Traversari], who asserted it was necessary that it be understood. […] I have learned from many of Ambrogio's translations that it was the usual practice of the Greek doctors not to express the word in propositions that are necessarily understood.'[500]

This passage makes it clear that Giovanni da Montenero relied on Traversari and his knowledge of Greek. Besides that, he believed and probably hoped that the authority of Traversari would convince the Greeks. The passage also shows that the languages

499 The antiquity of a manuscript as an authoritative factor is discussed in chapter 4.2.

500 "Quando vero tu mihi respondebas, dixisti mei moris esse ex multis locis colligere testimonia, ut feci sessione superiore prolatis quibusdam beati Epiphanii sententiis, quibus non est appositum verbum Est. Ergo me ad illas referam. Quia hic praesentes sunt multi interpretes et peritissimi multi, et maxime imperator, hos omnes voco in testes utrum, in iis quae protuli, subintelligatur Est; non ego apposui, sed Ambrosius, qui illud necessario intelligi asserit." AG 336–337. Translated by Charles Stinger, see Stinger 1977, 215.

and the differences in the translations were not minor issues in the Council. The addition of the word 'is' in the Latin translation of the Epiphanian text was a big issue for Mark of Ephesus. The reasons for his indignation were explained by the difference in meaning,[501] but even more, I see that the minor difference offered the Greeks the chance to attack the Latins by pointing to the difference in the original text, which (according to the Greeks) did not have the verb 'is'. And they trusted the material evidence of this state of affairs. It followed that Traversari and the Latins had added this and thus altered the authoritative work.

The case of a missing 'is' and its relation to meaning must be understood in the context of the late medieval idea of translating. For a long time in the Middle Ages, word-to-word translations dominated the translation sphere. However, many humanists in the Late Middle Ages began to use sense-to-sense translation as their way of translating texts.[502] The idea behind this was to preserve the original style better. A new approach to translating was not, however, universally acclaimed.[503] Although the passages from Sacred Scripture and the Church Fathers may have been quoted many times by heart on other occasions and in such a way that the essential aim was to conserve the meaning rather than the exact wording, the words in the manuscripts that were present at the Council were crucial in this context. Any alteration in the wording that was present in a manuscript that was considered to be authoritative for a speaker or the whole contingent could be pointed out to see whether it, in fact, changed the meaning. This proves that the manuscripts played a crucial part in the Council and that the languages and translations were part of these discussions.

There are other cases where the languages and their differences played a significant part in the Council as well. In the heated discussions of the Filioque, the expressions "from the Son" and "through the Son" were closely examined and compared. First, it was discussed in the Council whether *Filioque* was an addition (*additio*/*προσθήκη*) illegitimately made by the Latins, or whether it was an explanation (*explanatio*/*σαφήνεια*) or clarification (*explicatio*/*ἀνάπτυξις*).[504] The Greeks interpreted literally the prohibition of adding or subtracting anything to or from the Creed by the Ecumenical Councils. Following this literal interpretation, Mark of Ephesus, who was speaking for the Greeks at this point, used the excerpts

501 On the theological interpretations, see Gill 1959, 196–197.
502 Glykofrydi-Leontsini 2003, 175–185, see especially 182.
503 Deno J. Geanakoplos mentions that the bishop of Burgos chose the older translation by William of Moerbeke rather than the more recent one by Leonardo Bruni. See Geanakoplos 1976, 266.
504 Gill 1959, 151.

from the ecumenical Councils to support the Greek view, as well as Cyril of Alexandria and his words:

> In no way do we allow the defined faith to be upset by anyone; that is the Creed of our Holy Fathers who once in a time assembled in Nicaea. Nor indeed do we permit either ourselves or others to change a word of what is laid down there or transgress even one syllable, mindful of the text: 'Do not remove the ancient boundaries which your fathers set.' For it was not they who spoke but the Spirit of God and Father, who proceeds from him, yet is not alien to the Son in respect of substance. [505]

Cyril of Alexandria (c. 376–444) was the Patriarch of Alexandria and participated in the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus in 431. He is especially known for the Christological controversies with Nestorius and Nestorians.[506] Many of his Christological works were translated into Latin already during his lifetime, and works dealing with other topics were translated at a later date. Cyril was used in Latin *florilegia* supporting the *Filioque* as well as in the *florilegium* of a Greek unionist, John Bekkos.[507] For Mark of Ephesus, it was clear that the prohibitions were meant to be understood literally, and not even a syllable should be changed. Moreover, since the *Filioque* was neither in the original texts nor in the manuscripts that were authoritative for Mark, it was not permitted.

The Latin speaker, Andrew of Rhodes, however, challenged this view that the prohibitions should be understood so literally. Quite surprisingly, Andrew cited a late Byzantine author, Gregory Palamas, who had lived in the previous century. Andrew addressed Mark and other Greeks:

> 'What your great teacher Gregory Palamas says: 'I care little about words; for piety is not discerned in words, but in things, according to the theologian Gregory[508]. I care about doctrines and matters, and if someone agrees in the

505 Translated by Joseph Gill, see Gill 1959, 147, who quotes Cyril of Alexandria, Letter to John of Antioch (in Mansi, 5, 308E). Cyril has quoted Prov. 22:28.

506 A short introduction to Nestorius and Nestorianism, see Adams 2021, 366–375.

507 Van Loon 2015, 170–178. Hans van Loon has also noted that Cyril's works, *Epigraphae* and *Thesaurus*, played a role at the Council of Ferrara-Florence. See Van Loon 2015, 178.

508 Gregory of Nazianzus (329–390).

> matter, I will not differ from the words.' Reverend Fathers, since that teacher does not care about the words, you ought not to care about them.'[509]

Taking his stance on the authority of Gregory of Palamas and his interpretation of a more authoritative Church Father, Gregory of Nazianzus, Andrew of Rhodes endeavoured to show the Greeks that it was the matters and doctrines that counted, not the words themselves. Andrew continued that there are in any case differences in the words of the Creed in Latin and in Greek and in other languages as well in which this Creed is spoken.[510] This argument was not accepted at this point, and in this matter, by the Greeks,[511] but when the discussion moved on to the actual dogma, the different uses and meanings between Greek and Latin were discussed more widely.

Eventually, it was time to draft the union decree. The linguistic issues were not over, but the text was sent back and forth many times. Traversari's knowledge of both languages was so remarkable that he was chosen for the composition of the Greek text of the decree of union, together with others. Syropoulos describes the making of the document this way,

> It [=the Greek text] was composed by the Latin monk Ambrogio, a highly educated man of Hellenic culture. The Bishop of Nicaea wanted to change some terms to give more elegance to the Greek. So, the most learned of the Latins gathered together. Moreover, when the bishop of Nicaea read a word to them, they examined it and clarified its meaning for a long hour, sometimes even for two hours. If the Latins assigned to this work approved of the word, it was inserted, but if one of them did not agree with it, it was left out. This lasted ten days, and then they transcribed it as it appeared.[512]

509 "και ἤνεγκε τοῦ ἁγίου Γρηγορὶου τοῦ Παλαμᾶ χρῆσιν - Λέξεων ἡμῖν λόγος ὀλίγος · οὐ γὰρ ἐν ῥήμασι ἡμῖν ἀλλ´ ἐν πράγμασιν ἡ εὐσέβεια κατὰ τὸν θεολόγον Γρηγόριον· περὶ δὲ δογμάτων καὶ πραγμάτων ποιοῦμαι, κἄν τις ἐν πράγμασι ὁμοφωνῇ. πρὸς τὰς λέξεις οὐ διαφέρομαι. ἐπειδή, αἰδεσιμώτατοι πατέρες, ὁ διδάσκαλος ἐκεῖνος οὐδὲν ποιεῖται φροντίδα λέξεων, οὐδ´ ὑμεῖς ὀφείλετε περὶ λέξεων ποιεῖσθαι λόγον." AG 102–103.

510 AG 103.

511 Gill 1959, 154.

512 "Ἔγραψε δέ αὐτὸν ὁ μοναχὸς Ἀμβρόσιος ὁ λατῖνος· ἐκεῖνος γὰρ ἦν τῆς ἑλληνιχῆς παιδείας εἰδημονέστερος. Ἠθέλησε δὲ ὁ Νικαίας μεταποιῆσαι λέξεις τινὰς πρὸς ἑλληνικωτέραν καλλιέπειαν. Συνήγοντο οὖν οἱ λογιώτεροι τῶν Λατίνων, καὶ ἣν ἂν λέξιν ἔλεγεν ὁ Νικαίας, ἐξήταζον καὶ ἐσαφήνιζον αὐτὴν ὥεαν πολλήν, ἐνίοτε καὶ μέχρι δύο ὡρῶν· καὶ εἰ μέν ἠρέσκοντο ἐπὶ τῇ λέξει οἱ πρὸς τοῦτο ἐκλελεγμὲνοι [sic] Λατῖνοι, ἐτίτθετο· εἰ δέ τινι αὐτῶν ἀπήρεσκεν, ἠφίετο. Ἐγίνετο δὲ τοῦτο ἐπι δέκα ἡμέρας, καὶ ἔγραψαν αὐτὸν καθὼς ὁρᾶται." Syropoulos X, 5.

The linguistic formulas were of great importance in the official decree that was going to be distributed both to the contemporary rulers and nations and to the future generations. And since the decrees and other authoritative documents of the ecumenical Councils in the past had kindled discussion in linguistic terms, the decree of the present Council was intended to be formulated in such a way that it was precise and identical in both languages. It was Traversari who had the most responsibility in this work, although Bessarion (the bishop of Nicaea), as the above passage notes, wanted to correct some expressions.

Although it seems that neither language was treated as more authoritative or more inferior, it still mattered which language was used, or in which language the manuscripts and the works had been written. It was clear that the decree of union should be written "in Latin on one half of the parchment and in Greek on the other."[513] Latin and Greek were both used and approved languages in the Council, in spoken and in written form. The use and usability of the manuscripts were closely connected to the language of the manuscripts, but also to the participants' linguistic proficiency. The texts written in a foreign language, whether original or translations, were not so easily regarded as authoritative. Unknown texts were problematic, but the language had to be correct even in familiar texts. The translation had to be made by an expert and from an authoritative manuscript in the original language, as with the text translated by Traversari from an ancient Greek codex.

In this chapter, I have pointed out the various ways in which the Council participants used manuscripts. Both sides appointed learned men to search, collect and translate important texts and manuscripts. This search did not end when the Council started. The manuscripts were needed as material objects. They were compared, and their contents, as well as their materiality, were scrutinised carefully. Both the Greeks and Latins had their own learned culture and theological methods. These methods were tested at the Council, and the discussions shaped how the speakers argued for their cause. In the next chapter, the materiality of the manuscripts is discussed even more closely. The manuscripts before the eyes of the participants offered evidence that could either support or contradict the arguments based on textual factors. In this way, the manuscripts' material and cultural history became an important part of the Council's discussions.

513 "ἐν μὲν τῷ ἡμίσει μέρει τῆς αὐτῆς βεμβράνας λατινικῶς, ἐν δὲ τῷ ἑτέρῳ ἡμίσει ἑλληνικῶς." Syropoulos X, 13.

4 "Someone with an arrogant mind, and even more arrogant hand, has erased the truth with a knife"[514] – Authoritative and unreliable elements in the manuscripts

There were several aspects of the manuscripts that made them authoritative or unauthoritative. The difference between a text and its material form as a book or manuscript caused problems at the Council. The authoritative text did not necessarily mean an authoritative manuscript. Variant readings of the text found in many manuscripts from different times and places meant that there was a need to determine the most authentic and, thus, the most authoritative textual form preserved in a manuscript. The various aspects of the manuscript, such as its material and age, played a major part here. The origin and the entire life cycle of the manuscript were investigated, or at least assumptions were made about them.

In this chapter, I study the qualities of the manuscripts used and discussed at the Council and their relation to the question of authority. These were material and age, which were frequently closely connected to each other. In addition, the discussions and accusations of corruption or mutilation of the manuscripts were an important factor when the participants argued for and against the manuscripts and their authority. Corruption was also connected to the question of the users of the manuscripts and thus to the origin and provenance of the manuscripts. The places of preservation and the people responsible for the composition and use of the manuscripts were used as strong arguments. Moreover, since there was a large number of manuscripts at the Council and an even greater number not in the hands of the participants, quantity too could work as an argument in the discussions. However, mere quantity could not outweigh quality.

514 "Ἀνὴρ δέ τις τολμερᾶς μὲν ψυχῆς, χειρὸς δὲ τολμηροτέρας, κατὰ μὲν τοῦ βεμβράνου σιδήρῳ χρησάμενος ἀπέξεσε τὴν ἀλήθειαν·" Bessarion ad Alexium, 9.

Although these qualities are discussed in separate subchapters, it is important to apprehend them as parts of a larger whole. The manuscript had many qualities simultaneously, and many of these aspects were combined in argumentation. It is also noteworthy that there were two Churches and two book cultures present at the Council, and these qualities and their relation to the question of authority were, in some cases, understood differently. Furthermore, it was ultimately the individuals who were the ones who used these arguments and defined the course of the Council and its discussions.

4.1 Material and authority

Manuscripts are physical objects. They are made of different materials and designed for different types of use. Materials, in this case the writing supports, parchment, and paper, are choices that indicate the purposes and prestige of manuscripts. They may also offer information about their importance. However, what did the material mean to the Council's participants? What was the relationship between a writing support and authority? In this subchapter, I analyse the discussions or mentions of parchment and paper as a quality of a manuscript, and their role in the speakers' argumentation.

In the sessions held in the cities of Ferrara and Florence, the material of the manuscript brought into the Council was mentioned occasionally. There were times when the speakers of the Council saw it fitting to mention the writing support. It is probable that the materials were inspected in other situations as well, but these instances were not always recorded in the sources. The material was not something that had to be specified aloud on every occasion. Rather, writing support was a quality that was brought up when this was felt to be necessary by the owner or inspector of a manuscript. This included both positive and negative values of different materials.

It is necessary to begin the discussion with a brief history of the writing supports and especially the situation in the fifteenth century during the Council. In medieval Europe, the predominant material for writing was parchment. It had replaced papyrus, which was the most common writing support in the ancient world, by the fourth century CE.[515] Medieval texts were mostly written on parchment or, in the Late Middle Ages, on paper.[516] In the documents of the Council of Ferrara–Florence, there is no mention of papyrus as a material of the manuscripts brought to the Council, nor was it used in the documents produced in the Council. However, paper

[515] Papyrus was used by the Merovingian court until 677 and by the papal court until 1057, but otherwise, parchment replaced papyrus even earlier. See Clemens & Graham 2007, 3, 9.

[516] Clemens & Graham 2007, 3, 6–7, 9; Rizzo 1976, 13.

and parchment were present in the discussions and texts of the Council. Why was it important whether the manuscript was written on parchment or paper? Before the analysis of the different attitudes and attributions to the paper and parchment by the Latins and the Greeks, it is useful to observe the terms used for these materials.

In the documents of the Council, the Latin word for parchment is *membrana*. Bessarion also used *pergamenum* in his Latin translations of his own texts.[517] Greek equivalents in the documents are *μεμβρᾶνα* or *μέμβρανον* (or *βέμβρανον*). For the paper, the Latin word *papirus* (or *papyrus*) is used. Although this originally meant papyrus, medieval and humanistic writers used it mostly for paper, except when speaking explicitly about the ancient writing support.[518] The Greek word used in the *Acta Graeca* is *βάμβαξ*, which in fact refers to cotton. Cotton was one option for the material for making paper.[519] The Latin term *charta* or in Greek *χάρτης* and the adjectives derived from them are not used in the *Acts,* but are present in other documents of the Council participants. *Charta* in different forms is more ambiguous than the previous terms, as it can relate to papyrus, parchment, or paper. It could also mean a sheet. For Ambrogio Traversari, who used it widely, *charta* and *chartaceus* always referred to paper.[520] Let us then consider when the material is mentioned in the sources.

The material was brought up when some specific text was under scrutiny, and more closely when the participants noticed variant readings of the same text. When different manuscripts were brought into the discussion, the writing support could bring authority to the manuscript and thus to the reading preserved in it. In particular, the Latins appreciated parchment, as we read in Syropoulos, who wrote about the Latin respect for this specific material:

> They [=the Latins] presented it [= the manuscript] as old and made of parchment, for they give the greatest credibility to parchment.[521]

This respect regards not only its expensiveness or durability as a material, but also or especially its quality as a reliable material. The word *ἀξιόπιστος* is a compound

517 "in pergameno", Bessarion ad Alexium 9.

518 Rizzo 1976, 19, 21–22.

519 The early oriental paper was made of cotton, whence it got its name, see *Greek lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine periods*, 43–44. The humanists of the Western world also could use the Latin equivalent *bombyx* (or *bombycinus* as an adjective) and variations of it which had the same root as the Greek *βάμβαξ.* See, Rizzo 1976, 26. Bessarion uses the derivative *βαμβακηρά* of paper as well. See Bessarion ad Alexium 7.

520 Rizzo 1976, 26.

521 "καὶ ἐπεδείκνυον τοῦτο ὡς παλαιὸν καὶ βέμβρανον, ἐπεὶ ταῖς βεμβράναις τὸ ἀξιόπιστον ἐκεῖνοι παρέχουσι." Syropoulos VI, 31.

word consisting of two words: *ἄξιος* meaning worthy (of) and a derivative of the word *πίστις* meaning faith, confidence, or trust. Accordingly, *ἀξιόπιστος* means trustworthiness or credibility.[522] This credibility can be linked to its quality as a reliable material because of its durability, but in this case, it is probable that it is reliable also in the sense that the parchment, as a material for a manuscript, was thought by the Latins to bring credibility or trustworthiness to its content. One should be able to trust the manuscript with its content while it was written on parchment. Syropoulos's statement reveals a certain alienating spirit. It is 'them', the Latins, who give the greatest credibility to the parchment, not the Greeks. Syropoulos even used the pronoun *ἐκεῖνοι* (for *them*), although this is not needed in Greek for syntaxis nor even as an aid to understanding the meaning. I interpret, that its function here is to strengthen the alienation between the writer's culture and the others about which he is writing.

The *Acts* likewise relate that the Latins attached credibility to parchment. If the writing support was brought up in the discussions, this was done on Latins' initiative. One important manuscript brought from Constantinople to the Council by Nicholas of Cusa was made of parchment. This was one of the few cases where the material was mentioned and thus emphasized. This manuscript contained the works of Basil the Great and was crucial in the debates on the *Filioque*. The works were quoted, and it was soon noticed that there were different readings of the same passages of Basil. Thus, the Latin and Greek participants needed to prove somehow that they held the most authentic versions of these authoritative texts. In this, the material played a role. Giovanni da Montenero, speaking for the Latins, highlighted that their "book is made of parchment, not of paper, and is very old."[523] In particular, the mention "not of paper" indicates that in this case, the Greek manuscript (or manuscripts) was probably made of paper, while the Latin manuscript was of parchment. This gave the Latins the advantage, at least in their own eyes. The Greeks did not respond to this mention of the material. Their silence may indicate that the Greek manuscript was, in fact, made of paper, as they did not deny this.

Syropoulos's text, together with the passages in the *Acts* that show the Latin appreciation of parchment over paper, also indicates that the question of the writing support was not as important and vital to the Greeks as it was to the Latins. When Syropoulos writes that the Latins "give the greatest credibility to parchment,"[524] this shows that parchment and paper had differing values in the Greek and Latin worlds.

522 *Greek lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine periods*, 196.

523 "est liber in membranis, non in papiro, et antiquissimus." AL 155. Similarly in AG 297: "ἔστι δὲ ἡ βίβλος ἐν μεμβράνοις οὐκ ἐν βαμβακίνοις."

524 "καὶ ἐπεδείκνυον τοῦτο ὡς παλαιὸν καὶ βέμβρανον, ἐπεὶ ταῖς βεμβράναις τὸ ἀξιόπιστον ἐκεῖνοι παρέχουσι." Syropoulos VI, 31.

In the medieval West, parchment was the choice for important texts and illumination, which deserved (in the minds of contemporaries) a durable and elegant material. Paper was, however, usually the choice for documents of personal use, such as correspondence, and for drafts before the definitive version was produced on parchment. Paper production was much cheaper than parchment, and paper was in many ways more practical as a writing support than parchment. For example, it was easier to produce manuscripts of varying sizes and shapes with paper.[525] Great effort was made, especially by many humanists, to get a perfect and elegant manuscript for important work. Material frames of the manuscript reflected the importance and value attached to the text it contained. The choices that fifteenth-century humanists and other writers and manuscript producers made relating to the writing support indicate the values and views of different materials of the past as well. Since the bibliophile humanists saw paper as "a bit like the poor sister of the parchment", as Silvia Rizzo has put it,[526] it represented something inferior to parchment. Paper was not even supposed to endure over time the same way as parchment.[527]

Although it was the Latins' attitude towards parchment that Syropoulos highlighted, for Greeks the material was not trivial either. The Byzantine tradition of writing supports differs somewhat from that of Latin tradition. A Byzantinist, Nicholas Oikonomidès, analysed the outline of manuscript materials in Byzantine history and demonstrated that there were certain criteria behind the selection of the writing support for different texts for different purposes. He noted that paper was the main material even for the imperial acts before the year 1250, except for four documents of great luxury.[528] After this, parchment was increasingly chosen for solemn acts, especially for chrysobulles. At the same time, paper was used in greater quantity in monastic and private documents. From the second half of the fourteenth century onwards, paper was an even more likely choice, since the Empire suffered from poverty, and paper was much cheaper than parchment.[529] In this way, parchment acquired greater prestige. On the other hand, it seems that parchment was mainly used for imperial purposes, since it was a prestige material. But while it may

525 Rizzo 1976, 13, 16–17, 22. It should be noted that correspondence was not merely personal. The letters were usually written on paper but might have been collected later to form collections of the correspondence of a certain person. These collections were sometimes written or later printed on parchment to endure time better. See Rizzo 1976, 22.

526 "un po' come la sorella povera della pergamena," Rizzo 1976, 16.

527 Rizzo 1976, 17.

528 These were the *axiômatikon pittakion* of Christodoulos of Palermo and three solemn letters to the pope, written on purple parchment, see Oikonomidès 1977, 389–391.

529 Oikonomidès 1977, 389–391.

have brought a certain authority or prestige to imperial documents, this was not necessarily the case with the religious material. There, the tradition was different.

Besides that, all the references to the writing supports were raised by the Latins; all the paper manuscripts were said to have been brought by the Greeks. It is probable that the Latins possessed some paper manuscripts and brought them to the Council. Traversari, who had collected manuscripts for the whole decade of the 1430s, had many important works also on paper. This can be seen in his correspondence, where he many times described the manuscripts he had found in the monasteries or libraries or the manuscripts he was asking for and which he had perhaps seen before.[530] The mention of paper in the letters had nothing to do with authority, in my view, but was rather a helpful detail for the person whom Traversari asked to look for some specific manuscript. Traversari had seen some important work, written on paper, and needed it and so asked for it. In any case, the parchment manuscripts were more authoritative, and the Latins considered them worth mentioning in the Council discussions. Whereas a manuscript on paper might indeed contain an important work, it was still not as valuable and authoritative *qua* manuscript.

Parchment is also mentioned as the material for the preamble decree and for the decree of the union.[531] Although these other mentions of parchment refer to documents prepared at the Council, they reveal the attitudes of the Council participants. The material is parchment in every copy made at the council, surviving even today, and this is acknowledged by Syropoulos too. The decree was written, "in Latin on one half of the parchment and in Greek on the other."[532] Together with other elements discussed in other subchapters that gave a manuscript prestige and lasting value, parchment was a natural material choice for the decree. Besides its value as a precious material, which made it appropriate to this kind of prestigious document, its value as a durable material was central. The union was meant to last, and its documents were meant to demonstrate this in the future too.[533]

530 In the texts of Traversari, in his correspondence, and the *Hodoeporicon*, however, it is clear that he sees parchment as more prestigious.

531 Syropoulos II, 23; X, 13.

532 "ἐν μὲν τῷ ἡμίσει μέρει τῆς αὐτῆς βεμβράνας λατινικῶς, ἐν δὲ τῷ ἑτέρῳ ἡμίσει ἑλληνικῶς." Syropoulos X, 13.

533 Like many other Latin documents in the Middle Ages, the bull of union also used the formula "ad perpetuam rei memoriam" ("for the perpetual memory of the matter", which was translated in Greek as "εἰς αἴδιον τοῦ πράγματος μνήμην"). This formula had been used since the eleventh century (also in the form "in perpetuam memoriam", or simply abbreviated as "in pp. m") in papal bulls of great solemnity. Around the same time, papyrus was replaced with parchment as the material for the papal bulls. See Thurston 1908, 52–58. Parchment could carry out the task it was given (to hold the perpetual memory) better than papyrus or, later, paper. It was more prestigious and

As I have already pointed out, the Greeks did not mention the materials, either of their own manuscripts or of the Latin ones, in the *Acts*. Although the Greeks at the Council were not interested in the material of the manuscript, at least in the same way as the Latins, it is evident in the later writings of Bessarion that the material aspects of the manuscript and the ways in which the Latins had used them in the evaluation of the manuscripts and the works they contained had made an impression on Bessarion. After the Council and his return to Constantinople, Bessarion continued the work with the manuscripts. In his treatise, he recalled the Council and one occasion when the Latins and the Greeks had brought manuscripts of Basil of Caesarea's *Adversus Eunomium* in order to discuss the issue of the *Filioque*:

> At first, in the course of the conciliar deliberations were presented five, rather six books, four of which were made of parchment and were very old while two were made of paper (βαμβακηρά). Three of them (i.e., the parchment books) belonged to the archbishop of Mitylene, while the fourth belonged to the Latins. As for the paper ones, the first belonged to our mighty emperor and the second to the holy patriarch. He had brought it with him from the monastery of Xanthopouloi. Of these six [manuscripts], five contained the fragment/testimony in the form I just described, that is, «having (i.e., the Holy Spirit) its being from him and being completely dependent on that cause/principle» that is on the Son. Only one manuscript — that is, the one that belonged to the Patriarch — was different since someone had abridged the fragment by adding some [words here] and removing [some others there].[534]

In this passage, Bessarion mentioned the writing supports of all the manuscripts in discussion. He even grouped the manuscripts according to their material, and only then according to the owners. This indicates the value or importance which Bessarion attached to the material. The majority, that is, four out of six manuscripts were made of parchment, and only two were of paper, and these two were both owned by the Greeks. Of these six manuscripts, only one had a reading which supported the Greek

more trustworthy for the Latins. See also Johrendt 2014, in which he discusses the lapidary inscriptions of papal charters of Popes Boniface IX and Gregory XI.

534 "Πρῶτον μὲν ἐν τῇ συνόδῳ ταύτῃ πέντε βιβλίων εὑρεθέντων, μᾶλλον δὲ ἕξ, τῶν μὲν τεττάρων βεμβράνων καὶ παλαιοτάτων, τῶν δὲ δύο βαμβακηρῶν· ὧν τὰ μὲν τρία τοῦ Μιτυλήνης ἀρχιεπισκόπου ἦσαν, τὸ δὲ τέταρτον τῶν Λατίνων· τῶν δε δύο βαμβακηρῶν, τὸ μὲν ἓν τοῦ ἱεροῦ πατριάρχου, ὃ ἐκ τῆς τῶν Ξανθοπούλων μονῆς λαβὼν ἐπηγάνετο. Τούτων οὖν ἕξ, τὰ πέντε οὕτως εἶχον τὴν χρῆσιν, ὡς ἐγὼ νῦν ἐξέθηκα, δηλαδή, « πατ' αὐτοῦ τὸ εἶναι ἔχον καὶ ἐκείνης τῆς αἰτίας », ἤγουν τῆς τοῦ υἱοῦ, « ἐξημμένον τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον » λέγοντα· τὸ δὲ ἓν μόνον - τὸ τοῦ πατριάρχου, δηλαδή - εἶχεν ἑτέρως, τινὸς περικόψαντος τὸ ῥητόν, καὶ τὰ μὲν προσθέντος, τὰ δ' ἀφελόντος." Bessarion ad Alexium, 7. Translated by Alexander Alexakis, see Alexakis 2000, 158.

view of the dogma of the *Filioque*. Moreover, that was one of the two paper manuscripts. Although the reason for the corruption does not lie in the material itself, it is noteworthy that Bessarion was so specific in his treatise about the materials of the manuscripts.

The references to the material in the Council’s sources show that it was employed as an argument for the authority of the manuscript. If the references had been only to the parchment and in the form of attributes, this would not be as conclusive, but the juxtaposition of parchment and paper made by Giovanni da Montenero indicates not only that parchment was perceived as authoritative, but also that paper was not regarded as trustworthy as the manuscripts made of parchment. The participants certainly used paper manuscripts, but in the context of the Council, the paper manuscripts were inferior to the parchment ones. Why paper was not suitable was perhaps connected to its inexpensiveness, compared to parchment, and the impression of paper as a temporary and unofficial material for various types of texts. A possibly more accurate explanation is that the manuscripts made of paper were not considered as old as those made of parchment. Age is certainly a quality that was raised in the debates, even more than the material. Probably the material was present in these discussions as well, even if it is “invisible” in the sources. Afterall, the participants could see the material of the manuscripts before their eyes and thus it was not necessary to speak that aloud at every turn. Nevertheless, the manuscripts were made of some writing support, and the participants could see and feel the material in their hands. The manuscripts may have looked old or beautiful or scruffy, and the look and touch of the manuscript gave impressions of the authority and value of the manuscripts.

4.2 Age and authority

The participants brought manuscripts stemming from different centuries to the Council. Not all were considered unproblematic. In this subchapter, I analyse the importance of age as a feature of a manuscript and the work(s) it contains. The focus is on the question of authority that age brought to an individual manuscript and, with it, to a specific reading of a text or an excerpt of a text. I will argue that both the age of a work and the age of a manuscript played an important role in the discussions at the Council. First, the work needed to be old enough to be authoritative to both parties present at the Council. This meant that the work had to be from a period of the undivided church (naturally, this was not the only criterion for authority). Secondly and similarly, as I will point out, a manuscript had to originate from a time before the schism. In this subchapter, I will go through the cases in which the age is brought up or discussed in more detail in the Council meetings. I focus on age as an authoritative quality of a manuscript.

The basis of theological arguments for both parties, the Latins and the Greeks, at the Council, consisted basically of the same authoritative works. These were the sacred Scripture, the texts of the Church Fathers, and the Acts of the Ecumenical Councils.[535] All of these had a firm position inside the Eastern and Western Churches, although the works most used and studied varied both between and inside the Churches. In particular, the Church Fathers were divided into Eastern and Western, or Greek and Latin, Fathers; the Fathers and the works of the other language and traditions were not as widely known and available as the works from one's own linguistic and cultural environment. This, however, did not lead to an opinion that the Church Fathers or their writings, even if barely known, should not be recognized as authorities. The crucial matter was that they wrote in the time of the undivided Church and thus represented the commonly accepted teaching of the early Church. This was guaranteed by the decrees of the early ecumenical Councils, which were recognised by both Eastern and Western Churches even in the fifteenth century. When the speakers referred to these authorities, they sometimes added the attribute 'old' to them. This was unnecessary since the authors enjoyed their authoritative position even without the 'oldness'. Nevertheless, the mention of their oldness as a quality may have worked as a strengthening feature and a reminder of the common past, 'the old times'.

The common feature of these authoritative texts, recognised by all participants, was the age from which these works were derived, namely, the time of the undivided Church that the participants of the Council of Ferrara–Florence themselves sought to realize or at least resuscitate. The Council of Ferrara–Florence was intended to continue the tradition of the first seven Ecumenical Councils.[536]

The time of the undivided Church did not mean that everything and everyone worked in harmony. Nor did the fifteenth-century Latins and Greeks think so. There were debates. There were heresies and heretics. At the same time, there were ecumenical Councils which solved these issues and defined the orthodoxy and doctrines of the one Church. The five patriarchates were present at the Councils and obligated themselves to follow the conciliar decrees. This existence of five patriarchates did not mean that the Church was divided in the sense that they were schismatic. From early on, the idea and theory of the pentarchy, the five patriarchates and their order of precedence,[537] were formed and interpreted in different ways in the East and the West.

535 Besides the authoritative works, the importance of tradition in both Churches should not be underestimated.

536 Papadakis 2011, 30–31; Maleon 2009, 24, 30.

537 The Council of Ferrara–Florence confirmed the order of the pentarchy. In the decree of union: "Also, renewing the order of the other patriarchs which has been handed down

That the commonly accepted texts were all from an ancient period did not mean that the later authors and texts were not used at all. Medieval theologians and other authors were probably the basis for the theological thinking of many Council participants. In addition, medieval theologians, scholastic doctors, and mystical writers offered the key passages for many key issues of theology. Not everyone possessed the entire texts or corpora of the Church Fathers or the Acts of the ecumenical Councils, and even the biblical quotations could have been taken in many cases from later texts, compilations, *florilegia* and anthologies. These later authors, however, did not get much attention in the Council discussions. They represented the divided church and theologies that had gone separate ways. They were not authorities commonly accepted by everyone at the late-medieval Council that claimed to be ecumenical.

Nevertheless, there are a few references to later authors in the sources of the Council of Ferrara-Florence, suggesting their influence on the participants. One of these is Martin of Opava. Quite surprisingly, Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini made a passing reference to him in his speech in the early phase of the Council, in the third session held in Ferrara on 16 October. In the third session, Mark of Ephesus produced many quotations from the ecumenical Councils and other texts that were connected to the councils. When a passage from the seventh Council had been cited, Cesarini spoke and mentioned a manuscript with the Acts of the seventh council with the *Filioque*. To add more credibility or authority to this specific reading and manuscript, he relied on Martin of Opava and his chronicle *Chronicon pontificum et imperatorum*. This is recorded in both the Greek and the Latin Acts, as well as in Syropoulos's memoirs. Syropoulos quoted Cesarini in his narrative:

> 'We also [in addition to the codex with the Acts of the seventh council] have a historian, an old and learned author [Martin of Opava], who wrote on many other subjects and tells us on this subject that the symbol was recited in this state at the Seventh Council. His testimony we also put forward as proof of the fact.'[538]

in the canons, the patriarch of Constantinople should be second after the most holy Roman pontiff, third should be the patriarch of Alexandria, fourth the patriarch of Antioch, and fifth the patriarch of Jerusalem, without prejudice to all their privileges and rights." ("Renovantes insuper ordinem traditum in canonibus ceterorum venerabilium patriarcharum, ut patriarcha Constantinopolitanus secundus sit post sanctissimum Romanum pontificem, tertius vero Alexandrinus, quartus autem Antiochenus, et quintus Hierosolymitanus, salvis videlicet privilegiis omnibus et iuribus eorum.") Translated by Joseph Gill, see Tanner (ed.) 1990, 528.

538 "ἔχομεν δὲ καὶ ἱστορικὸν ἄνδρα παλαιὸν καὶ σοφὸν γεγραφότα περὶ ἄλλων πολλῶν, διεξιόντα δὲ καὶ περὶ τούτου, ὅτι τὸ σύμβολον οὕτως ἐξετέθη ἐν τῇ ἑβδομῃ, καὶ συνιστῶμεν τοῦτο καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἐκείνου φωνῶν." Syropoulos VI, 31.

It is unexpected to see that Cesarini relied in his argumentation on a Dominican chronicler and archbishop of the thirteenth century, by which time the East-West schism had already existed for a long time. In this particular case, it is difficult to understand the logic or reasons behind Cesarini's argumentation. Martin was probably not even known in the Byzantine world at the time. In the Greek Acts and the above-quoted Syropoulos, his name is not even mentioned. This suggests that his name was not significant to the Greek or Greek-speaking audience of these works. For Cesarini, Martin was probably an important figure, and he knew the chronicle and saw the connection between the text of the seventh Council with the *Filioque* and a passage of Martin's chronicle as relevant to the discussion.

Another matter that raises a question is the use of the adjective *old* in Syropoulos's narration. Syropoulos described the historian Martin as not only learned, but also old (*παλαιὸν*). Although they describe the incident in terms quite similar both to each other and to Syropoulos, the Greek and Latin Acts do not use this adjective of Martin. I suggest that Syropoulos's use of the word *παλαιὸν* in this instance might be even considered as ridicule, or an exaggeration. Cesarini had presented the codex with the *Filioque* as one of the oldest (*παλαιὸτατον*), and perhaps, for Syropoulos, Cesarini was illogical in his argumentation and his use of authors or authorities.

Perhaps more surprisingly, this is one of the few cases when a Byzantine participant also used a later Latin doctor in his counter-argumentation to Cesarini's claim. Syropoulos writes that Cesarini's speech was answered by the Greek scholar Gemisthos Plethon, who referred to Thomas Aquinas, a contemporary of Martin of Opava, and his writings on the *Filioque* issue. According to Syropoulos, he answered Cesarini as follows:

> 'If the Roman Church could prove what you are now claiming on the basis of certain books and the historian who spoke on the subject, then in this case they would have made superfluous those who wrote for the Latins, I mean Thomas [Aquinas] and those who before him tried to demonstrate, in a series of treatises and books, that your Church made the addition with reason and expediency. In this way, they would have omitted, as if they were worth nothing to them, the main proof of what they were saying! It would have been enough for them, instead of all the arguments and syllogisms they had invented, to affirm that the addition was formerly in the symbol and that it was read and approved with it at the Seventh Council. But the proof that it was not put forward at all at the

> Seventh Council, as you claim, is that those who wrote in favour of the Latins did not mention it.'[539]

Thomas Aquinas, as a Latin doctor in favour of the Latin dogma, but on different grounds, proved to Plethon that the addition of the *Filioque* was not already present at the seventh Council, as Cesarini had said, relying on Martin of Opava, but was made with reason and expediency. Plethon knew Thomas Aquinas and his importance to the Latins and their theology well.[540] He thus challenged Cesarini with a Latin author. Even if Aquinas did not support the Greek dogma of the procession of the Holy Spirit and supported the *Filioque* in the Creed, Cesarini's argument, based on Martin's *Chronicon,* contradicted Thomas Aquinas, an authoritative medieval author in the eyes of Plethon.

Before I analyse the age of the manuscripts, it is appropriate to briefly discuss the difficulty of differentiating between works as being old, and books or manuscripts that contain the works in the sources as being old. This means that the speaker at the Council might have referred to a work as being old (claiming, for example, that the work was old because it was written by a Church father who lived in the fourth century), or the speaker might have referred to a particular version of the work in some manuscript, codex or book. The Latin and Greek words *liber* and *βίβλος* could refer to the book both as a text and as an object. Furthermore, in some cases, it is difficult to infer which meaning is the correct one. I claim that in many cases, when there is a demonstrative pronoun before the word *liber* or *βίβλος*, it refers to a concrete book, perhaps in the hands of the speaker himself.[541] Although, one must be a little cautious with this interpretation. The demonstrative pronoun on its own does not prove this, since it could be used especially when the work had been already mentioned, specifically as a text, and then referred to again. The context often helps to determine which meaning is more applicable. It is appropriate here to

[539] "Καὶ εἴπερ εἶχεν ἡ Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἐκκλησία συνιστᾶν ὅ λέγετε νῦν ἀπό τε βιβλίων καὶ ἀπὸ ἱστορικοῦ τοῦ περὶ τούτου συγγραψαμένου, περίεργον ἐποίουν οἱ γεγραφότες ὑπὲρ Λατίνων, τὸν Θωμᾶν φημι καὶ τοὺς πρὸ αὐτοῦ, διὰ πλείστων μὲν λόγων τε καὶ βιβλίων ἀγωνιζόμενοι τὴν προσθήκην ἀποδεικνύειν ὡς εὐλόγως τε καὶ δεόντως γεγονυῖαν ὑπὸ τῆς ὑμῶν Ἐκκλεσίας, τὴν δὲ κυριωτέραν ὑπὲρ ὧν προέθεντο λέγειν σύστασιν παριδεῖν, ὡς μηδὲν ἐκείνοις συμβαλλομένην· ἤρκει γὰρ ἀντι πάντων ὧν ἐφεῖρον ἐπιχειρημάτων τε καὶ συλλογισμῶν εἰπεῖν ὅτι προῆν ἡ προσθήκη ἐν τῷ συμβόλῳ καὶ μετὰ τῆς προσθήκης ἀνεγώσθη καὶ ἐστέρχη ἐν τῇ ἑβδόμῃ συνόδῳ· ὅτι δὲ οὐδόλως προέβη ἐν τῇ ἑβδόμῃ συνόδῳ, καθὼς ὑμεῖς λέγετε, διὰ τοῦτο οὐδὲ οἱ γράψαντες ὑπὲρ Λατίνων περὶ τούτου ἐμνήσθησαν." Syropoulos VI, 31.

[540] Vojtěch Hladký refers to this same speech of Plethon at the Council, see Hladký 2014, 246. Elsewhere, Hladký mentions that Plethon had studied Latin scholasticism and especially Thomas Aquinas. See Hladký 2014, 215.

[541] These and related terms are discussed more closely in chapter 1.1.

discuss the difference between the work as old and the book (as a material object) as old.

While the age of a text can, in many cases, be determined quite precisely, when patristic works and texts deriving from ecumenical Councils are in question, the situation is a little different when it comes to the age of a manuscript. Besides this, it is often difficult to conclude whether the participants of the Council had a dating in mind for manuscripts that were used and discussed in the sessions. In addition, it is another question how accurate these possible datings were, or if they were even correct at all. Proving or rejecting the dates made by the participants is, however, not the aim of this study. What is of interest here is the ways in which the age of a single manuscript – usually at hand at the Council – was used as an argument in the discussions. In addition, I tackle the question of how old a manuscript needed to be in order to have authority, and what were the ways in which the participants estimated the age of manuscripts.

I begin with the terms used at the Council in defining the age of a manuscript. The most common adjective is *antiquus* and its derivatives, such as the superlative form *antiquissimus,* which could be translated as very old or very ancient. There are a few cases when *antiquus* appears together with the word *valde* (in Greek *λίαν* is used), which could be translated quite similarly to the superlative form of *antiquus*. Also, the substantive *antiquitas* is used. Less used but not rare is the adjective *vetus* and its derivatives. *Vetus* is mostly used for the Old Testament, but in a few cases, it is also used as an attribution to a manuscript. In Greek, there are also two words in different forms which are used for old and ancient: *ἀρχαῖος* and *παλαίος*. Silvia Rizzo has analysed these age-related words in Politian's texts and noticed that these two groups of Latin words meaning old or ancient (*antiquus* and *vetus* together with derivatives) seem to relate to manuscripts of a similar age, and otherwise not to a specific century. However, very old manuscripts dating from the fourth to sixth centuries always had some other adjunct, such as *mire* or *venerandae*, or were in superlative forms.[542] It should be remembered that these datings of the manuscripts are made by scholars later and do not necessarily correspond to the age Politian had ascribed to the manuscript (if indeed he even had a dating in mind in every case). In any case, it seems that in the context of the Council, the use of these terms is similar to Politian's, so the words themselves do not give us a specific age of a manuscript. The manuscript was said to be *antiquus*/*vetus* or *ἀρχαῖος*/*παλαίος* when it was considered to be old, or when the antiquity of a manuscript was needed in the argumentation. Moreover, a paper manuscript was never *antiquus* (or any other of the above-mentioned words for old).

542 Rizzo 1976, 147–164. Silvia Rizzo has made a table of the use of Politian's age-related words as regards the manuscripts, See Rizzo 1976, 151.

Thus, there is a connection between age and material. It is always a parchment manuscript that is old, not once made of paper – or papyrus, which is totally absent in the Council documents. There are a few occasions in which the material and age were linked. Usually, both acted as attributes to the word *codex*, *volumen* or *βίβλος*. Both *Acta Latina* and *Acta Graeca* tell almost identically about a manuscript which Ambrogio Traversari had with him: "A Greek book, most old and in parchment, was brought in."[543] In this and other similar cases, the prestigious material, parchment, is paired with antiquity. Not all manuscripts made of parchment were old, since parchment was still in common use in the fifteenth century, but it also belonged in the past in the minds of the humanists at the Council. Alternatively, the manuscript was not made of paper, and this made it possible to be old. This meant that the material had a connection to the age of the manuscript.

As a material, the age of the manuscript might have brought either authority and credibility or unreliability to the text within it. The main rule was that the older, the better.[544] The texts which were cited and used for argumentation were hundreds of years and even more than one thousand years old, and at the time of the Council, the humanists had started to pay attention to the age of the manuscripts. Although scholars have devoted some attention to this question, the focus is usually on humanist Politian who lived in the second half of the fifteenth century, 1454–1494. In his emendations of the classical texts, he employed the principle later called *eliminatio codicum descriptorum*. In other words, he thought that it was necessary to return to the oldest manuscripts, the first possible stage of the tradition, because the later manuscripts are always derivative.[545] Silvia Rizzo, who has studied the humanistic philological vocabulary, also concentrated on Politian while explaining the different age-related words. Among other humanists, she has examples from Traversari, Aurispa, Guarino, Valla, and others.[546]

543 "allegatus fuit quidam liber Grecus valde antiquus et in membranis." AL 169. Similarly in AG 327: "προσήχθη οὖν βίβλος ἑλληνικὴ λίαν ἀρχαιοτάτη, ἐν μεμβράνοις (πεποιημένη)."

544 This is still usually the case in the field of textual criticism. In many cases, the oldest manuscript is the best, but it might be deficient or otherwise corrupt, so that more recent copies are needed too. See further Reynolds & Wilson 2013 (1968), 217–219. Another perspective in modern textual criticism is that all the manuscripts are valuable. For example, Kenneth B. Steinhauser has pointed out that modern scholars usually speak of *variants* and not of *errors* when it comes to different readings in the manuscripts of the same text. See Steinhauser 2013, 16–17.

545 Reynolds & Wilson 2013 (1968), 145, 211. Only in the nineteenth century did Karl Lachmann return to the idea of *eliminatio codicum descriptorum*. See Reynolds & Wilson 2013 (1968), 145, 211.

546 Rizzo 1976, 147–164 for Politian, for other humanists, see Rizzo 1976, 164–167.

From the Greek side, L. D. Reynolds and Nigel Wilson have acknowledged Bessarion's importance. Although they emphasize Politian's role in the history of textual criticism, they point out that Bessarion had his eye on manuscripts' age-related issues.[547] The documents of the Council, together with other sources from Bessarion, prove that the Greek scholar, with other humanists at the Council, considered the question of age important. Although the theory of textual criticism or edition of classical and early Christian texts was not elaborated at the Council, similar issues were discussed. At the Council, the humanists did not make new editions or corrected versions of the texts, but they nevertheless sought the best manuscripts with the best reading in order to resolve the theological issues. Furthermore, the question of age was essential in this search for the most authentic and authoritative manuscript.

Reynolds and Wilson claim that "a lack of a set of logical principles for the evaluation of manuscripts handicapped scholars in their dealings with opponents who were willing to descend to forgery."[548] They continue that this was Bessarion's experience at the Council as well. Unfortunately, the scholars do not cite the source(s) nor give further details about Bessarion's view. I presume that they refer especially to Bessarion's view of his compatriots and their obstinate claim that the Latin manuscripts must be corrupt, without explaining the reasons behind this charge. Bessarion was convinced of the ways in which the learned Latin humanists dealt with the manuscripts and so must not have been totally disappointed by the lack of means to evaluate manuscripts.[549] One of these ways to evaluate the manuscript, its authenticity and authority was to date the manuscript.

Nevertheless, besides the material, what were the other ways in which the manuscripts were dated by the participants of the Council? Unfortunately, the Acts and other sources from the Council do not tell this. The sources from the years after the Council clarify this question. Bessarion, in his tract on the procession of the Holy Spirit, wrote about the Council and the dogmatic discussions. This work was addressed to Alexius Lascaris, who was not himself present at the Council. Besides the dogmatic analysis of the question of the procession of the Holy Spirit, Bessarion mentioned some events at the Council when this question was disputed, as well as Basil's *Adversus Eunomium*. The many manuscripts of this work got his attention.[550]

547 Reynolds & Wilson 2013 (1968), 152–153, 162–163.

548 Reynolds & Wilson 2013 (1968), 162.

549 About Bessarion being convinced by Latin arguments, see Gill 1959, 168–169, 224–225, 397.

550 Emmanuel Candal has edited the text in both languages. He has used Bessarion's autographs, and the parallel versions show some differences in the Greek and Latin versions. I have used the Greek version primarily, but sometimes the Latin if it offers something that the Greek version does not. See also Candal's introduction to this tract

Bessarion's tone in the tract seems to be, on the one hand, convinced of his understanding of the dogma and, on the other hand, quite embarrassed by the ways in which the Greeks had acted at the Council. Both of these points are related to the manuscripts used in the Council and found by Bessarion after the Council. In particular, Mark of Ephesus's accusations of the Latin corruption of the manuscripts made Bessarion feel ashamed.[551] The Latin treatment of the manuscripts had made him convinced of the dogma as the Latins understood it: namely, that the Holy Spirit proceeded from Father and Son. The Latins had already emphasized the antiquity of their manuscript, and Bessarion had continued to work on this topic. He had searched and found more manuscripts containing Basil's *Adversus Eunomium* and analysed the age of the manuscripts in relation to the different readings of the text.

> Then, after the conclusion of the Holy Synod and our return to Constantinople, I examined almost all the books of those holy monasteries. Furthermore, I discovered that all those more recent ones that were written after the controversy had the sentence abridged, while those written in an older hand/script before the outbreak of the fight among [Greeks and Latins] had remained intact and complete.[552]

First of all, in this passage, Bessarion made an evaluation of the old manuscripts in a manner similar to the discussions and arguments of the Council speakers. Bessarion had not taken the age for granted. He explained that he had investigated almost all the manuscripts found in the Greek monasteries and noticed that the old ones, written before the controversy, were intact while the recent manuscripts had a shorter form, without the *Filioque*. The antiquity and its relation to the authentic textual form had perhaps been a hypothesis for Bessarion, which he then tested with the manuscripts he found. Furthermore, as at the Council, the crucial factor regarding the age was whether the text had been written before or after the schism between the Churches. I propose that the word *old* in different forms in the context of the manuscripts at the Council always alluded to the manuscripts written before the schism. Moreover,

and another text of Bessarion concerning the same subject, the *Oratio dogmatica*. In fact, in some versions of the tract, the title has a part *de successu Synodi Florentinae et de processione Spiritus Sancti* in its Latin form.

551 This is discussed in chapter 4.3.

552 "Ἔπειτα, μετὰ τὴν γενομένην ἁγίαν σύνοδον καὶ τὴν εἰς Κωνσταντινο<ύ>πολιν ἡμῶν ἐπάνοδον, προθέμενος τὰ τῶν ἱερῶν ἐκείνων μονῶν βιβλία πάντα σχεδὸν ἀνιχνεῦσαιμ ὅσα μὲν νεώτερα καὶ μετὰ τὴν πολλὴν ἔριν γεγραμμένα εὗρον, πάντα περικεκομμένον εὗρον ἔχοντα τὸ ῥητόν· ὅσα δ' ἀρχαιοτέρας χειρὸς ἦσαν καὶ πρὸ τῆς μάχης τῆς κατ' ἀλλήλων, ταῦτα δὲ ὑγιῆ καὶ ὁλόκληρα μένουσιν, οὐκ ἐλάττω τῶν ἐφθαρμένων ὑπάρχοντα." Bessarion ad Alexium 8. Translated by Alexander Alexakis, see Alexakis 2000, 158.

similarly, in a few cases, when the word *new* or *recent* was used, it meant that the manuscript had been written after the schism, or that it was thought to have been written after it.

What, then, were Bessarion's methods of dating the manuscripts? In the same tract, he clarified them a little:

> Besides the others [=other manuscripts], I found in the Monastery of Christ Pantepoptes two manuscripts of the thrice-blest Basil: one of them in parchment and looking very old – but how old, I do not know, since there was no mention of the year. The other manuscript, made of paper, was over three hundred years old because there was a year at the end of the manuscript in which the book was finished.[553]

Even today, colophons remain one of the chief methods of dating manuscripts and individual fascicules and texts in compilations. When there was a colophon, the dating was naturally easier.[554] Many times, as in the case of the first manuscript Bessarion mentioned in the passage, we are told only that the manuscript looked old, without any explanation of why it looked old. This was the case many times in the Council debates as well. It is either stated in the way "this book is old," or simply with 'old' as a qualifier: "these old volumes". In some cases, the age is specified in years. In the already quoted case of the manuscript of Nicholas of Cusa, the book was said to be over 600 years old, although in both versions, the *Acta Latina* and *Acta Graeca,* this statement is softened with the word *videatur*/*δοκεῖ*, meaning "it seems/appears".[555]

553 "*Una* cum aliis duos etiam quosdam libros beati Basilii offendi apud monasterium Christi Salvatoris Pantepopti: unum in pergameno, antiquissimum ut videbatur — quanti vero temporis, ignoro; non enim erat annus inscriptus – ; aliud in papyro, ante trecentos annos scriptu[m], erat enim in fine tempus notatum, ex quo certe habetur tantum temporis preteri<i>sse ab eius initio. / Μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων εὗρον κἀν τῇ μονῇ τοῦ σωτῆρος Χριστοῦ τοῦ Παντεπόπτου δύο βίβλους τοῦ τρισμάκαρος Βασιλείου· τὸ μὲν βέμβρανον παλαιότατον ἔκ γε τῆς ὄψεως – ὅσου δὲ χρόνου οὐκ οἶδα, διὰ τὸ μὴ γεγράφθαι τὸ ἔτος ἐκεῖ – , τὸ δέ γε βαμβίκινον πρὸ χρόνων γεγραμμένον τριακοσίων. Ἐνεγέγραπτο γὰρ ἐν τῷ τέλει χρόνος, ἀφ΄ οὗ τοῦτο ῥᾷστα συλλογίσασθαι ἔνεστι." Bessarion ad Alexium, 9.

554 What makes the dating trickier is that the year in the colophon could refer either to the original date of the work or to the year when the copy was made.

555 "Ad factum libri ita dicimus, quod iste liber de anno preterito de Constantinopoli ductus est et dominus Nicolaus de Cusa portavit, et est liber in membranis, non in papiro, et antiquissimus, ita ut secundum iudicium plurimorum, qui viderunt, visa antiquitate videtur scriptus ultra VI^{c} annos et sic ante separationem hanc, et est ita correptus et apunctuatus et ordinatus, ut nil deficiat." AL 155. Similarly in AG 297: "Πρὸς δὲ τὸ τοῦ Βασιλείου ῥητὸν κατὰ τὸ παρὸν ἀποκρινόμενοί φαμεν ὅτι ἡ βίβλος αὕτη ἐν τῷ

One could ask what the participants of the Council saw when they looked at the manuscripts in front of them. How did they know or suspect that they were old by the look of them? One thing is the writing support, which has already been discussed, and perhaps the overall condition of the manuscript. There are also other factors hinted at in the sources.

One aspect that the users of the manuscripts were seeing was the script. In the passage from Bessarion’s tract on the procession of the Holy Spirit already quoted above, the older hand or script is mentioned.[556] In the sources of the Council, there is only one mention of the script used in the writing of the manuscript. In the *Acta Graeca*, and similarly in the *Acta Latina*, the manuscript is described as follows, and the speaker is Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini:

> ‘Moreover, in this volume, there are the Nicene and Constantinopolitan creeds in Greek: Yet, the codex has been brought to us from Constantinople: *We believe in one God,* etc. Here, we have three manuscripts, two of the Chalcedonian acts which are very old and another one which is over 500 years old, and which contains the Constantinopolitan creed but does not contain: *from heaven* or *according to the scriptures*. Besides, we have a book in Lombardian writing, which is very old, and in which is also found the Constantinopolitan creed, which does not show: *from the heaven* and *according to the writings*. But this book, which you showed to me, and in which there are the acts of the fourth synod, is a new book, and not more than 30 years old, but these [=our books] are more than 500 years old.’[557]

χρόνῳ τῷ παρεληλυθότι ἀπὸ τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ὧδε μετηνέχθη· καὶ ὁ κύριος Νικόλαος Δεκούζα τὴν βίβλον ἔφερε. ἔστι δὲ ἡ βίβλος ἐν μεμβράνοις οὐκ ἐν βαμβακίνοις.”

556 “while those written in an older hand/script before the outbreak of the fight among [Greeks and Latins] had remained intact and complete.” (“quecumque vero antiquiora erant et antequam hoc bellum oriretur scripta, hec vero sana et integra cum auctoritate predicta manent” / “ὅσα δ΄ ἀρχαιοτέρας χειρὸς ἦσαν καὶ πρὸ τῆς μάχης τῆς κατ΄ ἀλλήλων, ταῦτα δὲ ὑγιῆ καὶ ὁλόκληρα μένουσιν.”) Bessarion ad Alexium, 8.

557 “ἔτι ἐν τῇ βίβλῳ [ἐστὶ] τὸ σύμβολον τὸ ἐν Νικαίᾳ καὶ τὸ ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει ἑλληνικῶς, ἔσχομεν γαρ ταύτην ἀπὸ τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως· *Πιστεύομεν εἰς ἕνα θεόν*, καὶ τὰ ἑξῆς· ἡμεῖς ἔχομεν ἐνταῦθα τρεῖς βίβλους, δύο τῆς πράξεως τῶν ἐν Χαλκηδόνι, καί εἰσιν λίαν ἀρχαῖαι. ἡ μὲν μία ἐστὶ πλέον πεντακοσίων χρόνων, κἀκεῖσε τίθεται τὸ ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει σύμβολον, καὶ οὐδέποτε τίθεται τό· *ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν*, καὶ· *κατὰ τὰς γραφάς*. ἔτι ἔχομεν βίβλον διὰ γραμμάτων λογγοβάδρων, ἥτις ἐστὶν ἀρχαιοτάτη, καὶ κεῖται ἐκεῖσε καὶ ἐν τῶ ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει, δηλονότι τό· *ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν*, καὶ· *κατὰ τὰς γραφάς*. ἡ βίβλος δὲ ἐκείνη, ἥν μοι ἐδείξατε, ὅπου εἰσὶ τὰ πρακτικὰ τὴς τετάρτης συνόδου, ἐστὶ βιβλος νέα καὶ οὐ πλείων τῶν τριάκοντα χρόνων, αὗτα δέ εἰσιν ἐπέκεινα τῶν πεντακοσίων χρόνων.” AG 210.

This speech by Cardinal Cesarini shows that the age of the manuscript could have been estimated by analysing the script. The shape or style of the letters is used as evidence to prove the antiquity of the manuscript. Rizzo has analysed the use of the terms for different letters. About Lombardian letters (*litterae Longobardae*), she notes that humanists used them to "indicate writings that for their intricate and difficult character appeared to their eyes fruit of the barbarity" and that the Lombardian letters were generally the "writings belonging to the graphical system of the minuscule cursive".[558] The breadth of the humanists' understanding of Lombardian letters makes it impossible to give a specific dating to the manuscript, not even to one specific century. After presenting these manuscripts, Cesarini repeated that the Latins had manuscripts that were 500 years old, whereas the Greeks had only a new book, not more than thirty years old. From the passage, it is not obvious if all the manuscripts of the Latins were considered by Cesarini to be over 500 years old, or only the ones about which he had said this explicitly. He probably thought they all were over 500 years old, since he treated them together.

Although this is the only mention of the handwriting style, it cannot be ruled out that the different hands were examined and compared in the sessions or in the private meetings on other occasions as well. Alternatively, it is at least possible, or even plausible, that the different styles and forms of handwriting represented ancient times to the fifteenth-century readers. Another question is how well the humanists of the fifteenth century and the Council participants recognized different hands, and how they dated and located them.

Humanists had at least some ideas about different handwritings and their historical contexts. Their admiration of classical times and literature led them to model their own handwriting in imitation of older styles. The humanistic script originated, on the one hand, as a reaction to the Gothic scripts, which were considered difficult to read, and on the other hand, as part of the imitation project. Poggio Bracciolini developed the humanistic bookhand in 1400–1403; the model for this was the Carolingian minuscule. It was this handwriting that the humanists referred to as *littera antiqua*.[559] Poggio Bracciolini was also working as a papal secretary at the Council,[560] and his knowledge of handwriting styles could have been

558 "indicare scritture che per il loro carattere intricato e difficile apparivano ai loro occhi frutto della barbarie", "in genere le scritture appartenenti al sistema grafico della minuscola corsiva". Rizzo 1976, 122–123.

559 Clemens & Graham 2007, 175. For the humanistic understanding of *litterae antiquae*, see Rizzo 1976, 117–122. Silvia Rizzo has noticed that Politian, unlike the humanists before him, does not use the term in the sense of Carolingian minuscule and she supposes that this might be because his greater learning in the field of philology led him to regard this term as inadequate for the medieval handwriting.

560 Lapo da Castiglionchio V, 5.

useful. It is possible that Bracciolini together with other humanists recognised different handwriting styles, gave them names, and dated them at least in broad terms.

The languages posed another question or problem with regard to the use and the identification of the different letter forms or handwriting styles. Although Lombardian letters or any other Latin handwriting style told some of the Latin participants something about the age or original location of the manuscript, we may presume that it did not have a strong impact on the Greeks, who were mostly ignorant even of the Latin language and even more of the writing culture and history of the Latin manuscripts. Accordingly, while, the different handwriting styles might have even played an important role in the studies of the Latins, this was not an important issue when the point was to convince the Greeks. Moreover, the same could work also vice versa.

Cesarini's speech was not the only time when a manuscript was given an age in years, even if it was only a rough number. The juxtaposition between the manuscripts owned or brought by the Latins and the Greeks by their age are noticeable. When Giuliano Cesarini claimed that their Greek manuscript with the Nicene and Constantinopolitan creed, discussed in the prevailing session, was over 500 years old, he also declared that the manuscript the Greeks had shown to him was relatively young, 30 years at most. With these words, Cesarini accorded more authority to the manuscript the Latins owned, which supported their view of the topic under discussion and, at the same time, diminished the authority or the probative force of the manuscript that the Greeks had brought.

Even more important than the exact date of the manuscript or its age was the historical context in which it was written or copied. The main point, even in the cases discussed above, the manuscripts that were over 500 or 600 years old, was thus that they were written before the rupture of the Eastern and Western Churches.[561] This is even specified in the passage where the manuscript brought by Nicholas of Cusa is discussed: "It seems to be over 600 years old, which is many years before the schism

561 We cannot disregard another question: What was thought by the Greeks and Latins in the fifteenth century to be the moment of the rupture of the Churches? In the memoirs of Syropoulos, this moment is indicated, but in a rather peculiar manner: "πολυχρόνιον δὲ καὶ τὸ σχίσμα· πεντακοσίους γαρ ἔγγιστα χρόνους ἔχουσιν ἐμπαγέντες τῇ τοιαύτῃ δόξῃ." ("an old schism, since they [the Latins] have been deep-rooted in such a belief for nearly five hundred years."). Syropoulos II, 44. On the one hand, this is too exaggerated to be a reference to the Schism of 1054, but on the other hand, it is too brief a space of time to be a reference to the Photian schism of 863–867. Similarly, Simon Fréron writing in March 1436 to Cardinal Cesarini regarding the future council with the Greeks mentions that the schism has lasted for five hundred years. See Cecconi, doc. LXXIX.

and the separation emerged."[562] I argue that this specification had a deep meaning and that there was good reason to state this aloud and use it as an argument for giving authority to a manuscript.

On a few occasions, we read that the manuscript had been written before the schism or before there was a disagreement between Greeks and Latins.[563] This was crucial, because both parties needed to prove that their dogma was the correct one. The dogma had to be accepted by everyone both at the Council and afterwards as well. In addition, it had to be stated that the Church fathers, saints, and all authorities of the common past agreed on it or were the ones who had already defined the dogma. Furthermore, the common past meant the past when the Church was undivided. Ecclesiastical authors and their writings before the schism were the keys to the discussions and argumentation. It was not enough that the author or their work derived from this period, the manuscript too had to be written in the time of the undivided Church.

When the antiquity of a manuscript was a quality that was worth mentioning, one must search for the mentions of young manuscripts as well. Where are all the mentions of old or ancient manuscripts? Although we hear only once that the other party had brought a young manuscript,[564] a recurrent theme is speaker's reference to his own manuscript as being old and declaring that the other party's manuscript lacks this age. Oldness is a quality that was never accorded to the other party's manuscript in the *Acts*. By emphasising the antiquity of their own manuscript, the speakers downplayed the others' manuscripts. Moreover, antiquity was often a quality that ultimately determined the 'winner' of the debate, at least in the speaker's opinion. In

562 "δοκεῖν πλειόνων εἶναι ἢ ἑξακοσίων ἐτῶν, καὶ οὕτω διὰ πολλῶν ἐτῶν πρὸ τοῦ σχίσματος τούτου καὶ τῆς διαιρέσεως." AG 296. In the AL 155: "videtur scriptus ultra VI^{c} annos et sic ante separationem hanc" ("it seems to be written over six hundred years ago and thus before this separation").

563 Besides the AG 296 above, see, for example, AG 305: "ἐπειδὴ τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, ἐν ᾧ ἡ βίβλος αὕτη ἐγράφη, ὡς φανερῶς ὁρᾶται ἀπὸ τῆς ἐπισημότητος τῆς βίβλου ταύτης, κατ' ἐκεῖνον τὸν καιρὸν οὐδεμία ἦν διαφορὰ μεταξὺ Γραικῶν καὶ Λατίνων" ("Since at the time when this book was written, as can be clearly seen from this most esteemed book, at that moment there was no alienation between the Greeks and the Latins."). Similarly, Bessarion wrote after the Council about the manuscripts he found, and held to be authoritative, that they were written "before the outbreak of the fight" ("antequam hoc bellum oriretur" / "πρὸ τῆς μάχης τῆς κατ΄ ἀλλήλων"). See Bessarion ad Alexium, 8.

564 The already quoted speech of Cardinal Cesarini, AG 210. "But this book, which you showed to me, and in which there are the acts of the fourth synod, is a new book, and not more than thirty years old, but these [=our books] are more than five hundred years old." ("ἡ βίβλος δὲ ἐκείνη, ἥν μοι ἐδείξατε, ὅπου εἰσὶ τὰ πρακτικὰ τὴς τετάρτης συνόδου, ἐστὶ βιβλος νέα καὶ οὐ πλείων τῶν τριάκοντα χρόνων, αὗτα δέ εἰσιν ἐπέκεινα τῶν πεντακοσίων χρόνων.")

his address to the Latins, Mark of Ephesus claimed that “in this citation of Basil the Great, both the antiquity and the quantity of our books give us the victory.”[565] However, Mark’s triumph soon changed to lamentation when the Latins succeeded in convincing the majority of the Greeks, at least at that moment, about the correctness of Latin dogma – with the help of old manuscripts.

In the words describing one end of a two-fold matter, such as age, I see that the other is present even if this is not stated explicitly. When the Latins emphasised that their manuscript was old, they implied at the same time that not all the manuscripts were old. Furthermore, one could say that their emphasis on the antiquity of their own manuscript that the other party’s manuscripts were necessarily not old; thus, they were young, or at least not as old as the Latin manuscripts.

These cases, put forward by both Latin and Greek speakers, demonstrate that age was an important part of argumentation. It was closely connected to the idea of the authenticity of a manuscript and its textual form.[566] Authenticity was connected to authority. The quest for the most authentic and most authoritative reading of an authoritative work began by searching for the oldest manuscript. It was a good start if one could prove or state convincingly that the manuscript was old or indeed ancient. However, this was not the only way to manifest the authority of one’s own manuscripts. The next challenge was to prove that the manuscript was not only old but also devoid of corruption, and thus preserved the original reading. This is the topic I shall discuss in the next subchapter.

4.3 Corruption of manuscripts

Mark of Ephesus asked in the ninth session in Florence: “But who knows if they [=the Latins] have mutilated the books?”[567] This question, or rather comment, recalled the possibility that the manuscripts at the Council were not in their original state. It was more than a reminder of this inevitable process in any physical object. It was an accusation of a deliberate act of mutilation by the others. Mutilation or corruption of the sacred words once written on the sheets of paper or parchment meant interfering with the sacred truth. It was not a minor fault; nor was it a rare act on the part of medieval persons to alter the text of existing manuscripts. The act of

565 “ἐν τῇ χρῆσει τοῦ μεγάλου Βασιλείου καὶ ἡ ἀρχαιότης καὶ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν παρ' ἡμῖν βιβλίων τὴν νίκην ἡμῖν δίδωσι.” AG 301. The other matter here mentioned, the quantity, is discussed in chapter 4.5.

566 These qualities, antiquity and authenticity, are linked in a speech by Giovanni da Montenero, who said that the Lord of Sancta Sabina had brought them a “very old and most authentic letter of Pope Julius.” (“ἀρχαιοτάτην καὶ αὐθεντικωτάτην ἐπιστολὴν Ἰουλίου πάπα,”) See AG 306.

567 “Καὶ τίς οἶδεν, εἰ ἐφθάρησαν αἱ βίβλοι παρ΄ αὐτῶν;” AG 401.

alteration did not necessarily mean mutilation since it could also mean correction. In any case, the participants at the Council of Ferrara–Florence were searching for the original form of the works which they thought would best correspond to the heavenly truth. In this subchapter, I study the aspect of mutilation or corruption of the manuscripts and its presence and forms in the discussions and arguments of the Council speakers.

Medieval manuscripts were outcomes of a multiphase production. Before the scribe could start the work, the material of the manuscript had to be chosen and prepared. Many other choices also had to be made concerning the appearance and layout of the text and possible illustrations. After the preparations, the scribe could start the work, either writing their own text or copying someone else's text. After the text and the illustrations had been finished, the manuscript was usually put into covers, and this too involved many phases. Even after the book was done, it underwent many changes. Users and readers left their marks on the manuscripts as well. The strokes of a quill pen and erasures by a penknife could be seen hundreds of years after they were made. What one could not see was who had made the changes. Sometimes it was the scribe writing and correcting or altering the text. Sometimes it was the professional proofreader who had made the changes. Many times, the readers of the later times made their own notes on the manuscripts.[568] This proved to be a problem for the Council of Ferrara–Florence participants, who were searching for the most original version of the text.

The participants noticed that the authoritative works were not always in the same form or format. The texts of the saints and Church Fathers, likewise the decrees of the Ecumenical Councils and even the Sacred Scripture, were many hundreds of years and even more than a thousand years old, but in most cases, the manuscripts were not this old. Moreover, even if they were old, they might have been altered since then, or not only altered, but even corrupted, as many participants feared or accused.

There were many times when a term referring to the act of mutilation or corruption of the manuscript was raised in a conversation in the Council. Both the Latins and the Greeks used this as an argument against the other party and their manuscripts. The other side of the coin was to highlight the good quality of one's own manuscripts. It was always the other party's manuscripts that were blamed for mutilation.

There were many different words for mutilation and corruption and other similar expressions. In Latin, the most used words were *corrumpere* and its derivatives and

568 A good introduction to the production of manuscripts and the many layers of time that can be seen in the manuscripts is Raynold Clemens & Timothy Graham: *Introduction to Manuscript Studies* (2007). See also Erik Kwakkel's *Books Before Print* (2018).

adulterare, which could even mean *to forge.* Another common word was *depravare* with its derivatives. In Greek, the most commonly used term is the verb (*δια*)*φθείρω* and its derivatives. There were also words that referred to the act of erasure (the verbs *expungere* and *ἀφαιρέω*, and the nouns *rasura* and *ξύσμα*). Although these were the most common expressions for the act of mutilating manuscripts, there were also words for the manuscripts that were in an untouched condition, such as *integrus, sanus,* and *incorruptus* in Latin and *ὁλόκληρος*, *ὑγιής* and *ἀδιάφθορος* in Greek.[569] It was also common to use many of these expressions in the same speech to highlight the gravity of the state of corruption or, likewise, the fineness of the manuscripts in question.

The poor condition of a manuscript could have been a consequence of natural decay, such as damages made by insects or other animals, or other damage not deliberately caused by humans. Also, fire and water could damage a manuscript, as could even wrongly used inks and pigments, which might deteriorate and cause corrosion later on.[570] In the discussions of the Council, the mentions of corruption or mutilation almost always referred to the deliberate human action of altering the original text. On one occasion, Syropoulos recalled a situation when there was a problem with a deficient manuscript, which could refer to a manuscript in poor condition caused by some non-human factor. In the fifth session of Ferrara, Andrew of Rhodes, speaking on behalf of the Latins, quoted the letter of St Maximus the Confessor to Marin, priest of Cyprus. For most participants, Greeks and Latins, this work seemed to be more favourable to the Greeks and their understanding of the question of the *Filioque*. The Greeks were happy that they did not have to produce the text themselves, according to Syropoulos. The problem with this work was that it was only a fragment, not a whole work. Syropoulos recalled this as follows:

> It was then that he [=Andrew of Rhodes] produced, among other things, the fragment of Saint Maximus' letter to Marin. [--] For us, we felt that we had gained a lot from the Latins' exhibition of Saint Maximus's letter. We certainly feared that we would have to produce it out of necessity since it does not exist in its entirety.[571]

569 Same expressions are used for bodies of the saints. While the body of a deceased person was inevitably going to decay, a saint's body stayed incorrupt.

570 For the different types of damage in the manuscripts, see Clemens & Graham 2007, 94–116.

571 "ὅτε μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων καὶ τὸ μέρος τῆς πρὸς Μαρῖνον ἐπιστολῆς τοῦ ἁγίου Μαξίμου εἰς μέσον παρήγαγεν [--] Ἡμεῖς δὲ ὡς μέγα κέρδος ἐδεξάμεθα τὸ προενεγκεῖν ἐκείνους τὴν τοῦ ἁγίου Μαξίμου ἐπιστολήν· ἐδυσχεραίνομεν γὰρ προενεγκεῖν αὐτήν, χρείας καλούσης, ἐπεὶ οὐχ ὁλόκληρος εὑρίσκεται ἡ ἐπιστολή· ἐπεὶ δὲ παρ´ ἐκείνων

This passage reveals that the question of the deficiency of this text was an issue for the Greeks as well. One must notice that the deficiency problem was related, not only to a certain manuscript, but also to Maximus's work and authority Even if the text was difficult for the Greeks, they used it for their cause and even saw a great possibility to employ it to resolve the whole question of union, provided that the Latins were willing to accept the text. The problem for the Greeks thus seemed to lie more in its use in argumentation, with a fear that the Latins would not support a work that had not survived in its entirety. For the Greeks, this was not an issue in itself. The Greeks wanted to use the letter but were delighted that they themselves did not need to take the initiative. This case also shows that the Greeks were aware of the matters that could be a problem in argumentation for the Latins and acted according to their presumptions.

Andrew of Rhodes, who was of Greek origin but became convinced of the Latin dogma after studying the Greek and Latin Fathers, had already used the letter of Maximus, but what about the other Latins? Syropoulos continued:

> When we met again in the sacristy of San Francesco, our people tested the Latins about the letter [of St. Maximus] and told them: 'If you accept this letter, the union will be easy.' However, the Latins rejected it in these terms: 'We reproached the Bishop [Andrew] of Rhodes himself for having produced it without our agreement. We do not admit it since it is not complete.'[572]

This passage shows that the Latins saw the deficiency as a problem. The Greeks' fear that this could be a problem turned out to be reasonable.[573] Besides this, the work was not favourable to the Latins and their understanding of the *Filioque*. Therefore, the deficiency of the work might have acted as a saving argument. Because it was not known what else Maximus had said in the epistle, it was only a fragment and could not be trusted. Furthermore, for the Latins, it was superfluous, and should not have been used as an argument.

προεκομίσθη, ἐλέγομεν, ὅτι δεχθήσεται καὶ παρ´ αὐτῶν, ὅτε παρ´ ἡμῶν προκομισθῇ." Syropoulos VI, 35.

572 "Ἀλλ' ὅτε πάλιν ἐν τῷ σκευοφυλακίῳ τοῦ ἁγίου Φραγκίσκου συνήχθησαν, ἐδοκίμασαν ἐκείνους οἱ ἡμέτεροι περὶ τῆς ἐπιστολῆς καὶ εἶπον πρὸς αὐτούς· Εἰ στέργεται παρ´ ὑμῶν αὕτη ἡ ἐπιστολή, εὐκόλως προβήσεται καὶ ἡ ἕνωσις. Ἀπηγόγευσαν οὖν ταύτην οἱ Λατίνοι εἰπόντες, ὅτι· Ἡμεῖς ἐσκώψαμεν καὶ τὸν Ῥόδου ἕνεκεν αὐτῆς, ὅτι παρὰ γνώμην ἡμῶν προκεκόμικε ταύτην· οὐ γὰρ στέργομεν αὐτήν, ἐπεὶ οὐδὲ ὁλόκληρος εὑρίσκεται." Syropoulos VI, 36.

573 It is also possible that Syropoulos relates this story to show that the outcome of this incident made the Greeks cautious about using an incomplete work.

I do not mean to say that the deficiency was only a pretext that allowed the Latins to avoid a difficult work or passage. It was a real issue, and even if it was not discussed on a large scale at the Council, its importance could be seen in other ways. One way of determining whether a manuscript was mutilated or not was to analyse the whole work, or even the whole canon of the author in question, for the participants of the Council. In other words, the assumption was that the authors of the Church, the saints and doctors, were consistent. They even had to be consistent with other authors in their teaching, since they were thought to work under the same holy guidance,[574] but the starting point was that the author had to be coherent with oneself.

There were many occasions when the author's text was compared to their other writings, sometimes even to passages within the same text. In particular, Basil's texts were under scrutiny in many sessions, and his theological ideas and teaching were analysed as a whole. If some passages did not match the theological thinking of the author expressed in other places, this was a mark that the passage was mutilated.[575] In this way, the letter of Maximus was problematic because of its deficiency, since it did not offer enough material – not to mention complete works – to support a comparison and help to formulate a holistic idea of Maximus's theology.

An extensive analysis of the authors in question and their theology and thoughts, as these can be seen in their works, was thus one way to answer the question of how they could know or suggest that some specific manuscript was mutilated. Another way concerning a work and its analysis is explained by Bessarion, who saw the language as the key to evaluating the quality of a reading in a specific manuscript. Bessarion wrote in his treatise recalling the events of the Council:

> Then they [=his fellow Greeks] had the nerve to say that the Latins and even our Bekkos and others who followed the Latins had corrupted the books. Especially when the passage has such beautiful eloquence, pithy narration, and Attic grace, it was impossible for the Latins ever to have written with such Hellenic grace in a foreign language. For it was not possible for the Greeks either, apart from Basil himself.[576]

574 On consensus patrum or symphōnia of Greek and Latin Fathers, see for example Parry 2015, 7–9; Meyendorff 1986, 112; Ryder 165–166.

575 See for example AG 386, in which Mark of Ephesus stated that the Latins had brought corrupt manuscripts which were not coherent with Basil's thinking. See also Stinger 1977, 216. This is a valid method in the modern philological and historical research into texts as well.

576 "Deinde dicere audent, quod Latini nostrorumque Veccus et alii, qui Latinos sequuti fuerunt, libros corruperunt; presertim, cum hec auctoritas tantum ornatum, tantam

For Bessarion, the language and stylistic expression were crucial in determining the agents behind the manuscript and its textual form. The Latins could not write Greek as proficiently as the Greeks, and vice versa. This is, however, something that he did not state at the Council, or if he did, it was not recorded in the *Acts* or in Syropoulos's memoirs. Furthermore, it is possible that this was something that Bessarion only later reflected upon. It is the general opinion of scholars that Bessarion did not even know Latin at the time of the Council, but only later achieved a profound understanding of it.[577] This could have affected his thinking and his study of the works and manuscripts after the Council. His own experiences with the Latin language and as a translator of Latin and Greek works probably at least deepened his understanding of the differences between the languages.

Besides the ways of analysing the text's content and language, there were other ways in which corruption could have been detected in the Council. One way was to analyse the material form of the manuscripts. The participants sought different, interfering hands that might have erased or inked over crucial passages. This was something that Bessarion did even after the Council. When he analysed different manuscripts containing Basil's *Adversus Eunomium*, he discovered that some of them had been mutilated.

> Someone with an arrogant mind and an even more arrogant hand has erased the truth with a knife. And even if this recklessness did not provide him with anything, when the empty space left, and the cut syllables still existing, accuse him of audacity nevertheless show the truth. Moreover, in the paper codex, smeared with ink, he had covered the whole part which had 'from Him', and it is from the Son, 'is the Spirit, and from him is the Spirit dependent.' Some years after this, this book arrived in the hands of Demetrius Kydones, the wisest man, who had reintegrated this part. You see that he himself had written in the margin of this book that he reprehends the audacity of this corruptor.[578]

gratiam et eloquentiam atticam pre se ferat, ut non modo Latinos aliquid simile cum tanta gratia in lingua peregrina et greca non posse componere; sed neque Grecos quidem, preter ipsum Basilium. Latinis etenim lingua propria generaque dicendi a nostris diversa impedimento sunt, ne aliquid ita ornate in nostra lingua conscribant; quemadmodum etiam nostris impossibile est aliquid equali gratia et ornatu atque Latini in lingua latina scribere, quantuncunque vel Greci in latina vel Latinic in greca lingua profecerint." Bessarion ad Alexium, 10.

577 Monfasani 2021, 5.

578 "Ἀνὴρ δέ τις τολμερᾶς μὲν ψυχῆς, χειρὸς δὲ τολμηροτέρας, κατὰ μὲν τοῦ βεμβράνου σιδήρῳ χρησάμενος ἀπέξεσε τὴν ἀλήθειαν· οὐδὲν δ´ ὅμως αὐτῷ προὔργου ἀπήντηκεν, ὅ τε γὰρ τόπος κενὸς ὤν, αἵ τε τῶν συλλαβῶν ἡμίσεις ἔτι φαινόμεναι, τό τε τόλμημα ἐκεῖνον ἐλήγχουσι, τήν τε ἀλήθειαν οὐδὲν ἧττον σαφῶς παριστῶσιν. Κατὰ δὲ τοῦ

Bessarion witnessed two kinds of corruption in the manuscripts he studied: erasure and inking over. The original text, however, could still be seen, and in the latter case, it had even been rewritten in the manuscript by Demetrius Kydones. Kydones was a unionist who lived in the fourteenth century (1324–1398) and whose lifetime witnessed similar debates inside the Byzantine circles about the Church union. This means that at least three agents could be seen at work in the manuscript: the original writer of the manuscript, the one who had covered the passage with ink, and Demetrius Kydones, who had rewritten the text and added a note in the margin as well. The authority of Kydones was important to Bessarion, who was himself a unionist at this point. Even more important in this case was the fact that the act of corruption could be revealed, and the original reading of the text, or at least of that manuscript, could still be seen as well. It proved to Bessarion that the Greeks, his compatriots, had really been responsible for corrupting the text to match their theological interpretations.

Not even the first hand behind the composition of the manuscript was always pure, and this is the reason why the age was an important factor in the question of corruption as well. For many participants, especially the Latin ones, thought that antiquity, meaning that the manuscript was written before the rupture of the Churches at least according to their dating, brought credibility to the textual form, as I have already discussed in the previous section of this chapter. This credibility was attached to the agent working in the composition of the manuscript and their (pure) motives. Since the Churches had not yet fallen into the state of schism, the scribe could not have altered the text in favour of any of the Churches. Giovanni da Montenero answered Mark of Ephesus, who had accused the Latins of bringing a corrupted manuscript of Basil’s *Adversus Eunomium* in the fourth session held in Florence:

> ‘First, you said that the book which was brought here had been corrupted at a time by someone who favoured our dogma. In this, you are in error. Since this manuscript was written at a time, as can be discerned clearly from the annotation, when there was no difference between the Greeks and Latins.’[579]

ἑτέρου βιβλίου μέλαν ἐπιχέας ἐκάλυψε τοῦτο τὸ μέρος τοῦ ῥητοῦ πᾶν, ὅ φησιν· « παρ´ αὐτοῦ ἔχον τὸ εἶναι καὶ ὅλως ἐκείνης τῆς αἰτίας ἐξημμένον ». Ἀλλὰ χρόνῳ ὕστερον τοῦ σοφοῦ Κυδώνη ἐκείνου τὴν βίβλον εἰς χείρας λαβόντος, τὸ ῥητὸν πάλιν ὑγιὲς ἀπεδόθη· αὐτὸς γὰρ οικείᾳ χειρὶ τό τε ῥητὸν ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ ὁλόκληρον προσπαρέγραψεν, ὕβρεσί τε ἀξίως ἔπλυνε τὸν τοῦτο τετολμηκότα.” Bessarion ad Alexium, 9.

579 “Πρῶτον εἶπες ὅτι ἡ προαχθεῖσα βίβλος αὕτη ἠδυνήθη διαφθαρῆναι κατὰ τοὺς χρόνους παρά τινος τῶν φρονούντων τὸ ἡμέτερον δόγμα. τοῦτον δὴ τὸν τρόπον ἀνατρέπεται· ἐπειδὴ τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, ἐν ᾧ ἡ βίβλος αὕτη ἐγράφη, ὡς φανερῶς ὁρᾶται ἀπὸ τῆς

Giovanni da Montenero had already, in the same session, replied to Mark of Ephesus that the manuscript the Latins had brought could not have been mutilated, since it was written before the schism. Besides its age, the fact that it had just been brought from Constantinople proved, according to Giovanni da Montenero, that it had not been long enough in the hands of the Latins to have been tampered with. The other point made by Giovanni da Montenero was that the Latins were not inclined to mutilate the manuscripts, whereas the Greeks were.[580] These claims are discussed in greater detail in the next section.

One approach to identifying the most genuine and unspoiled manuscript was to compare it with other manuscripts. This is something that Charles Stinger has paid attention to in his studies. He writes that in order to prove that their readings of the works were the authentic ones, the Latins "could either consult other codices of the *Adversus Eunomium*, or they could explore Basil's meaning in this and in others of his relevant writings."[581] The latter point refers to a matter already mentioned in this section about the analysis of the contents of the author's texts as a whole, whereas Stinger's earlier point is about the argumentative force of the comparison of the manuscripts. Stinger continued that Giovanni da Montenero, with the help of Ambrogio Traversari as a translator, compared the different manuscripts and their similarities and differences word by word. This is also recorded in the Acts.[582] While Stinger has paid attention to this important moment in the Council's debates, he has not gone deeper in the analysis of what this comparison, in fact, meant. The comparison of the manuscripts and the different readings in them was only a beginning. The simple factual observation of differences did not prove any manuscript better than another. The participants had to find proofs for their arguments. Age and material were one way and showing mutilation another one.

There are times when a speaker seemed to use the affirmation of corruption as an argument when the reading in the manuscript in question simply appeared not to support the speaker's own idea about the dogma. In these cases, the speaker, usually a Greek, stated that the Latins had produced a corrupted manuscript, but did not give any further details. Usually, behind this affirmation lay the claim that the speaker's party had brought incorrupt manuscript(s). The discussion usually continued with a counterclaim, but then moved on to the theological discussion itself. The question

ἐπισημότητος τῆς βίβλου ταύτης, κατ΄ ἐκεῖνον τὸν καιρὸν οὐδεμία ἦν διαφορὰ μεταξὺ Γραικῶν καὶ Λατίνων." AG 305.

580 AL 155; AG 297.

581 Stinger 1977, 216.

582 Stinger 1977, 217; AG 354–357. Charles Stinger, in fact, mentioned that Bessarion analysed the manuscripts he found in Constantinople and paid attention to the age of the manuscripts. Stinger nevertheless did not deal with these themes in the context of the Council. See Stinger 1977, 217.

whether the manuscript was corrupt or incorrupt, and thus authoritative or not, had a great impact on the theological discussion as well. If the other(s) did not believe that the manuscript was authentic or authoritative, how could they accept the theological arguments and interpretations that were based on unauthoritative material?

In all these cases quoted and analysed above, the purpose of the speakers was to find the version closest to the original and thus most authentic and authoritative version of the work that Fathers of the Church had once written or otherwise composed. How, then, was it possible to find the true form of the work, or to know whether the manuscript had the words as the author originally meant them? The analysis of corruption and other factors discussed in this subchapter was one way, but human actions still affected the whole writing process.

This problem was evident in the discussions concerning the *epiclesis*, the blessing and invocation of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist. Syropoulos wrote that the written liturgies of Basil and Chrysostom caused controversy between Cardinal Cesarini and the emperor. The emperor explained that this specific eucharist practice was witnessed in every Eastern Church and in every written liturgy – and there were over two thousand of these, according to him. The cardinal was not convinced by these manuscripts, but instead challenged the emperor by asking:

> 'Can Your Sacred Majesty assert on oath that the books that Your Majesty mentioned were published by those saints in the beginning as they are now found and that they have not been altered at all in the course of time? If this is not the case, how can we trust these books?'[583]

Cesarini pointed out the life cycle of a text and its ever-changing nature. He must have known that even unintentionally, the texts went through changes in different manuscripts over the course of time. The problem or danger in Cesarini's questioning was that this kind of so-called natural alteration of the text in the course of time was a relevant issue not only for the Greek texts, but for the Latin texts as well. Unfortunately, Syropoulos did not recount the discussion in more detail. He did not give the answer of the emperor, nor of anyone else, to the Cardinal's questions but wrote that the discussion lasted for days concerning this subject. There might be many reasons for the silence of Syropoulos. The discussions might have been repetitive, as seemed to be the case many times in the Council. In addition, Syropoulos might not have wanted to write down the most convincing arguments of

583 "Δύναται ἡ ἁγία Βασιλεία σου μεθ'ὅρκου διαβεβαιῶσαι, ὅτι τὰ βιβλία ἅπερ ὁρίζεις οὕτως ἐξεδόθησαν τὴν ἀρχὴν παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων ἐκείνων, καθὼς εὑρίσκονται νῦν, καὶ οὐδόλως μετεποιήθησαν ἐν τοσούτοις χρόνοις; εἰ δὲ τοῦτο οὐ γενήσεται, πῶς ἡμεῖς τοῖς βιβλίοις πιστεύσομεν;" Syropoulos X, 2:8–11.

the Latins, if indeed there were convincing arguments of this kind. Nor might he have wanted to talk about the dead-end which the Greeks had perhaps come. Instead, Syropoulos continued by claiming that the discussions went on and more opinions were heard, with the Latins trying to persuade the Greeks and Mark of Ephesus, Bessarion, and Isidore expressing their opinions. The question thus remained unsettled in the narration of Syropoulos.

Cesarini's point relied mostly on the aspect of trust or distrust. He wondered whether one could trust (Greek) books if they were not in their original textual form. While the Latin books too were not necessarily in their original form, Cesarini had more trust in the Latins and their books than in the Greeks. He may also have shared Giovanni da Montenero's view that the Greeks were more inclined to the corruption of manuscripts. The issue of trust was linked not only to the manuscripts, but also to their owners and their past and present users. Cesarini wanted to hear from the Greeks whether they themselves were so sure about the authenticity of the manuscripts and their reading that they could swear an oath.[584] If even the Greeks could not be sure, how could the Latins trust those books?

While Cesarini did not directly accuse the Greeks of corruption, the case was different with Mark of Ephesus, who did not spare his words. Mark of Ephesus expressed his doubts about the authenticity of Latin books. He asked who knew whether the Latins had mutilated the books.[585] This was addressed not only to the Latins, but also to the other Greeks. At this point, Mark was already disappointed in his fellow Greeks, who had begun to lean towards the Latins and their teaching. This can be seen in the answer that Bessarion gave to Mark: "And who ventures to claim this?"[586] This was part of an internal Greek discussion in which they decided whether they believed that the Latins' texts were authentic. Finally, the majority followed Bessarion and arrived at the conclusion that they were authentic and thus confirmed the Latin dogma of the procession of the Holy Spirit as well.

Even at a later date, Bessarion's writings expressed his shame in relation to the comments by Mark, and thus of the Greeks, at the Council. This shame was closely connected to the claims of Latin corruption. In his treatise on the procession of the Holy Spirit, he recalled the private meetings of the Greeks in which they discussed the manuscripts the Latins had brought and how to answer the Latins. Bessarion wrote about the Latins:

584 Syropoulos VIII, 22–23.
585 "Καὶ τίς οἶδεν, εἰ ἐφθάρησαν αἱ βίβλοι παρ´ αὐτῶν;" AG 401.
586 "Καὶ τίς ἔχει τοῦτο τολμῆσαι εἰπεῖν;" AG 401.

> They brought not only [the writings of] the Western but also the Eastern fathers. [--] To these, we did not have any other answer than that they [=the writings] are spurious, corrupted by the Latins.
>
> [--] They brought our Epiphanius, which clearly stated in many sections that the Holy Spirit is from Father and Son. – ‘Spurious,’ we said.
>
> They read aloud the passage mentioned above of the Basil the Great against Eunomius. – It seems to us to be fraudulently written.
>
> They brought a couple of texts of Cyril and others. – We said the same.
>
> They brought some writings of the Western saints. – To everything, we had no answer other than ‘spurious’.[587]

Bessarion’s tone in this passage is ashamed of the Greeks and their handling of the case. While the Latins could offer texts confirming their dogma, one after another, the Greeks, according to Bessarion, had nothing else to say than that the manuscripts or texts were mutilated and that the Latins were guilty of doing this. What made this even more painful for Bessarion was that he did not agree with this: he was one of those who believed the Latin manuscripts, also of the Eastern Fathers, to be authentic.

If we look at the discussion that Bessarion was referring to in Syropoulos’s *Memoirs*, we get a little more background. The Greeks had convened a private meeting to vote on whether they considered the Latin manuscripts to be authentic. At this point, the emperor was only interested in the answer to whether the texts were authentic and did not want any more discussion about the topic. Syropoulos, according to his own narration, answered and explained why he hesitated to give a simple answer of yes or no:

587 “Παρήγαγον δέ οὐ Δυτικῶν μόνων, ἀλλ' οὐδὲν ἧττον καὶ Ἀνατολικῶν διδασκάλων. [--] Πρὸς ἅπερ ἡμεῖς ἀπολογίαν εἰπεῖν εἴχομεν οὐδεμίαν, ἢ ὅτι νόθα εἰσί, καὶ ὑπὸ Λατίνων νενόθευται.
[--] Παρήγαγον τὸν ἡμέτερον Ἐπιφάνιον, ἐν πολλοῖς τόποις σαφῶς ἐκ πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ θεολογοῦντα τὸ πνεῦμα. — Νόθα ἐλέγομεν εἶναι.
Ἀνέγνων τὸ προειρημένον ἐν τοῖς κατ΄ Εὐνομίου τοῦ μεγάλου Βασιλείου ῥητόν. — Παρέγγραπτον εἶναι ἐδόκει ἡμῖν.
Allegarunt Cyrilli nonnulla, et aliorum. — Idem aiebamus.
Προεκόμισαν τὰ τῶν ἐξ Ἑσπέρας ἁγίων. — Πᾶσα ἡμῶν ἀπολογία, τὸ νόθον, καὶ οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἦν.” Bessarion ad Alexium, 51–52. The translation is a mixture of both Greek and Latin versions of Bessarion’s text.

> In fact, discerning the false from the authentic is very difficult and requires a long thoughtful examination, because books are falsified. [--] The process of falsification that we now suspect is not among those enumerated in this place. Books are therefore falsified in many ways, and this is found in certain speeches of St. John Chrysostom.[588]

Syropoulos was aware that the books could be, and were, falsified. He also hinted that he, or the Greeks in general, did not have the tools to estimate whether the Latin texts were authentic, at least without the proper examination. In contrast to Bessarion's recollection of the Greek attitude towards the Latin manuscripts and their strong, but unfounded claims that these were corrupted, Syropoulos again paints a picture where he himself tried to explain the situation that the Greeks, especially the anti-unionists, were in, and he indicates that he tried to talk some sense to other Greeks that were over-hasty in their opinions. Bessarion, writing after the Council, was already convinced that the Latins were right in their theological doctrines and in their methods of analysing the manuscripts by looking at the age, material and other aspects.

I claim that the discussions about the corruption were a mixture of humanist studies of both the manuscripts and the texts they represented. The outcome of cultural encounters was spiced with distrust and deep bias against the other, founded on past and present experiences. There was always someone behind the corruption. Besides, there were also voices of cultural and religious rapprochement. Furthermore, it is evident that these discussions had a powerful impact on the Council participants, as individuals but also as representatives of their Churches, and thus on East-West relations too.

4.4 Origin and provenance of manuscripts

A manuscript was produced in a specific place and by specific people. In many cases, there were many agents working on the process of a manuscript: parchment or paper makers, scribes, illustrators, bookbinders, and so on.[589] The person or institution that ordered the manuscript had a significant role in the process of making it. The

588 "τὸ γὰρ διακρῖναι τὸ νόθον ἀπὸ τοῦ γνησίου πολλὴν ἔχει δυσχέρειαν καὶ μεγάλης δεῖται σκέψεως ἐπιστημονικῆς· νοθεύονται γὰρ τὰ βιβλία, [--] εἰς τοὺς ἀπηριθμημένους ἐκεῖσε τῆς νοθεύσεως τρόπους ὁ νῦν ὑποπτευόμενος τρόπος οὐκ ἐπενοήθη. Εἰ οὖν κατὰ πολλοὺς τρόπους νοθεύονται τὰ βιβλία καὶ ἐπί τινων λόγων τοῦ θείου Χρυσοστόμου τὸ νόθον εὑρίσκεται." Syropoulos IX, 7.

589 A good introduction to the production process of the manuscript and the different agents involved is Raymond Clemens & Timothy Graham's *Introduction to Manuscript Studies* (2007). See especially Clemens & Graham 2007, 3–64. See also Kwakkel 2018.

intended use, determined by the order maker, and the amount of the funds for the manuscript, had an impact on the external characteristics[590] and the quality of the book.[591]

The first stages of the manuscripts were not the only ones that affected the external or even the textual parts of the manuscript. The whole life cycle of a book and all the users have left their marks on the book; some were intentional, some unwanted. Besides this, the manuscripts were damaged because of insects, animals, and other natural reasons.[592] Accordingly, when the Council participants read and analysed the manuscripts, which varied in age, they saw manuscripts that carried the whole history with them. While the external traces of the use of the manuscripts, especially corruption and mutilation, have already been discussed in the previous subchapter, I focus on the impact that the origin and the provenance[593] had on the attitudes and approaches of the participants towards the manuscripts and their authority.

At the Council of Ferrara–Florence, the attitudes towards the origin and provenance of the manuscripts were usually not expressed publicly, but there were clearly presumptions on both sides. The manuscripts of the other party were seen in a bad light and usually attacked. Almost all the manuscripts used by the Latins and the Greeks were from their own territories and from the persons and institutions of their own side. It should be noted that the practical factors are weighty here. The manuscripts used at the Council were the property of the participants themselves or loaned from other persons or institutions. There is information about the collecting of the manuscripts before the Council by the Latins, and some indication by the Greeks as well.[594] The manuscripts were mainly collected from the nearby monasteries and libraries, and questions concerning the books were sent to those who were part of the Council's participants' intellectual circles. One notable exception is the collection project of Nicholas of Cusa, who searched for Greek manuscripts in Constantinople when he was there as a papal diplomat before the Council.[595] Thus, when there was an opportunity to search and collect manuscripts from afar, even

590 For example, the number of illustrations, choice of writing supports and inks and pigments, perhaps gildings, book covers, size, etc. See for example Clemens & Graham 2007, 30–34.

591 As already noted in the section 4.1 about the writing supports, in important manuscripts, the draft version was usually made on paper and the definitive version on parchment, at least in the West. This also affected the quality. See Rizzo 1973, 16–17.

592 For different types of damages in manuscripts, see Clemens & Graham 2007, 94–116.

593 Clemens and Graham distinguish these terms as follows: origin, meaning the place (of origin) and provenance, meaning the history of ownership. See Clemens & Graham 2007, 117.

594 This is discussed in chapter 3.1.

595 Nicholas of Cusa's collection activity is discussed more closely in chapter 3.1.

from the 'opponent's' realm, this opportunity was seized.[596] Although the preparation of the Council took many years, it seems that there was no systematic collection activity nor even interest in the distant areas whose collections were unknown, and thus difficult to reach. Practical restrictions concerning the expenses of travel and acquiring the manuscripts have to be taken into account as well.

These practical issues had their impact on attitudes too. The restrictions caused a situation where the Latin or the Greek texts, translations, or versions were not known to the others. This cannot be said of all the material, nor of all the Latins and Greeks, because there were some Latin texts and translations available in the Byzantine Empire and even more Greek texts and translations circulating in the Latin areas. However, these were rare and known only by the most eminent scholars and theologians of the time.[597] This unfamiliarity with the other tradition, its works, and manuscripts is attested in Syropoulos's memoirs. It emerged in the meeting at which the Greeks discussed certain Latin patristic texts:

> 'If, then, in the writings of Chrysostom, which we read from childhood to old age and whose letter and idea we know, we are unable to discern clearly the false from the true, what will become of the Western saints whose works we have never known or read (since we have never had them in our possession and they have never been translated from the beginning, and that is why they are totally unknown to us)? Where would we dare to declare authentic or false texts whose expression, idea, structure, and order of discourse we cannot grasp?'[598]

This section is part of a discussion of the authenticity of Latin patristic works which were unknown to the Greeks. It was difficult for the Greeks to discuss or define whether the works and manuscripts were authentic or not, since they had nothing to compare them to. The speaker, who was Syropoulos himself, concluded that all the works that agreed with the letter of Maximus and the writings of Cyril of Alexandria were to be considered authentic, and all the others as false. In this way, Syropoulos solved the problem of unfamiliarity by trusting the tradition he was familiar with and

596 One must, however, note that this happened only in one direction. At any rate, we have no information about Greeks travelling to the West and collecting manuscripts for the Council, or even discussing this possibility.

597 Siecienski 2006, 123–124; Ševčenko 1955, 298; Kolbaba 2000, 60 n. 242.

598 "Εἰ οὖν ἐπὶ τῶν Χρυσοστομικῶν λόγων, οὓς ἐκ νεότητος καὶ μέχρι γήρως ἡμῶν ἀναγινώσκοντες καὶ εἰδότες τὴν φράσιν καὶ τὴν ἰδέαν αὐτῶν οὐκ ἔχομεν ὁμολογουμένως διακρῖναι τὸ νόθον τε καὶ τὸ γνήσιον, πῶς ἂν ἐπὶ τῶν δυτικῶν ἁγίων, ὧν τὰ συγγράμματα οὔτε οἴδαμεν οὔτε ἀνέγνωμεν ποτε (οὐδὲ γὰρ εἴχομεν αὐτὰ οὔτε ἀρχῆθεν μετεγλωττίσθησαν κἀντεῦθεν οὐδόλως εἰσὶν ἡμῖν γνώριμα), θαρροῦντες εἴποιμεν γνήσια ταῦτ' εἶναι ἢ νόθα, ἐν οἷς οὔτε φράσιν οὔτε ἰδέαν οὔτε ὑφὴν ἢ ῥυθμόν τινα τοῦ λόγου γνωρίσαι ποθὲν ἔχομεν;" Syropoulos IX, 7.

comparing the Latin tradition to that. For him, the textual content was in a key position, and the manuscripts themselves did not receive attention. The *Acts* frequently attest this way of doing this.

Besides the approach of Syropoulos, the comparison to the tradition one was familiar with, there is also another approach in the *Acts*. After the actual sessions of the Council, the discussions too were recorded. In the Greek *Acts*, it is stated that the Greeks – as a group – noted:

> 'We had never seen Western saints [=their writings], nor had we read them. But now we know them, and we read them, and we receive them.'[599]

This was certainly not the opinion of all the Greeks, although it was recorded as such in the *Acts*, but it nevertheless tells us something about the change of attitudes during the Council. The Latins had won over the Greek unionists. The unionists, with Bessarion as the leading force, had won over the majority of the Greeks present at the Council. At the same time, the other Church's tradition and authorities were becoming more familiar and therefore authoritative. This can also be seen from the translation activity which followed the Council.

The practical concerns, such as unfamiliarity caused by the lack of manuscripts and translations, affected the attitudes, which in turn affected the practices or the lack of them. Distrust and even hatred towards the other culture did not prompt people to familiarize themselves with the tradition of the other culture. Furthermore, obviously, when the works of one's own tradition were already available in one's own region, it was not necessary to look for them in other places, where they were thought more likely to be corrupt.

In 1437, an opportunity opened up for Nicholas of Cusa, who was on a papal mission in Constantinople. He searched for Greek manuscripts in the Byzantine capital and found at least one book by Basil of Caesarea, the *Adversus Eunomium*. This work had been brought up by Mark of Ephesus already in the session held on 2 March,[600] and after discussions in several sessions, Mark accused the Latins of bringing a corrupted manuscript of Basil's text.[601] Giovanni da Montenero answered Mark:

599 "Οὐδέποτε εἴδομεν τοὺς δυτικοὺς ἁγίους, οὐδέποτε ἀνεγνώσαμεν αὐτούς. νῦν οὖν καὶ οἴδαμεν καὶ ἀνεγνώσαμεν καὶ στέργομεν αὐτούς." AG 427.

600 The Greek Acts and the Latin Acts have the same date but differ in their numbering of the session. The first mention of Basil's *Adversus Eunomium* by Mark of Ephesus, see AL 140; AG 261.

601 AL 155; AG 296.

> 'To that book of Basil, we say by answering that this book was brought by Master Nicholas of Cusa from Constantinople last year and that it is made of parchment, not of paper, and that it is most ancient.'[602]

The age and material which are mentioned in this passage have already been discussed in this chapter, but the reference to Constantinople as the place of origin of the manuscript deserves our attention as well. Before Giovanni da Montenero's response to Mark of Ephesus, he and the Latins had been accused by Mark of Ephesus of bringing a corrupted manuscript of Basil's text. Mark employed Constantinople as an authority in his speech. After he alleged the manuscript used by Giovanni da Montenero to be mutilated, he compared it to the many manuscripts that were in Constantinople.[603] For Mark and many other Greeks, Constantinople represented the heart of Greek patristic and orthodox tradition, and its manuscripts were authoritative. Besides this, it may have been a tactical move to refer to the manuscripts – in an authoritative location - which were not present in the Council, since their exact reading could not be checked. However, because Mark used Constantinople this way in his argumentation, it opened up a possibility for Giovanni da Montenero to respond with a counter-argument. Not all Constantinopolitan manuscripts agreed with the Greek dogma that Mark of Ephesus had in mind. Moreover, the manuscript that Nicholas of Cusa had brought with him proved this.

The more detailed ways in which Giovanni da Montenero argued for and against the corruption of the manuscripts have been discussed in the previous subchapter, but what must be noted here is the role played by historical users of the manuscript in Giovanni da Montenero's argumentation. Mark of Ephesus had accused the Latins of corruption. Giovanni answered that because the manuscript was of Constantinopolitan origin[604] and had not been seen by the Latins before this, it was not possible that the corruptions in it were made by Latin hands. The manuscript was made by the Greeks, probably in Constantinople or at least somewhere in the East, and everything in it was made by the Greeks. In this way, the place of origin or the storing place of the manuscript revealed the users and the active agents behind everything one could see in the manuscript.

602 "Ad factum libri ita dicimus, quod iste liber de anno preterito de Constantinopoli ductus est et dominus Nicolaus de Cusa portavit, et est liber in membranis, non in papiro, et antiquissimus." AL 155. See also AG 297.

603 AL 155; AG 296. The quotation of Mark's accusation can be found in the next chapter 4.5, where the question of quantitative authority is discussed.

604 One should note that neither Giovanni da Montenero nor anyone else claimed that this manuscript had been produced in Constantinople, which was, however, the home of the manuscript before Nicholas of Cusa brought it to the West and the Council.

In fact, Giovanni da Montenero had even emphasized that corruption was not typical of the Latins but instead of the Greeks. Thus, he extended his argument, not only to explain one specific manuscript, but also to all the manuscripts by stating that the origin of corruption as a phenomenon was Greek, not Latin.[605] He said to Mark of Ephesus:

> 'Secondly, because the origin of this addition, which you are talking about, cannot be attributed to the Latins. The reason is that so far (I say this in peace) mutilation and erasure of the books can be seen as your vice from the old Councils.'[606]

This passage, on the one hand, tells about the attitudes of the Latins towards the Greeks but, on the other hand, about the use of shared history and its sources. Even at the ecumenical Councils, the Greeks were accused of corruption. Giovanni da Montenero brought up an example from Cyril of Alexandria, who had reminded John of Antioch that the heretics had corrupted the letter of Athanasius of Alexandria to Epictetus of Corinth.[607] Giovanni da Montenero then said, that the corrupted letter of Athanasius of Alexandria was brought to the Council of Ephesus (431) by the bishop of Messenia, who then asked Cyril if he agreed with Athanasius. Cyril had answered: "If you have the letter of Athanasius to Epictetus intact and not corrupted, I am of the same faith as Athanasius."[608] Giovanni da Montenero described as follows the ensuing discussion between Cyril and the bishop of Messenia:

> 'They [Cyril and bishop of Messenia] saw this letter [of the bishop] together with the one which he [Cyril] had with him, and it appeared that the [bishop's] letter was deformed, and in the whole of the East no whole letter of Athanasius was found except the one that Cyril had. Whereupon, [the bishop of] Messenia

605 AG 301.

606 "δεύτερον, ἐπειδήπερ ὁ λόγος ταυτησὶ τῆς προσθήκης, περὶ ἧς λέγετε, οὐ φαίνεται δύνασθαι ἀπονεμηθῆναι Λατίνοις. ὁ δὲ λόγος, ὅτι μέχρι τῆς παρούσης, ὡσανεὶ μετὰ συγγνώμης λέγοιμι, ἀπὸ ὑμετέρων ἀρχαιοτάτων συνόδων φαίνεται φανερὸν ὅτι ἡ κακία αὕτη τοῦ διαφθείρειν τὰς βίβλους καὶ ἀφαιρεῖν ἀπὸ τῶν βίβλων, ἅτινα ἐποίουν οἱ τῇ πίστει μαχόμενοι, ἐν ἐκείνοις τὰς μέρεσιν ἐφωράθη." AG 297. Similarly in AL 155: "ex vestrismet libris et ex synodis antiquissimis apparet manifeste, quod vitium corrumpendi libros et auferendi, que quandoque faciebant contra impugnantes fidem fuit deprehersum in partibus vestris."

607 AL 155–156; AG 298–299. See Van Loon 2015, 175.

608 "Si habes epistolam Athanasii ad Epictetum integram et non corruptam, eiusdem fidei sum cum Athanasio." AL 156.

> corrected his own according to the example of the one that Cyril had with him, and sent the corrected one to John of Antioch.'[609]

Most of Cyril of Alexandria's works were translated from Greek into Latin already during his lifetime.[610] Mark of Ephesus had quoted Cyril of Alexandria already when discussing the illegitimacy of the addition of the *Filioque*, but for the Latins, Cyril offered arguments not only for their doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit,[611] but also as proof that the manuscripts were mutilated, and in particular by the Greeks. In addition, I argue that the text of Cyril and a detailed encounter relating to corruption at the Council of Ephesus, whose authority and ecumenicity were recognized by both Churches, offered a model for the Latins for their argumentation. Ecumenical Councils were not only authoritative sources for theology; their methods and approaches to the texts and manuscripts were models that were to be imitated by those who took part at the Council of Ferrara–Florence.

The vague references to the origin and the history of the ownership in the discussions give the idea of a certain understanding of the historical context on the part of the Council participants. The manuscript's age, together with the aspect of its makers and users and the place where it was produced, might have given a hint of possible variations or mutilations made to the text in the manuscript. When Giovanni da Montenero accused the historical figures of the Greek past of mutilation of a manuscript, Mark of Ephesus made it clear that the Latin ancestors too had been guilty of corruption. Both speakers demonstrated that they knew the history of falsification of the documents and manuscripts quite well, and they reminded others of the questionable persons in the past.

4.5 Quantity of manuscripts

As we have seen in the previous subchapters, the quality and authoritative status based on various material aspects of the manuscripts varied. Could the number of manuscripts serve the speakers and their argumentation? The original sources of the Council give some indication of the quantities of the manuscripts and how the theological argumentation could also lean on the quantitative evidence. It is difficult, indeed impossible, to specify the exact number of manuscripts that were present at

609 "Viderunt hanc epistolam cum illa, quam habebat apud se, et apparuit, quod erat difformis, et in toto Orientali non fuit reperta epistola integra Athanasii nisi apud Cirillum. Unde ille Missenus correxit suam ad exemplum illius, que erat apud Cirillum, et misit correctam Iohanni Anthioceno." AL 156.

610 Van Loon 2015, 175. The Letter of Cyril of Alexandria to John of Antioch was translated into Latin already in the fifth century.

611 Van Loon 2015, 178.

the Council. It is even more difficult to determine all the other manuscripts which were referred to in the discussions but were not with the participants at the Council. While, in most cases, the manuscripts or texts are referred to or analysed specifically, sometimes the quantity of the manuscripts played a key role in the discussions. Usually, the large quantity was supposed to give more authority to a certain reading or interpretation, but in reality, the situation was not this straightforward.

The number of manuscripts was mentioned in discussions when differing readings appeared. A dubious reading could be overturned if there were more manuscripts with other reading. Mark of Ephesus did not accept the reading, nor the interpretation, of the manuscript that the Latins had used of Basil of Caesarea's *Adversus Eunomium*. Mark commented on the manuscript of the Latins and compared it to the manuscripts he knew to be in Constantinople:

> 'This book in front of us thus proved to be depraved and to have this corrupt passage, which you have brought; because in Constantinople there are four or five manuscripts, which also have this reading; but books, which are truly intact [of corruption] and have incorrupt words and thought, are near to a thousand, which have more trustworthiness because of their (old) age and (great) quantity and because they have preserved the conception of the teacher [Basil of Caesarea] acutely.'[612]

The importance of the place of origin or the current location has already been pointed out in the previous section. In this passage, Mark's idea of the number of manuscripts in Constantinople is also noteworthy. While there were only four or five manuscripts with a reading similar to the reading of the Latins, there were almost a thousand manuscripts with a reading supporting the Greek view of Basil's teaching on the doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit. It is difficult to say whether Mark had in mind the four or five manuscripts with a different or dissident reading in the Capital. He could have said that all the manuscripts had the same reading or supported the Greek doctrine, but instead, he specified the number of the manuscripts

612 "Τοῦτο τὸ βιβλίον εὑρίσκεται μὲν καὶ παρ΄ ἡμῖν νενοθευμένον οὕτω τε καὶ διεφθαρμένον εἰς τὴν ῥῆσιν ταύτην, ὡς ὑμεῖς προηέγκατε. εἰσὶ γὰρ ἐν τῇ Κωνσταντινουπόλει τεσσαρα ἢ πέντε βιβλία τὸν ὅμοιον τρόπον ἔχοντα, τὰ δὲ ὑγιῆ καὶ ἀδιάφθορον ἔχοντα τὴν λέξιν καὶ τὴν διάνοιαν ἐγγὺς τῶν χιλίων εἰσί, τῇ τε ἀρχαιότητι καὶ τῷ πλήθει τὸ πιστὸν ἔχοντα καὶ τὴν ἀκολουθίαν ἀκριβῶς ἀποσώζοντα πρὸς τὴν τοῦ διδασκάλου ἔννοιαν." AG 296. Similarly in AL 155: "Liber iste invenitur apud nos ita corruptus, ita adulteratus circa istam auctoritatem, ut per vos dicitur; nam sunt in Constantinopoli quatuor vel quinque libri, qui ita etiam se habent; libri enim, qui sanam et incorruptam habent sententiam, sunt proprie mille vel plures, qui quidem digni sunt et propter multitudinem et antiquitatem, et qui etiam servant consequentiam secundum intentionem doctoris."

with a different reading. This was perhaps more credible, and coincided with the conception that Mark, in fact, had of the manuscripts in Constantinople. The other number given in the passage must, of course, be a figurative number. "Almost a thousand" signifies a great amount, especially when compared to merely "four or five."

This was not the only occasion when a small number was compared to a great number in the discussions of manuscripts. In the discussion of the *epiclesis*, the Byzantine emperor and his party relied on the large number of manuscripts that had the form of the Eucharist which the Greeks supported. According to Syropoulos, the emperor tried to convince Cardinal Cesarini by speaking of the number of the manuscripts:

> 'If you want to be convinced of the way in which both Basil the Great and Saint Chrysostom teach to hallow the sacred offerings and to consecrate them, you will find in every church in the East that all written liturgies, which consist of more than two thousand, are written this way.'[613]

Syropoulos records that, according to the emperor, more than two thousand written liturgies have the correct teaching about the *epiclesis*. The number again is great; it is obvious that neither the emperor nor any other participant had actually seen all of the manuscripts or visited all the places where these written liturgies were used.[614] In the emperor's speech, the mention of over two thousand written liturgies must again be a figurative number that was used as an authoritative force against the small number of Latin manuscripts present in the Council. Two thousand was an overwhelming number when compared to the few manuscripts that the Latins were using.

Besides the great number of manuscripts, the emperor used the geographical diffusion of the manuscripts as an argument for the authenticity and authority of the correctness of the Eastern teaching. Not only were there more than two thousand manuscripts containing this teaching, but they also came from every church in the Eastern parts. The problem about this argument was that the manuscripts were not present at the Council. At the same time, it made this kind of argument possible since

613 "Εἰ θέλετε πιστωθῆναι πῶς καὶ ὁ μέγας Βασίλειος καὶ ὁ θεῖος Χρυσόστομος οὕτω παρέδωκαν ἁγιάζειν τὰ θεῖα δῶρα καὶ τελειοῦν, εὑρησετε ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἐν τῇ Ἀνατολῇ Ἐκκλησίαις τὰς γεγραμμένας λειτουργίας πάσας οὕτω διαλαμβανούσας ὑπὲρ τὰς δισχιλίας οὔσας." Syropoulos X, 2.

614 The classical and Byzantine historian Nigel Wilson has studied Byzantine libraries and noted that the numerals are "subject to corruption in manuscript tradition" and that the "majority of people find it impossible to give accurate estimates of large numbers." Wilson 1967, 55.

it was impossible to show the central passages in the written liturgies. The great number of the manuscripts and the extent of the written practice of the liturgy were the key elements in convincing the Latins. The numbers did not convince the Latins, who, in fact, attacked the written documents, absent from the Council, by questioning their authenticity. Cardinal Cesarini challenged the emperor:

> ‘Can Your Sacred Majesty assert on oath that the books that Your Majesty mentioned were published by those saints in the beginning as they are now found and that they have not been altered at all in the course of time? If this is not the case, how can we trust these books?’[615]

For the Cardinal, a large number of manuscripts was not enough if they were not authentic, meaning that they were not in their original form. Nor was it enough that the authors were saints, if the text forms seen in the manuscripts did not represent their original teachings. Moreover, the problem was the impossibility of proving the authenticity of these texts, which were not even at hand at the Council.

All these arguments using the quantity of manuscripts are closely connected to the question of the origin or provenance of the manuscripts. The thousands of manuscripts with a correct reading or teaching come from a place that the speaker regards as trustworthy and renowned. Constantinople or, more widely, the churches in the East and their manuscript tradition testify to the true teaching of the Church with their abundant number of manuscripts. What then was the case with quantities of Latin manuscripts?

It seems that references to other cities than Constantinople were not used in this way in the debates. The prevalent attitudes towards the other culture and its history – and to its manuscript tradition as part of this – can also explain why the participants did not highlight the origin or provenance of the manuscripts they used. The Latins tried this, as has been seen in the case of a manuscript brought from Constantinople by Nicholas of Cusa. The Greeks seem not to have possessed Latin manuscripts, since they did not use them at the Council. There is one occasion when the city of the Council, Florence, is mentioned in the discussions alongside Constantinople. In the fourth session in Florence, 10 March 1439, Emperor John VIII Palaiologos reminded the Latins that only a small number of their manuscripts were in Florence.

615 “Δύναται ἡ ἁγία Βασιλεία σου μεθ'ὅρκου διαβεβαιῶσαι, ὅτι τὰ βιβλία ἅπερ ὁρίζεις οὕτως ἐξεδόθησαν τὴν ἀρχὴν παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων ἐκείνων, καθὼς εὑρίσκονται νῦν, καὶ οὐδόλως μετεποιήθησαν ἐν τοσούτοις χρόνοις; εἰ δὲ τοῦτο οὐ γενήσεται, πῶς ἡμεῖς τοῖς βιβλίοις πιστεύσομεν;” Syropoulos X, 2.

> Emperor: We said yesterday that they [=the manuscripts] are in Constantinople.
>
> Cardinal [Cesarini]: Do you have another [manuscript of a work of] Basil in Florence except those two?
>
> [Mark of] Ephesus: No.
>
> Cardinal [Cesarini]: Here in this city [of Florence], there are three books and two are in our favour.
>
> Emperor: It is no wonder that we should not look at those that are here.
>
> Giovanni da Montenero: So, we should say that they are elsewhere. [--]
>
> Emperor: This is like if someone had a case with one hundred witnesses and three contrary ones, the case would be decided where those three were.[616]

In this discussion, both Giovanni da Montenero and the Byzantine emperor bickered with each other. For the emperor, it seemed irrational to use the manuscripts that were in Florence. He did not explain this, but probably the reason was his and other Greeks' distrust of the manuscripts, which although written in Greek had their origin now from Latin hands. Perhaps the fact that they were in the city of the Council added to the dubiousness of the manuscripts. This is how Giovanni da Montenero seemed to interpret the emperor's answer. Giovanni answered ironically that they should say that the manuscripts were from somewhere else. In his answer, the emperor pointed more to the disparity in the number of manuscripts in different places than to the importance of the origin in his earlier claim. The problem was not in Florence itself, but in the number of manuscripts in the city of Florence compared to those in Constantinople. Why would the few manuscripts in Florence be more trustworthy than the great number of them in Constantinople, asked the emperor in his simile drawing on judicial language.

616 "Imperator. Diximus pridie, quod in Constantinopoli ita sunt.
Cardinalis. Habetis hic alium Basilium in Florentia nisi istos duos?
Ephesinus. Non.
Cardinalis. Hic in civitate hac sunt tres libri, et duo faciunt pro nobis.
Imperator. Non est mirum, quia non debemus respicere ad istos, qui sunt hic.
Provincialis. Ita diceremus nos, quod alibi sunt. [--]
Imperator. Hec est similitudo, ut si aliquis haberet causam et unus haberet centum testes et contrarios tres et causa decideretur, ubi essent illi tres." AL 168.

In this same session somewhat later, Mark of Ephesus proclaimed that "the antiquity and the quantity of our books give us the victory."[617] It turned out that in the discussions in the Council's sessions, more important than the origin or provenance of the manuscripts or the number of manuscripts with a specific reading or teaching was the presence at the Council. The manuscripts needed to be there, before the eyes and in the hands of the participants. Only in this way could they be used convincingly. In the debates on the *Filioque*, the Latins had brought works of the Western saints supporting the Latin view. These works caused difficulties for the Greeks, who still supported the traditional Eastern teaching of the procession of the Holy Spirit. In a private meeting of the Greeks, the emperor told his men that they had to answer the Latins about whether the texts were authentic or false, but if they were in fact false, one should be able to prove them false. In this, quantity, as well as quality, were crucial factors.

> 'In my opinion, there is no other way to arrive at a conclusion than to establish beforehand whether the texts of the Western saints brought by the Latins to the Council are authentic or false. Therefore, for the time being, examine this question, remembering that whoever wishes to declare them corrupt will be required to show how they are corrupt. He will also have to have more and better books than the Latins have. However, the Latins can bring two thousand books, while you do not possess even one. So, I do not see how it can be demonstrated that these texts are false. Nevertheless, let the one who wishes to prove it prove it.'[618]

The problem of the absence of the manuscripts is evident in this case. The Latins could bring 'two thousand' manuscripts, which again is to be understood figuratively; the Greeks had not even one manuscript relevant to this topic with them. The manuscripts in the East would not help in a situation when it was necessary to examine exact passages and use them in argumentation. Besides, the quantity did not suffice: the books had to be better as well. It is difficult to determine what exactly the emperor, or Syropoulos recalling this conversation, meant by 'better' (*κρείττω*),

617 "ἡ ἀρχαιότης καὶ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν παρ΄ ἡμῖν βιβλίων τὴν νίκην ἡμῖν δίδωσι." AG 301. Similarly in AL 157: "multitudo et antiquitas librorum de libro nostro victoriam dant."

618 "Νομίζω μὴ ἂν ἄλλως ἐλθεῖν ἡμᾶς εἰς συμπέρασμα, εἰ μὴ πρότερον περιστῇ, εἰ γνήσιά εἰσι τὰ ῥητὰ τῶν δυτικῶν ἁγίων, ἃ προεκόμισαν οἱ Λατῖνοι εἰς τὴν σύνοδον, ἢ νόθα. Διὸ σκέψασθε περὶ τούτου κατὰ τὸ παρὸν, μεμνημένοι ὅτι ὁ θέλων εἰπεῖν ταῦτα νόθα, ἀναγκασθήσεται ἀποδεῖξαι πῶς εἰσι νόθα, καὶ δεῖ αὐτὸν ἔχειν βιβλία πλείω και κρείττω, ὧν ἔχουσιν οἱ Λατῖνοι. Αὐτοὶ οὖν δυνήσονται προκομίσαι δισχίλια ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐδὲ ἐν ἔχετε καὶ οὐκ οἶδα πῶς ἄν τις ἀποδείξειεν αὐτὰ νόθα. Ὅμως ὁ βουλόμενος ἀποδειξάτω." Syropoulos IX, 6.

which is the comparative form of the adjective *ἀγαθός* meaning 'good' but of things, also 'serviceable'. 'Better' could point to a variety of qualities of a book, such as the ones discussed in this chapter and especially the ones the Greeks considered important for the book's authority. The other meaning, 'serviceable,' is likewise good, since it could mean that the books had to be relevant and answer the questions discussed.

The many qualities of the manuscripts had an importance for the manuscripts' authority. The participants of the Council strengthened their arguments by referring to the manuscripts' writing support and age. The commonly accepted authoritative works were written before the Schism occurred, so the manuscripts had to be old enough to be authoritative. The signs of past use and users could be evidence for the Council's participants of corruption and mutilation of the original texts. The participants' gaze was thus not only on the textual contents but also on the physical objects that could reveal information about their past. As this chapter has shown, these factors were crucial for the Council's argumentation. The next chapter investigates the outcome of these discussions, focusing on the materiality of manuscripts and their relation to authority. How did the arguments based on materiality contribute to the understanding of truth? How did they shape the participants' identities and communities? What was this *humanistic theology* that found its arena in the Council of Ferrara–Florence?

5 "Our books reveal the truth better than yours"[619] – Influence of manuscripts on Late-Medieval and Byzantine intellectual and religious culture

In previous chapters, I have explored the use and authority of manuscripts at the Council of Ferrara–Florence. I have argued that the material aspects of the manuscripts occupied an important space in the theological discussions. In addition, these discussions turned out to be decisive for the whole outcome of the Council. One of the last questions that the Greeks contemplated was whether they accepted certain Latin manuscripts and texts in them as authentic. In the end, the majority gave their approval. This forwarded the union, but also changed something that had to do with an issue that was bigger than the Council alone. For the Greeks especially, their conception of truth had changed. The basis of who they were and where they belonged had been challenged. The manuscripts had opened new perspectives on truth and religious identity, and provided a new theological method, *humanistic theology*. These aspects are discussed in this chapter.

5.1 Manuscripts as authorities for truth

In the introduction to this thesis, I approached the concept of authority as something given in culture and by people and not existent *per se*. Authority then affects how people define their environment and what is true and meaningful for them. Authoritative works of the Church have shaped the understanding of Christian dogma and religious practice. The works were and are, however, confined in their material form, in manuscripts and books, and authority is not automatically accorded to all material forms, even if the text in them is considered authoritative. The truth

[619] "τὴν ἀλήθειαν τῶν ἡμετέρων βιβλίων φανῆναι μᾶλλον ἢν τῶν ὑμετέρων," AG 354.

which holds the greatest authority[620] is beyond matter but must be assessed by its material features and by human factors that have influenced it. In this way, the material form of the book succeeds or fails to gain authority. In this subchapter, I focus on the concepts of authority and truth and their relation to manuscripts at the Council of Ferrara–Florence.

In the Council's sources, the word 'truth' (*veritas*, *ἀλήθεια*) and its derivatives repeatedly occur in the speeches of the participants as well as in the narration of Syropoulos. The Council aimed to find the truth that both Churches could believe in and profess in the union. In the Bull of Union, issued on 6 July 1439, it was stated that,

> In the name of the holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we define, with the approval of this holy universal Council of Florence, that the following truth of faith shall be believed and accepted by all Christians and thus shall all profess it: that the Holy Spirit is eternally from the Father and the Son, and has his essence and his subsistent being from the Father together with the Son, and proceeds from both eternally as from one principle and a single spiration. We declare that when holy doctors and fathers say that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son, this bears the sense that thereby also the Son should be signified, according to the Greeks indeed as cause, and according to the Latins as principle of the subsistence of the Holy Spirit, just like the Father. [--] We define also that the explanation of those words "and from the Son" was licitly and reasonably added to the creed for the sake of declaring the truth and from imminent need.[621]

The purpose of the Bull of Union and the whole Council was to declare the truth of the one Church. Before that, there were two competing understandings of truth. The task of the Council and its participants was to find the truth and formulate it for future

620 See for example Syropoulos V, 11. See also AG 20, 21.

621 "In nomine igitur sanctae trinitatis, patris et filii et spiritus sancti, hoc sacro universali approbante Florentino concilio, diffinimus ut haec fidei veritas ab omnibus christianis credatur et suscipiatur, sicque omnes profiteantur, quod spiritus sanctus ex patre et filio aeternaliter est, et essentiam suam suumque esse subsistens habet ex patre simul et filio, et ex utroque aeternaliter tanquam ab uno principio et unica spiratione procedit. Declarantes quod id, quod sancti doctores et patres dicunt, ex patre per filium procedere spiritum sanctum, ad hanc intelligentiam tendit, ut per hoc significetur filium quoque esse secundum graecos quidem causam, secundum latinos vero principium, subsistentiae spiritus sancti, sicut et patrem. [--] Diffinimus insuper explicationem verborum illorum filioque, veritatis declarandae gratia, et imminente tunc necessitate, licite ac rationabiliter symbolo fuisse appositam." Translated by Joseph Gill, see Tanner (ed.) 1990, 526–527.

generations. In the bull, before the above citation, we find out how the truth was found.

> For when Latins and Greeks came together in this holy synod, they all strove that, among other things, the article about the procession of the Holy Spirit should be discussed with the utmost care and assiduous investigation.
>
> Texts were produced from divine scriptures and many authorities of eastern and western holy doctors, some saying the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, others saying the procession is from the Father through the Son. All were aiming at the same meaning in different words.[622]

Before the truth could be found and declared, a profound investigation was necessary. Testimonies of Sacred Scripture and excerpts of many Eastern and Western saints and doctors were brought, and their wordings and meanings were discussed and investigated in the Council. The testimonies and the authoritative excerpts were the texts and works in the manuscripts that were at hand at the Council. In the text of the bull, a rather concise document, there is no need to point out more precisely the ways in which the testimonies were read and investigated, but the general method of the Council is important for the authority of the Bull of Union and its declaration. The notion that there are different ways of stating the same truth about the procession of the Holy Spirit, whether it was from the Son or through the Son, but all meaning the same, is also a tool for the future Church and its members in order to understand the material remnants, the manuscripts, of their ancestors. Not all the different wordings meant that the other one was correct or true and the other had to be false, but the *consensus patrum* could be witnessed in these different languages besides these differences. This naturally does not mean that there were no corruptions and mutilations as well, but the bull sheds light on what can be considered to be the authoritative formulation of the truth.

The bull does not explain in detail how this truth was found. The ways in which these testimonies, the manuscripts, were investigated have already been discussed in depth in previous chapters. What particularly captures my attention is the aspect of truth in these discussions. Where did the truth lie, as the participants saw it?

622 "Convenientes enim latini ac graeci in hac sacrosancta synodo ycumenica magno studio invicem usi sunt, ut inter alia etiam articulus ille de divina spiritus sancti processione summa cum diligentia et assidua inquisitione discuteretur. Prolatis vero testimoniis ex divinis scripturis plurimisque auctoritatibus sanctorum doctorum orientalium et occidentalium, aliquibus quidem ex patre et filio, quibusdam vero ex patre per filium procedere dicentibus spiritum sanctum, et ad eandem intelligentiam aspicientibus omnibus sub diversis vocabulis;" Translated by Joseph Gill, see Tanner (ed.) 1990, 525.

The original hope of the pope and the Latins was that the Greeks could be brought back to the Mother Church of Rome without arduous negotiations. The emperor had announced to the pope's legates in Constantinople before the Council that they demanded an "open discussion of all the old problems and a decision, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, based on those discussions."[623] For the emperor, "open discussion" meant that both parties were equal at the Council and could express their arguments.

The open discussion that the emperor demanded could also mean that both parties needed to withdraw from their own certainty and prejudices before the discussions. In Syropoulos's narration, the emperor spoke as follows:

> 'We must cast out prejudices from our minds, not hold the Latin dogma false, nor admit our own dogma as false, but have equal doubt about both, until after the examination. What will come out of the inquiry and the conciliar decision is that which must be accepted as true and unquestionable.'[624]

623 Gill 1964, 233.

624 "Δεῖ τὰς προλήψεις ἐκ τῶν διανοιῶν ἡμῶν ἐκβληθῆναι καὶ μήτε τὴν λατινικὴν δόξαν ἡγεῖσθαι ἐπισφαλῆ, μήτε τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ ὡς ἀσφαλεῖ συντίθεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς τὰς δύο ἀμφιβόλως ἔχειν ἐπίσης, μέχρι ἂν ἐξετασθῶσι, καὶ τὸ εὑρεθησόμενον ἀπὸ τῆς συνοδικῆς ἐξετάσεως καὶ ἀποφάσεως, ἐκεῖνο ὀφείλει στέργεσθαι ὡς ἀληθὲς καὶ ἀναμφίβολον." Syropoulos VII, 18. See also the speech of the emperor in Syropoulos X, 10: "For this reason, I have often told you that you must all get rid of your prejudices and not cling to any of them, but have equal doubt both as to the doctrine of the Roman Church and our own, since they are subject to examination, until the Council, having studied and judged them, has pronounced itself. It is then up to us to accept its declaration without fail. I myself have put myself in these dispositions, as I have already said, even though I am emperor, even though I summoned the Council, and it would have been natural for me to wish to adhere to one doctrine or another. Thus I have decided for myself not to hold the doctrine of our Church as incontestable and certain, nor to despise the Roman one as false; I stand in doubt in regard to both until the council has submitted them to its consideration. At that time, I accept the judgment that the Council may render. Thus, you too must remove from your minds the prejudices and accept the council's statements without question. Cease, therefore, your quarrels and leave those speeches contrary to the Council's decision as unworthy of your habit and of the episcopal order. And receive with due piety what the council has decreed." ("Ἀλλὰ διὰ τοῦτ' ἔφην πολλάκις, ὅτι χρὴ πάντας ὑμᾶς ἐκβαλεῖν ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν τὰς προλήψεις καὶ μηδεμιᾷ τούτων προσκεῖσθαι, ἀλλ' ἐπίσης ἀμφιβόλους ἡγεῖσθαι τήν τε τῆς Ῥωμαϊκῆς Ἐκκλησίας δόξαν καὶ τὴν ἡμετέραν, ἐπεὶ πρόκεινται εἰς ἐξέτασιν, μέχρις ἂν ἡ σύνοδος ἐξετάσῃ καὶ διευκρινήσῃ ταύτας καὶ ἀποφήνηται, καὶ τότε δεξόμεθα ἀπταίστως τὸ ἀποφανθέν. Ἐγὼ γὰρ οὕτως ἐμαυτὸν διέθηκα καθάπερ εἶπον, καίτοιγέ εἰμι βασιλεὺς καὶ ἐγὼ συνῆξα καὶ τὴν σύνοδον, καὶ ἦν εἰκὸς ἵνα βουληθῶ προστεθῆναι τῇδε τῇ δόξῃ ἢ τῇδε. Ἀλλ' οὕτως ἔστησα εἰς ἐμαυτόν, ἵνα μήτε τῆς δόξης τῆς ἡμετέρας Ἐκκλησίας ἀντέχωμαι ὡς ἀναμφιβόλου καὶ ἀσφαλοῦς, μήτε τῆς Ῥωμαϊκῆς καταφρονῶ

These words were addressed to the emperor's own people, the Greeks. Purgatory was being discussed when the emperor spoke this way. It is possible that the emperor encouraged the Greeks to produce any arguments or ideas, because the Greeks did not, in fact, have a definite and clear dogma of purgatory.[625] At the same time, this issue was not as grave for the Greeks as was the doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit or even the correct form of eucharistic bread. Perhaps the emperor was ready to compromise on the doctrine of purgatory. According to the Greeks, their strong points were still to come in the discussions of the addition to the Creed. Nevertheless, this idea of the emperor can also be understood in a wider context than just the discussions of purgatory. The emperor did not see his place as the speaker on theological matters and dogma, but rather as a defender of the Church and of his Empire that was in distress.[626] The emperor encouraged different voices to be heard throughout the Council, except, perhaps, when decisions had to be made. He had chosen Mark of Ephesus and Bessarion as speakers although they often represented different views: the former being a strong anti-unionist, while the latter was in favour of the union. It was the Council, convened by the emperor, when held properly and in accordance with the old ecumenical Councils, that defined the truth.

While open discussions and a truth not defined beforehand were perhaps the ideal, it seems that, for most participants, the truth already existed in their own teaching and tradition. The teaching of both Churches relied on authoritative works and tradition. Both were closely connected to the material form. Works were written on parchment and paper, passages on the walls and floors of the churches and other buildings and various objects; the tradition was present in the many material practices. The truth of faith could be witnessed and revealed in the objects of faith. At the same time, not all objects revealed the truth of faith, even if they contained religious contents or seemed to be religious by nature. Just as not all relics were believed to be authentic and thus true remnants of the holy, similarly, not all the manuscripts with Christian works were considered to contain truth. This becomes clear in the discussions of the Council as well. Giovanni da Montenero answered Mark of Ephesus in the sixth session of Florence on 14 March 1439,

> ὡς ἐπισφαλοῦς, ἀλλ' ἵν' ἀμφιβολίαν ἔχω καὶ ἐν ταῖς δυσί, μέχρις ἂν ἐξετάσῃ τὰ περὶ τούτων ἡ σύνοδος, καὶ τότε στέργω ὅπερ ἂν ἀποφήνηται. Οὕτως οὖν ἔδει καὶ ὑμᾶς ἐκβαλεῖν ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν τὰς προλήψεις καὶ νῦν στέργειν ἀναμφιβόλως ὅπερ ἡ σύνοδος ἀπεφήνατο. Παύσασθε οὖν τῆς φιλονεικίας καὶ ἐάσατε τοὺς λόγους τοὺς ἐναντιουμένους τῇ συνοδικῇ ἀποφάσει ὡς ἀναξίους ὄντας τῷ σχήματι ὑμῶν καὶ τῇ ἀρχιερατικῇ τάξει, καὶ στέργετε μετὰ τῆς προσηκούσης εὐλαβείας ὅπερ διωρίσατο ἡ σύνοδος.")

625 The Latin dogma of purgatory and the Greek response to that is explained in chapter 2.4.

626 See for example Syropoulos VIII, 11.

> ‘Therefore our books reveal the truth better than yours, and therefore the truth is made clear evidently as it is found in our manuscripts, nor in any way as it is in your manuscript, I wish to establish a comparison as it was written from word to word, as it is in your manuscript, interpreted by Ambrogio [Traversari]. I examined, therefore, when we are in agreement and when in difference in the manuscripts.’[627]

It is clear, in my understanding, that the books in this passage refer to the material manuscripts that were read and compared in the Council. The truth was in the words of the authoritative work, but since the words in the manuscripts were prone to mistakes and even deliberate mutilation, the truth could be found only in some manuscripts. The Greek words used here to describe how the truth is revealed (“φανῆναι μᾶλλον”) and made clear evidently (“διασαφηνισθῆναι φανερῶς”), in my opinion, highlight the material and sensory experience and the importance of the presence of the truth in the material. The truth could also be hidden, and human mutilation is seen in the material making the manuscripts as well as its users fixed on falsehood. The truth was immaterial, but it was revealed in the material.

Truth, then, was the most important basis for authority. Bessarion had stated this in his speech at the very beginning of the Council: “We have no other basis for agreement than the truth.”[628] The truth was sought, and the agreement was made in the end, though not in total unanimity. It was time to draft a ‘new’ truth that was found in the debates. This truth was to be put into the matter. Formulations for the Council’s decree uniting the Churches and stating that the dogmas and the truth to be “believed and accepted by all Christians”[629] were prepared for ten days, according to Syropoulos.[630] Drafts for the decree were sent back and forth.[631] This was an important phase of the Council. I suggest this because the truth was finally put into the matter and for future generations.

The material choice for the decree, or bull, of Union, was parchment. This must have been a natural choice, and no disagreement on this is witnessed in the sources.

627 “Ὥστε τὴν ἀλήθειαν τῶν ἡμετέρων βιβλίων φανῆναι μᾶλλον ἢν τῶν ὑμετέρων, καὶ ὥστε διασαφηνισθῆναι φανερῶς ὅτι ἡ ἀλήθεια οὕτως ἔχει καθὼς ἐν τοῖς ἡμετέροις βιβλίοις εὑρίσκεται καὶ κατ' οὐδένα τρόπον ἐν τῇ ὑμετέρᾳ βίβλῳ, ἠθέλησα λαβεῖν τὸ ἴσον καθὼς κεῖται ἀπὸ ῥήματος εἰς ῥῆμα, καὶ τοῦτο ὅσον ἦν ἀναγκαῖον λαβεῖν ἀπὸ τοῦ τρίτου λόγου μέχρι τῆς ἐπαγωγῆς τοῦ πρώτου βιβλίου· καὶ ὁ Ἀμβρόσιος ἡρμήνευσε τοῦτο. ἐσκεψάμην οὖν ἐν οἷς συμφωνοῦμεν καὶ ἐν οἷς διαφερόμεθα.” AG 354.

628 “Μεσότητα δὲ ἄλλην ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἔχομεν εἰ μὴ τὴν ἀλήθειαν.” Syropoulos V, 11. See also AG 20, 21.

629 “παρὰ πάντων τῶν χριστιανῶν [--] πιστεύτηταί τε καὶ στέργηται.” Syropoulos VIII, 30. See also AG 413; AL 224.

630 Syropoulos X, 5.

631 Syropoulos X.

Parchment was durable and prestigious for this kind of document. The union was meant to last. The truth of the unified Church as a result of the Council was consolidated in the parchment. It was written in both languages used in the Council so far, Latin and Greek. The future Church could use both languages, but they would profess the same truth of faith. The signatures of the participants made the material form of the decree binding. Only then were the union and the truth truly accepted by the two Churches and their members.

The procedure of signing the document was not without its difficulties. The order of signatures and who should sign caused discussion.[632] Besides, not all the Greeks were willing to sign the document. Syropoulos, as being one of those indisposed to sign, expressed his thoughts this way: "How could we sign a document for which we have not voted, which we do not accept and hold contrary to the dogmas of the Church?"[633] The many Greeks to whom Syropoulos gave a voice did not support the decisions made by the Council, and thus did not want to sign the document. The emperor answered Syropoulos and others unwilling to sign:

> 'since this doctrine has been approved by the whole Council, and from now on our Church must hold it to be sound, you too must accept it. You must do nothing against the decision of the council and our commandment. [--] And I ask you to sign.'[634]

The emperor invoked the Council and its authority in approving the doctrine. Syropoulos, with the others, answered and claimed the decision to have been the emperor's decision rather than the Council's decision.[635] From Syropoulos's text, it is difficult to determine whether this was the actual discussion between the emperor and the Greeks who were unwilling to sign the document. In the end, we see that all the Greeks, with the exception of Mark of Ephesus (and the bishop of Stavropolis, who had fled from the Council before the end),[636] signed the document, Syropoulos as well. Syropoulos wrote his memoirs after the Council and explained the conditions in the Council and what made him accept the union even if he did not support it.[637]

632 Syropoulos X, 4.

633 "πῶς δὲ ὑπογράψομεν εἰς ὃ οὔτε ἐγνωμοδοτήσαμεν οὔτε στέργομεν ἀλλ' ἔχομεν αὐτὸ ἐναντίον τῶν δογμάτων τῆς Ἐκκλησίας;" Syropoulos X, 12.

634 "ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ ἐστέρχθη παρὰ πάσης τῆς συνόδου ἡ δόξα αὕτη καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μέλλει ἔχειν ταύτην ἡ Ἐκκλησία ἡμῶν ὡς ὑγιᾶ δόξαν, ἀνάγκη ἐστὶν ἵνα στέρξητε ταύτην καὶ ὑμεῖς καὶ οὐκ ὀφείλετε ποιῆσαι ἄλλο παρὰ τὴν ἀπόφασιν τῆς συνόδου καὶ τὴν ἡμετέραν παρακέλευσιν. [--] καὶ ὁρίζω ἵνα ὑπογράψητε." Syropoulos X, 12.

635 Syropoulos X, 12.

636 Gill 1959, 292.

637 Gill 1964, 20.

It is possible that there were discussions of this kind, but there is also a possibility that the reluctance of Syropoulos and his active role in opposing the union are at least emphasised in this passage, as well as in some other parts.

The decree was finally signed. Syropoulos gives a detailed account of this, emphasizing how the Latins watched closely as the Greeks signed the document. He even stated that most of them did not even know what they were signing, as the text was not read to them beforehand.[638] The last one to sign the document was Pope Eugene IV. Syropoulos wrote:

> The pope came too, looked at our signatures at the bottom of the decree, and then signed it himself by standing up and pressing his hands and the document on a desk.[639]

Signing is a very meaningful act. It connects the body, the mind, and the material. It connects the signatory to the contents of the material form of the decree. The matter then connects the signatories to other signatories. The connection is also made to future generations. The signed document binds the signatories as well as the future members of the Church that the document is about. The immaterial truth is put into writing and revealed to the people who see it, and the signed parchment copy of the ecumenical Council's decree obligates them to follow this truth.

Before the material manifestation of the truth in the parchment, the debates were about seeking the truth, defending one's own understanding of the truth, or attacking the other interpretations and false material evidence. Speeches were opinions, and the participants were broadly free to express their arguments and standpoints on doctrinal and ecclesiastical matters.[640] These were also put into writing by the scribes and secretaries of the Council. These were not yet the final truths of the Council, but were a way to see and understand how the final decisions were made. The bull of Union stated concisely that the works of the Sacred Scripture, saints and doctors of the Church were read and analysed closely; the documents made by the scribes showed in detail how this was done. Speeches that were delivered orally were not as clear and distinctive and were only sometimes remembered sufficiently well. Because of this, there are times when the other party asked if they could obtain the

638 Syropoulos X, 29.

639 "εἰς ὃν καὶ ὁ πάπας ἐξελθὼν καὶ τὰς ἐν τῷ ὅρῳ ὑπογραφὰς ἡμῶν θεωρήσας, ὑπέγραψε καὶ αὐτὸς ἱστάμενος ὅρθιος ἐπὶ ἀναλογίου ἐρείσας τὰς χεῖράς τε καὶ τὸν ὅρον." Syropoulos X, 15.

640 They were sometimes reproached by their own people for what they said, and they were, of course, chosen speakers. This means that not all the participants were free to express their opinions.

arguments in written form.[641] This helped the memory, but also forced the other party to commit to a distinct understanding of dogma or other matter in question. Once again, the matter bound its maker(s).

The Union was manifested in the parchment and read and accepted in public.[642] The union was not, however, going to last. Many people in Constantinople and in general in the East opposed the union fiercely. Even many of the Greeks who had signed the decree at the end of the Council turned their back to the union.[643] How could the binding signatures on the parchment be denied or overturned? Syropoulos again offers some insights into this.

After Syropoulos wrote about the ways in which the decree was made, the process of signing the document, and how it was read in the church (and accepted by the Latins with the words "placet, placet" and by the Greeks with "ἀρέσκει"), he gave instructions to his readers:

> From then on, the Decree having been drawn up under these conditions, the bishops having had the knowledge of its content that we know, and its preparation has been the result of such artifices and intrigues, I leave it to those who will want to examine whether it should be held as a decision of an ecumenical Council and embrace the Union thus made as a true and indisputable Union, or whether it is to be opposed to a conciliar decision not to accept it or the Decree. My aim is not to clarify these questions but only to examine the facts in their nakedness as they unfolded, to make them known to those who wish to know, and to pass them on to posterity.[644]

The point of Syropoulos is that the decree was made in questionable conditions.[645] Although he does not claim directly that the Union or the Decree was not true or that they should not be held as true decisions of an ecumenical Council, his choice of words in this passage, as in many other parts of his memoirs, makes it clear that the union and the decree were made in conditions that included "artifices and intrigues"

641 See for example AG 23.

642 On the importance of the ritual in the completion of the union, see Nowicki 2011, 317.

643 For example, Syropoulos and George Scholarios. On Scholarios, see Setton 1976, 66.

644 "Οὕτως οὖν γεγονότος τοῦ ὅρου καὶ τῶν ἐπισκόπων τοιαύτην εἴδησιν ἐσχηκότων περὶ τῶν ἐμπεριειλημμένων αὐτῷ, καὶ τοσούτων ῥᾳδιουργημάτων καὶ συσκευῶν γεγενημένων ὥστε κατασκευασθῆναι, σκοπείτωσαν οἱ βουλόμενοι, εἰ χρὴ λογίζεσθαι τὸν τοιοῦτον ὅρον ὡς ἀπόφασιν οἰκουμενικῆς συνόδου, καὶ εἰ χρὴ τὴν οὕτω γεγονυῖαν ἕνωσιν ὡς ἀληθῆ καὶ ἀναντίρρητον στέργειν ἕνωσιν, καὶ εἰ ἐναντιοῦνται ἀποφάσει συνοδικῇ οἱ τὴν ἕνωσιν καὶ τὸν ὅρον μὴ στέργοντες· ἡμῖν γὰρ οὐκ ἐξελέγχειν τὰ τοιαῦτα σκοπός, ἀλλ' ὡς προέβησαν μόνον γυμνὰ ταῦτα ἐκθέσθαι καὶ δῆλα καταστῆσαι τοῖς βουλομένοις καὶ παραπέμψαι τοῖς ἐφεξῆς." Syropoulos X, 29.

645 Gill 1969/1970, 227.

("ῥᾳδιουργημάτων καὶ συσκευῶν"). He nevertheless wanted to emphasise that he aims to tell the facts.[646]

The people rejecting the union in their homelands were absent from the Council. It was not their hands that had signed the document and that were bound by it. However, it must be remembered that the people who had not been at the Council were subject to the leaders and delegates in the Council. The emperor, the Patriarch of Constantinople, and on a local level, the bishops and other leaders had the authority to decide for them in matters of faith and the Empire. While it was not easy to accept the decree, it could not be denied without reason. This is probably why Syropoulos explained that the conditions leading to the decree were not legitimate, and that the decree, even if signed by the Greeks as well as the Latins, would not necessarily be binding.

Truth had the greatest authority. The truth was revealed in the matter. Thus, the material remnants had to be investigated in order to find the truth. After that, the truth that had been found was once again put into the matter. Not everyone accepted the authority of this material manifestation of truth. While the Latin delegation seemed not to have problems about accepting it, many Greeks did not accept it. However, not all the Greeks thought the decree was illegitimate and made in spurious conditions. For these Greeks, the material aspects were significant. The manuscripts were testimonies to the truth. The material aspect of the final decree of Union also shaped how they understood themselves and their Church and communities.

5.2 Manuscripts shaping identities and communities

Manuscripts mattered not only in defining the dogma of the Church, but also for the individuals and religious and cultural communities. Communities often share, commission, produce and use material objects. Members of a community recognize and give specific meanings to objects that are related to their community and shared identity. Members of a community may even have certain rules for objects and the material world surrounding them with regard to their use and interpretations. At the Council of Ferrara–Florence, two cultures, two Churches, and two communities with a shared identity and close contacts were present. These cultures and communities had material traditions that were partly shared, but partly developed in their own directions. Churches were indeed cultures with an immense number of objects that shaped the identity of the members and their understanding of themselves and the divinity. In this subchapter, I focus on the manuscripts and their significance for the

646 Syropoulos frequently mentions in his memoirs this aim and premise of his narration, namely to tell the truth. See for example, Syropoulos XII, 15.

communities present in the Council. I will deal with the question of how the discussions surrounding the manuscripts influenced the communities, and how they both shook the existing communities and also created new communities around the manuscripts.

I argue that the criticism directed at the manuscripts forced the participants to rethink their theological and spiritual position and relationship with their community and their past. Rethinking could then lead to various outcomes. The critique could strengthen the existing views and standpoints with regard to oneself and the other. In this case, the critical voices were only reasserting the belief of one's own cultural and theological superiority over the other. In particular, Mark of Ephesus was not convinced by the claims of corruption of the Greek manuscripts and other critical remarks by the Latins, but instead kept believing in his own historical tradition in theology that had been preserved in the material culture, in this case, in the manuscripts. Another outcome of the critique was a change of mind and belief. The arguments of the manuscripts and their potential misuse and dubious history convinced some participants that they had put their belief in the wrong tradition. Bessarion and Isidore of Kiev are the best examples of this kind of change of heart. The manuscripts played a significant part in this change.

The definition or how the concept of *identity* is used in this context must be first established. I do not intend to overly theorise the term or find a new definition for it, but rather use it as an analytical tool with other concepts that are related to it, such as community and material culture. The editors of *Imagined Communities: Constructing Collective Identities in Medieval Europe* (2018) have defined identity both as a factor connecting people and as a label put by an outsider to an imagined group. The latter is dominant in medieval sources.[647] The fact that identities of the communities are usually described by an outsider, either by medieval contemporaries or by modern scholars relying mainly on the past outsiders labelling the others, creates a situation in which identities do not necessarily correspond to the idea that a certain community had about its own self. Similarly, the community as a group of people sharing an identity or a "sense of belonging to a large collectivity," is seldom apparent in the sources.[648] The sense of belonging is sometimes easier to discern from medieval definitions and opinions of others, displaying the boundaries of

647 Pleszczyński, Sobiesiak, Tomaszek & Tyszka 2018, 3. *Imagined community* is a concept coined by Benedict Anderson, who employed it to analyse nationalism. See Anderson 2003 (1983).

648 Pleszczyński, Sobiesiak, Tomaszek & Tyszka 2018, 2. Christina Lutter uses *belonging* as one of the key concepts in relation to identity. See Lutter 2020, 131–152.

community: what a community is not and what it does not believe in, as opposed to the other community.[649]

Christina Lutter points out that "identities are constructed within historical processes and thus change over time."[650] Identities have "constantly been produced, negotiated, sometimes affirmed or adapted, and sometimes challenged, changed, or dismissed."[651] The discussions at the Council of Ferrara–Florence treated theological doctrines and practices, but at the same time, these theological themes were at the core of how the participants understood themselves and their religious and cultural identities and communities. The debates challenged the identities, and even changed the existing identities and communities that were built on these identities.

What was the foundation of the identities for the communities that were present at the Council? First, it must be pointed out that individuals could be part of various communities and identify themselves in terms of several categories.[652] At the Council, there were two large communities present, the two Churches whose members shared many beliefs. These two Churches shared the fundamental belief in the Christian God. Members of the two Churches had, however, differing ideas about whether the members of the other Church could be considered as fellow Christians and siblings, or whether the schism (or even heresy) of the other was so extensive that the Christian identity could not be predicated of them. In addition to the large communities, there were smaller groups that shared, for example, political or intellectual ideas. Monastic communities or other communities that were tied to monastic rules or even geographical and spatial places and buildings were also communities with an identity that shaped the members and their understanding of themselves as others. Especially when we are dealing with religious communities, a shared belief and concept of truth is central in defining the community. The beliefs and conception of what is the truth were based on authoritative texts and their shared interpretation. This is the main idea of Brian Stock's *textual communities*.[653] In addition to texts and their shared interpretation, material culture could play a role in communities and identity constructions.[654]

I share Ann Brower Stahl's and Chris Fowler's affirmations that material culture is not merely a reflection or the product of the culture, as some previous scholars

649 See also Pleszczyński, Sobiesiak, Tomaszek & Tyszka 2018, 10.
650 Lutter 2020, 132.
651 Lutter 2020, 133.
652 Christina Lutter lists four key categories in present-day identities: gender, class, ethnicity, and religion. See Lutter 2020, 131.
653 Stock 2021 (1983), 88–240. In Stock's *textual communities*, what is important is not the written version of the text, but the interpreter of the text who utilised the text "for reforming a group's thought and action." See Stock 2021 (1983), 90.
654 Lutter 2020, 139; Tomaszek 2018, 103–124; Fowler 2012, 352–385.

have claimed.[655] Instead, the material culture shaped persons, and vice versa.[656] Manuscripts, as part of material culture, shaped the culture in which they were produced and used. Cultural values and practices had influenced the shape and form of manuscripts, which later generations often reshaped to correspond to their own needs and cultural values.[657] Manuscripts, like other material objects, were closely connected to the people and communities who used them. They could be links to the past users and the historic community that the present members understood themselves to be a part of. The Council of Ferrara–Florence and the role that the manuscripts had there is a clear expression of this.

Council participants had brought manuscripts with them, as has already been seen and discussed in this study. The authoritative texts in them, naturally, played an important part, but the culture that had produced and used the manuscripts and interpreted the texts in them was crucial as well. The manuscripts, like the Church Fathers, were referred to either as 'ours' or as 'yours'.[658] These pronouns connected the manuscripts and the authors to their cultural and religious origin and community. If we, as scholars, are not to perceive material culture only as a reflection of the larger culture, it seems that for the participants, the manuscripts were most of all reflections of the culture that had produced and used them. Both parties relied on their own material culture and historical traditions and past generations of the community to which they belonged. The manuscripts of the other culture were prone to error because of the character of the past and present members of the community that was responsible for the manuscripts.

Despite this starting point for the Council, the role of the manuscripts became decisive. Manuscripts were not only material shells for the authoritative textual content; they themselves became objects of debate. The participants had to defend their own material culture and history, both the past members of the communities that were responsible for the manuscripts and the present-day members. At the same time, participants attacked and challenged the material culture of the other party. In the end, manuscripts, together with the verbal argumentation, affected the participants and forced them to rethink their identity and place in the community as well as their material tradition of faith, and hence likewise the immaterial truth they were believing and professing.

Rethinking did not necessarily mean a change of identity or community. For Mark of Ephesus, the Council meant a crisis. First, the discussions had caused a

655 Brower Stahl 2012, 153–154; Fowler 2012, 355–358. Both Brower Stahl and Fowler present a comprehensive history of the study of material culture.
656 Brower Stahl 2012, 151.
657 Rudy 2016, see especially 1–2.
658 This is discussed also in chapter 3.2.

fissure in the Greek party, and the outcome of the Council, the bull of Union signed by other Greeks, was seen by Mark as a death blow. His own identity and Christian faith, like his belief in the material culture and tradition of Eastern Christians, stayed strong and remained unchanged. The community he once was part of, however, changed. At the Council, he was left alone with his strong support of his belief in the traditional teaching of the Eastern Church and the authenticity and authority of their manuscripts. After the Council, when he was back in Constantinople, he found his community again, but the people were even more divided between favouring or opposing the union than before the Council.

Bessarion faced a change in the Council as well. He came to the Council opposing the union, but soon changed his mind. From speaking for the union, he took an even bigger turn than before to support the Latin dogma. He began to doubt the authenticity of the many manuscripts of his own community. After the Council, he searched for manuscripts and compared them, with the discussions of the Council in mind. It is important here to notice the change in the way Bessarion looked at manuscripts, even the ones he had been using and on which he had earlier based his faith and knowledge, the manuscripts that had connected him to his fellow Christians of the East.

Bessarion adopted at the Council a new humanist way of reading and analysing manuscripts and their contents. Manuscripts were not only textual objects that were part of religious practice and a basis for Christian knowledge of the truth, but also human-made objects with errors, mutilations, different readings, and remnants of the past users with various aspirations. He found a new community that approached the manuscripts in a manner similar to his own. He founded a literary circle in Rome, where many refugees from the East, especially after the Fall of Constantinople in 1453, came to study, edit and translate works of classical and Christian authors. This circle also included Latin scholars and humanists.[659]

Many Greeks writing about Bessarion said that he abandoned his old community and had become a Latin: He had been Latinised.[660] For Bessarion, his identity and the community of which he saw himself as a part were, however, different from what many others thought about him. In his work in Rome on the manuscripts and the Latin and Greek works together with Latin and Greek scholars, he thought of himself as a member of the unified Church. He was a defender of Greek works from the past when he translated and edited them with the others in his circle and even donated his personal library to Venice in his old age. If it was the pope who had brought the two Churches together at the Council and in the bull of Union, it was Bessarion who

659 On Bessarion's humanist circle, see Hankins 2006 (1990); Monfasani 1981, 165–209; Harris 2011, 425–427; Bianca 2005, 19–41; Bolick 2014, 25, 84, 214.

660 Gill 1959, 234.

brought Latin and Greek intellectuals together in the name of studying the manuscripts. Manuscripts were a link between the persons speaking, reading, and writing these two languages.

Even if Church union had been achieved, this did not exhaust the questions concerning the authenticity of manuscripts, and the place of arguments about the material aspects of the manuscripts in theology. A humanist community was looking at the manuscripts in a way that was changing the approaches to the Christian and ancient past.

5.3 Humanistic theology

The Council participants represented various intellectual and theological traditions. In the West, scholasticism had been dominant in academic theology, but the emerging humanism began to diversify the Western theological field. Byzantine theology also had its various branches. Although many studies deal with humanism, surprisingly little research has been done into humanism at the Council of Ferrara–Florence. This subchapter focuses on this question. First, let us consider what humanism was in this context.

The scholarship on humanism is vast and goes back several centuries, although it is a difficult task to find or compose a clear and complete definition of humanism.[661] Already in the 1960s, Paul Oskar Kristeller, in his studies of Renaissance humanism, identified the diverse definitions of Renaissance humanism. For Kristeller, this was not a problem in itself; but in any case, a scholar needs to define the ways in which they understand and use the term.[662] In addition, Kristeller warns scholars not to be misled by modern humanism and its meanings. Even if, Renaissance humanists put a certain emphasis on the human being and his excellence, this should not be the starting point for scholars in their definitions if they aim to understand the phenomenon in its various historical and cultural contexts.[663]

Many recent studies do not give clear definitions of how they use of the concept of humanism. They seem to rest on previous definitions or on common knowledge about the meaning of the concept. In many cases, the word *humanist* is used in a variety of ways. The reader is not told how to understand the adjective or the noun in a particular context. Since the word has its modern meaning and use, the historic meaning is sometimes blurred. Therefore, let us consider what humanism and humanist method were in the context of the Council of Ferrara–Florence.

661 This was also Kenneth Gouwens's observation. See Gouwens 1998, 58–59.
662 Kristeller 1962, 7.
663 Kristeller 1962, 9–10.

Humanism is usually closely connected to the revival of ancient learning. Renaissance humanists were keen to find new texts and manuscripts that contained works of ancient Classical authors. While this is true and is also present at the Council, since the participants shared classical manuscripts and discussed ancient authors in pursuance of the Council, humanism was also something else. Of the many areas that humanism touched,[664] theology has achieved little attention from scholars. Already Kristeller acknowledged that humanism influenced theology, albeit indirectly. On the one hand, Kristeller saw that Christian humanism was only a small sector of humanism, but on the other hand, he acknowledged that the place of religion in Renaissance humanism could be studied further.[665] Although sixty years have passed since Kristeller's remarks, the religious side of humanism is still little studied. While Lorenzo Valla and especially Erasmus of Rotterdam have caught scholars' eyes as Christian humanists,[666] earlier humanists have received little attention. Charles Stinger's study on Ambrogio Traversari and his interest in patristics is an exception.[667]

When humanism is discussed, especially in terms of theology or religion, it is often compared with scholasticism, as the medieval and Renaissance humanists themselves did.[668] In the scholastic tradition, theological (and philosophical) questions were approached through dialectical disputation. Contradictory ideas on a given question were placed side by side and debated. Scholastics investigated theological and philosophical questions in a systematic way, collecting passages that seemed to be contradictory, and they but found a synthesis by explaining the passages by reason. In particular, Aristotle's logic was important. In this way, it was possible to approach theology systematically.[669]

If we approach both scholasticism and humanism as methods,[670] when discussing theology, the key differences, according to Ulrich G. Leinsle, were the following

664 Kristeller has given an excellent account of the ways in which humanism is manifested in various areas of culture. See Kristeller 1962, 6–30.

665 Kristeller 1962, 20.

666 See for example Scott 2003; Rummel 2008.

667 Stinger 1977.

668 N. Scott Amos has analysed the biblical humanism of Lorenzo Valla and Erasmus of Rotterdam and their critique of the scholastics. See Scott 2003, 39–54.

669 Monagle 2017, 1–18; Rummel 2008, 1; Scott 2003, 41–42; Demetracopoulos 2012, 334.

670 Scholasticism is usually approached as a method, but Clare Frances Monagle has recently suggested that it could also be considered as a project. See Monagle 2017, especially 5–11, where she explains the idea of scholasticism as a project. Monagle nevertheless acknowledges scholasticism as a method and does not claim to overturn that aspect. See Monagle 2017, 8. Humanism was more than just a method. It is often referred as a movement. On many ways in which humanism can be viewed and conceptualised, see Kurtz 1973.

three aspects. First, humanists abandoned the scholastic method of dialectical disputation. Secondly, humanists turned to ancient sources (so-called *ad fontes*). In theology, this meant the Church Fathers. Thirdly, linguistic studies formed an essential part of humanist method.[671] These same differences appear in the humanist critique of the scholastics. N. Scott Amos has analysed the biblical humanism of Lorenzo Valla and Erasmus of Rotterdam and noticed that what caused irritation in the minds of humanists was also the "hubris of the dialecticians arising from their claims to possess the universal method."[672]

Both humanism and scholasticism had a relation to Antiquity and ancient texts. For scholastics, Aristotle was especially important, and his philosophy and logic were applied also to theological dialectics.[673] Humanism is usually closely connected to the revival of ancient learning. Renaissance humanists were keen to find new texts and manuscripts that contained works of ancient Classical authors. Ancient authors were also a source of imitation. The use of Aristotle and Greek philosophy in theology was, however, considered inappropriate by humanists. Lorenzo Valla pointed out that even the Church Fathers who were closer to the ancient philosophy than the scholastics, and were familiar with the ancient thought, had not used the terminology or the metaphysics of the ancients in their theology.[674] Aristotle, in fact, is brought up in the Council's discussions as well. Syropoulos recounts an occasion involving a Georgian ambassador who had come to the Council at the Pope Eugene's invitation. The pope had hoped to win over the Georgian,[675] but the ambassador had not union in mind. Instead, the ambassador had noticed and been irritated by the speech of Giovanni da Montenero, who had quoted Aristotle to support his arguments:

671 Leinsle 2010, 244. See also Scott 2003, 39–53; Rummel 2008, 1–3.

672 Scott 2003, 42. Some humanists accused some scholastics of even despising Church Fathers because of the latters' ignorance of the universal character of the scholastic method. See Scott 2003, 43. On biblical humanism, see also Monfasani 2008, 15–38; Trinkaus 1970, 563–614.

673 Leinsle 2010, 7.

674 Scott 2003, 45–46.

675 Syropoulos IX, 27. The Georgian Church was, and is, an autocephalous Church. This meant that the Church was part of the Eastern Christian community but not under the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The relations with the Byzantine Church had deteriorated in the thirteenth century. Relations with the Western Church were even more difficult. Popes had tried to urge the Georgians to formal union, in exchange for help in the crusade against the Mongols, but the Georgians did not yield to these offers. Pope John XXIII appointed a Dominican, John of Florence, as bishop in the city of Tbilisi in 1328. Although this see existed for several centuries, the Georgian Church never made a formal union with the Roman Church. See Rapp 2007, 141, 148.

> He [=the Georgian ambassador] said: 'What about Aristotle, Aristotle? A fig for your fine Aristotle.' And when I [=Syropoulos] by word and gesture asked: 'What is fine?', the Georgian replied: 'St Peter, St Paul, St Basil, Gregory the Theologian; a fig for your Aristotle, Aristotle.'[676]

Joseph Gill interpreted this event to mean that the Georgian was saying aloud what the majority of the Greeks were thinking. The Greeks were not familiar with this kind of argumentation since their theology was rooted on patristics.[677] This passage and Gill's observation on the characteristics of Byzantine theology remind us to bear in mind the relations between the Latin and Greek theological traditions.

John Meyendorff, an expert on Byzantine theology, has described Byzantine theology as patristic and mystical.[678] He points out that unlike in Western theology, Byzantine theology never saw a conflict between theology and mysticism.[679] In the tradition of the Cappadocian Fathers, the concepts of *theologia* and *theoria* ('contemplation') were inseparable. The Western method of rational deduction from premises was incompatible with the Byzantine idea of theology as a vision. No new visions or revelations could be added, but all the visions had to be consistent with apostolic and patristic witnesses.[680] In this sense, it is clear that the Georgian ambassador's position, and as Gill sees it, that of the majority of the Greeks as well, was that the use of Aristotle in a theological context was not acceptable. When we look at the *Acts*, we, however, get another picture.

In the *Acts*, there are a few occasions when Aristotle was quoted or otherwise mentioned. In addition to Giovanni da Montenero, Andrew of Rhodes referred to Aristotle in his argumentation.[681] On these occasions, Aristotle is used in a scholastic way, supporting the theological arguments by explaining the speaker's reasoning. Aristotle is not the source for the doctrine in itself but offers logical paradigms in

676 "εἰρηκότος λατινικῶς τοῦ εὐγενοῦς ἀνδρὸς Ἰωάννου τοῦ πρωωτονοταρίου, παρακαθημένων καὶ ἡμῶν ἐκεῖσε, ἐπεὶ πολλάκις παρήγαγεν ἐκεῖνος τὸν Ἀριστοτέλην εἰς παράστασιν ὧν ἔλεγε καὶ ἐδίδασκεν, ἤκουσε δὲ τοῦτο δίς τε καὶ τρὶς ὁ Ἴβηρ, νύττει με τῇ χειρί, καὶ στραφέντι μοι πρὸς ἐκεῖνον καὶ διαπορουμένῳ νεύμασι τί ἆρα καὶ βούλεται εἴπε· Τί Ἀριστότελ, Ἀριστότελε· νὲ καλὸ Ἀριστότελε· Ἐμοῦ δ΄εἰρηκότος καὶ λόγῳ καὶ νεύματι· τί δέ ἐστι τὸ καλὸν, εἶπεν ὁ Ἴβηρ· ἅγιο Πέτρο, ἅγιο Παῦλο, ἅγιο Βασίλιο, θεολόγο Γρηγόριο, Χρυσόστομο, νὲ Ἀριστότελ Ἀριστότελε." Syropoulos, IX, 28. Translated by Joseph Gill, see Gill 1959, 227.

677 Gill 1959, 227–228. John Meyendorff has also noted that "Byzantium thus took a much more negative stand toward Greek philosophy than the West ever did." See Meyendorff 1983, 1964.

678 Meyendorff 1983, 13–14.

679 Meyendorff 1983, 4.

680 Meyendorff 1983, 8–9.

681 See for example AG 62, 93, 103.

which theological arguments can be built. Although the Greek speakers do not quote Aristotle or refer to his works, they answered the Latins' arguments that used Aristotle and had been composed in the scholastic method of using syllogisms.[682] The point that has been made in some studies that the Greeks did not understand the syllogisms and the Latin argumentation is, thus, a generalisation that does not apply to all the Greeks, especially the chosen speakers, Bessarion or even Mark of Ephesus.[683] Marie-Hélène Blanchet has perceived aptly that the Greeks understood the Latin arguments; they just did not accept them.[684]

Scholastic tradition had made its way into the Byzantine intellectual sphere in the late thirteenth century under the influence of the Dominican friars in Constantinople. Thomas of Aquinas's works were translated, and Thomism had an influence on Byzantine theology and philosophy. Thomas's works had offered Greeks a new dialectical model and a new pattern of using syllogisms and reasoning in theology. In particular, the use of the *quaestio*, a question where the answer is either yes or no, finds its way into Byzantine theology. In this form, arguments are given for and against, and then the question is settled.[685]

Panagiotis C. Athanasopoulos has analysed the ways in which Bessarion and Mark of Ephesus applied scholastic methods in their theological works.[686] Mark had applied the scholastic *quaestio* in the treatise in which he dealt with theological matters, mainly the procession of the Holy Spirit.[687] While he used the methods provided by Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus, he argued for the Greek doctrines.

Mark's example, together with that of another anti-unionist, Neilos Cabasilas,[688] proves that the adoption of Latin scholastic methods did not mean the adoption of Latin doctrines. V. Laurent suggests that Cabasilas deliberately "turned the scholastic method against some scholastic positions."[689] John Demetracopoulos, who cited the same passage from Laurent, affirmed that when the scholastic *quaestio* was introduced into the Byzantines' intellectual life, "the latter were forced to adopt it." According to Demetracopoulos, the scholastic methods offered effective tools to Byzantines in their polemical writing against the Latins in a way that their traditional rhetorics could not.[690]

682 Syllogisms were part of scholastic argumentation based on deductive logic. From major and minor premises, a conclusion could be deduced.
683 Meyendorff 1991, 153–175, see especially 163, 167, 175.
684 Blanchet 2017, 561.
685 Demetracopoulos 2012, 333–334, 343.
686 Athanasopoulos 2017, 77–92.
687 Athanasopoulos 2017, 77–92.
688 Demetracopoulos 2012, 341.
689 Quoted in Demetracopoulos 2012, 341.
690 Demetracopoulos 2012, 341.

It is true that, for most Greeks, the use of Aristotle and scholastic methods of argumentation did not represent the traditional theology. Mark of Ephesus and Bessarion were, nevertheless, the two Greeks who were in charge in the discussions with the Latins. Mark and Bessarion were in a way prepared for the Latin argumentative methods, when these were modelled on scholastic principles. What then came as a surprise to the Greeks was the use of arguments based on a humanist approach to the texts and manuscripts.

While scholastic methods were linked to the philosophical language and logic in argumentation, such as syllogisms, humanist methods added arguments that were based on the analysis of the manuscripts and the texts in their historical contexts. These have been analysed throughout this study. It is important to notice that humanism or humanist methods did not replace the scholastic methods in the Council. Pope Eugene IV had chosen scholastic theologians as well as humanists in his delegation to study the questions separating the Churches. Although scholars often draw a strong contrast between scholasticism and humanism, they could also live side by side. Scholars have found that this was the case in Italy more than elsewhere.[691] At the Council, Giovanni da Montenero and Andrew of Rhodes represented scholastic theologians, and Ambrogio Traversari and Nicholas of Cusa, who worked in the background were the humanists. It was then Cardinal Cesarini who seemed to be the one who produced the humanist arguments in the Council's sessions. He had worked with Traversari and Nicholas of Cusa, who had probably helped him in formulating the arguments based on manuscripts and patristics. It is also possible that the humanist papal secretaries, such as Poggio Bracciolini and Flavio Biondo, had a role in the private meetings. Pope Eugene supported all of them. How, then, did the humanist arguments convince the Greeks? What was the humanist background of the Greeks?

Previous chapters have showed that both Latins and Greeks used arguments that were related to the manuscripts' material aspects. Both parties accorded authority to old manuscripts and accused the other of using corrupt manuscripts. For both, the time of the unseparated Church was the ground in which arguments were supposed to find their authorization. After the schism, neither party could trust the other party's material culture. Doctrinal differences between the Churches had been discussed and debated for centuries by the time of the Council, and most arguments had already been presented in previous encounters and theological and polemical treatises. New arguments, new methods of theological argumentation were needed in order to convince the other side. The Greeks had familiarized themselves with Latin scholasticism, but that was not the key to convince the Latins. What was decisive

691 Scott 2003, 42, 44; Leinsle 2010, 244.

was the new humanist arguments that the Latins had presented. After the Council, Bessarion wrote:

> The words (of the Fathers) by themselves alone are enough to solve every doubt and to persuade every soul. It was not syllogisms or probabilities or arguments that convinced me, but the bare words (of the Fathers).[692]

Although Bessarion does not explicitly say that it was the humanist arguments that convinced him, it is valid to interpret his words to means that the Latin arguments about the manuscripts were crucial in convincing Bessarion. The bare words of the Church Fathers were the source of truth and theology. This was the case in traditional Byzantine theology as well. The Latins did not reveal the truth, which was in the words of the Fathers. The Latins could, however, show where and what these words of the Fathers were, that were correctly revealing the truth.

I claimed above that the Latin humanist arguments took the Greeks by surprise. Byzantine humanism as a concept differs from its Latin counterpart. It is usually connected to the Palaiologan Renaissance, coinciding with the reign of the Palaiologi Emperors in 1261–1453.[693] The Palaeologan Renaissance was a movement mostly affecting art. Its intellectual impact was small, although some consideration was given to textual criticism.[694] At the Council of Ferrara–Florence, the Latins were the first to produce arguments related to the manuscripts. Although the Greeks were not familiar with arguments of this kind, they did not deny their use in theological discussion or accuse the Latins of invalid argumentation. Instead of demanding other kinds of arguments from the Latins, the Greeks began to use the same arguments about the manuscripts they had brought with them or which they had in Constantinople and other places in the East. When the Latins claimed to have old manuscripts, so did the Greeks. When the Latins accused the Greeks of corrupting the manuscripts and crucial passages, the Greeks accused the Latins of corruption. A new method of humanist argumentation was finding its place in theology.

692 "ex his etiam nudis huius doctoris verbis manifeste appareat; non tamen ab re esse iudicavi <– siquidem in hac parte *narrationis* sumus –>, ipsis eius verbis presuppositis, syllogismum quendam ad eam veritatem probandam inferre." Bessarion ad Alexium, 17. Translated by Joseph Gill, see Gill 1959, 227.

693 In addition, it is used to describe the intellectual movement of the 9th and 10th centuries. This is usually called the First Byzantine Humanism. Christian Brockmann has studied the scholars and scribes of this period and noticed their keenness on textual criticism and exegetics. This period also affected the manuscript culture, and the new minuscule script was developed. See Brockmann 2014, 11–33, see especially 11, 22–23, 29.

694 Geanakoplos 1989.

Finally, the majority of Greeks were convinced by the Latin arguments and believed the Latin manuscripts to be authentic and authoritative on questions of Christian doctrine. Bessarion was so strongly convinced that he continued to search for manuscripts when he returned to Constantinople and to analyse their age and signs of historic use and corruption. Humanism had found its way into Byzantine theology as well. In the end, this impact on Byzantine theology turned out to be short-lived and was received by few. Bessarion, who was the most enthusiastic, went back to the West and found his place as a Cardinal a few years after the Council ended. The other Greeks who were interested in the manuscripts and humanist ideas followed him and continued their work in Bessarion's circle, which has been discussed above. The others in the Byzantine lands had either not taken part at the Council and thus had not experienced direct influence from the Latin argumentation, or were fervent anti-unionists who did not change their belief or the basis for their understanding of the truth. They did not need to examine the manuscripts on which they relied and which they believed to be authentic.

Was the humanism at the Council Christian humanism? Can this concept, which is usually reserved to Erasmus of Rotterdam and northern humanism, be applied to the Council in the Italian cities of Ferrara and Florence in the 1430s? This is possible but, as already Kristeller pointed out, humanism was not in itself pagan or anti-religious,[695] so in this way the term 'Christian humanism' can even be a little misleading. At the Council, when contents were theological and the humanist methods and principles were applied to theology, the attribute 'Christian' could naturally be added to the larger phenomenon, humanism. What I propose is, however, a reversal of words, *humanistic theology*. Just as there is scholastic theology, theology that is approached with scholastic methods, [696] there is likewise a theology that is approached with humanist methods. In this way, the human and the historical, cultural, philological and even material aspects are brought to theology, not vice versa.

The humanistic theology of the Council of Ferrara–Florence was not complete or fully-fledged. The emerging textual criticism that would develop in the following centuries was still deficient. The ground for some principal ideas was nevertheless laid. What was different in the context of the Council was the objective of the textual criticism and other arguments concerning the manuscripts. The participants on both sides had precise ideas about what they believed in and what they considered to be the truth that they were arguing for. All arguments, including the humanist ones,

695 Kristeller 1962, 19–21.

696 That is why it is necessary to survey the history of the concept 'Scholastic theology,' whereby 'theology' is regarded as being specified by the adjective 'Scholastic.' See Leinsle 2010, 1.

supported the theological positions that preceded the Council. Not everybody left the Council with the same belief with which they came to Ferrara, but the arguments produced at the Council coincided with the beliefs that the participants had when the Council began.

The Council, in any case, showed the participants how texts and manuscripts can be approached. Gradually, the methods of *humanistic theology* could develop in a new context that was not bound to the Council or even to debates between the Churches of East and West. Lorenzo Valla, a participant at the Council, began to examine the Latin *Vulgate* and compare it to the Greek *Septuaginta* and make emendations to the Latin Bible on philological and historical grounds.[697] For him and Erasmus of Rotterdam in the next century, exegesis was once again, for the first time since the patristic age, the aim of theology: it was not merely instrumental in discussing doctrines or other theological matters.[698] The Council was paving the way for the Reformation. The manuscripts had opened a new window on to the Christian past for the generations following the Council.

In his studies of the history of reading, Robert Darnton has emphasised how "reading has changed the course of history." He took as his examples Luther reading Paul, Marx reading Hegel, and Mao reading Marx.[699] The Council of Ferrara–Florence proves the same. A new reading of Church Fathers and other traditional authorities of the Churches changed the course of the Council, and changed the individuals and communities that took part in the Council. This new reading meant not only reading the texts and interpreting the authoritative works and passages, but also 'reading' the material and thus arguing and interpreting on the basis of material and other non-textual features. Although the authoritative works were understood to be 'timeless' in the sense that they defined the Christian truth, orthodoxy and way of life that was supposed to be the same in the past, present and future, the manuscripts were approached as objects or artefacts that were exposed to temporal and cultural changes. This critical approach to past objects, while retaining the deference to the ideal and non-changeable truths that were existent but occasionally got lost in time or mutilated by (unorthodox or heretical) cultures or individuals. Thus, the new reading altered not only the course of the Council, but also the persons present at the Council, who continued their work in different places.

697 Stinger 1977, 205.
698 Scott 2003, 39–54.
699 Darnton 2001, 178.

6 Conclusion

The Council of Ferrara–Florence gathered people and manuscripts. For centuries, the relations between the Churches of East and West had been strained. Discrepancies in doctrinal and ecclesiastical matters had driven the Churches into a state of schism. The difficult political, cultural and religious atmosphere, of which the Fourth Crusade is probably the best indication, hindered the fruitful discussions and encounters even more. Earlier attempts to bring the schismatic Churches back to one had failed. The failed Council of Lyons did not succeed in being ecumenical in the minds of the Greeks, and the achieved union was not considered legitimate. Once again, over 160 years later, the Churches met. The delegations led by Pope Eugene IV and the Byzantine emperor, John VIII Palaiologos, together with the Patriarch of Constantinople, Joseph II, congregated in Ferrara and Florence to discuss theological matters and negotiate Church union.

In order to resolve the differences in the theological and liturgical traditions and teachings of the Eastern and Western Churches, both sides needed not only learned men capable of presenting arguments, but also manuscripts that proved their arguments well-founded. The ways in which manuscripts were used in the Council thus had a deep impact on the Council, its participants, and late-medieval intellectual and religious culture.

Manuscripts were precious objects in the Middle Ages. They were valuable because they cost a great deal of money, although towards the late Middle Ages the price for making manuscripts decreased. In addition, manuscripts had a distinct value for their owners and communities. In the Council, this value was put to the test. Not all the manuscripts that had monetary value or personal significance for the owners and users were of great value when it came to theological argumentation. Every manuscript had a cultural history, traces of past production and use, which could either boost the argumentation or challenge the traditional interpretation.

Both Churches had made preparations for the Council. The participants had collected manuscripts and read texts. When the Council finally convened in Ferrara, the participants were well-prepared. However, they were unaware of how the other party had prepared. There were arguments and passages that had been used already for centuries in the earlier encounters between the Churches and individuals. What

was new, however, was the role played by the manuscripts. The focus was not only on differing interpretations, but also on the manuscripts that had preserved various readings that affected the interpretation.

Differing readings of the authoritative texts that both Churches used, posed a problem that had to be solved. The text that the original author had composed could not be in contradiction with the work of the same or other authors and their authoritative texts. This made the mere quotation of passages of Church Fathers and of documents from the early ecumenical Councils insufficient as argumentation. The argumentation based on the material features of the manuscripts came into play. The participants had either to argue for the authenticity and authority of the manuscripts they had brought with them and on which they rested their belief and teaching, or else produce evidence showing that the manuscripts of the other party were corrupt or otherwise devoid of authority.

To help the participants to produce arguments for and against the manuscripts and their different readings, the system of lending and borrowing of manuscripts was created. Conditions for the loaning were settled, but problems followed soon after. The Latin members accused the Greeks of holding back the manuscripts. There were trust issues and a fear of misuse on the Greeks' part. After discussions, however, the Greeks let the Latins see the manuscripts, and the system of comparison of the Greek and Latin manuscripts was practiced in the Council. Similarly, the discussions and documents that were produced at the current ecumenical Council were compared and checked to see if they matched. The future Council documents needed to be consistent.

The Council witnessed the confluence of several intellectual methods and theological traditions. A large corpus of authoritative sources, Sacred Scripture, Greek and Latin Church Fathers, and documents from the ecumenical Councils, was used in argumentation. These *auctoritates* were quoted and compared and arguments were built utilising scholastic methods of logical reasoning and syllogisms. Together with the traditional theological argumentation based on the scholastic learning acquired from universities, a new approach to authoritative texts and their material manifestations, namely the manuscripts, was applied to discussions. The cultural history of manuscripts was found in the leaves of parchment and paper and the human traces of mutilation appeared before the eyes. What was seen in the manuscripts could, then, reveal errors made in the interpretation in the course of history.

The discussions focusing on the matters that separated the Eastern and Western Churches had directed the participants toward certain texts and passages. The relevant point was that the authors represented the time of the undivided Church. The period prior to the schism was considered orthodox by both Churches; the ecumenical Councils had taken care of this orthodoxy. Church Fathers were shown

a shared veneration by the Greeks and Latins. What, nevertheless, turned out to be a challenge was the fact that not all Church Fathers and their works were known or widely read by the other Church. *Consensus patrum* meant that the Church Fathers could not contradict each other on matters of faith. However, there seemed to be inconsistencies between the Fathers that had to be explained so that and the *consensus* could be found and established. When part of the patristic tradition was unknown, the task of determining the correct reading or interpretation or authentic work relied on matters closely linked to the material aspects of manuscripts.

The age of the manuscript became a focal feature that could work as a convincing argument. If the manuscript was old and showed no mutilation, authenticity was assured. The same condition seemed to hold in the case of manuscripts as with the texts. The time before the schism had produced authentic manuscripts that were devoid of mutilation and of a teaching that was alien to the other Church. The past generations were worthy of trust from both Churches in a way that the contemporaries did not. At the same time, both Churches considered themselves to be a part of the same tradition as the Church Fathers, who used the same language and had an established place in theology and culture.

At the Council, looking at the past and its sources and testimonies of Christian truth, the future Church and its teaching were formulated. The findings made in the ancient manuscripts were written into the new decree of union. The decree, which was written in both languages, Greek and Latin, formulated and signed in the ecumenical Council by the representatives of the five patriarchates, was supposed to define the 'new' truth – which was naturally considered to be eternal and heavenly truth – and bind its signatories as well as the future generations to this truth of one unified Church. In the end, the five parchment copies of the union decree could not compel the opposing members of the Churches who had not participated the Council. Not even all the signatories were devoted to the union and the parchment decree with their name on it but returned to their old faith and community.

Although the union had failed, something had truly changed. This is best seen when we look at individuals, such as Bessarion. The manuscripts and the convincing arguments had changed the ways in which Bessarion looked at manuscripts and what they represented. Bessarion continued to work with manuscripts and gathered a large community, with both Greeks and Latins, who collected manuscripts and translated Greek and Latin texts. Manuscripts had given rise to new communities and reshaped the old ones.

Humanists had found a new arena in which new methods and approaches to manuscripts and texts could thrive and spread in a way that was not possible before. Besides this, humanist methods were employed in theological argumentation. Humanistic theology was new for the Greeks, as it was for many Latins, but it touched the issues that were shared in both Churches. Both Churches were founded

on sacred and authoritative texts that were preserved in material form of manuscripts. In order to find the eternal truth that was not temporal or linked to worldly matters, the human traces had to be found from the matter and analysed. Only then could the immaterial heavenly truth be revealed.

Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini asked: “How can we trust these books?” The discussions at the Council centring on the material aspects and the human touch in the manuscripts made the participants rethink the basis of their knowledge of the heavenly matters. Not all books could be trusted, not even the ones that they had previously built their religious belief on, a belief that had made sense to them, constructed identities and formed communities. Books had the power to change people and the world surrounding them.

Abbreviations

AG	Acta Graeca
AL	Acta Latina

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