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“For all virtue and imitation of God on our part render the person who has acquired them fit for divine union, but grace effects the ineffable union itself.”

(Tomos of the Holy Mountain)

ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΙΑ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΜΟΣ ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΕΣ
ΠΕΜΠΤΟΥΣΙΑ

EDITORIAL

This is the third volume of our special series dedicated to Saint Gregory Palamas. The fact that *Analogia's* invitation to an issue dedicated to Saint Gregory Palamas has yielded so many academic responses of a high scholarly level has been exceptionally encouraging and revealing. The quality of many of the received articles obliges us to announce a fourth and final volume that will follow the present publication. We hope that these issues will be thought-provoking, and will make the discussion of Palamite work more substantial and profound.

In the first essay of this volume, Constantinos Athanasopoulos offers an original and thoughtful contribution to the ongoing discussion concerning Palamas' reception and, most importantly, revolutionary transformation of some essential concepts of Ancient Greek moral philosophy, namely the concepts of Aristotelian eudaimonia, Stoic apatheia, and Epicurean ataraxia.

Fr Alexandros Chouliaras, in the second study, gives an insightful and balanced overview of Palamas' use of crucial Augustinian concepts—such as eros—in his theology. The author summarises the various scholarly discussions on this topic and also makes his own suggestions concerning the limits of the Palamite use of Augustinian terms, along with the new meanings he gives to them.

Georgi Kapriev, in the third paper of this volume, provides an excellent overview of the recent discussion on the alleged Western turn of some prominent medieval Palamite thinkers, such as George-Gennadios Scholarios. Kapriev proves that, although Scholarios used the specific Western terminology of his time, he never thought he was saying something different from his teacher, Gregory Palamas, but on the contrary he sought to reinforce Palamas' arguments.

Antoine Levy, in his insightful and challenging study, strives to reassess deeply the impact of the hesychastic teaching on divinisation upon the political philosophy of the medieval Russian state, and he also indicates some of its modern repercussions. Levy reopens an invaluable discussion and poses some difficult questions which cannot be ignored by anyone intending to study the modern political theory underpinning major political events of modern Russian history.

Ivana Noble reinstates, in her notable article, the immense importance of experience in Gregory Palamas' theology. This is a skilful contribution, since this dimension is usually overlooked by scholars who tend to put Palamas' 'scholastic' dimension above his existential commitment. Noble also criticizes Palamas' excessive (as was usual for Byzantine scholars) rhetoric against his opponents, and poses some insightful questions concerning the relation between spiritual and natural knowledge.

Finally, Archimandrite Ephraim, the Abbot of the Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopedi, offers an erudite discussion on the distinction between reason (*dianoia*) and the intellect (*nous*), according to St Gregory Palamas, and the consequences of this in the life of created beings.

– *Nikolaos Loudovikos*, Senior Editor

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EUDAIMONIA, APATHEIA, ATARAXIA AND HESYCHASM: HOW ST GREGORY PALAMAS' VIEWS ON HESYCHASM AND ASCETICISM SOLVE PROBLEMS WITH THE OFTEN-MISUNDERSTOOD ANCIENT GREEK MORAL CONCEPTS OF EUDAIMONIA, APATHEIA, AND ATARAXIA

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In this work, I examine how we can use St Gregory Palamas' views on hesychasm and asceticism to solve key problems associated with Aristotelian *eudaimonia*, Stoic *apatheia*, and Epicurean *ataraxia*. The problems of social interaction and lack of knowledge regarding the intentions of others presents a serious problem for Aristotelian *eudaimonia*. For Epicurean *ataraxia*, the fleeting nature of pleasure presents further problems, and the Stoic ideal of *apatheia* is too stable to be real. St Gregory Palamas knew these limitations of Ancient Greek ethics very well and proposed *hesychia* and *ascesis* as the true answer to moral dilemmas and the pursuit of true *eudaimonia*.

Introduction: Why is this Topic Relevant to Palamite Studies?

It is almost seven hundred years since the Orthodox Church declared that the positions of Barlaam and his follower Akindynos were heretical and should be condemned, at the Council of 1341 (which is regarded by many as the Ninth Ecumenical Council, and is otherwise known as the Fifth Council of Constantinople). Gregory Palamas was declared a saint in 1368, and soon after, the Orthodox Church asserted that the Sunday following the Sunday of Orthodoxy during Lent was to take his name, so as to remind believers that Palamas' theology is a continuation of Orthodox theology upholding the veneration of icons, which was defended at the Seventh Ecumenical Council of 787. During the Sunday of Palamas, the *Hagioritic Tome* (a text signed by the Holy Community of Mt Athos and other Orthodox Church representatives which condemns the heretical positions of Barlaam and his two followers, Akindynos and Gregoras) is traditionally read at the Patriarchate of Constantinople and Orthodox monasteries worldwide to remind believers of the

heresies and the heretics that pushed Orthodoxy into a bitter civil war lasting for more than ten years (in a similar fashion to the civil war over the veneration of the icons, which lasted for more than a hundred years in the seventh to eighth centuries).

One would expect that after seven hundred years, Palamas' theology would be taken for granted. But this is far from being the case. Palamas' thought, both in terms of his theological positions and the philosophical background of these positions, is the target of many orthodox as well as non-orthodox contemporary philosophers and theologians. Their common approach is to find inconsistencies and problems in Palamas' texts that demonstrate either that his philosophy is poor or that his theology is problematic, suggesting, in the case of his philosophy, that Palamas did not understand some key positions in the Aristotelian corpus (or that his logic in his philosophical discussion is flawed) and, in the case of his theology, that he commits heresy in one way or another. I have discussed the poor basis of some of their worries regarding Palamas' use of key Aristotelian ideas in metaphysics and logic in a past paper.¹ In this work, I discuss why Palamas' views on asceticism can be seen as an improvement on Ancient Greek debates about *eudaimonia* and *ataraxia*. Obviously, those who oppose Palamas on the grounds that he is either a poor Aristotelian or that he confuses important Ancient Greek concepts and terms will disagree with me. This strategy was widely used by all the philosophers and theologians who first attacked Palamas seven hundred years ago. Contemporary critics of Palamas make use of the same strategy. It differs slightly from the strategy of some other contemporary commentators (again originating from both inside and outside Orthodoxy) who claim that Palamas' thought is similar to that of Aquinas. However, the end result of both strategies is the same: they attempt to turn Palamas' theology and philosophy into some kind of non-Orthodox pan-ecumenism, which can be dismissed at a later date as being too confused or too confusing to make any sense. My aim moves in a different direction: I respect the Orthodox character of Palamas' theology and philosophy and try to present clearly the significance of his ideas for today's problems in philosophy and theology. I will examine three key concepts in Ancient Greek ethics: *eudaimonia* (which for the followers of Aristotle is an end in itself and most valuable), *apatheia* (which has a similar value for the followers of Stoicism), and *ataraxia* (which has a similar value for the followers of Epicureanism). I will examine their differences in approach and compare them to Palamas' teachings about asceticism and salvation, trying to establish how Palamas' views are able to overcome the intrinsic theoretical difficulties of the Greek terms. Beyond any doubt, the terms had a long history before Aristotle (they were used in Plato and the Pre-Socratics), but focusing on the use made by the Aristotelians, the

¹ C. Athanasopoulos, 'Demonstration (Ἀπόδειξις) and its Problems for St Gregory Palamas: Some Neglected Aristotelian Aspects of St Gregory Palamas' Philosophy and Theology', in *The Ways of Byzantine Philosophy*, ed. Mikonja Knezevic (Alhambra, CA: Sebastian Press, 2015), 361–74.

Stoics, and the Epicureans, three key schools of Ancient Greek ethics, will provide enough background for a comparison with Palamas.

Eudaimonia in Aristotle (384–22 BC)

Before I begin discussing Aristotle's views on *eudaimonia*, I would like to mention that the usual English translation of the term (i.e., 'happiness') is not appropriate. A much better translation is 'blessed by the gods', since a *daimon* is a god or a messenger of gods. A somewhat better translation than 'happiness' might be 'living well and faring well', but this again does not adequately express the meaning the term would have had for an Ancient Greek.² Aristotle provides in the *Nicomachean Ethics* both a formal definition of *eudaimonia* (i.e., the general principles that one could have in mind when considering the application of the term) and a material definition (i.e., Aristotle examines what kind of lives satisfy these principles of the term's use).

Aristotle begins his examination of what is considered good in *Nicomachean Ethics* through an analysis of many kinds of 'goods' or ends for which we do things: some are considered valuable for the sake of other 'goods', some are good (valuable) in themselves. He points out in the first book that *eudaimonia* is a good that we desire for its own sake (1095a15–22).³

Overall, from Aristotle's discussion of *eudaimonia* in the *Nicomachean Ethics* we can establish that it has three key characteristics:

1. Aristotle does not think of *eudaimonia* as a psychological state, nor as a state of the mind, but as relating to an activity—the activity of living with virtues. A good life is one that realises the full potential of a human life (1098b30–1).
2. *Eudaimonia* is not something subjective, dependent on the way people perceive it individually. For Aristotle, it is an objective value, independent of people's perception thereof. It relates to an objective judgement about one's life as a good human life. It does not say anything (directly) about one's state of mind; nor is it a judgement over which the person making it has any special authority. By contrast, if someone says they are happy or unhappy, it is difficult to correct them or to even know better than the person claiming they are happy or unhappy.
3. *Eudaimonia* is not something easily changed. It does not come and go as happiness (in the usual sense) does. This is so because it is an evaluation of a life lived well or of a person (a good person) as a whole (i.e., considering the

² I am not alone in rejecting the 'happiness' translation; for example, Nussbaum overall avoids translating the term, and prefers Cooper's 'flourishing', see Martha Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, Revised Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001 [1986]), 6.

³ *Ethica Nicomachea*, ed. J. Bywater (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894).

life of a person in its totality). Usually, for Aristotle, *eudaimonia* is evaluated as such only after a stable way of life is established. This agrees with the beliefs of most Ancient Greeks that *eudaimonia* would be determined after death (things that take place after death are as important as things that take place during life). See, for example, Homer's description of Achilles, when he was visited by Odysseus in Book 11 of *The Odyssey*; see also the portrayal of the characters of Oedipus Rex and Antigone in Sophocles' plays, etc.

Aristotle also insists that *eudaimonia* is not about:

- a) Pleasure (because some people pursue animal pleasures and we are looking for something that is related only to humans);
- b) Money and honour (because they are means to further ends);
- c) Virtue (because virtue is compatible with inactivity, great misfortune and pain). *Eudaimonia* is the activity of the rational soul which acts in accordance with virtue, but it is not the virtues themselves, because someone can claim to have virtue without having *eudaimonia* (1099a31–b6; 1153b17–19; cf. 1098a16–1102a5).

For Aristotle, *eudaimonia* is the only good pursued for its own sake and not as a means to another end. He thus believes that *eudaimonia* is a final end without qualification. It is also self-sufficient; it cannot be made more desirable by adding something else to it. If we are to add some other good to it—for example, knowledge—it is only so as to make that other thing part of *eudaimonia*. *Eudaimonia* is the only self-sufficient good.

Of particular importance for our discussion on *eudaimonia* are books 6 and 10 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. In Book 10, Aristotle claims that *eudaimonia* must involve pleasure, but not just any pleasure; only the pleasure of doing good is valuable for *eudaimonia*. What is truly pleasant is what is pleasant to the good person, and this is a life of virtuous activity, not a life of mere amusement. In Book 6, he considers what kind of reason is relevant to *eudaimonia*; he finds that both the practical and the theoretical reasons are important and necessary for it. And while certain animals may have practical reason, only humans have theoretical reason. This ability is our share in 'divinity'. *Eudaimonia*, therefore, must include an excellent activity of theoretical reason, which is philosophy. Theoretical reason is far more important than practical reason (both are needed, but the theoretical one is more important), because:

1. It is the best activity in which we can engage: with it we contemplate what is best (the greatest and most divine things in the universe) and not merely what is best for us (as in practical wisdom).
2. We can engage more continuously in it than in anything else, therefore it leads to continuous *eudaimonia*.

3. It leads to pure and lasting pleasures as well as to more leisure for worthy and *eudaimonia*-related actions.
4. It is the most self-sufficient activity related to *eudaimonia*.
5. It is more related to what makes us characteristically human and differentiates us from animals. Given our nature, it is the most pleasurable thing we can engage in. We get pleasures through it, which we cannot get via anything else.

In the later books of *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle also claims that having good friends who are virtuous and engaged in good life projects, as well as being part of a well-organised *polis* and living harmoniously with others in a society, are also important factors of *eudaimonia* (even though they are not as important as engaging in activities related to theoretical reason, like philosophy, mathematics, etc.).

But here arises the problem of ignorance regarding the intentions of others as well as the issue the development of their moral virtues independently from our control, pointing to the ever present problem of moral vulnerability (for example in the case of a friend who was good but now has turned to evil). The problem of moral vulnerability points out more problems linked to the Aristotelian theory of virtue and to how it relates to Aristotle's theory of *eudaimonia*.⁴ Aristotle recognises this in his *Poetics* (relatively unknown in the Medieval West but widely studied in the Eastern Byzantium), where he discusses tragedy. This awareness of the unavoidable character of tragedy in human affairs is what pushes the East into asceticism and hesychasm. I wish to claim that asceticism and hesychasm, as practiced by St Gregory Palamas and his followers, is not only their attempt to live in a Christian way, observing the traditions of the Orthodox Fathers, but that it is also the result and fruit of much thought on problems in the Aristotelian intuitions on the human predicament. Let us look at some of these problems.

- a) What is the exact relation between virtues and *eudaimonia*? Can someone be *eudaimon* without actively engaging in virtuous behaviour? For Aristotle, virtuous activity seems to be important, but he also insists that *eudaimonia* is not itself a type of virtue, and that one can be virtuous without being *eudaimon*. Some have claimed that virtue is not important; others that it is important, but only when seen as an activity of theoretical reason, and/or that someone can engage in the activity of theoretical reason without being virtuous.

Kraut (following here Eastern Byzantine and Western Medieval commentators) claims that for Aristotle, in order to engage in theoretical reason, we have to have lived a virtuous life and to have pursued virtues actively.⁵ If we have not achieved an

⁴ See a relevant discussion of the problem in Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, 343–72.

⁵ R. Kraut, *Aristotle on the Human Good* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 15–78.

active engagement with the virtues, we will not be able to engage in the activity of theoretical reason for long. But Aristotle leaves this unclear, and he also associates *eudaimonia* with the existence of friends, family and material goods, which are not related to theoretical reason and are not related to virtue as such.

b) How important is recognition from others? Even though there is no dispute that *eudaimonia* for Aristotle is something objective, how important is recognition (i.e., of one's virtues, etc.) from others? Kraut⁶ thinks that this recognition is important both psychologically and in terms of the objectivity of *eudaimonia*. However, note that the problem of moral vulnerability described above, of which Aristotle himself was aware, makes the necessity of friends a problem in Aristotle's theory of *eudaimonia*. Commentators of East and West are divided on this point.

The hesychastic and ascetic tradition that developed in the East to the point of being the pre-dominant form of monasticism in later Byzantine times, tried to distance the discussion about true *eudaimonia* from the existence of friends and material goods (see, for example, the Areopagite texts, the Desert Fathers, St John of Sinai, and St Symeon the New Theologian). St Gregory Palamas follows in this tradition, and especially the way it was developed on the Holy Mountain by the Hesychast Fathers there.

c) Is it an ongoing process or an evaluation at a final stage of life (or even a post-mortem evaluation)? Aristotle's views on this are not clear. In some instances he maintains that life is important for *eudaimonia* (because without it we cannot enjoy material goods). In other instances, he goes against this (for example because life pursuits provide obstacles for the full exercise of theoretical reasoning). Again, the commentators in the East and the West are divided on this. In the West, there is no clear indication either way. On the other hand, most Eastern Byzantine commentators claim that it takes place at the final stage, and most concur with the idea of a post-mortem evaluation. This is the school of thought in which St Gregory Palamas was educated (by Theodoros Metochites), and this is why, on this particular issue, he would not have considered the Aristotelian understanding of *eudaimonia* to be too different from his own.

d) Is it related to rest or to an activity? Both in the West and in the East, commentators are divided on this. However in the Medieval West, most commentators have interpreted Aristotle's idea of *eudaimonia* in an active way, practiced through works of charity.⁷ In the East, *eudaimonia* is related more

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ See, for example, Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica*, First Part of the Second Part 65, and Second Part of the Second Part 23, translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Cincinnati and Chicago: Benziger Brothers, 1947).

to a state of wellbeing and bliss that comes as the result of activity. As such, for most of the Eastern commentators near the time of Palamas, *eudaimonia* is related more to contemplation and prayer.

e) What is the relation of *eudaimonia* to the gods? As I indicated above, for most ancient Greeks *eudaimonia* is related to the gods. A person committing *hubris* against the gods would not be *eudaimon*. Up to the fifteenth century, there was unanimity among the commentators (Eastern and Western) that approval by the gods (or from God in Christian times) is essential. From the period of the Enlightenment onwards, however, there is very little discussion of this among the non-Christian commentators of Aristotle.

f) Inclusive of other elements or not? This problem relates to the tension between the formal and material definitions of *eudaimonia*. In the past, the West emphasised the exercise of theoretical reason (logic and metaphysics) as being the most important characteristic of *eudaimonia*, to the point that a madman or someone with very low mental abilities could not be considered to be *eudaimon*. The East emphasised goodness as being more important.⁸ Currently, the debate is framed differently, and even though there are those who highlight the aspect of goodness in *eudaimonia*, they do not emphasise the connection between goodness and *eudaimonia*, and a relationship with God.⁹

*Attempts by Stoicism (300–201 BC) and Epicureanism (300–201 BC) to
Meet the Problems in Aristotle's Eudaimonia*

Both Stoics and Epicureans relate *apatheia* and *ataraxia* with *eudaimonia*. Realising the problems described above in Aristotle's theory, the Stoics emphasise the exercise of the rational faculties for achieving *eudaimonia*, while the Epicureans affirm the non-cognitive elements of human motivation (putting emphasis on pleasure and avoidance of pain) and believe that the best route to *eudaimonia* comes from *ataraxia*.

There are slight differences among the Stoics on the role of judgements in emotions, but overall, they believe that the passions (*pathē* or *πάθη*) have both cognitive (dependent on judgement) and non-cognitive elements, and while we can control the cognitive elements (our judgements in relation to them), we have no control over the non-cognitive ones. The only thing we can do with our reason is to pursue virtue, by having the right intentions (*prohairesis*) and eradicating the cognitive elements that motivate us towards what the Stoics consider as

⁸ C. Athanasopoulos, 'The Influence of Ps.Dionysius the Areopagite on Johannes Scotus Eriugena and St Gregory Palamas: Goodness as Transcendence of Metaphysics' in *Being or Good? Metamorphoses of Neoplatonism*, ed. Agnieszka Kijewska (Lublin: Catholic University of Lublin Press [KUL], 2004), 319–41.

⁹ For example, Kraut, in *Aristotle on the Human Good*, 15–78, makes a similar move.

bad passions. We can instead turn our attention towards the good passions which will motivate us in life according to our nature and reason, so that we can become *eupathēs* towards the good passions like watchfulness (*eulaveia*) and joy (*chara*).¹⁰ In their ethical system, Stoics accepted that there are morally indifferent things (i.e., actions that have no moral value) and that we should not have a motivation for these. This brought them into trouble, and there were critics in ancient times (e.g., Seneca and Aristo) who highlighted the fact that once they allowed for moral indifference in their system, it becomes difficult for the Stoics to argue that these actions should be avoided.¹¹ Others argued against the Stoics' naturalistic views, claiming that their position of moral indifference toward certain things is incompatible with their naturalism, and that their emphasis on the fact that life according to nature is a good thing goes against their claim that *eudaimonia* is closely connected to a virtuous life.¹² Certain other critics have emphasised that the Stoic has no motivation to do good if this necessitates misery, trouble or discomfort, and as such the Stoic would avoid doing good in most instances, emptying their concept of virtue of all content.¹³ In the West, there is much discussion about the Stoic influences on St Paul's Epistles and the Gospel according to St Matthew.¹⁴ This discussion also existed in Medieval times, but did not result in an agreement over the extent of these influences. Augustine and the early Latin Fathers (for example Jerome) saw great problems in *apatheia* and used it to attack Pelagius;¹⁵ Avicenna used and criticised Stoic positions, and Aquinas used much of the critiques of Augustine and Avicenna.¹⁶ In more recent times, Erasmus, Adam Smith, and Frances Hutcheson wished to promote a Christian form of Stoicism and tried to build on what was accepted as 'Natural Theology', with Hume criticising their belief in reason existing in nature, arguing that this cannot be proven.¹⁷ There are differences in the way that the East discussed Stoic ethical positions. Some (Desert Fathers, especially Evagrius of Pontus and the Cappadocians) aimed at re-evaluating and re-signifying *apatheia*;¹⁸ others tried to disassociate themselves from Stoic philosophical psychol-

¹⁰ Richard Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 157–60.

¹¹ F. H., Sandbach, *The Stoics*, second edition (London: Duckworth, 1989 [1975]), 28–45.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ T. Wiersma, *Stoic Notes*, trans. S. Field (Utrecht: Atalanta, 2014), 157–60.

¹⁴ M. L. Colish, 'Pauline Theology and Stoic Philosophy: An Historical Study', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 48, no.1 (1979): 129–39; D. Desilva, 'Paul and the Stoa: A Comparison', *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 38, no. 4 (December 1995): 549–64; T. Engberg-Pedersen, 'A Stoic Understanding of Pneuma in Paul', in *Philosophy at the Roots of Christianity*, ed. Troels Engberg-Pedersen and Henrik Tronier (Copenhagen: Faculty of Theology, University of Copenhagen, 2006), 101–23.

¹⁵ See Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind*, 400–18.

¹⁶ See S. Knuuttila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

¹⁷ R. Dealy, *The Stoic Origins of Erasmus' Philosophy of Christ*, (Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2017); P. H. Clarke, 'Adam Smith, Stoicism, and Religion in the Eighteenth Century', *History of the Human Sciences* 13, no. 4 (2000): 49–72.

¹⁸ See Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind*, 343–71.

ogy and ethical positions altogether (see St John of the Ladder and St Symeon the New Theologian).

The Epicurean emphasis on *ataraxia* also involved considerable difficulties. For Epicurus, *eudaimonia* is a life with pleasure, which is the ultimate good, and devoid of pain, which is the ultimate evil. In this hedonistic system, absence of physical pain (*aponia*) and absence of mental disturbance and anxiety of all kinds (*ataraxia*) is what we should aim for with our actions, in order to achieve *eudaimonia*. *Ataraxia* is achieved when we reach the state of a well-balanced soul, a certain kind of psychic harmony devoid of anxiety, distress, and pain, that is somewhat stable (*katastema*) over time.¹⁹ But the very hedonistic basis of the Epicurean conception of *eudaimonia* and *ataraxia* makes these concepts problematic. Epicurus and his followers seem to think that the hedonistic basis of their theory (i.e., that seeking pleasure and avoiding pain) is the only certain motivation and that it is a given beyond any doubt. From ancient times however, critics focused on the impossibility of verifying this hedonistic basis of the Epicurean theory. The writings of Epicurus seem to suggest that their theory is a form of Descriptive Hedonism, but in some parts of these writings there is the suggestion that people actually should pursue hedonism in order to achieve *eudaimonia*, indicating that their theory admits some form of normative hedonism. Both versions of hedonism are problematic in their hedonistic presumptions, and they are incompatible in terms of what they take morality to be. Overall, they go against our normal everyday moral intuitions: is absence of pain the same as pleasure (as the Epicurean discussion of *ataraxia* implies)? What happens when someone does not derive pleasure from the activities that most people find pleasurable? What happens when absence of pain makes life so boring that it is unbearable to live? Epicurus insists that, when faced with death, we should have *ataraxia* and not be afraid of it nor be saddened by it. But how far is this possible? Epicureans were from ancient times asked to reply to these kinds of criticisms, and they have yet to find a convincing answer.

Both Stoics and Epicureans used *ataraxia* in their discussions of *eudaimonia*. But their conceptions differ significantly. The Epicurean conception of *ataraxia* refers to the present state of the person who has *eudaimonia*; this may change over time and when it does, the person stops having *eudaimonia*. He tries to go back to this state by thinking of all the pleasurable things associated with his misfortune, but again he may lose this achievement. For the Stoics, it is a state that does not change at all, or at least one more difficult to change than the Epicurean conception. True *ataraxia* for the Stoics can only be achieved by the sage who will not be moved away from this state, no matter what comes upon him. The *ataraxia* of the Stoic sage is the crown achievement of his life due to the wisdom attained and the cultivation of his reason to an excellent degree, and this is the result of his *apatheia*. The Epicurean con-

¹⁹ M. Erler and M. Schofield, 'Epicurean Ethics', in *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*, ed. Keimpe Algra (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 642–74.

ception of *ataraxia* shares more common elements with Pyrrho and the Pyrrhonist Sceptics and less with the Stoic conception. For Pyrrho, continuous and severe scepticism about all values will bring about a certain state of the mind where nothing really matters. This is what he thought *ataraxia* to be. By achieving this *ataraxia* the sceptic can rest. But this rest is short lived, because his strong desire to criticise and refute accepted truths will push him out of his rest, out of his *ataraxia*. However, while for the Stoics and the Epicureans *ataraxia* was tied to a conception of the ultimate good, the Sceptics could not tie it to any conception of ultimate good; for this reason, the Stoic and the Epicurean conceptions of *ataraxia* in Ancient Greek ethics were more successful than the Sceptics' use of the term.²⁰ However, let me emphasise that, as in the case of Aristotle, both the Epicureans and the Stoics, even with their more developed ideas of *apatheia* and *ataraxia*, failed to provide a theory about *eudaimonia* that would be without theoretical difficulties, and which would be suited to what most people feel and do in their moral lives, especially in terms of fear of death and the unavoidable feeling of pain.

St Gregory Palamas on Eudaimonia.

By *eudaimonia*, St Gregory Palamas (1296–1359) understands salvation and union with God. In terms of using metaphysics and epistemology for achieving *eudaimonia*, he would not accept Aristotelian, Stoic, Thomistic, and Avicennian intuitions. He would instead opt into the realm of ethics and would maintain that ethics should control metaphysics and epistemology as far as this is possible. In the medieval debate of Being vs. Good, St Gregory Palamas responds by claiming that goodness (not conceived as virtue, but as true repentance through prayer) is more important than knowledge of being. This not only brings back an essential Aristotelian agenda, but also agrees with most of the Aristotelian commentators in the East.²¹

Barlaam's charge of *omfaloskopoi* against the hesychastic monks of Mount Athos and all other such attempts to discredit hesychasm in the fourteenth century can only be understood within the specific metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical context of the time. It was an attempt to ridicule the endeavours of the hesychasts by the learned humanist intellectuals of Constantinople, who found an ideological refuge in Barlaam of Calabria (c.1290–1348), after the condemnation and excommunication of Johannes Italus (1025–85). The agenda was Aristotelian: is theoretical reason as important as practical reason and virtuous behaviour, or is it not? Barlaam claimed that theoretical reason was the most important form of reason. St Gregory Palamas came to the rescue of the Hesychastic Fathers of Mount Athos and claimed

²⁰ Gisela Striker, 'Ataraxia: Happiness as Tranquility', *Monist* 73, no.1 (1990): 97–111.

²¹ See Athanasopoulos, 'The Influence of Ps.Dionysius the Areopagite'.

that Aristotelian fixations regarding the role of theoretical reason, practical reason, as well as virtue, amount to nothing by themselves.

Palamas' intervention brought forward an ascetic and hesychastic solution to the Aristotelian problems: true *eudaimonia* (even though short-lived during one's earthly life) can only be achieved through divine grace and union with God. Praying truthfully and incessantly with true repentance in a hesychastic context is a prerequisite for this union with God, but ultimately it will depend on God's will. This hesychastic approach to *eudaimonia* has the following four key elements:

- a) incessant prayer and compunction,
- b) living in an environment conducive to prayer,
- c) participating in the Mysteries of the Church, and
- d) guidance from a more experienced hesychastic Elder (spiritual father).

I will limit my discussion of Palamas' texts to the specific discussion of *eudaimonia* as found in the *Triads*, in his small treatise entitled: *On Light and Divine Illumination and Holy Eudaimonia and Perfection according to Christ*.²² One can find these ideas in many other texts contained in the five volumes of Palamite writings edited by P. Chrestou, but due to the limitations in the scope of my study here, I will limit my discussion to this small treatise found in the second volume.

In this treatise—which essentially is a reply to a question about the nature of the divine light that the hesychasts claim the Apostles saw on Mount Tabor during the Holy Transfiguration of Christ—St Gregory Palamas notes that engaging in philosophical pursuits is not essential for salvation; humility is more important. To believe that one could reach perfection through the philosophical methods of division (*diairesis*), analysis, and synthesis is the heretical dogma of the Greek philosophers of the past.

He mentions here the Pythagoreans and the Stoics, who (according to Palamas) state that the end and goal of true knowledge is the theoretical knowledge attained by the philosophical study of things.²³ He also stresses that people who think they can reach the truth and thus salvation through philosophy alone, are deluded. For the hesychasts, work and lived experience are also important. For the Saint, if one is to be limited to words alone, there will be no end to debates and scepticism (alluding here to the impossibility of *ataraxia* during *skepsis*). As he notes, for the hesychasts, to each word there is always 'a contrary word'; what can be contrary to a lived experience itself ('Λόγῳ' γάρ, φησί, 'παλαίει πᾶς λόγος', βίῳ δέ τις;)?²⁴ He also makes the following interesting remark: the ones who think that they can approach

²² Π. Χρήστου, επιμ., *Γρηγορίου Παλαμά, τὰ Συγγράμματα*, τ. 2 (Θεσσαλονίκη, 1961–1992), 151–259.

²³ Ibid. *Εἰ δὲ παρὰ τῶν πάντα ἀνακρίνειν δυναμένων ἐν ταπεινώσει προσελθόντες ἠθέλησαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν μαθεῖν, ἤκουσαν ἂν ὡς τοῦτο τό δόγμα φρονήματός ἐστιν ἑλληνικοῦ. Στωικῶν τε καὶ Πυθαγορείων αἵρεσις, οἱ τὴν ἐπιστήμην τέλος λέγουσι τῆς θεωρίας προσγινομένην διὰ τῆς τῶν μαθημάτων ἀναλήψεως.*

²⁴ Ibid.

true knowledge only through philosophy do not know how poor they are in their knowledge of themselves.²⁵ It is only through painful compunction and strict *askesis*, that someone can steer his mind away from evil and the mental disease of pride, and make his mind suitable to receive the truth.²⁶

In a later passage, St Gregory Palamas uses a variety of ancient Greek terms to describe what the ones who wish to approach God exclusively via the philosophical methods will never be able to attain (note the use of *katastema*, *anapausis*, *pathē* and *hēdonē*, all frequently used by Aristoteleians, Stoics, and Epicureans): ‘οὐ κατάστασιν λογισμῶν, οὐκ ἀνάπαυσιν πνευματικὴν...οὐ κατάπαυσιν ἡδονῶν τε καὶ παθῶν, οὐ διάθεσιν ψυχῆς ἀρίστην’.²⁷ The rest from continuous debates and the achievement of true *eudaimonia* (which for Palamas, allows for all the above spiritual conditions, that is, rest of soul and a perfect temperament in the soul) comes via actions permitted by divine grace: ‘τά τῆς χάριτος ἐνεργήματα’.

Palamas mentions here the Hesychastic Fathers’ view that, to support the view that no one in this world can see divine light is ‘of the wolves’—‘τοῦ μέρους τῶν λύκων ἐστὶ’—alluding to the idea oft cited in New Testament that heretics will attempt to misguide the Church and its faithful in the form of wolves attacking the flock.²⁸ His reason for supporting this claim is that the hesychasts believe that a human *apatheia* (and not an angelic one, agreeing here with Orthodox patristic anthropology) is achievable through divine grace, even though it is short-lived. The heretics believe that this is impossible for all humans who are susceptible to sin. For the hesychasts however, God’s intervention necessitates a liberation from sin, even as a temporary measure, that is enough for humans to experience God’s Divine Light on a short-term basis, and in this way, be continuously motivated towards divine *eudaimonia*. This process has different stages, but is experienced with the presence of the Holy Spirit and thus certain.²⁹

Palamas also supports his claims with the words of Neilos the Ascetic (c. fifth century AD), who claims that when the Holy Spirit sees that the prayer is true and full of compunction, it stops the army of mental disturbances and brings peace

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Καὶ μὴν οὐδὲ ἑαυτὸν γινῶναι δυνηθῆναι τινα οἰόμεθα διαιρετικαῖς καὶ συλλογιστικαῖς καὶ ἀναλυτικαῖς μεθόδοις, ἅν μὴ δι’ ἐπιπόνου μετανοίας καὶ ἀσκήσεως συντόνου, ἄτυφον καὶ ἀπόνηρον ποιήσῃ τὸν οἰκεῖον νοῦν. Ὁ γὰρ μὴ τοιοῦτον καὶ οὕτω τὸν ἑαυτοῦ κατασκευάσας νοῦν, οὐδέ τὴν οἰκεῖαν κατὰ γνῶσιν εἴσεται πενίαν, ὃ τοῦ γινῶναι τινα ἑαυτὸν ἐστὶν ἀρχὴ λυσιτελῆς.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid. See Acts 20:29; Matthew 7:15.

²⁹ Ibid. Ἀπάθεια γοῦν ἐν ἀνθρώποις οὐκ ἀγγέλων ἀλλ’ ἀνθρωπίνῃ ζητεῖται, ἥν γνώσῃ καὶ οὐκ ἀπατηθήσῃ ἐν σεαυτῷ οὐσαν κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν ἅγιον ἐν πλήθει φωτός ἀρρήτου καὶ προσευχῆς ἔρωτι ἀμυθήτῳ· καὶ πάλιν, ‘ψυχὴ προλήψεως ἐλευθερωθεῖσα πάντως θεῖον φῶς ἐθεάσατο· γινῶσιν δὲ δογμάτων θεῶν, πόσοι μετὰ ποληρήσεων ἔχουσι;’ καὶ πάλιν, ‘ἐξ ἄλλων μὲν οἱ τῇ ψυχῇ ἀσθενεῖς γνωρίζουσι τὴν πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς τοῦ Κυρίου ἐπίσκεψιν, οἱ δὲ τέλειοι ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Πνεύματος παρουσίας’· καὶ πάλιν, ‘ἐν μὲν τοῖς εἰσαγωγικοῖς πληροφορία τοῦ κατὰ Θεὸν εἶναι αὐτῶν τὰ διαβήματα ἢ τῆς ταπεινώσεώς ἐστι προσθήκη· ἐν δὲ τοῖς μέσοις, ἢ τῶν πολέμων ἀναχώρησις· ἐν δὲ τοῖς τελείοις, ἢ τοῦ θείου φωτός προσθήκη καὶ περιουσία’.

to the mind and the soul.³⁰ Finally, confirming the truth he has received from the Hesychastic Fathers, Palamas notes that this divinely inspired *eudaimonia* is experience-based, pleasurable, and not like any other. In this way, it cannot be communicated by words to someone who has no experience of this, and thus cannot understand it.³¹ Palamas' understanding of spiritual pleasure, described above as 'sweetness which is beyond description', stands in opposition to the Ancient Greek conception of pleasure (*ἡδονή*), which is primarily understood in material or bodily terms. Aristotle considers it to be primarily material and dependent on the peculiarities and differences between each living being.³² Epicurus seems to have a similar idea.³³ For Stoics, pleasure (together with sorrow) is to be avoided by the wise men, because it clouds the mind.³⁴ In this way, pleasure for the Stoics is alien to reasoning abilities and skills (which the wise are supposed to cultivate), and is in this way alien to the true spiritual dimension of human beings. Palamas, here, is following St Maximus the Confessor (and other Fathers of the Church) who stresses that the need for pleasure and sorrow in human affairs comes after the exit from Paradise. In Paradise, God gave to man a natural desire to seek and know God. Man twisted this desire in order to get access to and knowledge of material things. For this he left Paradise. God allows the existence of pain as a controlling mechanism in the madness of the body to seek pleasure beyond control.³⁵ Palamas is using Maximus' anthropological ontology of pain and pleasure as a background for developing further the intuitions of Fathers of the Desert and writes about the pleasure that is beyond description and incommunicable.³⁶ This 'sweetness beyond description' for Palamas, brings us to the state before the Fall; we return back to the satisfaction of our natural desire to know and seek union with God. We cannot describe it, because all our experiences and our abilities to express them cannot cope with the transcendental nature of this experience, which is quite alien to this world.

³⁰ Ibid. 'Τὸ γὰρ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα' κατὰ τὸν ἐν Πνεύματι λαλοῦντα Νεῖλον, 'συμπάσχον τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ ἀσθενείᾳ, καὶ ἀκαθάρτοις οὖσιν ἡμῖν ἐπιφοιτᾷ καί, εἴπερ εὐρήσει τὸν νοῦν μόνον φιλαλήθως αὐτῷ προσευχόμενον, ἐπιβαίνει αὐτῷ καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν κυκλοῦσαν αὐτόν τῶν λογισμῶν ἢ νοημάτων φάλαγγα ἐξαφανίζει'.

³¹ Ibid. ὁ ἐλλάμψεως Θεοῦ αἰσθησιν καὶ ἐνέργειαν τοῖς ἀγεύστοις διὰ λόγου διηγείσθαι βουλόμενος, ὁμοίως ἐστὶ τῷ τοῖς μὴ γευσάμενοις μέλιτος τὴν αὐτοῦ γλυκύτητα διὰ λόγων διδάσκειν ἐθέλοντι

³² *Nicomachean Ethics* VII, 12–15; X, 1–5 (LCL 73), trans. H. Rackham, vol. XIX (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926).

³³ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* X, 34, 128–39 (LCL 185), trans. R. D. Hicks, vol. II (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925).

³⁴ Epictetus, *Discourses*, I, 9, 7; III, 11, 2; 24, 43; IV, 4, 32 (LCL 131), trans. W. A. Oldfather, vol. I (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925).

³⁵ Μαξίμου Ομολογητοῦ, *Ἑπτακόσια Κεφάλαια περὶ Θεολογίας*, Εκατοντάς Γ, §18, Εκατοντάς ΣΤ, §33, ΜΑΞΙΜΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΟΜΟΛΟΓΗΤΟΥ, ΑΠΑΝΤΑ ΤΑ ΕΡΓΑ 15Δ, ed. and trans. Ignatios Sakales (Θεσσαλονίκη: ΠΑΤΕΡΙΚΑΙ ΕΚΔΟΣΕΙΣ «ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΟΣ Ο ΠΑΛΑΜΑΣ», 1995). See also *Προς Θαλάσσιον, περὶ ἀποριῶν* Ερώτηση 1 (PG 90: 268D–269D).

³⁶ Μητροπολίτου Ναυπάκτου καὶ Ἀγίου Βλασίου Ἱεροθέου, *Θεραπευτικὴ Ἀγωγή. Προεκτάσεις στὴν «Ὁρθόδοξη Ψυχθεραπεία»*, Ε' ἐκδοση (Λειβαδιά: Ἱερά Μονὴ Γενεθλίου τῆς Θεοτόκου [Πελαγίας], 2003).

Conclusions

From the discussion so far, it is clear that Palamas used ancient Greek philosophical terms and concepts associated with *eudaimonia* to highlight one important aspect in the debates regarding true knowledge of God and how this is possible for the hesychasts. True knowledge of God brings along with it specific acts from the Holy Spirit (*energēmata*) which allow the hesychast to find true *eudaimonia* in this life, even though short-lived and temporary. This is important not only for supporting the hesychasts' motivation in this struggle with his passions and sin but also as a criterion of success in this pursuit for divine illumination. Any light that a mind thinks is divine but cannot sustain this *eudaimonia*, even on a temporary basis in this life, is not divine light.

Palamas knew that the Aristoteleian, the Stoic, and the Epicurean views on *eudaimonia* and associated terms were only allowing problems to multiply for their followers. There was no certainty over the existence of this *eudaimonia* envisaged by followers of these theories, nor was there any certainty that this *eudaimonia* could be achieved during this life. Palamas, with his defence of hesychasm, found a way to highlight both the problems originating from the poor metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical positions of his opponents, as well as to confirm the existence of divine *eudaimonia* and the criteria of its existence in this life.

St Gregory Palamas' insistence on asceticism (primarily as lived humility but also as an active engagement with a variety of other Christian virtues) and hesychasm (as seclusion within the Church through incessant prayer and full participation in its mysteries) are solutions to centuries-old problems. Palamas worked within the context and the agenda of Ancient Greek ethics to answer effectively its most important and perennial problems, by developing further the intuitions and ideas of St Maximus the Confessor, the Desert Fathers, and the experienced ascetics and hesychasts of Mount Athos.

The above discussion also makes evident that the opposition of St Gregory Palamas to Barlaam can be understood not only as a metaphysical and epistemological confrontation but also an ethical one, on the basis of an ancient Greek agenda that existed for centuries prior to the appearance of the two main protagonists in the debates.

THE NOTION OF EROS (LOVE) AND THE PRESENCE OF ST AUGUSTINE IN THE WORKS OF ST GREGORY PALAMAS REVISITED

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'Since one of the wise and apostolic men says...'¹

The article revisits the use of certain Augustinian expressions and passages in the works of St Gregory Palamas, mainly regarding the Trinitarian reflections in man, the *imago Dei*, and the notion of *eros* (love). First, we present Palamas' theology regarding the *eros* of the *nous* (intellect) for its *logos*. Second, we provide a brief review of the literature regarding the Augustinian presence in Palamas, and then continue with our assessment of this presence. We demonstrate that Gregory does indeed borrow phrases from Augustine, but he does not always use or incorporate the latter's ideas; sometimes (e.g., in the case of the *Filioque*) he even comes to the opposite conclusion. In other words, despite similarities, one also finds crucial differences between Augustine's and Palamas' relevant approaches. Finally, four possible reasons—not often stressed in scholarship; the third probably mentioned for the first time—are proposed to explain why Palamas takes up the notion of *eros* from the Bishop of Hippo: a) the 'eternal rest' (*αἰδιος ἐπανάπαυσις*) of the Holy Spirit on the Son; b) his willingness to oppose the *Filioque*; c) the appeal to a major notion in Palamas' anthropology, namely the 'vivifying power' (*ζωοποιὸς δύναμις*) of the human soul; and d) the Holy Spirit's 'eternal resplendence' (*αἰδιος ἐκλαμψις/ἐκφανσις*). In conclusion, it is argued that this endeavour of Palamas could nowadays also inspire Orthodox theology in its effort to engage in dialogue with Western thought and in its attempt to articulate a genuine and persuasive voice in our era.

The Eros of the Nous (intellect) for its Logos²

A very contentious subject in the recent literature has been the presence, or lack thereof, of St Augustine in St Gregory Palamas' writings,³ and especially in his

¹ *Contra Gregoras* II, 43.10–4, ed. Panagiotis Christou, *Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμᾶ Συγγράμματα* (=ΠΣ), vol. 4 (Θεσσαλονίκη: Κυρομάνος, 1988), 296: '...ἐπεὶ καὶ τις τῶν σοφῶν καὶ ἀποστολικῶν ἀνδρῶν φησιν...' (St Gregory Palamas referring, indirectly, to St Augustine).

² I am grateful to Revd Prof. Andrew Louth, Revd Dr Demetrios Bathrellos, and Archim. Dr Maximos Conostas for having read earlier drafts of this text and providing important feedback, and to Mr Vincent DeWeese for proofreading my English; moreover, to the anonymous peer reviewer, whose remarks helped me improve the article and bring it to its final form. Of course, for all possible shortcomings, the author alone is responsible.

³ For an overview of the recent literature and some remarks that carry the discussion further, see Reinhard Flogaus, 'Inspiration–Exploitation–Distortion: The Use of St Augustine in the Hesychast Controversy–

theology concerning the image of God.⁴ In his *imago Dei* theology, Palamas identifies *nous*, *logos*, and *pneuma* as a reflection of the Trinity in man.⁵ He also stresses that the Holy Spirit is ‘the ineffable love (ἔρως) of the Begetter towards the ineffably begotten Word himself’. Moreover, the Son also has this love for the Father and ‘also experiences this love towards the Begetter, but he does so inasmuch as he possesses this love as proceeding from the Father together with him and as resting⁶ connaturally in him.’⁷ From the Incarnate Word we have learnt that the Holy Spirit is a

sy’, in Aristotle Papanikolaou and George E. Demacopoulos, eds, *Orthodox Readings of Augustine* (Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 2008), 63–80. See also John Demetracopoulos, *Αὐγουστίνος καὶ Γρηγόριος Παλαμάς: τὰ προβλήματα τῶν ἀριστοτελικῶν κατηγοριῶν καὶ τῆς τριαδικῆς ψυχοθεολογίας* [Augustine and Gregory Palamas: the problems of Aristotle’s categories and of the triadic psychotheology] (Αθήνα: Παρουσία, 1997), 83–85. Michele Trizio, “Un uomo sapiente ed apostolico”, Agostino a Bizanzio: Gregorio Palamas lettore del *De Trinitate*, *Quaestio* 6 (2006): 131–89. For the general reception of Augustine in Byzantium, see M. Trizio, ‘Alcune osservazioni sulla ricezione Bizantina del *De Trinitate* di Agostino’, in Antonio Rigo and Pavel Ermilov, eds, *Byzantine Theologians. The Systematization of their own Doctrine and their Perception of Foreign Doctrines*, Quaderni di Νέα Πώμη 3 (Roma: Università ‘Tor Vergata’, 2009), 143–68. Joseph Lössl, ‘Augustine’s “On the Trinity” in Gregory Palamas’ “One Hundred and Fifty Chapters”’, *Augustinian Studies* 30.1 (1999): 69–81. Idem, ‘Augustine in Byzantium’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 51.2 (2000): 267–95. For two interesting recent approaches, see Marcus Plested, *Orthodox Readings of Aquinas, Changing Paradigms in Historical and Systematic Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013): 29–44. Viorel Coman, ‘Le Saint-Esprit comme liaison de l’amour éternel entre le Père et le Fils: un cas de « sobornicité ouverte » dans la théologie orthodoxe moderne’, *Irénikon* 89.1 (2016): 25–51.

⁴ For Augustine’s *imago Dei*, see Gerald P. Boersma, *Augustine’s Early Theology of Image: A Study in the Development of Pro-Nicene Theology*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), and Luigi Gioia, *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine’s De Trinitate*, Oxford Theological Monographs (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 232–97.

⁵ What is, in fact, a ‘Trinitarian reflection in man’? In broad terms we could say that it is an element or condition in the human person—usually in the human soul or intellect—that resembles the Holy Trinity. It is a point that permits us to make an analogy between man and the Trinity. Many things could be said here regarding Palamas’ relevant approach, which is very important indeed, but this goes beyond the scope of our article. Let us only note that Palamas draws mainly on Gregory Nazianzen, Maximus the Confessor, and John Damascene. For a basic approach to Palamas’ Trinitarian reflections in man, see Robert E. Sinkewicz, *The One Hundred and Fifty Chapters: A Critical Edition, Translation and Study*, Studies and Texts 83 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1988), 16–34. A detailed analysis of Gregory’s thought, as presented in his *Chapters*, has been attempted by Jeremy D. Wilkins, “The Image of this Highest”: the Trinitarian Analogy in Gregory Palamas’ *Capita* 150’, *SVTQ* 47.3–4 (2003): 383–412. Cf. also Edmund Hussey, ‘The Palamite Trinitarian Models’, *SVTQ* 16.2 (1972): 83–89. Alexandros Chouliaras, ‘The *Imago Trinitatis* in St Symeon the New Theologian and Niketas Stethatos: Is this the Basic Source of St Gregory Palamas’ own Approach?’, in Markus Vinzent, ed., *Studia Patristica XCVI: Papers presented at the Seventeenth International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford 2015: The Second Half of the Fourth Century; From the Fifth Century Onwards* (Greek Writers); *Gregory Palamas’ Epistula III*, volume 22 (Leuven-Paris-Bristol, CT: Peeters, 2017): 493–503.

⁶ Cf. John Damascene, *Expositio fidei*, 8.173, in P. Bonifatius Kotter, OSB, ed., *Expositio fidei* [Ἐκδοσις ἀκριβῆς τῆς ὀρθοδόξου πίστεως; *On the Orthodox Faith*], *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, vol. 2, *Patristische Texte und Studien* 12 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1973), 25: καὶ ἐν Υἱῷ ἀναπαυόμενον [i.e., the Holy Spirit].

⁷ Palamas, *Capita* 36.11–5, ed. Sinkewicz, 122 [=ed. P. Christou, ΠΣ 5 (Θεσσαλονίκη: Κυρομάνος, 1992), 54.25–29; for the English translation of the *Capita* we have generally used the Sinkewicz’s edition, although we have replaced the term ‘mind’ with ‘intellect’ (for the Greek word ‘νοῦς’): Ἐκεῖνο δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ ἀνωτάτω λόγου οἶόν τις ἔρως ἐστὶν ἀπόρρητος τοῦ γεννήτορος πρὸς αὐτὸν τὸν ἀπορρήτως γεννηθέντα λόγον, ᾧ καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐπέραστος λόγος καὶ υἱὸς χρήται πρὸς τὸν γεννήτορα, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἔχων αὐτὸν συμπροελθόντα καὶ συμφυῶς ἐν αὐτῷ ἀναπαυόμενον. In order to have an adequate view of Palamas’ approach, one has to also take into consideration *Capita* 35 and 37–39.

distinct hypostasis who belongs both to the Father and the Son.⁸ Furthermore, the Holy Spirit owes his being only to the Father, but is sent forth (in the context of the divine *economy*) from both the Father and the Son to those who are worthy.⁹

For Palamas, the idea of the Holy Spirit as love provides the most suitable analogy for the *imago Dei* in man. He explains this in *Chapter 37*, describing the relation of the human intellect to its immanent knowledge (*λόγος*)¹⁰ as love and yearning (*ἔρως* and *ἔφρεσις*): ‘Our intellect too, since it is created in the image of God, possesses the image of this highest love in the relation of the intellect to the knowledge which exists perpetually from it and in it, in that this love is from it and in it and proceeds from it together with the innermost word.’¹¹

In other words, it is precisely because our intellect is created *kat’ eikona* that it also possesses an ‘ineffable love’ like the Divine Intellect—i.e., God the Father—possesses the Holy Spirit. Moreover, ‘The insatiable desire of men for knowledge is a very clear indication of this even for those who are unable to perceive their own innermost being.’¹² That is to say, man’s lust for knowledge is a clear proof of the

⁸ As Sinkewicz (*The One Hundred*, 123, n. 58–59) indicates, Palamas refers here to the biblical passages John 15:26: ‘The Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father’ and Prov 8:30: ‘I was the one (i.e., Wisdom) who rejoiced together with him’ (‘ἐγὼ ἤμην ἢ προσέχαιρεν’). Regarding the second passage, Hussey (‘The Palamite Trinitarian Models’, 85) notes the following: ‘Gregory’s quotation is: ἐγὼ ἤμην ἢ συνέχαιρον αὐτῷ. This is probably a free citation of Proverbs 8:30b—ἐγὼ ἤμην ἢ προσέχαιρεν. The context of the passage in Proverbs celebrates the excellence of wisdom and its presence with God before creation. Gregory’s alteration of the prepositional prefix does some violence to the original text.’

⁹ *Capita* 36.28–31, ed. Sinkewicz, 122 (ed. Christou, 55.13–5): ...διὸ παρ’ ἀμφοτέρων καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἀξίους πέμπεται, μόνου δὲ τοῦ πατρὸς καθ’ ὑπαρξιν ὑπάρχον· διὸ καὶ παρ’ αὐτοῦ μόνου ἐκπορεύεται καθ’ ὑπαρξιν. Gregory here stresses the fact that the Holy Spirit derives his existence only from God the Father, but is sent to the creation from the Father through the Son. This is the standard opinion of the Byzantine Fathers and the Orthodox Church. As is well known, Gregory was a fervent opponent of the *Filioque*. His most representative texts are his two *Apodictic Discourses* [ed. Boris Bobrinsky, ΠΣ 1 (Θεσσαλονίκη: Κυρομάνος, 1988), 23–153]. For a recent and succinct summary of his approach, with some insightful remarks and useful bibliography, see A. E. Siecienski, *The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal Controversy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 145–47. For Palamas’ stance on the *Filioque*, see the important analysis of Jean-Claude Larchet, in his ‘Introduction’ to *Saint Grégoire Palamas, Traité apodictiques sur la procession du Saint-Esprit*, traduction et notes par Emmanuel Ponsoye, Collection l’Arbre de Jessé (Paris-Suresnes: Les Éditions de l’Ancre, 1995), 14–104. Cf. section (d) of this article. On the matter of the *Filioque* in general, see Peter Gemeinhardt, *Die Filioque-Kontroverse zwischen Ost- und Westkirche im Frühmittelalter*, Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 82 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2002); Siecienski, *The Filioque*; Theodoros Alexopoulos, *Der Ausgang des thearchischen Geistes: Eine untersuchung der Filioque-Frage anhand Photios’ ‘Mystagogie’, Konstantin Melitiniotes’ ‘Zwei Antirrhetic’ und Augustins ‘De Trinitate’* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht unipress, 2009).

¹⁰ See *Capita* 34–35. Cf. the second section of the current article, where we discuss Edmund Hussey’s paper.

¹¹ *Capita* 37.1–4, ed. Sinkewicz, 122 (ed. Christou, 55.16–9): Τοῦτου τοῦ ἀνωτάτω ἔρωτος τὴν εἰκόνα καὶ ὁ κατ’ εἰκόνα τοῦ Θεοῦ κτισθεὶς ἡμῶν ἔχει νοὺς πρὸς τὴν παρ’ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ διηλεκτῶς ὑπάρχουσαν γνῶσιν, παρ’ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ τοῦτον ὄντα καὶ συμπρόϊοντα παρ’ αὐτοῦ τῷ ἐνδοτάτῳ λόγῳ.

¹² *Capita* 37.5–7, ed. Sinkewicz, 122 (ed. Christou, 55.19–22): Καὶ τοῦτου δεῖγμα ἐναργέστατον καὶ τοῖς μὴ τὰ ἐνδοτάτῳ ἑαυτῶν δυνάμενοι καθορᾶν ἢ πρὸς τὸ εἰδέναι τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀκόρεστος ἔφρεσις. Demetracopoulos (Αὐγουστῖνος καὶ Γρηγόριος Παλαμάς, 88) points out that Palamas here alludes to the well-known first line of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*: πάντες ἄνθρωποι τοῦ εἰδέναι ὀρέγονται φύσει (see *Τῶν μετὰ τὰ φυσικὰ A* 980a, Oxford Classical Texts, ed. Werner Jaeger [New York: Oxford University Press, 1957], 1).

intellect's love towards its immanent knowledge (λόγος). Therefore, the love of the νοῦς for its λόγος images the ἔρως of the Father for the Son, i.e., the Holy Spirit.

Reviewing the literature

The well-known Roman Catholic scholar Martin Jugie was the first to open the debate regarding the Augustinian presence in the works of St Gregory. In 1932 he argued that Palamas, in his theology of the divine processions, and specifically in his *Chapters*,¹³ has a theory identical to that of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. Jugie regards Palamas' use of the triad *nous-logos-pneuma*, as well as his notion of *eros*,¹⁴ as quite 'curious and unusual' for a fourteenth-century Byzantine theologian. He believes that Gregory borrowed them either from Augustine's *De Trinitate*, translated by Maximus Planoudes around 1280,¹⁵ or from Aquinas' *Contra Gentiles*, translated by Demetrios Cydones in 1354.¹⁶

Additionally, in 1959, Fr John Meyendorff expressed surprise to find a psychological image rather like that of St Augustine in Palamas' thirty-sixth *Chapter*.¹⁷ Moreover, in another context, he characterizes Gregory as 'l'un des auteurs les plus "augustiniens" de l'Orient chrétien'.¹⁸ Gregory's point of view here is the doctrine of

¹³ Meaning the important work of Palamas, *Capita 150* (Κεφάλαια ἑκατὸν πεντήκοντα...). See the critical editions of Christou, ΠΣ 5, and Sinkewicz, *The One Hundred*.

¹⁴ For a brief analysis of these points, according to Palamas, see the first section of the current article.

¹⁵ For the critical edition, see Maximus Planoudes, *Ἀγιοσύνην Περι Τριάδος βιβλία πεντεκαίδεκα ἄνω ἐκ τῆς Λατίνων διαλέκτου εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα μετήνεγκε Μάξιμος ὁ Πλανοῦδης*, ed. Manolis Papathomopoulos, Isabella Tsabari, Gianpaolo Rigotti. *Editio Princeps*, 2 vols (Ἀθήνα: Ἀκαδημία Ἀθηνῶν, Κέντρον Ἑκδόσεως Ἑργῶν Ἑλλήνων Συγγραφέων, 1995). On this translation, see Elizabeth Fisher, 'Planoudes' *De Trinitate*, the Art of Translation, and the Beholder's Share', in Papanikolaou and Demacopoulos, eds., *Orthodox Readings of Augustine*, 41–61. For an important critical evaluation of this edition, with some very useful remarks and corrections, see Dimitrios K. Raïos, 'H *editio princeps* της πλανοῦδειας μετάφρασης του *De Trinitate*: προβληματισμοὶ καὶ προτάσεις' (The *editio princeps* of the Planoudean Translation of *De Trinitate*: Questionings and Suggestions), in Βελλά: Επιστημονικὴ Ἐπετηρίδα [Vella: Scientific Anniversary] (Βελλά: Ἀνωτάτη Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Σχολὴ Βελλὰς Ἰωάννινων, 2001): 49–109.

¹⁶ Martin Jugie, 'Palamas Grégoire', *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* 11.2 (1932): 1735–76; at 1766–77. For the *imago Dei* according to Thomas Aquinas, see D. Juvenal Merriell, *To the Image of the Trinity: A study in the Development of Aquinas' Teaching* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990). In this book, Merriell regards Augustine to be the foundation of Aquinas' relevant teaching. However, recent scholarship rejects the possibility of an influence of Aquinas—or any other Scholastic theologian—on Palamas, regarding the *imago Dei*. See Demetracopoulos, *Ἀγιοσύνης καὶ Γρηγόριος Παλαμάς*, 83 and 154, n. 222. Cf. Georgios Martzelos, 'Τὸ Ἅγιο Πνεῦμα ὡς "ἔρως ἀπόρητος" μεταξύ Πατρός καὶ Υἱοῦ κατὰ τὸν Ἅγιο Γρηγόριο Παλαμά' ['The Holy Spirit as "ineffable love" between the Father and the Son according to Saint Gregory Palamas'], *Θεολογία* 86.3 (2015): 7–21; at 14–15 [initially presented at *The International Conference 'St Gregory Palamas: The Theological and Philosophical Significance of his Work'*, Thessaloniki 7–15.3.2012].

¹⁷ John Meyendorff, *Introduction à l'étude de Grégoire Palamas*, *Patristica Sorbonensia* 3 (Paris: Seuil, 1959), 316 [=partial English translation by George Lawrence: *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, second edition (New York: Faith Press, 1974), 232].

¹⁸ Meyendorff, *Introduction*, 175 (=A *Study*, 118: '...one of the most "Augustinian" writers of the Christian East').

grace: Palamas, as Augustine had already done in his anti-Pelagian writings,¹⁹ insists on man's incapability of reaching God by his own power alone.

A reaction comes from Edmund Hussey, in a paper of his in 1972.²⁰ Initially he presents his English translation of *Chapters* 35–37, and then he discusses them in detail. He admits that Jugie's and Meyendorff's observation of a 'psychological' trinitarian model is, at first glance, justified. This applies especially to *Chapter* 36. 'But', in Hussey's words, 'the unexplained and abrupt transition from "word" to "knowledge" in *Chapter* 35, and the equally abrupt and unexplained transition from "breath" to "love" in *Chapter* 36, suggest that Gregory has interwoven an "ontological" word-breath figure and a "psychological" knowledge-love figure.'²¹

Hussey tries to prove that Gregory's models are mainly ontological and not psychological.²² The reason for this position is Hussey's effort to stress the difference between Palamas' and Augustine's psychological models. This effort is justified, because there is indeed a divergence.²³ Thus, he argues that Palamas does speak about the word which is expressed externally in sounds (*προφορικὸς λόγος*), as well as the mental image of the sounds of a word before it is expressed externally (*ἐνδιάθετος λόγος*), and the mental concept that comes before the expression in a word and is gradually shaped in the intellect (*λόγος ἐν διανοίᾳ*). However, the only suitable analogy he finds to express the relation of the second person of the Trinity to God the Father is the *λόγος ἐμφύτως ἐν ἡμῖν ἐναποκείμενος τῷ νῷ*, the naturally inherent *λόγος*, that is, 'a word in the sense of the knowledge latent or immanent in the intellect', a 'word naturally stored up within our intellect'.²⁴ Hussey underlines that this is not just a psychological model, constructed according to human measures. We have to understand the *logos* not only as a word or thought, but primarily as our point of communion with God. This is the type of *logos* which reflects the second person of the Trinity, who is generated from the Father.²⁵

¹⁹ On this subject, see the relevant study of Dominic Keech, *The Anti-Pelagian Christology of Augustine of Hippo, 396–430* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

²⁰ Hussey, 'The Palamite Trinitarian Models', 83–89.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 85–86.

²² By 'psychological', we refer to elements that have to do with human psychology, such as thought, love, soul, etc., whereas by 'ontological', to points related to the ontology-existence, such as the constitution of the intellect. From my point of view, Jeremy D. Wilkins provides a more worked and well-grounded—though a little bit sophisticated and sometimes difficult to apprehend—interpretation of Palamas' *Capita* 34–38 than Hussey's (see Wilkins, "'The Image of this Highest Love'"). Moreover, Wilkins tries to prove in a more adequate way the balance between the ontological and the psychological character of these chapters, contrary to Hussey who gives a clear priority to ontology. Here again, it seems that Wilkins is more objective. It is noteworthy that Wilkins, in this article, traces some interesting similarities and divergences, between Palamas', Aquinas', and Augustine's teaching (divine goodness-unity, communion with God, etc.).

²³ As Hussey ('The Palamite Trinitarian Models', 89) writes, 'there is no question here of constructing a theology of the Trinity out of any model, as Western theology has tended to do with the so-called psychological model.' Wilkins ("The Image of this Highest Love", 402) notes that the two most known triads of Augustine are 'memory, understanding, and will' (*memoria, intelligentia, voluntas*), and 'mind, knowledge, and love' (*mens, notitia, amor*).

²⁴ Cf. Palamas, *Capita* 35.1–16, ed. Sinkewicz, 118–120 (ed. Christou, 53.22–54.6).

²⁵ Hussey, 'The Palamite Trinitarian Models', 86. A very interesting topic for further research would

Robert Sinkewicz offers a significant commentary on Palamas' *Chapters*. As far as the presence of Augustine is concerned, he does accept the existence of similarities between the *Chapters* and Augustine's Trinitarian analogies at first.²⁶ Nevertheless, he argues that, in virtue of these parallels, there is a temptation to conclude that Palamas really assimilated some of Augustine's ideas. However, Sinkewicz is totally opposed to such an idea. He believes that, while Gregory speaks of the knowledge immanent in the intellect, he does not equate this with *the intellect's knowledge of itself (notitia sui)*.²⁷ Moreover, Palamas mentions the relation of the intellect to the knowledge naturally inherent in it, but he does not depict this as *the intellect's wanting its self-knowledge (amor sui and voluntas sui)*.²⁸ Last, but most important for Sinkewicz, Palamas never concludes that the Holy Spirit is the *relation of love* between the Father and the Son:

Faithful to the Church's tradition, Palamas maintained that the Holy Spirit is identical in every way with the divine goodness (i.e. the divine nature) and with the Father and the Son, except in hypostasis. The Spirit has his own perfect hypostasis, which is defined by its derivation from the Father by procession.²⁹

Several years later, Jacques Lison shared the same hesitation with Sinkewicz in seeing a direct influence of Augustine on Palamas, but unlike Sinkewicz did not want to exclude the possibility of some 'indirect' influence. However, he also argued

be to examine whether the theology of the *λόγοι τῶν ὄντων* is present here; but this cannot be pursued in the current article.

²⁶ Sinkewicz, *The One Hundred*, 18.

²⁷ Sinkewicz refers to Augustine, *De Trinitate*, IX.4.4 and XV.6.10; for a translation, see Gareth B. Matthews, ed., *Augustine: On the Trinity. Books 8–15*, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy, trans. Stephen McKenna (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 27–28 and 176–78.

²⁸ Cf. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, X.11.18 and XV.3.5 [ed. Matthews (trans. McKenna), 58–59 and 171 respectively].

²⁹ Sinkewicz, *The One Hundred*, 18. Wilkins ("The Image of this Highest Love", 387–88) criticises Sinkewicz's stance, reminding that Augustine, in his *De Trinitate*, regards the Holy Spirit as a person, exactly in the same way as the Father and Son, stressing the equality of the divine persons. Wilkins indicatively refers to *De Trinitate*, VII.4.6; VII.6; V.9; I.7.13; VI.7. As it seems Wilkins is correct here, but one finds his claim too strict (ibid., 388) that 'despite Sinkewicz's erudition it is difficult to detect in his remarks the kind of deep understanding of Augustine that would be required to assess whether in fact Palamas' ideas bear any important resemblance to them; rather they perpetuate a dubious and thoroughly apologetic caricature'. However, for a more grounded rejection of Sinkewicz's specific argument, see Demetracopoulos, *Αὐγουστίνος καὶ Ἰρηγόριος Παλαμάς*, 157–58, n. 230. Cf. Lössl, 'Augustine's "On the Trinity"', 70. Idem, 'Augustine in Byzantium', 280–81.

that the relevant teaching of Palamas is not the same as Augustine's.³⁰ For this reason, he believes that if there really is an Augustinian influence, it is merely superficial.³¹

However, in 1996–97 we have the first documented proofs about Palamas' borrowings from Augustine. In particular, Reinhard Flogaus³² and John Demetracopoulos,³³ almost simultaneously but independently, identify a number of parallels between the Greek translation of Augustine's *De Trinitate* by Maximus Planoudes and Palamas' *oeuvre*.³⁴ After these discoveries, a direct Augustinian influence on Palamas cannot be denied.³⁵ However, let us now make some comments about what exactly this influence may be.

Assessment: Augustine and the Notion of Eros

To summarise, we may draw the following conclusions. There is indeed a parallel in Palamas' and Augustine's conceptions of the *imago Dei*.³⁶ Nevertheless, one can find some crucial differences. First, in order to express his triadic analogies, Augustine seems to base his ideas on human psychology.³⁷ He finds Trinitarian reflections present in the functions of the soul: initially in the triad 'intellect, under-

³⁰ See the important book of Jacques Lison, *L'Esprit répandu: la pneumatologie de Grégoire Palamas* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1994 [repr. 2009]), 89. Idem., 'L'Esprit comme amour selon Grégoire Palamas: une influence augustinienne?', *Studia Patristica* 32 (1997): 325–32. In this paper (p. 331), referring to Sinkewicz's thesis, Lison rightly declared that 'Aucun argument ne nous semble en tout cas infirmer la possibilité d'une influence augustinienne' ('In any case, it seems to us that no argument is able to [definitively] rule out the possibility of an Augustinian influence').

³¹ Lison, 'L'Esprit comme amour selon Grégoire Palamas', 330.

³² See mainly his *Theosis bei Palamas und Luther: Ein Beitrag zum ökumenischen Gespräch* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), 98–109, 140, 143–53, 155–57, 238–61. Idem., 'Der heimliche Blick nach Westen. Zur Rezeption von Augustins *De Trinitate* durch Gregorios Palamas', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 46 (1996): 275–97, and 'Palamas and Barlaam Revisited: A Reassessment of East and West in the Hesychast Controversy of Fourteenth Century Byzantium', *SVTQ* 42.1 (1998): 1–32.

³³ *Αὐγουστίνος καὶ Ἰρηγόριος Παλαμᾶς*, specifically 13–17, 52–54, 83–94, 115. For all the parallels between Palamas' *Chapters* and Planoudes' translation of Augustine's *De Trinitate*, see pp. 183–93.

³⁴ Mainly in Palamas' *Chapters*, *Homily 16: On the Incarnation*, *Contra Beccos*, and *Ad Xenam*.

³⁵ This is admitted also by Sinkewicz, in his latest and very important work on Palamas, i.e., 'Gregory Palamas', in Carmelo Giuseppe Conticello and Vassa Conticello, eds, *La théologie byzantine et sa tradition*, *Corpus Christianorum*, vol. 2 (*XIIIe–XIXe s.*) (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), 131–88; at 163–64.

³⁶ But why doesn't Palamas ever mention his source, i.e., Augustine's *De Trinitate*? For an interesting justification and some plausible reasons, see Demetracopoulos, *Αὐγουστίνος καὶ Ἰρηγόριος Παλαμᾶς*, 107–10. In general, a possible explication would be that some Byzantines were facing Augustine with suspicion due to his support for the *Filioque*; this fact may have prevented Palamas from explicitly mentioning his source. Cf. Plested, *Orthodox Readings of Aquinas*, 59. However, it did not prevent him from indirectly referring—in another work—to Augustine as 'one of the wise and apostolic men...' ('ἐπεὶ καὶ τις τῶν σοφῶν καὶ ἀποστολικῶν ἀνδρῶν φησιν...'); see Palamas, *Contra Gregoras II*, 43.10–4, ed. P. Christou, ΠΣ 4 (Θεσσαλονίκη: Κυρομάνος, 1988), 296.

³⁷ For how Augustine, through his reading of the Scripture, decides to call the Holy Spirit 'Love' and 'Gift' (and for some connections with contemporary Christian theology), see Matthew Levering, 'The Holy Spirit in the Trinitarian Communion: "Love" and "Gift"?', *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 16.2 (2014): 126–42.

standing, will', and then in the more developed form of 'memory, understanding, and love'.³⁸

On the contrary, Palamas most probably draws on a common patristic tradition, though not much developed, which finds a Trinitarian image in the intellect (*nous*), word or reason (*logos*), and spirit (*pneuma*).³⁹ It seems that Palamas, having read Planoudes' translation, found some useful tools, which he exploited in order to elaborate his views more fully.⁴⁰ Therefore, we should speak instead of a 'borrowing of words', not of ideas as such.⁴¹ As has been remarked, 'Gregory's borrowings do not extend to what is the live nerve of Augustine's reflections—the Spirit as "something common", *commune aliquid*, to the Father and the Son.'⁴² Alexander Golitzin calls this 'a quietly selective appropriation' and argues that

³⁸ Andrew Louth, 'The Reception of St Augustine in Late Byzantium', in Charalambos Dendrinos and John Demetrapoulos, eds, *When East met West: the Reception of Latin Philosophical and Theological Thought in Late Byzantium*, Acts of the Institute of Classical Studies International Byzantine Colloquium, London, 11–12 June 2012, *Nicolaus, Rivista di Teologia Ecumenico-patristica*, vol. 40, Fasc. 1 (Bari: Istituto di Teologia Ecumenica San Nicola di Bari, 2013), 115–23; at 118.

³⁹ As already stated, this tradition is mainly carried by Gregory Nazianzen, Maximus the Confessor, and John Damascene.

⁴⁰ In another text of his (*Contra Beccum*), Palamas once refers to the Holy Spirit as 'the communion and love of the Father and the Son' (κοινωνίαν καὶ ἀγάπην... τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον). See Panagiotis Papaevangelou, ed., ΠΣ 1 (Θεσσαλονίκη: Κυρομάνος, 1982), 164.14–5. Here Gregory speaks of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father alone.

⁴¹ Flogaus agrees with this, 'Palamas and Barlaam Revisited', 31. Amphilochios Radović, in his study on Palamas' Triadology, does recognise that Gregory's psychological triad is an Augustinian one, but he stresses the different way Palamas uses it. In particular, he comments that Augustine, based on this triad, concludes by supporting the *Filioque*, whereas Palamas concludes the opposite. See A. Radović, *Τὸ μυστήριον τῆς Ἁγίας Τριάδος κατὰ τὸν Ἅγιον Γρηγόριον Παλαμᾶν* (Θεσσαλονίκη: Πατριαρχικὸν Ἰδρυμα Πατερικῶν Μελετῶν, 1973 and 1991), 53–54. Flogaus mentions something similar ('Palamas and Barlaam Revisited', 20–21) about Augustine's understanding of Father and Son as *one* principle of the Spirit: Palamas uses Augustine's passage, but comes to the opposite conclusion, viz. that the Father is the sole principle of both the Son and the Spirit. Flogaus refers to Augustine, *De Trinitate* V, 13, 14 and Palamas, *Capita* 132. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Augustine's treatment of the procession of the Holy Spirit is entirely unpolemical. He did not know that the Eastern Fathers did not accept the *Filioque*; he thought that they also supported the same belief. Were he aware of their stance, it is very possible that he would not have insisted so much on it, or that he would even have expressed the opposite position. Cf. Louth, 'The Reception of St Augustine in Late Byzantium', 119–20: 'Augustine does not argue for the *Filioque* against those who reject it, rather he takes for granted an understanding of the Spirit who proceeds *ex utroque*, from both [cf. Brian Daley, 'Revisiting the "Filioque" (Part I): Roots and Branches of an Old Debate', *Pro Ecclesia* 10 (2001): 31–62]. Someone convinced of the doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father alone might well have read these affirmations of the procession *ex utroque* as referring to the procession of the Spirit in the Divine Economy, not within the Trinity itself. Augustine does not work with a sharp distinction between *theologia* and *economia* in the way the Greeks did, and continue to, nor did he know a creed that affirmed that the Spirit *ex Patre procedit*—proceeds from the Father.' Therefore, one would agree with Demetrapoulos that we cannot know for sure what exactly Palamas believed about whether Augustine supported the *Filioque* or not (*Ἀὐγουστίνος καὶ Γρηγόριος Παλαμᾶς*, 156–57, n. 227).

⁴² Louth, 'The Reception of St Augustine in Late Byzantium', 118. Cf. Plested, *Orthodox Readings of Aquinas*, 43–44. As Metr. Kallistos Ware points out, the analogy of the 'mutual love' that St Augustine uses is developed by some Latin authors of the Middle Ages, mainly Richard of St Victor (twelfth century). Moreover, it has a central place in the Trinitarian theology of some Russian religious-philosophical thinkers, in the end of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, such as Vladimir Solovyov, Fr Pavel Florensky, Fr Sergius Bulgakov, Nicolas Berdiaev, and Paul Evdokimov ('Τὸ ἀνθρώπινο πρόσωπο ὡς εἰκόνα τῆς Ἁγίας Τριάδος: Ἀπὸ τὸν ἱερό Ἀὐγουστίνου στὸν Ἅγιο Γρηγόριο τὸν Παλαμᾶ' ['The Human Person as an Image of

It is very clear that Palamas quite liked much of what he had read in *De Trinitate* and, moreover, found that those sections which he particularly liked, all of them from the latter part of Augustine's work, could be easily and naturally engrafted into already existing elements within Greek Christian literature in such a way as to enrich and deepen the whole. In this regard, Gregory was a good deal bolder and more confident of the strength of his tradition than are many modern Orthodox theologians... Palamas did not then accept the whole of Augustine on the Trinity, but only that (and it seems to have been quite a lot) which he appears to have felt could be enfolded without rupture or strain into the already existent theological *Gestalt* of the Greek East.⁴³

That is why, from our point of view, one should not be puzzled by Palamas' endeavour, as often happens in recent scholarship.⁴⁴

the Holy Trinity: from St Augustine to St Gregory Palamas'], speech at the Honorary Degree Nomination of Metr. Kallistos Ware, Thessaloniki, 3 June 2015, accessed 6 June 2015, <http://www.pemptousia.gr/author/kallistos-ware/>).

⁴³ Alexander Golitzin, 'Dionysius the Areopagite in the Works of Gregory Palamas. On the Question of a "Christological Corrective" and Related Matters', *SVTQ* 46.2 (2002): 163–90; at 183–84.

⁴⁴ Flogaus ('Palamas and Barlaam', 1–5 and idem, 'Inspiration', 68–73) mentions some examples of scholars (not only Orthodox) who thought that the theology of the Bishop of Hippo had many problems, and, for this reason, tried to omit the possibility of an Augustinian influence on Palamas. For an interesting relevant presentation, see also Plested, *Orthodox Readings of Aquinas*, 29–34, 44. In general, a very critical stance towards the theology of St Augustine is held by the late Fr John Romanides. For instance, see his *Ρωμαίοι ἢ Ρωμηοὶ Πατέρες τῆς Ἐκκλησίας. Τόμος Ι. Γρηγορίου Παλαμᾶ ἔργα 1: Ὑπὲρ τῶν Ἱερῶς Ἠσυχάζοντων Τριάς Α'* (Θεσσαλονίκη: Πουρναράς, 1991), 5–194 (passim). There, in many points (see, for example, pp. 17–18, 56–59), he argues that a great part of Western theology has been influenced, through the centuries, by some erroneous points of the theology of St Augustine and, for this reason, led to numerous problems. For instance, Romanides finds a great problem in Augustine's interpretation of the Old Testament theophanies (see, for example, p. 58). It should be noted that David Bradshaw argues something similar (see 'The innovations of Augustine', in his *Aristotle East and West: Metaphysics and the Division of Christendom* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004], 222–29). This whole stance of Romanides, though perhaps somehow exaggerated, is very interesting. However, a detailed assessment of it and the arguments he brings to support it, go beyond the scope of this article. For several objections to the relevant positions of Romanides and Bradshaw, and also Christos Yannaras, who seems to walk on this same line of thought, see some of the contributions in Papanikolaou and Demacopoulos, eds, *Orthodox Readings of Augustine* (e.g., pp. 208–9, 212–13, etc.). For Bradshaw's response, see pp. 244–51 in the same book, and for his contribution, where he again approaches critically some points in Augustine's teaching, see *ibid.*, 227–43. Recently, Hierotheos Vlachos (Metropolitan of Nafpaktos) ('Τὰ ἑκατὸν πενήκοντα κεφάλαια τοῦ Ἁγίου Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμᾶ' [The One Hundred and Fifty Chapters of Saint Gregory Palamas], *Θεολογία* 80.1 (2009): 5–25) has maintained something similar. He finds many incompatibilities between *De Trinitate* and Palamas' teaching; he therefore finds it very unlikely (almost impossible) for Gregory to have borrowed some lines from it (see mainly pp. 7–9, 12–14, 16, 18, 19–20 of the aforementioned article). In particular, he supports that Palamas could not possibly have used Augustine, because Barlaam, Palamas' opponent, was relying heavily on the Bishop of Hippo. However, as we mentioned, Palamas is sometimes only using the words, not exactly the ideas of Augustine. Moreover, Metr. Hierotheos presents three hypotheses: first, that a specific abstract from the *Chapters* (*Capita* 133.1–3: *Θέσεις καὶ ἔξεις καὶ τόποι καὶ χρόνοι καὶ εἴ τι τοιοῦτον οὐ κυρίως ἐπὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ λέγονται, ἀλλὰ μεταφορικῶς. τὸ δὲ ποιεῖν καὶ ἐνεργεῖν ἐπὶ μόνου τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀληθέστατα ἂν λέγοιτο*), which is taken from the fifth chapter of *De Trinitate*, is interpolated: someone other than Gregory has added it. Second, that the major part of the text was indeed written by Palamas, but a posterior theologian, who knew the teaching of Augustine, added whole paragraphs. Third,

Why Does Palamas Borrow the Notion of Eros?

We have left the most important question for the end: why, at last, does Palamas borrow the notion of *eros* from Augustine? To what end? Georgios Martzelos gives two plausible reasons: first, Palamas, through *eros*, merely refers to the patristic teaching of the ‘eternal rest’ (αἰδῖος ἐπανάπαυσις) of the Holy Spirit on the Son, in the context of the intra-Trinitarian relationships.⁴⁵ Second, Palamas tries to preclude any possible interpretation of Augustine’s teaching supporting the *Filioque* (because, as shown, Gregory uses this idea of *eros* to oppose the *Filioque*).⁴⁶

Furthermore, it seems to me that there are two other important reasons, which are rarely—if ever—stressed in the scholarly literature.⁴⁷ Initially, through the notion of *eros* Palamas is guided to the idea of the ‘vivifying power’ (ζωοποιὸς δύναμις) of the human soul, namely the power of the soul that grants life to the body. Many things could be said here. For the purposes of this article, let us only mention that for St Gregory it is a basic means of explaining how man bears the image of God to a greater extent than the angels. Moreover, it is closely connected with the human body and occupies a major place in Palamas’ anthropology.⁴⁸

More specifically, St Gregory articulates this idea in his thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth *Chapters*. Initially he mentions that,

the intellectual and rational nature of the angels also possesses intellect, and word from the intellect, and the *love* of the intellect for the word, which *love* is also from the intellect and ever coexists with the word and the intellect, and which could be called spirit since it accompanies the word by nature.⁴⁹

and most probable according to Metr. Hierotheos, the *Chapters* is a work of a later theologian, who knew the teaching of both Palamas and Augustine and made a synopsis of those. Here, he makes two suggestions: either Theophanes of Nicaea (ca. 1315/20–ca. 1380/1) or Gennadios Scholarios (ca. 1398/1405– after 1472). However, from our point of view, these hypotheses are not likely to be true, because both critical editors of the *Chapters* (i.e., Sinkewicz and Christou) have accepted the authenticity of this text. Moreover, as we have seen, Palamas also exploits Augustinian expressions in other texts, which undoubtedly derive from his pen (for instance in *Contra Beccum*). For a brief response to Metr. Hierotheos’ paper, see Georgios Martzelos, “Τὸ Ἅγιο Πνεῦμα ὡς ἔρως ἀπόρρητος”.

⁴⁵ See, for instance, the relevant quotation from St John Damascene mentioned above: *Expositio fidei* 8.173, ed. Kotter, 25: καὶ ἐν Υἱῷ ἀναπαυόμενον [i.e., the Holy Spirit].

⁴⁶ See Martzelos, “Τὸ Ἅγιο Πνεῦμα ὡς ἔρως ἀπόρρητος”, mainly 11, 18–21.

⁴⁷ The following reason (i.e., the third one), as far as I know, has never before been proposed in scholarship to explain why Palamas borrows the topic of *eros*. It is, most likely, underlined for the first time in this article.

⁴⁸ This is what Sinkewicz calls the pneumatological aspect of the *imago Dei* (‘Gregory Palamas’, 171). In general, for the soul’s ζωοποιὸς δύναμις according to Palamas, see his *Capita* 38–9. Idem, *Homily* 60, *On the Holy Feast of Theophany*, critical ed. Vasileios St. Pseftogas, Ὁμιλῖαι [Homilies], ΠΣ 6 (Θεσσαλονίκη: Κυρομάνος, 2015), 645–56 (=Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμᾶ Ἄπαντα τὰ Ἔργα 11, in ed. Panagiotis K. Christou et al., Ἑλληνες Πατέρες τῆς Ἐκκλησίας 79 (Θεσσαλονίκη: Πατερικαὶ Ἐκδόσεις «Γρηγόριος ὁ Παλαμᾶς», 1986), 506–34). Cf. Sinkewicz, ‘Gregory Palamas’, 168–70.

⁴⁹ *Capita* 38.1–5, ed. Sinkewicz, 124 (ed. Christou, 56.9–12; emphasis added): Ἐχει μὲν οὖν καὶ ἡ τῶν ἀγγέλων νοερά καὶ λογικὴ φύσις νοῦν τε καὶ λόγον ἐκ τοῦ νοῦ καὶ τὸν πρὸς τὸν λόγον ἔρωτα τοῦ νοῦ, ὃς καὶ αὐτὸς ἐστὶν ἐκ τοῦ νοῦ καὶ σύνεστιν αἰὲ τῷ τε λόγῳ καὶ τῷ νῷ καὶ πνεῦμα ἂν καλοῖτο, ὡς τῷ λόγῳ φύσει συμπαρομαρτῶν.

That said, Palamas argues that the angels⁵⁰ also have the *imago Dei*, and that reflections of the Trinity can also be found in the angels, as happens in man—and as analysed in section (a) of this article. However, there is a crucial difference. The spirit of the angels is not life-giving (ζωοποιόν); it has no vivifying power, because the angels have no body. On the other hand, the intellectual and rational human soul was created in conjunction (συνεκτίσθη) with an earthly body. For this reason, the soul has received from God a spirit which is also ζωοποιόν, ‘through which it [i.e., the soul] conserves and gives life to the body joined to it’.⁵¹

With this observation, Palamas explains the lofty value of the human soul: without the soul’s energy, the body has no life. He continues by arguing that the human spirit, ‘the life-giving power in his [i.e., man’s] body, is intellectual love (νοερὸς ἔρως); it is from the intellect and the word, and exists in the word and the intellect, and possesses both the word and the intellect within itself’.⁵² Obviously this view helps Gregory to stress the likeness of the human spirit to the Holy Spirit, who, as already analysed above in section (a), is ‘the ineffable love of the Begetter towards the ineffably begotten Word himself’.⁵³ Moreover, this spirit is the soul’s loving bond with its own body, which is so intense that the soul never wishes to leave and be separated from the body ‘and will not do so at all unless force is brought to bear on it externally from some very serious disease or trauma’.⁵⁴

Palamas concludes, in *Chapter 39*: ‘The intellectual and rational (λογική) nature of the soul, alone possessing intellect and word and life-giving spirit, has alone been created more in the image of God than the incorporeal angels’.⁵⁵ From all the above evidence, it is shown that, very likely, Palamas borrows the notion of *eros* from Augustine in order to exalt the rank of the human person, via his *imago Dei* theology.

Last, but not least, one further reason could be invoked as to why St Gregory borrows the notion of *eros* from Augustine. It has been maintained that Palamas, in

⁵⁰ For an interesting recent book on the teaching of some Christian writers about the angels, see Ellen Muehlberger, *Angels in Late Ancient Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁵¹ *Capita* 38.5–10, ed. Sinkewicz, 124 (ed. Christou, 56.13–18; emphasis added): ‘Ἄλλ’ οὐκ ἔχει καὶ ζωοποιὸν τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦτο, οὐδὲ γὰρ συνημμένον εἴληφεν ἐκ γῆς παρὰ Θεοῦ σῶμα, ἵνα καὶ ζωοποιὸν τε καὶ συνεκτικὴν λάβῃ πρὸς τοῦτο δύνανται. ἡ δὲ νοερά καὶ λογικὴ φύσις τῆς ψυχῆς, ἐπεὶ γηῖνῳ συνεκτίσθη σώματι καὶ ζωοποιὸν ἔλαβε τὸ πνεῦμα παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ, δι’ οὗ συνέχει καὶ ζωοποιεῖ τὸ συνημμένον σῶμα...’ On another occasion, it would be very interesting to research the roots of Palamas’ approach.

⁵² *Capita* 38.10–14, ed. Sinkewicz, 124 (ed. Christou, 56.18–21; emphasis added): ‘παρ’ οὗ καὶ δείκνυται τοῖς συνιοῦσιν, ὅτι νοερός ἐστιν ἔρως τὸ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου πνεῦμα, τὸ τοῦ σώματος ζωοποιόν, ὅπερ ἐκ τοῦ νοῦ ἐστι καὶ τοῦ λόγου ἐστὶ, καὶ ἐν τῷ λόγῳ καὶ τῷ νῷ ἐστὶ καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ἔχει τὸν τε λόγον καὶ τὸν νοῦν’. As Sinkewicz explains, ‘This human spirit or life-giving power in the body is an extension of the intellectual love (νοερὸς ἔρως)’ (*The One Hundred*, 19). For the ‘intellectual love’ and its relation to the Holy Spirit, cf. sections (a–b) of the current article.

⁵³ *Capita* 36.11–13, ed. Sinkewicz, 122 (ed. Christou, 54.25–27).

⁵⁴ *Capita* 38.14–17, ed. Sinkewicz, 124 (ed. Christou, 56.21–25): ‘τοσοῦτο γὰρ ἐρασίμῳ ἔχει δι’ αὐτοῦ φυσικῶς τὴν πρὸς τὸ οἰκεῖον σῶμα ἢ ψυχὴ συνάφειαν, ὥς μηδέποτε ἀπολιπεῖν τοῦτο ἐθέλειν, μηδ’ ἀπολείπειν ὁλως, μὴ βίας ἐπενεχθείσης ἐκ νόσου δὴ τινος μεγίστης ἢ πληγῆς ἐξωθεν’.

⁵⁵ *Capita* 39.1–4, ed. Sinkewicz, 126 (ed. Christou, 56.26–28): ‘Ἡ νοερά καὶ λογικὴ φύσις τῆς ψυχῆς, μόνη νοῦν ἔχουσα καὶ λόγον καὶ πνεῦμα ζωοποιόν, μόνη καὶ τῶν ἀσωμάτων ἀγγέλων μᾶλλον κατ’ εἰκόνα τοῦ Θεοῦ παρ’ αὐτοῦ δεδημιούργηται’.

his theology regarding the procession of the Holy Spirit, was likely influenced by the views that Gregory of Cyprus had developed approximately fifty years earlier.⁵⁶ The latter argued two important things. First, one can say that the Holy Spirit is ‘of the essence of the Son’ and thus refer to their consubstantiality, but the Father remains the sole cause of the hypostatic existence of the Holy Spirit, in the same way as the Father is the only source of the divinity; namely, the Spirit derives his existence *only* from the Father.⁵⁷ Second, however, the manifestation of the Holy Spirit from the Son (ἐκ Πατρὸς δι’ Υἱοῦ) should not be taken only as the Spirit’s temporal mission (ἀποστολή; i.e., in the *economy*), but also as the Spirit’s ‘eternal resplendence’ (αἰδιος ἑκλαμψις or ἑκφανσις; that is, at the level of theology).⁵⁸ For this reason, according to Gregory of Cyprus, one may say that the Holy Spirit *is* (or *exists*) from the Father through the Son (ἐκ Πατρὸς δι’ Υἱοῦ; or even *of the Father* and *of the Son*), without, however, admitting that the Spirit derives his existence from both the Father and the Son.⁵⁹ In particular, the expression αἰδιος δι’ Υἱοῦ ἑκλαμψις signifies the *property* (or: *capability*), which the Son eternally has, of sending the Holy Spirit within the context

⁵⁶ Jean-Claude Larchet, ‘Introduction’, 97, 99. Cf. Meyendorff, *Introduction*, 25–26 (=A *Study*, 13). Panagiotis Christou, ΠΣ 1, 17. Marcus Plested also sees Palamas as following this same line of thought (*Orthodox Readings of Aquinas*, 36–40). For a good analysis of this topic, perhaps the best at this time, see Larchet, ‘Introduction’, 94–103. For Gregory of Cyprus and his theology, see Jean-Claude Larchet, ed., *La vie et l’œuvre théologique de Georges/Grégoire II de Chypre (1241–1290) patriarche de Constantinople*, *Théologie Byzantine* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2012). Chrysostomos Savvatos, *Ἡ Θεολογικὴ ὀρολογία καὶ προβληματικὴ τῆς Πνευματολογίας Γρηγορίου Β’ τοῦ Κυπρίου* [*The Theological Terminology and Speculation of the Pneumatology of Gregory II the Cypriot*] (Κατερίνη: Ἐπέκταση, 1997). Aristeides Papadakis, *Crisis in Byzantium. The Filioque Controversy in the Patriarchate of Gregory II of Cyprus (1283–1289)* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1983). Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 140–43. Theodoros Alexopoulos, ‘Die Argumentation des Patriarchen Gregorios II. Kyprios zur Widerlegung des Filioque-Ansatzes in der Schrift *De processione Spiritus Sancti*’, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 104.1 (2011): 1–38.

⁵⁷ See, for example, Gregory of Cyprus, *On the procession of the Holy Spirit*, 270D–271A: Ὅτι δὲ οὕτω, παντὶ που δῆλον ὡς τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας λεγόμενον τοῦ Πατρὸς, καλῶς ἂν ἐχη καὶ εὐσεβῶς καὶ ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Υἱοῦ λέγεσθαι. Μία γάρ, καὶ ὡς οὐσία οὐκ ἔστιν ὅπως ποτὲ διαίρεσιν δέχοιτο... Διότι δὲ μία, τὸ ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας ὁμολογούμενον τοῦ Πατρὸς Πνεῦμα, καὶ ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ Υἱοῦ ὑπάρχον ὁμολογεῖται. Πλὴν οὐ διὰ τοῦτ’ ἤδη καὶ ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Υἱοῦ ὑποστάσεως τὸ Πνεῦμα... For other relevant references to this text of the Cypriot, see Larchet, ‘Introduction’, 97–98, n. 164.

⁵⁸ For instance, see Gregory of Cyprus, *On the procession of the Holy Spirit*, 290C: ‘καὶ ἡκει [the Holy Spirit] δι’ αὐτοῦ [i.e., the Son] καὶ ἀπολάμπει καὶ πέφηνε κατὰ τὴν προαιώνιον αὐτοῦ καὶ αἰδιον ἑκλαμψιν...’. For similar references to the works of the Cypriot, see Larchet, ‘Introduction’, 98–99, n. 165. For an in depth theological analysis of the αἰδιος ἑκλαμψις according to the Cypriot, see Savvatos, *Ἡ Θεολογικὴ ὀρολογία*, 180–228.

⁵⁹ Cf. Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 141–3. The theology of the Cypriot influenced greatly the Council of Constantinople (Blachernae) in 1285. See, for example, the relevant *Synodal Tome*, which, besides, he himself authored: Ἐκθεσις τοῦ τόμου τῆς πίστεως κατὰ τοῦ Βέκκου’ (PG 142:240C): ‘δι’ Υἱοῦ γὰρ ὁμολογουμένως αὐτὸς αἰδιως ἐκλάμπει καὶ ἀναδείκνυται ὁ Παράκλητος... δηλοῖ δὲ καὶ τὴν εἰς ἡμᾶς χορηγίαν καὶ δόσιν καὶ ἀποστολήν...’. For a good and succinct discussion of the eternal ἑκφανσις of the Holy Spirit, with references both to Church Fathers and modern theologians, see Demetrios Bathrellos, *Σχεδιάσμα Δογματικῆς Θεολογίας. Μὲ βάση τὸ συγγραφικὸ ἔργο τοῦ Ἁγίου Συμεὼν Θεσσαλονίκης (†1429)* [Orthodox Dogmatics at the End of Byzantium: the Case of St. Symeon of Thessalonica] (Ἀθήνα: Ἐν Πλῶ, 2008), 140–47 and 153–57.

of the divine *economy*, as an expression referring to the eternal life and communion of the divine persons.⁶⁰

Palamas takes up these two ideas in his *Apodictic Discourses*, though the second one in a much more moderate way, and definitely not as explicitly as the Cypriot.⁶¹ In general, as far as I know, nowhere does Palamas in his *oeuvre* explicitly refer to the *αἰδῖος ἔκλαμψις* or *ἔκφανσις*, about which Gregory of Cyprus speaks at length, or at least to the extent and with the clarity of the latter. Although Palamas often uses the word *ἔκφανσις* or its derivatives, it is not in the same context we are writing about now (usually, he uses it in reference to the uncreated activities or to the vision of the divine light).⁶²

Nevertheless, it seems to me possible that Palamas, using the notion of *eros*, has in the back of his mind the arguments of Gregory of Cyprus mentioned above.⁶³ The

⁶⁰ Savvatos, *Ἡ Θεολογική ὁρολογία*, 234.

⁶¹ For the first one, see mainly *Apodictic Discourse* II, 30, 62–68, 73, ed. Bobrinsky, ΠΣ 1, 105, 133–40, 144–5 respectively; for similarities to the second one, see *Apodictic Discourse* II, 65, 69, 75–76, ΠΣ 1, 136–7, 141–2, 146–7 respectively. Cf. Larchet, ‘Introduction’, 99, n. 167. It seems, therefore, that both Gregory of Cyprus and St Gregory Palamas establish a connection between *theology* and *economy*, as far as the procession of the Holy Spirit is concerned. However, there are two reasons why this connection is not of the same type as that of which Latin theologians of their epoch spoke. First, the latter ignored or rejected the distinction between essence and energies. Second, it conceived the procession of the Spirit based on his manifestation in the *economy* (for the above, see Larchet, ‘Introduction’, 102). Nevertheless, there is indeed a relation between *theology* and *economy*. But, as Larchet notes, what is important, is to distinguish the energy of the Holy Spirit from his hypostasis, both in *theology* and *economy*. Because, in both cases, what is manifested is not the *hypostasis* of the Spirit, but his *energy*, the divine uncreated energy, ‘which, in reality, is the energy which shines forth or radiates from the common essence of the three divine hypostases, from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit’ [ἐκ Πατρὸς, δι’ Υἱοῦ, ἐν Ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι] (‘Introduction’, 102). Cf. Plested, *Orthodox Readings of Aquinas*, 38. Consequently, Gregory of Cyprus and Gregory Palamas show that there is indeed a relation between, on the one hand, the eternal manifestation and resplendence of the Holy Spirit from the Son, and, on the other hand, the manifestation or mission of the Spirit from the Son to humanity (or to creation). Larchet stresses a crucial theological reason for this: ‘the energy, of the Spirit, which is sent, manifested, breathed forth [*insufflée*] and given to human beings, is nothing else than the divine uncreated energy; it is somehow included [*incluse*] with the latter, which would radiate even if the world was not created and there were no humans to receive it.’ Thus, in the Fathers one can find ‘two modes of energetic manifestation of the Spirit’, the eternal and temporal, if such a distinction can be drawn (‘Introduction’, 101).

⁶² Reinhard Flogaus is correct in arguing that Palamas never refers to the Cypriot. However, Flogaus’s stance on this matter does not seem to me very plausible, because he bluntly rejects the possibility of Palamas being influenced by Gregory of Cyprus. In particular, Flogaus writes that Palamas ‘explicitly repudiated the possibility of eternal revelation as a Latin impiety and understood revelation, like creation, to be a temporal effect (*ἀποτέλεσμα*) of the eternal energy. Obviously, Palamas’ stance on the *Filioque* question was much more traditional, inflexible and unyielding to the Latin position than that of the Cypriot. Very likely, he saw in the Patriarch’s attempt to mediate between East and West in this crucial question a betrayal of the Orthodox position’ (‘Palamas and Barlaam’, 17). On the other hand, Kallistos Ware notes that Palamas, in general, was not hostile to the Latin West (‘Τὸ ἀνθρώπινο πρόσωπο ὡς εἰκόνα τῆς Ἁγίας Τριάδος’).

⁶³ If this is true, it is a very important point, because, it is generally acknowledged that this position of Gregory of Cyprus, if it were accepted by all sides, could be a solution to the vexing problem of the *Filioque*. As Larchet has argued, Gregory of Cyprus and Gregory Palamas developed ‘une théologie orthodoxe du *Filioque*’ (‘Introduction’, 102). Plested, referring to Palamas, uses the same expression, namely ‘an Orthodox *filioque*’ (*Orthodox Readings of Aquinas*, 38–9). Cf. Savvatos, *Ἡ Θεολογική ὁρολογία*, 224–28, 235. Siecienski (*The Filioque*, 147) makes a very interesting comment, which is directly related to our discussion: ‘While the Latin doctrine remained heterodox, there was thus a sense in which the *filioque* could

reason is that Palamas uses some expressions which at times resemble the Cypriot's approach. In particular, as shown above in section (a), for Palamas the Son possesses *eros* (i.e., the Holy Spirit) as, first, 'proceeding from the Father together with him [i.e., the Son]', and, second, 'as resting connaturally in him'.⁶⁴ This may indicate the fact that, according to Palamas, the Spirit is manifested from the Father through the Son, not only in *economy*, but also in *theology*.⁶⁵

Consequently, it is possible that Palamas borrows his concept of *eros* from Augustine, among other reasons, in order to underline the reality of the eternal manifestation and resplendence of the Holy Spirit. But, even if this is true, he makes this connection in a rather obscure way; he does not give us enough clues to state our case in stronger terms.

Concluding Remarks

This article dealt with the presence of St Augustine in St Gregory Palamas' *oeuvre*, with special attention given to reflections of the Trinity in man and the notion of *eros*. It was hinted at that Palamas did indeed use some of Augustine's own words, but without fully incorporating his ideas.⁶⁶ In particular, he cannot have borrowed his triad *nous-logos-pneuma* from the Bishop of Hippo, because Augustine's triads are always some variant of mind-word-will or love.⁶⁷ Undoubtedly, though, Palamas located some parallels between his own thinking about the Triadic image and that of

be interpreted in an orthodox manner and not simply in reference to the economy. Palamas thus offered the Byzantines a constructive alternative to the prevailing unionist and conservative tendencies of his contemporaries, keeping alive the *via media* established by Maximus the Confessor and Gregory of Cyprus. However, while Gregory's theology was accepted by no fewer than three local councils (often referred to as the Palamite councils of 1341, 1347, and 1351), it remained controversial enough that at Ferrara-Florence its introduction was forbidden by the emperor. Nevertheless, in my view, it is a subject open for debate—namely whether Palamite theology was absent from Ferrara-Florence because it was controversial among the Byzantines, or for diplomatic and political reasons; but we do not have space to treat the subject in this article.

⁶⁴ *Capita* 36.11–5, ed. Sinkewicz, 122 (ed. Christou, ΠΣ 5, 54.25–9; emphasis added): 'Εκεῖνο δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ ἀνωτάτω λόγου οἶόν τις ἔρωσ ἐστὶν ἀπόρρητος τοῦ γεννήτορος πρὸς αὐτὸν τὸν ἀπορρήτως γεννηθέντα λόγον, ὃ καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐπέραστος λόγος καὶ υἱὸς χρήται πρὸς τὸν γεννήτορα, ἀλλ' ὡς ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἔχων αὐτὸν συμπροελθόντα καὶ συμφυῶς ἐν αὐτῷ ἀναπαυόμενον'.

⁶⁵ Cf. Plested, *Orthodox Readings of Aquinas*, 36–37, where it is mentioned that 'There are antecedents for this kind of language in the Byzantine tradition: Maximus the Confessor's intuition of the fundamental congruity of procession "through" and "from the Son"; John of Damascus' eternal "resting" of the Spirit in the Son; or Gregory of Cyprus' eternal "shining forth" of the Spirit through the Son.' For St Maximus the Confessor, see his *Letter to Marinus* (PG 91:136AD). For St John and Gregory of Cyprus, see above in this article.

⁶⁶ As Wilkins ("The Image of this Highest Love", 410) puts it, 'this thunderbolt from the Augustinian sky seems but a passing squall in the total pattern of Gregory's thought.'

⁶⁷ Cf. Louth, 'The Reception of St Augustine in Late Byzantium', 118: 'Augustine's triadic analogies seem to be derived from his understanding of human psychology; he is looking for reflections on the Trinity in the operations of the souls, moving from mind, understanding and will to the more adequate memory, understanding and love.'

Augustine, and found rather attractive the way in which Augustine gives *love* (ἔρως) a central place.⁶⁸

The reader, however, at this point, cannot help but wonder: how does this article's interpretation differ from those of J. Demetracopoulos, R. Flogaus, and R. Sinkewicz? As shown, the article builds on the findings of Demetracopoulos and Flogaus concerning the use of certain Augustinian passages from Palamas; something that scholarship, in general, nowadays accepts.⁶⁹ However, it seems that the aforementioned scholars, despite their important contributions on the topic, did not discover the deeper reasons and aims that motivate Palamas' endeavour. This is the gap that our article has tried to fill; it can be considered something of a theological *supplementum* to their work.

To this end, we first referred to Martzelos's relevant analysis and suggestion, namely a) the 'eternal rest' (αἰδιος ἐπανάπαυσις) of the Holy Spirit on the Son and b) the rejection of the *Filioque*. Second, we proposed two other reasons as a probable solution to the question at hand, namely c) the 'vivifying power' (ζωοποιὸς δύναμις) of the human soul, a major notion in Palamas' anthropology, and d) the Holy Spirit's 'eternal resplendence' (αἰδιος ἐκλαμψις).⁷⁰ These are the four possible reasons (a–d) suggested in this article as to why Palamas takes up Augustine's notion of *eros*, and, as far as the third reason is concerned, it is likely the first time that this has been mentioned in scholarly literature.

In conclusion, if we may add a final word, we would note the following: what is important for us today is to think about how Palamas' endeavour could inspire Orthodox theology in our own era. We saw that Palamas borrowed an important notion from what most would consider a 'heterodox' environment. Does this entail that Orthodox theology nowadays, being deeply based on its rich tradition (dogmatic, liturgical, canonical, etc.), could indeed, at the same time, trace useful points in *loci* that may seem 'foreign' at first sight? If so, what exactly would this mean? How could it be achieved? Would there not be certain hazards involved? And how could they be overcome?⁷¹ Undoubtedly, St Gregory's example has much to teach us, but what exactly this entails will require further and more thorough examination.

⁶⁸ In Sinkewicz's words, 'Although Palamas is wholly traditional in seeking a Trinitarian analogy in the human person's νοῦς, λόγος, πνεῦμα, he appears to develop this analogy further through the influence of his reading of Augustine's *De Trinitate*' ('Gregory Palamas', 170, n. 121).

⁶⁹ As far as Sinkewicz is concerned, we mentioned that, he initially, in his early writings on Palamas, rejected the possibility of an Augustinian influence, either direct or indirect; but he changed his opinion in his later article in *La théologie byzantine* (2002). However, let us not forget that Sinkewicz has rightly indicated some points of divergence between Palamas' theology and that of Augustine; cf. section (b) of the current article.

⁷⁰ As far as I could know, reasons (c) and (d) have not been proposed by Demetracopoulos, Flogaus, or Sinkewicz.

⁷¹ For the moment, it suffices to say that a great Father and spiritual teacher of the Orthodox Church, St Nikodimos the Hagiorite (†1809), despite being deeply rooted in Eastern spirituality, wrote some of his most well-known texts (e.g., *Unseen Warfare* [Ὁ Ἀόρατος Πόλεμος]) by drawing heavily on western theologians.

GREGORY PALAMAS AND GEORGE SCHOLARIOS: JOHN DUNS SCOTUS' DIFFERENTIATION BETWEEN SUBSTANCE AND ENERGY AND THE SOURCES OF THE PALAMITE TRADITION

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Georgios Scholarios, Patriarch of Constantinople from 1454 under the name Gennadios II, formulated the 'essence-energy' distinction, emblematic for the Byzantine tradition, using the scheme of Duns Scotus: the figure of *distinctio formalis a parte rei*. Today, some scholars attempt to contrast Scholarios' solution with the concept of *distinctio realis*, which they ascribe to Palamas, thereby seeking to demonstrate an incommensurability between the two. The thesis suggested by this perspective is that, in making use of Latin (Thomistic, but also Scotist) metaphysical logic, Scholarios shows a way out of the deadlock to which the philosophical clumsiness of Palamas and of his direct successors had lead. From this point of view, many assert that Scholarios' position is non-Palamite or at best nominally Palamite. The purpose of this text is to critically compare the positions of Scholarios and Palamas, thus clarifying the following questions: Does the Palamite tradition dispense with its own internal resources to formulate Scholarios' solution? What is Scholarios' attitude towards the Western tradition?

George Scholarios¹ (called Gennadios II, Patriarch of Constantinople, following his enthronement in 1454) is portrayed as a 'Byzantine Thomist', even 'the greatest of the Byzantine Thomists',² although he acted as the leader of the Palamite party in Constantinople from 1444 onward. At the time, he was mainly thought of as belonging to the pro-Thomists in Byzantium, although it became clear early on that he was open to several schools of thought, which wrought minor influences on his approach.³ As early as the beginning of the 1930s, Martin Jugie supported the thesis—which remains influential in our current era—that in his formulation of the essence–energy distinction (emblematic both of Byzantine philosophy and systematic Palamism) Scholarios relies on the scheme of distinction employed by

¹ The first version of this contribution is published in the volume *Contemplation and Philosophy: Scholastical and Mystical Modes of Medieval Philosophical Thought*. A Festschrift in Honor to Prof. Kent Emery, Jr., eds. R. Hofmeister Pich, A. Speer (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2018). The editors of this volume have granted permission for the publication of this text in *Analogia*.

² G. Podskalsky, *Theologie und Philosophie in Byzanz* (München: Beck, 1977), 179.

³ Cf. R.P. Guichardan, *Le problème de la simplicité divine en Orient et en Occident aux XIVe et XVe siècles: Grégoire Palamas, Duns Scot, Georges Scholarios* (Lyon: Legende, 1933), 183–84.

Duns Scotus (i.e. the *distinctio formalis a parte rei*).⁴ Jugie's claim is now regarded as an established research finding.

More recently, interest in this question has grown. On the one hand, some scholars try to compare the argument of Scholarios with the *distinctio realis* attributed to Palamas. Their aim is to show the incompatibility of these two views. It is suggested that Scholarios found a way out of the impasse of the logical and philosophical indecisiveness of Palamas and his successors (within a period of about 100 years) by using Latin (Thomistic as well as the Scotian) metaphysical logic. From this point of view, Scholarios is characterized as a non-Palamite or, at best, a Palamite only 'in name', but not in actuality. On the other hand, there are a growing number of scholars who postulate a Palamite tradition that includes Scholarios and seems to be compatible with the views of Bonaventura and Scotus.

The aim of this study is to examine the two following issues: 1. the existence or lack of potential for inner development in the Palamite tradition and its importance for the solution of Scholarios 2. the nature of his relationship to the Western tradition.

The Argument of Scholarios

In his relevant treatises, Scholarios presented his position by using a terminology which was comprehensible to adherents to Western Scholasticism.⁵ He cites six numerically ordered presuppositions which function as a starting-point for his interpretation of the distinction between the divine essence and its energy. Firstly, he argues that 'the divine essence is infinite (unlimited-ἄπειρος)'. Second, he explains that both the essence and the energy may be called 'thing', 'πράγμα'. Scholarios, trained in Latin terminology, explains that, unlike the divine essence, the divine energy, whether internal (ἡ ἐνδον) or external (ἡ ἔξω), is, considered precisely, not a 'πράγμα', but rather 'τὶ τοῦ πράγματος καὶ ἐν τῷ πράγματι'. In other words, the energy is something which belongs to the 'thing', is deeply linked to the 'τὸ τί ἐστὶ', and it is located in the 'thing' itself. Scholarios observes that the divine energy is neither something indivisible (ἄτομος) which exists apart from the essence nor something separable from the divine essence. Essence and energy, Scholarios points out, may be parts of a whole, but not in the case of the divine, which is indivisible. They could still also be potentially (ἐν δυνάμει) present. God, however, exists fully in accordance

⁴ M. Jugie, 'Introduction', in *Oeuvres complètes de Gennade Scholarios* (= OCGS), tome 3, eds. L. Petit et al. (Paris: Maison de la Bonne Presse, 1930), XVIII.

⁵ I focus on the analysis of three points: Chapter 94 of his commentary on *De ente et essentia* of Thomas Aquinas in translation (*Commentarius in De ente et essentia* [= *Commentarius*], in OCGS 6), chapters 6, 10, and 11 of his work against the followers of Akindynos (*Contra Acindynistas*, in OCGS 3) and the tractate about the difference between the divine essence and its energy (*Distinctio inter essentiam divinam et suas operationes* [= *Distinctio*], in OCGS 3). It is assumed that the former two writings were written in 1445 and the latter in 1458.

with actuality; there is no potentiality in him. The essence and the energy of God are thus, in a perfect way, real. Finally, Scholarios emphasises that, unlike all other beings, the being of God is absolutely necessary. According to his nature, there are no first and last ontological elements in God (*πρωτερόν τε καὶ ὕστερον*). God is, therefore, not composite in any way, neither by the principle of the essence (*λόγος τῆς οὐσίας*) nor by the rank (*μέρος*) of energy.⁶

For Scholarios it is important that no contingent attribute can be predicated of God (*τοῦ δὲ Θεοῦ συμβεβηκὸς μὲν οὐδὲν κατηγορεῖσθαι δύναται*). The creative acts of God are referred to as such because the reality created by him participates in these works. However, how is it, asks Scholarios, with divine wisdom, goodness, and similar powers? Names like ‘wise’, ‘good’, etc., are not used adventitiously for God, but they refer to his ‘self-determining wisdom, goodness, and power (*αὐτοσοφία, αὐτοαγαθότητα, αὐτοδύναμις*)’ (i.e., his essential powers), while the distinction (*διάκρισις*) of the names follows their truth. Even the powers which belong to every creature exist because of the existence and activity of their nature, and they are named accordingly. Neither is there a ‘force’ *per se*, nor is any such thing stated. Only God is really and truly powerful; he is omnipotent and infinitely powerful, most benevolent and beyond-benevolence. The names like ‘wise’ and ‘good’ are names of his attributes’ perfection or energy.⁷ In short, at issue here is the way in which the essential energies are distinguished from the essence.

In order to clarify his position, Scholarios introduces an alternative approach with regards to God and the divine names: they can either be distinguished through a ‘real distinction’ (*πραγματική διαφορά* or *distinctio realis*) or a distinction only in thought (*distinctio rationis tantum*), that is, the designation and distinction (*διάκρισις*) by which the intellect (*νοῦς*) refers to the reality.⁸ By way of introduction, he explains that each *διάκρισις* is either real (*πραγματική*) or made by the intellect (*κατ’ ἐπίνοιαν*). Scholarios regards the ‘real distinction’ (*πραγματική*) as explaining the solution of Gregory Palamas and suggests that *κατ’ ἐπίνοιαν μόνην* reflects the method of Barlaam and Akindynos, branding the views of the latter two as the ‘opposite of the truth’. However, both approaches, however, are diverse and have different variants.⁹

⁶ *Commentarius* 94, in OCGS 4, 281, 5–24.

⁷ *Distinctio* 4, in OCGS 3, 233, 1–234, 30.

⁸ *Distinctio* 3, in OCGS 3, 231, 14–19.

⁹ *Distinctio* 1, in OCGS 3, 228, 19–21; 28–33. The strongest variant of *πραγματική διάκρισις* is the distinction between God and creation, that is, the distinction of both the essence and its characteristics. The division of a genus into species is weaker. The distinction between the individuals of a genus is even weaker (they differ from each other only in number and not essentially), the distinction between the essence and its properties (*συμβεβηκότα*) is the weakest. All these types of distinction are called *πραγματικά*—*ibid.*, 229, 1–25. The *κατ’ ἐπίνοιαν διάκρισις* is summarised as a distinction that ontologically belongs only to thought and is attributed to secondary intentions of the intellect (*δεύτερα νοητά*). In this case, the difference is not real (*ἐν δὲ τῷ πράγματι οὐκ εἰσὶν*)—*Distinctio* 2, in *ibid.*, 230, 1–11.

Furthermore, Scholarios sharply opposes in his commentary on *De ente et essentia* the interpretation of the distinction between essence and energy as a differentiation by reason (λόγος)—in other words, according to thought (ἐπίνοία)—which Barlaam and Akindynos rigorously asserted. Scholarios rejects the assertions that this distinction is made only within the psyche by secondary thoughts (δεύτεραι ἐπίνοιαί), without a corresponding distinction present in the object itself. These claims, which he dismisses immediately as heretical, he considers not only to be false but as being impossible. According to Scholarios, Holy Scripture truly demonstrates this distinction with reference to God by teaching that in God there is righteousness, wisdom, and goodness, by which he is called righteous, wise, and good. The doctors of the Church express the same notion without compromising the unity and simplicity of God.¹⁰

Scholarios insists that Barlaam's and Akindynos' lack of knowledge about the different distinction aspects must be the reason why they have interpreted this distinction only as one according to the reason and not real (πραγματική). This distinction, however, falls under the same category as the distinction between the essence and the hypostases of the Godhead.¹¹ In the same way, in the case of the distinction between essence and energy, we are not able to express and rationalise its nature. Therefore, it would be inappropriate to distinguish sharply between 'really distinct' (πραγματικῶς) or by 'intellection alone' (κατ' ἐπίνοιαν μόνην). If one were to make 'complete distinctions' with reference to the 'thing', then the divine would have to be composed of several common and separate 'things'. If this were the case, then creaturely defect—which is inherent in that sort of complete distinction—would be ascribed to God. However, God exists beyond fulfilment and above perfection. His energies are also at his disposal in a beyond-perfect manner, so that they are one according to nature and simplicity; they are in him, and they are him. However, were they distinguished only in theory, according to the strict definition of the distinctions, this distinction would be both wrong and untenable (περιττή), since sacred theology would suggest that the names of God differ from those revealed by his works. The energies, with their names, must not be confused with those of the divine essence because the energies are an excess with respect to the divine essence.¹²

Scholarios deals in detail with the question as to what extent the energies can and should be called 'things' (πράγματα). His point of departure is the assertion that each of the divine energies constitutes a 'thing' in God, just as each of the hypostases is not merely the idea of a 'thing' πράγμα. Similarly, he says that the divine essence is a 'thing' in the same way, but it is more precisely distinguished from what belongs to the 'thing' and what is in the 'thing' (τὶ τοῦ πράγματος κἂν τῷ πράγματι).¹³

¹⁰ *Commentarius* 94, in OCGS 6, 281, 28–282, 17.

¹¹ *Contra Acindynistas* 6, in OCGS 3, 215, 1–9.

¹² *Distinctio* 5, in OCGS 3, 235, 27–236, 6; 237, 36–238, 11.

¹³ *Distinctio* 6, in OCGS 3, 238, 21–26.

Thus, each of the divine energies, Scholarios further insists, is something (πράγματι) in the one and simple ‘thing’ that is the divine essence, and each of them has its logos, which reveals the essence (τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι). They can be distinguished from one another by their very ‘work’. They differ not only among themselves, but also from the divine essence, truly and formally (ἔργῳ τε καὶ εἰδικῶς), and they are different according to essence (τῷ τί ἐστίν). We do not distinguish them merely through our rational conceptions, but do so according to the powerful and discriminating truth. It would be a mistake to say that they are different only according to the word that represents them, that is, according to human thought.¹⁴

In his commentary on *De ente et essentia*, through his engagement with Thomas Aquinas Scholarios refined his conception of the essence/energy distinction. He insists that the essence and the energy of God, insofar as they are distinct, do not occur as two ‘things’ but rather as two states or modes of expression (οὐ δύο πράγματα ἀλλὰ δύο τινά), which ‘belong to the one “thing” and exist in that “thing” (δύο τινά, τοῦ τε πράματος ὄντα καὶ ἐν τῷ πράματι)’. There is a great difference, he insists, between speaking about two ‘things’ and discussing two modes that originate from a thing and reside in it. It is, in this case, a distinction made both by reason and manifested by the nature of the ‘thing’, rather than by reason (i.e., thought) alone. The essence-energy distinction is therefore subject to this twofold arrangement as Scholarios affirms that it is produced by the psyche’s intellection but also maintains the reality of the distinction in the ‘thing’. Given that God is simple, it is not therefore wrong for the *nous* to differentiate simultaneously between the essence and the energy.¹⁵ Although all distinctions of this kind are beyond the ‘real distinction’ (πραγματική διάκρισις) definition, as Scholarios explains, they are nevertheless referred to as ‘real’ (πραγματικός) (i.e., they are considered under the notion of πραγματικός).¹⁶ Furthermore, he opines that the position of Barlaam and Akindynos is a result of their interaction with the works of Thomas Aquinas in Greek translation.¹⁷ Scholarios concludes that ‘Holy Gregory Palamas of Thessaloniki’ and the ancient teachers of the Byzantine Church recognise this disagreement, and, consequently, they have argued that the essence and energy of God are truly (πραγματικῶς) different from each other. Nevertheless, the energies are not πράγματα or ‘things’ in the true sense, but are referred to as such in a way that is similar to the hypostases of the Trinity (i.e., πράγματα insofar as they constitute concrete realities). In this context, we speak of ‘what belongs to a thing and what exists in it (τὶ τοῦ πράματος καὶ ἐν τῷ πράματι)’. In this way, essence and energy are not only theoretically distinguished.¹⁸

¹⁴ Ibid., 238, 29–239, 4.

¹⁵ *Commentarius* 94, in OCGS 6, 283, 20–28.

¹⁶ Ibid., 283, 33–35.

¹⁷ Ibid., 282, 35–283, 19.

¹⁸ Ibid., 285, 4–14.

As Scholarios further observes in *Contra Acindynistas*, the order (τάξις) and the distinction (διάκρισις) between the essence of God and its energy are not easy to grasp. One cannot claim, with regards to both the divine essence as well as the divine energy, that they are a 'thing' (πρᾶγμα) in the sense conveyed by 'individual' (ἄτομον). Indeed, some take it precisely in this sense. Consequently, they believe that if they were to use the term 'thing' with reference to the essence-energy distinction, they could rightly be accused of claiming that God is composite or that they are polytheists. On the contrary, Scholarios argues, the essence and energies are properly understood and rightly proclaimed as something belonging to the 'thing' and being in the 'thing'. Essence and energy are distinguished from each other as 'things' πραγματικά and as belonging to the nature of things.¹⁹ However, they are not 'one and another' (ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο), though they are truly (οὐσιωδῶς)²⁰ differentiated from each other. There is no essence without energy. The energy is inseparably linked to the essence, which is an irrevocable relationship. In this way, according to Scholarios, not only essence and energy but also the existence and the 'ground' (τόποι) are determined.²¹

Referring to Basil the Great, Scholarios explains that the principle (λόγος) of energy is not identical to that of the essence. This is evident both by definition (ὀρισμός) and the nature of 'things'. Due to the simple and incorporeal divine nature, the energy takes its mode of existence (τρόπος τῆς ὑπάρξεως) from the logos of the essence, which is common to both. Every dignity (πᾶν ἀξίωμα) belonging to essence is transmitted to energy. Divine nature is infinite, uncreated, and eternal, and the energy, insofar as it derives from the same logos, possesses these same attributes. In God, the energy belongs to the same order as the divine nature. In the case of created beings, it is different; here, the essential energies conceptually belong to the range of the property (συμβεβηκός).²²

Scholarios specifies his first assumption: the essence of God is infinite (unlimited) in its form (εἰδικῶς). The energy, however, is not ἄπειρος, not 'unlimited' or 'innumerable' because the existence of many unlimited 'things' is impossible. Furthermore, the energy exists due to the essence and 'possesses existence with the essence (μετὰ τῆς οὐσίας ὑπαρξιν ἔχειν)', and it is extant insofar as it constitutes something that belongs to the unlimited. As energy has the same modes of existence as the essence (i.e., the existence of the strictly necessary divine simplicity), essence and energy are something infinite and are in God. For this reason, one cannot ascribe a division of things or composition to the formal distinction (εἰδική διάκρισις) between them.

¹⁹ *Contra Acindynistas* 6, in OCGS 3, 214, 28–35.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 10, in OCGS 3, 224, 16–19.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 224, 25–30.

²² *Ibid.* 11, in OCGS 3, 225, 31–226, 5.

For Scholarios, formal distinction in this sense assumes that essence and energy are based on the one elementary and supreme reality that is the divine nature (*φύσις*).²³

Earlier in *Contra Acindynistas*, while interpreting an extended quotation of Basil the Great, Scholarios explains this concept of the divine nature and demonstrates the legitimacy of applying the *distinctio formalis* to the essence–energy distinction. Relying on Basil, he asserts that a being’s principles (*λόγοι*) of essence and energy differ from each other. The nature of the divine essence and the nature of divine energy are not identical. He explains (to paraphrase), I call nature that which the logos designates as nature, which expresses the essence (*τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι*), as well as the peculiarities of the designated, whereby the designated is and acts, and thus has a natural shape. Scholarios, as he insists, uses the formula of Basil, which speaks of a ‘*τρόπος τὸ φύσει πρὸς τὸ θέσει καὶ κατ’ ἐπίνοιαν*’, and he is convinced that this concept of nature is appropriate for this determination because it is derived from ‘sublime methods’ (*κατὰ τὰς ὑψηλοτέρας μεθόδους*). Again, his solution is to say that the divine essence and energy are distinguished by the nature of ‘things’ (*ἐκ τῆς τοῦ πράγματος φύσεως*) ‘or rather, as they say, formally (*εἰδικῶς*)’.²⁴ He insists, therefore, that the essence and the energy of God are distinguished conceptually, but with the understanding that they are also distinguished according to the thing itself (*πρᾶγμα*), which he expresses by repeatedly placing emphasis on their ‘existence’.²⁵ The distinction between essence and energy is neither real (*πραγματικῶς*) nor a designation of the intellect because it exists according to the form and the reason of the essence (*τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι*).²⁶

It is important for the current discussion to present the examples and analogies used by Scholarios. The correspondence between the essence–energy distinction and the difference between the hypostases are discussed several times in all of Scholarios’ treatises. He emphasises that birth and emanation, paternity and sonship, are distinguished from each other in the same way as the essence from the energy as well as being, essence, wisdom, goodness, etc. (i.e., according to the form and the logos of the *τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι*). Similarly, in the case of hypostases, there is no distinction between ‘things’ (*πράγματα*), which is dependent on the human soul and would contradict the simplicity of essence.²⁷ In this context, nature, hypostases, and the will of God are differentiated by the same distinction.²⁸

Scholarios also uses anthropology as a basis of comparison. To use an example, Scholarios notes that we can differentiate many ‘things’ in Socrates. There is a real difference between the essence and that which is supported by it, whereby, for example, Socrates is not divided into individual parts because of the unity of his

²³ Ibid., 226, 5–16.

²⁴ Ibid. 6, in OCGS 3, 215, 22–34.

²⁵ Ibid. 11, in OCGS 3, 226, 25–29.

²⁶ *Commentarius* 94, in OCGS 6, 284, 31–36.

²⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 282, 17–23; 284, 21–32.

²⁸ Cf., e.g., *Distinctio* 5, in OCGS 3, 237, 27–35.

person.²⁹ One uses the same mode of distinction when applying the concepts wisdom, goodness, justice, etc. to a human person. These are predicates which belong to the soul according to the logos of the respective hexeis, though a particular hexis originates from and is caused by the energy (*ἀρχή τῆς ἕξεως ἢ ἐνέργεια*). Put in another way, the predicates are derived from the causal energy which characterise those who have the respective hexeis. Thus, he who is wise is the one who has wisdom. Consequently, humans are defined by ‘wisdom’ insofar as they possess the hexis thereof. Righteousness is used in the same way. The perfection of righteousness, however, is something other than the accomplishment of wisdom. In humans they are manifested in different ways. Righteousness and wisdom really (*πραγματικῶς*) differ in humans. They differ not only from each other but also in relation to the individual human being in whom they are manifested. As Scholarios stresses, the distinction is very clear in this respect (*ἰσχυροτέρῳ διακρίσεως τρόπῳ*). The spiritual perfections of man as well as the states and energies of the soul are regarded as peculiar to the human soul. They are neither coincidental nor do they manifest in the same way, but there is an innate power of the soul that is related to them.³⁰ When one calls somebody a sage or declares him or her to be righteous, the human brain recognises the wisdom and the righteousness as inseparable from the human being. Let us take, for example, a hypothetical example of a man named ‘Peter’. The genre and nature of Peter are similarly recognised as his basic aspects, though they emerge and exist as ideas in the human nous. However, these categories are peculiar to his being and do not emerge by the power or the will of the human mind.³¹ Finally, the second thoughts are the deeds of the wise human intellect, and they are in it, though they differ from it.³²

As already mentioned, Scholarios criticises Barlaam and Akindynos because of their opinion that, if the essence and the energy of God constitute ‘things’ (*πράγματα*), then God would have to be composite. Consequently, in their view, the distinction ought to be merely theoretical (*κατ’ ἐπίνοιαν μόνην*). Scholarios identifies their position with that of Thomas Aquinas. As he argues, Thomas insists that the essence and the energy of God must be distinguished not truly (*πραγματικῶς*) but in thought only (*λόγῳ*). As it is a rational distinction, Thomas does not consider it to be a formal one (*εἰδική [διαφορά]*) referring to the nature of ‘things’. Scholarios concludes that insofar as this distinction is not real and concrete, Aquinas believes that it is *κατ’ ἐπίνοιαν*. In a polemical manner, Scholarios goes on to assert that Barlaam and Akindynos knew the books of Thomas in Greek translation and, armed with his wisdom, turned against the Eastern-Roman Church. In doing so, they have failed to notice that many of the ‘Latin teachers’ agree with St Gregory Palamas, and

²⁹ *Commentarius* 94, in OCGS 6, 283, 28–32.

³⁰ *Distinctio* 3, in OCGS 3, 231, 29–232, 36.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 5, 236, 6–14.

³² *Ibid.*, 6, 238, 27–29.

view these problems in a similar way to the Eastern Church.³³ In the prologue of his commentary on *De ente et essentia*, he specifies these Latin teachers are the pupils of John Scotus, asserting that some of them are more Orthodox than Thomas and ‘closer to us and the truth.’³⁴

The Parallelism to the Position of Scotus

The parallelism between the arguments of Scholarios and the logic of Scotus is evident. One can detect the common use of the *distinctio formalis* both in terms of content and language. Duns Scotus was not the first Western thinker to use the ‘formal’ distinction *ex natura rei*. Initially, this distinction had been used to deal with questions in Trinitarian theology, the critical impetus for which was provided by Gilbert de la Porrée. Similarly, the *distinctio formalis* is considered to be a typical doctrine of Scotus, inasmuch as he was the one who put it into effect. He is striving to distinguish between such proprietaries, which are not accidents, but unitive contenta. The *distinctio formalis* forms an objective basis for the various concepts of a ‘thing’. Scotus insists on the *identitas realis*, which is implicitly contained in the concept of *continentia unitiva*, but which also leaves room for a ‘formal non-identity’. The various *perfectiones* of the divine essence are also interpreted in this way. They definitely do not constitute a different ‘thing’—the divine nature is simple—but it must be emphasised that a formal difference can be established even in God. This is also the case for created energies, though the uncreatedness and infinity of the divine essence and its perfections are very different in comparison with the created energies and their limited perfections, even in the case of the *continentia unitiva*. In both cases, however, the *perfectiones* are not to be understood as truly distinguished (*realiter differentes*), as if they were individual natures. The *entitates* which are thus distinguished are not *diversae res*: they are regarded as being in one and the same *res*, and are not individual and independently existing things. They are identical to each other *realiter* and differ from one another *formaliter et quidditative*. Scotus defines the objects to be distinguished as *formalitates* or *realitates*. The formal difference has its ground not in the intellect, but results *ex parte* or *ex natura rei*. This also applies to the *potentia divina*. By using the concept of *continentia unitiva*, Scotus differentiates the ‘formal’ from the purely ‘rational’ distinction—which is a result of reasoning and can even be a fiction—as well as from the completely ‘real’ distinction. According to Scotus, the *distinctio rationalis* or *intentionis* does not allow us to answer the question of the essential or inherent properties. The *distinctio realis*, on the other hand, differs from the formal distinction because it is a distinction between two independent *res*, while the formal distinction differentiates between two *formalitates* or *realitates* (realities, but not ‘things’). What is subject to the *dis-*

³³ *Commentarius* 94, in OCGS 6, 282, 35–283, 19; 284, 2–5.

³⁴ *Commentarius, Prooemium*, in OCGS 6, 180, 33–35.

tinctio realis can be currently divisible or divided; the formal distinction distinguishes between two positive entities (*entitates*), which in principle are inseparable. Everything that is subject to the *distinctio realis* has a real, autonomous existence; the *distinctio formalis*, however, embraces that which can exist only in relation to its subject. If the real distinction proves a simple non-identity, the formal shows a non-identity only in a certain aspect (*secundum quid*). While the real distinction negates the simplicity, the formal is compatible with the simplicity.³⁵

The direct influence of Scotus on Scholarios has been a matter of dispute for a long time. For good reasons, it is assumed that Scholarios, during his attendance of the Council at Ferrara and Florence, was acquainted with Bonaventura's *De mysterio Trinitatis* (the true inspiration for the formal distinction of Scotus) and works of Scotus himself. Also, he probably attended lectures of Magister Augustine of Ferrara³⁶ who was influenced by Scotus. However, there is no direct evidence to suggest that Scholarios attended these lectures, nor that Scotist texts were translated into Greek.

Christiaan W. Kappes convincingly identifies the works of the Dominican Hervaeus Natalis—translated by Prochoros Kydones,³⁷ who often uses the thought-schemes of Scotus—as the only available connecting link between Scotus and Scholarios.³⁸ Hervaeus takes on this role due to his interpretation of the being-expressions of the Trinity and the application of the *formalis in divinis ex parte rei* (in contrast to the *distinctio rationalis*). He differentiates God's essence from God's attributes by defining the divine attributes not as *res* but as *formalitates*, which permeate the divine essence. Hervaeus establishes a fundamental difference between the reality and the formality of 'things'. Moreover, he affirms the infinity of the divine and its attributes, considering them to be the reason for the coexistence of formally distinguished hypostases and attributes in the divine essence. For Hervaeus—as well as for Scotus—a further, necessary formal distinction is added: He distinguishes between intellect and will in the divine essence. Last but not least, his conception of secondary thoughts (i.e., species and genus) must also be mentioned. This conception assumes that there is a corresponding object for each *ens rationis*. This conception corresponds to the theses and terminology of the Modist school, especially those of Radulphus Brito (well-known to Scholarios). According to them, secondary

³⁵ O. Georgiev, 'John Duns Scotus. *Distinctio formalis*', *Archiv für mittelalterliche Philosophie und Kultur* 10 (2004): 212–227 (Bulgarian); J.A. Aertsen, *Mediaeval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought: From Philip the Chancellor (ca. 1225) to Francisco Suárez* (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2012), 422–26.

³⁶ C. W. Kappes, 'Foreword', in J. I. Goff, *Caritas in Primo: A Historical Theological Study of Bonaventura's Quaestiones Disputatae de Mysterio Ss. Trinitatis* (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2015), XVII–XXVI.

³⁷ Excerpts from Book II of his commentary on the *Sentences* and his *Quaestiones quodlibetales*.

³⁸ C. W. Kappes, 'The Latin Sources of the Palamite Theology of George–Gennadius Scholarius', *Rivista Nicolaus* 40 (2013): 95–98.

thoughts—especially species and genus—are creations of the intellect, but are nevertheless initiated by the ‘things’. They reflect a real mode of being outside the soul.³⁹

Hervaeus also uses ‘disjunctive transcendentalities’ in a way which is closely connected with the theses of Bonaventura. Probably, Scholarios is influenced here by Richard of Middleton, whose work he attests to knowing. Apart from further points of contact, Scholarios is also close to Hervaeus regarding his vocabulary and his phraseology in the rationale of the *distinctio formalis ex parte rei*.⁴⁰ It should be noted that Scholarios was familiar, though not necessarily directly, with the contemporary logical methods of Scholasticism, consistently using what he terms as these ‘sublime methods’.⁴¹

Scholarios vs Palamas

In his ‘classic’ essay on the Palamite conflict, Martin Jugie makes the assumption that Palamas makes a real distinction between essence and energy, which, Jugie believes, stands in radical opposition to Scholarios’ view.⁴² There is a long history of distinguishing between Palamas and Scholarios on essence/energy, and in the 1930s—when Jugie was writing—they were further distinguished because of their opposing views on the infinity/finitude of energy. According to Jugie’s approach, Palamas interprets the essence as being infinite, but defines energy as real and finite. As a result, his solution would be regarded as a *distinctio realis minor*. Scholarios, on the other hand, accepts a formal finality of the essence in addition to its infinity. However, he also accepts a real infinity of energy, which, it is claimed, decisively distances him from Palamas.⁴³ Nowadays, this conclusion is almost taken for granted. John A. Demetracopoulos, for example, considers the *distinctio realis* in Palamas to be a given, and does not feel it necessary to provide references to support this conclusion.⁴⁴ Demetracopoulos then reaffirms this claim by quoting a very general proposition of Palamas (from his *Antirrhetikos to Akindynos* 2, 19, 91), after which he lists the titles Palamas’ other works as well as secondary literature (surprisingly, one of mine⁴⁵).

³⁹ Cf. *ibid.*

⁴⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 95–113.

⁴¹ Scholarios, *Contra Acindynistas* 6, in OCGS 3, 215, 33–34.

⁴² M. Jugie, ‘Palamite (Controverse)’, in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, tome 11.2, eds. M. Vacant et al. (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1932), cols. 1777–1818.

⁴³ V. Grumel, ‘Grégoire Palamas, Duns Scot et Georges Scholarios devant le problème de la simplicité divine’, *Échos d’Orient* 34 (1935), 95.

⁴⁴ J. A. Demetracopoulos, ‘Palamas Transformed: Palamite Interpretations of the Distinction between God’s “Essence” and “Energies” in Late Byzantium’, in *Greeks, Latins and Intellectual History 1204–1500*, eds. M. Hinterberger and C. Schabel (Leuven–Paris–Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2011), 264.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 273, Footnote 24.

Christiaan W. Kappes also briefly mentions ‘the real distinction of Palamite metaphysics’ and the ‘Palamite emphasis upon a real distinction’⁴⁶ without providing any proof. Recently, however, this so-named ‘real-distinction’ (πραγματική διάκρισις) (with or without quotes) on the part of Palamas has been fiercely debated.⁴⁷ In his extended essay, John Demetracopoulos suggests that some of the Palamite thinkers tried to interpret the essence–energy distinction as a theoretical distinction (κατ’ ἐπίνοιαν) by mixing Greek patristics with the Thomistic concept regarding the explanation of the divine manifoldness.⁴⁸ According to Demetracopoulos, the translation of ‘*intentio*’ and ‘*ratio*’ as ‘ἐπίνοια’ and ‘λόγος’ by Demetrios Kydones allegedly played a crucial role in the reformulation of the distinction by some Palamites who applied the moderate Thomist view.⁴⁹ The term ἐπίνοια, which barely appears in the writings of Palamas, occupies a central place in the works of several, if not all, authors of the Palamite ‘party’ during the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Consequently, the position of these successors of Palamas ought to be regarded as Neo-Palamism (in the sense of Ěndre of Ivanka).⁵⁰ Demetracopoulos would prefer to distinguish George Scholarios from this brand of Neo-Palamism because his interpretation of the Palamite distinction is so idiosyncratic that it can hardly be described as being Palamite at all. His position is, at most, only nominally Palamite.⁵¹ On the other hand, Christian W. Kappes, Jared I. Goff, and Thomas A. Giltner argue that Scotus and his doctrine regarding the divine infinity and the formal (or quasi-real) distinction between essence and energy (or the distinction between essence and perfections) are consistent with the teaching of Palamas.⁵² In their view, there are good reasons for regarding the Palamite tradition—from Palamas to Scholarios, and their successors—as being uniform, and to think of it as being compatible with the ‘Franciscan’ tradition (i.e., with the concepts of Bonaventura and especially of Scotus). As such, there is no other alternative but the effort to decipher the real position of Palamas.

A more detailed discussion of the position of Gregory Palamas himself is all the more urgent since he is the only authority whom Scholarios repeatedly mentions in connection with this topic. All other authorities are referred to generally as ‘the ancient teachers of our Church’. In Scholarios’ view, ‘the Holy Gregory of Thessaloniki’ is the

⁴⁶ C.W. Kappes, ‘The Latin Sources of the Palamite Theology’ (See n. 38), 96; 91.

⁴⁷ Cf., e.g., *Essays on Divine Essence and Divine Energies: Ecumenical Reflections on the Presence of God in Eastern Orthodoxy*, eds. C. Athanasopoulos and C. Schneider (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

⁴⁸ J. A. Demetracopoulos, ‘Palamas Transformed’ (See n. 43), passim.

⁴⁹ J. A. Demetracopoulos, ‘Palamas Transformed’ (See n. 43), passim.

⁵⁰ Cf. Ěndre von Ivanka, *Plato Christianus* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1964): 410–45.

⁵¹ J. A. Demetracopoulos, ‘Palamas Transformed’ (See n. 43), 264; 271; 280.

⁵² C. W. Kappes, J. I. Goff, T. A. Giltner, ‘Palamas among the Scholastics: A Review Essay Discussing D. Bradshaw, C. Athanasopoulos, C. Schneider et al., *Divine Essence and Divine Energies: Ecumenical Reflections on the Presence of God in Eastern Orthodoxy* (Cambridge: James and Clarke, 2013)’, *Logos: A Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 55 (2014): 175–220.

one who has sufficiently demonstrated the way (*τρόπος*) to distinguish between the essence of God and his energy on the basis of the dogmas of the Church of Christ. The whole Church is taught by him, and he is in harmony with the earlier teachers.⁵³ As Scholarios further emphasises, Saint Gregory and the ancient teachers of the Church have argued that the essence and the energy are different from each other 'in truth' (*πραγματικῶς*) without insisting that the energies (like the hypostases) are *πράγματα* in the true sense.⁵⁴ What does Palamas actually teach?

The Position of Gregory Palamas

Palamas' main concern in his polemic is to emphasise the uncreatedness of the essential divine energies and their co-eternity with the essence of God by reaffirming the existence of a non-composite deity. He establishes the essence/energy distinction on this basis.

It is impossible, he insists, to act and create without energy just as it is impossible to exist without existence. Likewise, it is impossible to assume implicitly God is uncreated but speak of him in terms of a created existence. The same also applies to the action of God.⁵⁵ The energy of God is uncreated and co-eternal (*συναιδιος*) with him; God is eternally active and omnipotent (*ἐνεργῆς καὶ παντοδύναμος*).⁵⁶ Palamas draws attention to the fact that it is neither action nor energy but the suffering of effect or affect (*τὸ πάσχειν καὶ τὸ πάθος*) which cause the composition of created beings. However, God acts without suffering any effect or change.⁵⁷ The simplicity and the non-composite quality of God presuppose that the divine *δύναμις* must be regarded as pre-eternal (*προαιώνιος*) and not as something that is created.⁵⁸ The energies belong to God naturally and are inseparably (*φυσικῶς καὶ ἀχωρίστως*) connected to him. The name 'God' also designates what is around God, which is inherent to his nature (*τὰ περὶ τὸν Θεὸν φυσικῶς θεωρούμενα*). He eternally possesses the energy on account of his nature without being composite.⁵⁹ God is one and eternal in an inseparable manner.⁶⁰ The essence and the energy of God are one (*ἓν*).⁶¹ God is an essence as a whole (*ὅλος*) and energy as a whole.⁶² The divine essence and the divine energy are undivided and omnipresent (*ἀχωρίστως παροῦσαι*). According

⁵³ Cf., for example, *Contra Acindynistas* 6, in OCGS 3, 214, 19–25; *Commentarius* 94, in OCGS 6, 282, 28–29; 284, 8–9; 285, 4–14.

⁵⁴ *Commentarius* 94, in OCGS 6, 285, 4–13.

⁵⁵ *Capita* 150, 139, in *Γρηγορίου Παλαμά Συγγράμματα*, τομ. 5, επιμ. Παναγιώτης Χρήστου (Θεσσαλονίκη, 1992), 113, 18–23.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 140 (Χρήστου 5, 113, 30; 114, 1).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 145 (Χρήστου 5, 116, 8–10).

⁵⁸ *Contra Gregoram* 2.20 (Χρήστου 4, 280, 4–17).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 2.21 (Χρήστου 4, 280, 30–31; 280, 34–35; 281, 19–20).

⁶⁰ *De divinis operationibus* 8 (Χρήστου 2, 102, 6–9).

⁶¹ *Ibid.* 4 (Χρήστου 2, 99, 4–6).

⁶² *Contra Acindynum* 4.15, 41 (Χρήστου 3, 270, 12–13).

to the foregoing theologians, suggests Palamas, the energies are indivisibly divided (*μερίζεται ἀμερίστως*), while the divine nature remains wholly indivisible.⁶³ Similar phrases run through the entire work of Palamas, and they shape the way in which he describes the difference between the essence and the energies of God. In opposition to the above-mentioned opinion, the concrete assertion of the infinity of the energies, which coincides with divine infinity, is also applicable to these propositions. Indeed, God and everything around him are infinite. Palamas, using a quotation of Athanasios of Alexandria, insists that they are the ‘infinite’ (*τὸ ἄπειρον*).⁶⁴ He also concurs with Maximus that it is the ‘beginningless works’ (*ἀναρχα ἔργα*), the immortality and the infinity (*ἡ ἀπειρία*), as well as the existence (*ἡ ὄντοτης*) of God that can be truly seen ‘around him’.⁶⁵ Consequently, it is obvious that, in Palamas’ view, infinity belongs to the ontological understanding of the energies. It is noteworthy that Palamas does not connect the distinction between divine energy and essence into the conceptual scheme of *πραγματικῶς* and *κατ’ ἐπίνοιαν*. However, the essence, the energy, as well as the hypostases ought to be regarded as ontological modes of God, which, in his view, are three: essence, energies, and the three divine hypostases.⁶⁶ However, these three ontological modes do not divide the divine in actuality. We believe that God exists as a Trinity (*Τριάς*), yet he is not threefold (*οὐ τριπλοῦς*). Again, Palamas calls the energies ‘things’ (*πράγματα*) that ‘are not essences’ (*πράγματά ἐστι καὶ οὐκ οὐσίαι*).⁶⁷ With the views of Nikephoros Gregoras in mind, Palamas asks rhetorically, ‘Why are they things but not essences?’⁶⁸ This question requires clarification because Palamas’ explanation might seem strange from a contemporary standpoint, and we will revisit it below. He then asserts that ‘being’, which exists without further determination (*τό ὁπωσδήποτε ὄν*), is not just called an ‘entity’. The only absolute is nature; in other words, that which belongs to an absolute is natural (*φυσικῶς*) and is counted among the ‘accidents’ or characteristics. God, however, possesses no accidents, or to use Palamas’ expression, nothing can be attributed to him ‘*κατὰ συμβεβηκός*’. The energies naturally (*φυσικῶς*) belong to God without being ‘accidents’.⁶⁹

To return to the *aporia* mentioned above, what does Palamas mean when he uses the term ‘thing’ (*πρᾶγμα*)? Palamas understands ‘*πρᾶγμα*’ in the general sense, not necessarily as an autonomous substance or a *res* in the sense conveyed by Scholasticism. The concrete meaning conveyed by the noun, ‘*πρᾶξις*’, simply suggests something that is ‘real’ or ‘acting’ without differentiation, and it therefore refers to ‘something existent’. Furthermore, Palamas shows that the hypostasis itself is rec-

⁶³ *Capita* 150, 74 (Χρήστου 5, 77, 11–14).

⁶⁴ *De divinis operationibus* 10 (Χρήστου 2, 104, 16–17).

⁶⁵ *Triades* 3.3, 8 (Χρήστου 1, 686, 19–21).

⁶⁶ *Capita* 150, 75 (Χρήστου 5, 77, 26–27).

⁶⁷ *Contra Gregoram* 2.20 (Χρήστου 4, 280, 35).

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 21 (Χρήστου 4, 281, 8).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* (Χρήστου 4, 281, 8–13).

ognised primarily as something active. He begins his reflection with the following claim: if the essence had no energy differentiated from it, then it would not exist in actuality, and it would be regarded merely as a theoretical construct. For example, the human being, considered in a universal sense (*καθόλου*), cannot think, reckon, see, speak, eat, etc. He/she would, therefore, have no energy that is distinct from the essence, which would demonstrate that he/she is a hypostasis. In the absence of energy, the human as a universal is non-existent (*τελέως ἀνυπόστατός ἐστιν ὁ καθόλου ἄνθρωπος*). However, if the human being has at least one inherent natural energy (*ἐνέργεια ἔμφυτος*), which is distinguished from his/her essence, it is due to that very *ἐνέργεια ἔμφυτος* that we can acknowledge that the human being is a hypostasis and that he is not non-existent. However, because such energies are not manifested individually, it is evident that the universal human being exists in many hypostases.⁷⁰ A hypostasis is first recognised as actually existing and being through its effect, and its existential effect demonstrates that it is a *‘πράγμα’*. It is essential to point out that *συμβεβηκός* cannot be adequately translated by the word, ‘accident’. As Palamas himself notes, we also know of inseparable (*ἀχώριστα*) *συμβεβηκότα*.⁷¹ Thus, *συμβεβηκότα* can also imply essential properties as well as accidents. However, nothing *κατὰ συμβεβηκός* can be predicated of God because God remains absolutely immutable. Palamas concludes that the divine energy in God is neither essence nor accident, although some theologians designate it as quasi-accidental (*συμβεβηκός πως*). However, in so doing, they simply intend to show that energy is in God but is not an essence.⁷² Obviously, for Palamas, ‘thing’ and ‘being’ are meant not only to convey the substance or the substrate. Consequently, the Scholastic phrase *‘Accidences non est ens sedis’*—from which it follows that activity is not a being—is not valid for Palamas and his tradition. ‘Being’ is everything that one can claim that it ‘is’ without necessarily being an essence or substance. The determination of the energy as a thing (*πράγμα*) and being does not presuppose a *distinctio realis*.

Palamas hones this argument by referring to the fact that, in the case of creatures belonging to a genus, there is a similarity at the level of energy. Energy is inherent in any created hypostasis, and the contingent hypostasis acts on its own accord.⁷³ By contrast, life and power are something that the Father, Son, the Holy Spirit have in themselves. The supreme Trinity is nothing but God himself (*αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ Θεός*); the highest monad means nothing other than God himself, and there is no difference between the Trinity and the monad.⁷⁴ God is identical to himself in all respects, and the energy of the three divine hypostases is not one in the sense of similarity, as with creatures, but is a true and numerical one.⁷⁵ While the distinction between

⁷⁰ *Capita* 150, 136 (Χρήστου 5, 112, 7–19).

⁷¹ *Ibid.* 127 (Χρήστου 5, 107, 1).

⁷² *Ibid.* (Χρήστου 5, 107, 3–5; 8–11).

⁷³ *Ibid.* 112 (Χρήστου 5, 97, 9–12).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* 113 (Χρήστου 5, 98, 1–3; 8–12).

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 138 (Χρήστου 5, 113, 7–8).

the essence and the energy of God is by no means empirical, the role of the intellect (*νοῦς*) nevertheless cannot be ignored in this context.

In order to elucidate his view, Palamas mentions the phrase that, according to legend, was written above the entrance to Plato's school: 'Let no one unversed in geometry enter here.' Geometry is completely inaccessible to anyone who is incapable of thinking and speaking about the indivisible as divisible (*περὶ τῶν ἀχωρίστων ὡς κεχωρισμένων*). For example, it is impossible for a limit to exist without something that is limited. Geometry, in a way, refers to limits, inasmuch as limits are often treated in themselves without reference that which is limited, and this happens because the nous divides the indivisible. If one has not yet learned to separate the body from what belongs to it by using his intellect (*νοῦς*), how can one speak about nature in itself, which is not only inseparable from what belongs to it, but rather cannot exist at all without it? How can one speak of the universal as universal, if it exists in the individual? That is to say, these realities are distinguished only by intellect and reason. It is logical that, when speaking of the universal, one refers to the majority of individuals, provided that the universal does not exist without them. But, it must be asked, how can one talk about noetic structures and what the intellect achieves? How can this be understood when we claim that every nous has thoughts (*διανοήματα*) and in light of the assertion that our nous exists as every single thought? Would not one laugh and protest, saying that our argument means that we are ultimately claiming every human being has two, or, even many intellects? If, in such cases, one cannot speak or think about the inseparable as separable (*περὶ τῶν ἀδιαίρετων ὡς διηρημένων*), how would one be able to speak and think about it with regard to God, insofar as theologians insist that there are several such units and distinctions? As Palamas notes, the Areopagite's sentence 'the units are superior to the discriminations and precede them'⁷⁶ neither abolishes units' existence nor averts them. However, Palamas argues, the pupils of Akindynos are unable to accept and understand the indivisible division (*ἀδιαίρετος διαίρεσις*) in God, even if they hear that we speak, in accordance with the saints, about divided unity (*διηρημένη ἕνωσις*). This is due to the fact that some things regarding God can be explained while others cannot not. God is a unity that cannot be grasped in his essence. However, one can grasp the divine energy by what his essence creates. One can understand God according to his eternal will, his eternal providence, according to his eternal wisdom, which are directed toward us, or, according to Saint Maximus, one can understand his infinite power (*ἄπειρος δύναμις*), wisdom, and goodness. When Barlaam, Akindynos, and their successors hear that we are saying that these distinctions are necessary, they accuse us of talking about several gods and several uncreated 'things', making God a composite being. However, God divides himself

⁷⁶ Dionysius Areopagita, *De divinis nominibus* 2.11 (PG 3:652A).

in an undivided way (*ἀδιαιρέτως διαιρεῖται*) and unites himself in a divided way (*συνάπτεται διηρημένως*). He experiences neither multiplication nor composition.⁷⁷

It is worthwhile to examine this lengthy argument carefully in order to understand Palamas' position and its incompatibility with the *distinctio realis* in all its forms. He does not dispense with his thesis that the essence and the energies, both in contingent 'things' and God, necessarily differ from one another as different 'things' or 'beings'. At the same time, he shows that an 'indivisible division' takes place under the primacy of unity both in God and the contingent entities. For this reason, they should not be interpreted as different substances or subjects. On the contrary, they are different aspects of the object viewed by the intellect, which applies in particular to the divinity with its total and empirically inaccessible identity. The distinction is neither *πραγματικῶς* nor *κατ' ἐπίνοιαν*. It is a real but not a physical distinction, and Palamas has good reasons not to define them more narrowly.

Palamas often uses analogies in relation to contingent beings as an example, applying distinctions between the individual and his nature, the general and the particular, the limit and the limited. The parallelism of the soul and its faculties, and the nous and its thoughts or knowledge, occurs particularly often.⁷⁸ As regards the divinity, the comparison with the hypostases must first be mentioned. In an important passage, Palamas states that the divine is not only distinguished in essence and three hypostases, but also by emanations (*πρόοδοι*) and energies that participate in [divine] being, though their existence is not contingent upon their participation.⁷⁹ Another prominent example is the distinction between divine will, divine wisdom, providence, goodness, etc. and the divine essence.⁸⁰

In a late systematic work, *The 150 Chapters*, Palamas summarises the doctrine of the energies and responds to the main accusations against him. God has (*ἔχει*) something that is not essence (*ὃ μὴ ἐστὶν οὐσία*). This does not mean, however, that this 'thing' is a contingent attribute or an 'accident' because God has no contingent attribute. It is not contingent because it is absolutely unchanging, but it is not an essence because it does not belong to 'what can independently subsist' (*τῶν καθ' ἑαυτὸ ὑφeschηκότων ἐστὶ*). Given the fact that it is neither an essence nor a contingent attribute does mean that it is not a being or does not exist. On the contrary, it exists truly (*ὡς ἀληθῶς ἐστὶν*). Some theologians, Palamas emphasises, improperly refer to it as an 'accident', but they do this only to emphasise the fact that it is not an essence. Palamas then refers to two analogies, the first of which indicates the hypostases. These, also, are neither an essence (*οὐσία*) nor a contingent property of God, yet they exist. The same applies to the divine energy of God (*ἡ θεία τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐνέργεια*). The analogy follows from the fact that neither the hypostases nor the energy have

⁷⁷ Palamas, *Capita 150*, 81 (Χρήστου 5, 80, 30–82, 7).

⁷⁸ Cf. *De divinis operationibus* 5 (Χρήστου 2, 100, 9–23).

⁷⁹ *De unitate et diversitate Dei* 12 (Χρήστου 2, 77, 25–29).

⁸⁰ *Contra Gregoram* 2.20 (Χρήστου 4, 279, 26–31).

their own principle of essence (λόγος τῆς οὐσίας). The second analogy relates to the divine will. Since God creates according to his will and not by nature—because, in the latter case, the act of creation would have a necessary character—one must differentiate between the will (τὸ βούλεσθαι) and the being by nature (τὸ πεφυκέναι), thereby rendering a distinction between the divine will and the divine nature (ἡ θεία βουλή τῆς θείας φύσεως ἕτερον). The will differs from the nature and is not essence, but it exists and belongs to God, who has not only essence but also will, according to which he creates. According to Palamas, the will could be referred to as ‘accident’, but it is not an ‘accident’ according to the strict definition thereof because it does not involve any composition or difference. God, therefore, has both essence and non-essence, which is not an ‘act’ but rather divine will and divine energy (βουλή καὶ ἐνέργεια).⁸¹

Palamas Compared to Scholarios

An unbiased and non-anachronistic reading of the texts of Palamas and Scholarios leads to the conclusion that both positions are identical in content. Even their respective theoretical constructions and analogies correspond to each other. In this respect, Scholarios is far clearer than his interpreters grant, given that he unhesitatingly cites Palamas as his main authority. Even the alleged difference between Palamas and Scholarios regarding the finitude or infinity of the energies has proved to be inaccurate. In light of this, the abovementioned opinion that Scholarios’ interpretation of the Palamite distinction is only nominally Palamite⁸² should be rejected decisively.

There are, however, some technical differences (i.e., by way of description on the one hand, and the conception of some notions, on the other) which require some explanation. As a first step in this direction, it is necessary to assume that Gregory Palamas expressed himself on the basis of traditional terminology and the corresponding logical tools, without being familiar with the Scholastic tradition. It is unlikely he would have read the first translations of Thomas Aquinas into Greek.

The opinion that, with regard to the distinctions in the Godhead, the fathers of the church believed that God is simple *ex parte objecti* (with respect to the subject matter), but multiple *ex parte subiecti* (κατ’ ἐπίνοιαν or λόγῳ, i.e. theoretically or according to reason)⁸³ is not supported by the available evidence. On the contrary, Athanasios of Alexandria, who emphasises the absolute simplicity of the divine being, makes a distinction between the essence of God and the divine will, which he interprets as the power of God *περὶ αὐτόν*, without claiming that this is a theoretical distinction. In a similar manner, the Cappadocians distinguish between

⁸¹ *Capita* 150, 135 (Χρήστου 5, 111, 14–112, 6).

⁸² J. A. Demetracopoulos, ‘Palamas Transformed’ (see n. 43), 264.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

the essence and the energies of God. This distinction acquires a fixed definition in Maximus the Confessor and John of Damascus.⁸⁴ It is, therefore, symptomatic that Demetracopoulos is unable to decide whether Basil the Great, in determining the divine names as 'ἐπίνοιαί', refers to a *distinctio a parte rei* between the divine names (after the so-called Stoic model) or a *distinctio a parte mentis* (after the so-called Plotinic model).⁸⁵

Roger Guichardan and Venance Grumel have demonstrated that the 'Greek fathers' use only two distinctions: διαφορά τῷ πράγματι (the term πραγματική used by Guichardan is not applicable, according to Grumel) and a διαφορά κατ' ἐπίνοιαν. Comparing these distinctions with their Scholastic counterparts, the first corresponds to the *distinctio realis maior* and the second corresponds to all other species (including the *distinctio realis minor*). Grumel concludes that there is no scheme of distinction which could correspond to the Latin one.⁸⁶ Demetracopoulos, on the other hand, argues that Basil, by relying on Stoic logic, distinguishes between κατ' ἐπίνοιαν and λόγῳ to describe the classification of beings according to their parts, categorial properties, and states or effects. According to Demetracopoulos, this distinction in the Scholastic approach includes the *distinctio realis minor* and the *distinctio rationis cum fundamento in re*.⁸⁷ Demetracopoulos also notes that the Palamites of the mid-fourteenth century (e.g., Philotheos Kokkinos and Neilos Kabasilas), used the concept of ἐπίνοια in the same sense as in the Trinitarian debates of the fourth and fifth centuries.⁸⁸ Likewise, Palamas participated in aspects of the controversy. In this context, he refrained from qualifying the essence/energy distinction by employing a technical vocabulary. The attempts of some of his contemporaries to shape a clearer logical formula led to questionable results.

Matters did not improve later on when a few Palamites inspired by Thomas Aquinas attempted to clarify the distinction by means of the Thomistic terminology that was then circulating in Byzantium. As a result of this attempt, the terminological usage in relation to these issues acquired an ambivalence in some authors.⁸⁹ As we have seen, the reason for this has already been explained by Scholarios.⁹⁰ Barlaam and Akindynos (supposing both of them were actually influenced by Thomas) were not the only ones who were irritated by the aforementioned attempt. However, from

⁸⁴ See detailed discussion in G. Kapriev, *Philosophie in Byzanz* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005), 21–22; 25; 61–65; 126–27. The same topic also is in greater detail discussed in D. Bradshaw, *Aristotle East and West. Metaphysics and the Division of Christendom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), and J. C. Larchet, *La théologie des énergies divines. Des origines à saint Jean Damascène* (Paris: Cerf, 2010).

⁸⁵ J. A. Demetracopoulos, 'Palamas Transformed' (see n. 43), 268.

⁸⁶ Cf. R. P. Guichardan, *Le problème de la simplicité divine* (see n. 3), 41–49; V. Grumel, 'Grégoire Palamas, Duns Scot et Georges Scholarios' (see n. 42), 85–87.

⁸⁷ J. A. Demetracopoulos, 'Palamas Transformed' (see n. 43), 265–66.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 283, Footnote 56.

⁸⁹ Cf. Ibid., 292–368.

⁹⁰ *Commentarius* 94, in OCGS 6, 282, 35–283, 19; 284, 2–5.

a perspective of the history of philosophy perspective, it is a mistake to diagnose crypto-Thomism (or any other 'secret' approaches to the West) as being present simply based on a Thomistic influence amongst the Palamites. Similarly, it is inappropriate to speak about a 'Thomistic Palamism', namely, a Neo-Palamism which differs from the views of Palamas and can be detected in most (if not in all) of his successors.

The entire Byzantine theocentric tradition, especially after the middle of the twelfth century, not only declined to accept Latin 'innovations' in dogmatics, but saw them fall completely out of favour. The Palamites were no exception. However, in the field of speculative theology, which was viewed in Byzantium as a branch of philosophy, the situation was quite different. The explanation and clarification of *theologoumena* became the subject of debate. In this area, conceptual and methodological exchange, as well as the borrowing of logical techniques to promote the typical 'Byzantine subtlety',⁹¹ were fundamentally endorsed, no matter the origin of the sources. Within philosophy, the Palamites and the other Byzantine thinkers did not have to hide their concern with techniques that were popular in the West. It was rather a self-evident process.⁹²

Among the Palamite thinkers, Scholarios was the one most familiar with the Western developments in logic. Comparison of the positions of Scholarios and Palamas has shown that Scholarios could use both the relevant Thomistic and the Scotist theories to formulate the original Palamite position more precisely and, for Western thinkers, more insightfully. It is remarkable that he borrowed not only formulas and dialectical methods from the philosophy of the Western world. If one seeks to identify a massive influence of Thomas on Scholarios, it can be detected rather in his use of concepts rather than in his dialectical instruments. For our purposes at hand, it is important to note that Scholarios' concepts of 'thing' and 'being' barely appear in the Palamite and ancient Byzantine tradition, and are strictly conceived by Scholarios in the Thomistic sense.⁹³ Scholarios' attempt to preserve the continuity of the Palamite doctrine—again in the same context as Palamas himself—results in the definition of energy as a *πρᾶγμα* in God and the immediate explanation that it is not a *πρᾶγμα* in the strict sense of the word—which applies, for example, to the divine essence—but rather 'that which is of and in the thing itself' (*τὸ τοῦ πράγματος καὶ ἐν τῷ πράγματι*).⁹⁴ This approach also justifies the interpretation of the Palamite view, which in principle coincides with the view of Scholarios as a 'real distinction' (*πραγματικὴ διάκρισις*). Scholarios thus contrasts these concepts with the *κατ'*

⁹¹ J.M. Garrigues, *Maxime le Confesseur* (Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1976), 174.

⁹² See in detail G. Kapriev, 'Lateinische Einflüsse auf die Antilateiner. Philosophie versus Kirchenpolitik?', in *Greeks, Latins and Intellectual History 1204–1500*, eds. M. Hinterberger and C. Schabel (Leuven – Paris – Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2011), 385–95.

⁹³ Cf., e.g., Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate* 1.1, resp.; *Summa theologiae* 1.39, 3, ad 3; Aertsen, *Mediaeval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought*, 223–24.

⁹⁴ *Commentarius* 94, in OCGS 6, 281, 6–8; *Distinctio* 6, in OCGS 3, 238, 21–26.

ἐπίνοιαν μόνην distinction, which further corresponds to Palamas' notion. He then seeks to subdivide the *πραγματική* distinction,⁹⁵ which is unusual in the Byzantine tradition. He concludes with emphasis on the divine infinity and the distinction between the hypostases, arguing that it would be utterly inadequate to simply distinguish between the concepts *πραγματικῶς* and *κατ' ἐπίνοιαν μόνην*.⁹⁶ He ultimately finds that these distinctions, though they are above the level of *πραγματική διάκρισις*, must be called real (*πραγματικάί*), and thus fall within the concept of *πραγματική*.⁹⁷ Scholarios does not use Thomistic metaphysics or metaphysical (also Scotist) logic as an intellectual weapon to dissect the theology of Palamas.⁹⁸ On the contrary, he succeeds in positively qualifying the real position of Palamas, on the one hand, and in finding the correct formulation of Palamas' ideas within the framework of the more exact Scotist distinction theory, on the other.

In this regard, we must agree with von Kappes who claims that Orthodoxy is the most powerful regulative idea that dominates the Trinitarian theology of Scholarios. As Kappes notes, Jugie's view regarding the modified Scotism of Scholarios could be modified and made correct if conditioned by a closer examination of Scholarios' confessional background.⁹⁹ Scholarios' relation to Scotism can thus be described as an instrumental one. We should add that, besides Orthodoxy in general, Scholarios acknowledges the Palamite tradition and Eastern Christian theology as his primary motivation. However, this is not the only reason for his approach.

Another significant concern of Scholarios is the intellectual dialogue between East and West. His reference to the Latin culture and philosophical tradition should be understood as a 'committed reception'. This signifies a clear conception of the Eastern-Roman tradition, which is, however, open to the appropriation of the achievements and benefits of contemporary Latin culture. Scholarios regards the possible shifts and dogmatic confusions that potentially exist in Scholasticism as the only danger. He regarded philosophical logic as universal, and he did not regard the confrontation between East and West as a clash of two cultures, but as a struggle between the two traditions of single culture, which he considered to be compatible and complementary. In this context, his aim was to develop the Orthodox speculative doctrine, as developed by the fathers, against the background of the most precise logical methods. The Orthodox doctrine should be capable of being presented to and accessible to dialogue with Latin Scholasticism of his time. To Scholarios, it should be possible to make Orthodox doctrine appear as a counterpart of Latin culture in order for debate to take place with its representatives. He deliberately

⁹⁵ *Distinctio* 1, in OCGS 3, 228, 19–33.

⁹⁶ *Distinctio* 5, in OCGS 3, 235, 25–32.

⁹⁷ *Commentarius* 94, in OCGS 6, 283, 33–35.

⁹⁸ Kappes, 'The Latin Sources' (see n. 38), 80.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 105.

sought a synthesis of the developments of the Latin tradition and the Eastern Roman (i.e., 'Romaean') tradition, which he confidently represented.¹⁰⁰

When it comes to the essence–energy distinction and its particular conceptual context, the Thomistic dialectical instruments could not serve this purpose. His visible utilisation of the Franciscan and in particular the Scotist logical doctrine was further motivated by the existence of substantial ontological parallels between the Franciscan and Byzantine traditions, and especially the Palamite tradition. He regarded the Franciscan doctrine as being 'Orthodox' in comparison with that of Thomas. Examples of this include the interpretation of divine simplicity as real undividedness, the positive interpretation of divine infinity, the univocal understanding of being, and the corresponding legitimacy of the disjunctive definitions of being, etc.¹⁰¹ Scholarios, however, did not invent new metaphysical motifs simply in order to implant them in Palamite teaching. On the contrary, he appreciated them as teachings that organically fit into his theological approach. Obviously, he considered the Franciscan line to be a legitimate line of Western thought, and, through the application of its methods, sought to expand the dialogue with the West and establish the Palamite ideas within this dialogue.

Conclusion

In summary, it must be emphasised that it is not Scholarios' intention to reject or change the Palamite arguments nor to propose a milder version of the essence–energy distinction promulgated by Palamas. On the contrary, he remains faithful to the genuine position of Palamas, not only in name but also in fact. He offers, however, a 'translation' of Palamas' theses into the language of Western Scholasticism and, in particular, of the logic of Scotus, whose approaches he considers methodologically more precise. In this way, he succeeds in creating a more subtle and general formulation, which is no longer dependent on the Byzantine debates of the fourteenth century and its language. In so doing, he opens up another possibility to enter into a conceptual dialogue with the Western tradition, without giving up the Palamite position. To summarise Scholarios' contribution in one sentence, he has above all achieved an inner unfolding of the resources both of the Palamite and the Byzantine theocentric traditions.

¹⁰⁰ G. Kapriev, Vier Arten und Weisen, den Westen zu bewältigen, in: *Knotenpunkt Byzanz. Wissensformen und Kulturelle Wechselbeziehungen* (= *Miscellanea Mediaevalia* 36), eds. A. Speer and P. Steinkrüger (Berlin–Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 28–29.

¹⁰¹ Cf. C. W. Kappes, 'Foreword', in J. I. Goff, *Caritas in Primo* (see n. 36), *passim*.

‘POLITICAL HESYCHASM’ AND THE FOUNDATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE RUSSIAN STATE

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The expression ‘political hesychasm’ was coined by late Soviet historiography. It designates the contribution of the spiritual renewal initiated by Gregory Palamas to the dramatic rise of the Muscovite State between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. The present paper argues that this influence runs much deeper than previously assumed. Behind what foreign visitors described as a species of oriental despotism, there is a brilliant translation of the hesychastic process of divinisation into political terms.

Despite its relative diffusion in the recent years, one is entitled to wonder whether the notion of ‘political hesychasm’ carries more meaning than that of a round square. It is difficult not to agree with the manner in which S. Khoruji singles out this inherent hiatus: ‘[Hesychasm] is a specific activity of the human subject, an activity that leads it to actually and ontologically transcend and modify the fashion of its existence. As such, this activity is characterised by an aspect of foreignness when it comes to the whole sphere of human empirical concerns, which includes social, cultural and political practices.’¹ In contrast to modes of prayer that aim at improving the material conditions of human personal and collective existence—or, to put it more theologically, at paving the road to God’s Kingdom on Earth—the hesychastic way that Palamas justified on dogmatic grounds is about accessing, through the practice of asceticism and mental prayer, a transforming reality that is fundamentally foreign to the coordinates of space and time—those that precisely define the horizon of political thinking. True, minds bent on ideological or confessional controversies will always be able to politicise the most apolitical type of human activity. Still, as Khoruji observes: ‘The political sphere has an anthropology of its own, its own rigid patterns of conduct and strategies of action. These are deeply foreign to the hesy-

¹ ‘Hesychasm and “Political Hesychasm”: An Attempt at Defining Concepts’, accessed 22 May 2016, <http://pluriversum.org/~n1aTP> (translation mine).

chastic world, and the moment a hesychast makes them his own and acts according to them, he is no longer a hesychast'.²

If turning hesychasm into a political doctrine or strategy is betraying hesychasm, so be it. But what about the other way around? What about political doctrines, strategies, even political structures being fashioned by hesychasm as a purely spiritual phenomenon? One cannot politicise what is spiritual without defiling it, but one can always hope to spiritualise the political sphere without prejudice to what should remain spiritual. I believe it is with this perspective in mind that G. M. Prokhorov spoke about 'political hesychasm' and popularised this concept within the academic world of the late Soviet Union. A scholar of ancient Russian literature, Prokhorov relentlessly emphasised the multiple connections between the monastic efflorescence of pre-Renaissance Russia, the circulation of people, literature or ideas associated with the hesychast movement and the rise of the Muscovite State between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. While taking care of not infringing on the prerogatives of the secular ruler, spiritual leaders would rely on the ideals of the hesychast movement to support the fledgeling State and instil a deeply religious dynamism into it. More recently, N. Petrunin drew on the research of Prokhorov to establish the continuity of principles and ideas between this movement and the official stance of the Russian Orthodox Church on social issues since the publication of her main document in that regard.³ Petrunin claims that the role of the Orthodox Church both as totally independent from the State and as its guiding authority on ethical matters, is a legacy of fourteenth and fifteenth-century 'political hesychasm'.⁴ While

² Ibid. I discern an instance of this semantical ambiguity in *The Revival of Political Hesychasm in Contemporary Orthodox thought: The Political Hesychasm of John S. Romanides and Christos Yannaras* a book by D. P. Payne (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2011). According to its doctrine (Palamas' distinction between divine essence and energies) and practice (the repetition of the Jesus Prayer), hesychasm has absolutely nothing to do with the civilisational contrast between the Eastern-Byzantine world and the Western-Latin one. That this specific doctrine or practice is either non-existent or not officially received by Western Churches is a fact that is *interpreted* by thinkers such as Romanides and Yannaras as a proof of the superiority of the Byzantine civilisation over the Latin one, and therefore a justification of the splendid ecclesiological isolation of the former. There is a political view of hesychasm, but there is no such thing as a 'political hesychasm' because hesychasm itself has no political vision to offer. In this sense, Romanides's and Yannaras's interpretation of hesychasm as a civilisational phenomenon is certainly not a 'revival' of some ancient 'political hesychasm'. True, in the aftermath of Palamas' canonisation (1368), the defence of his doctrine turned into an intra-Byzantine confrontation between the supporters of an alliance with the Latin West and their opponents. But both parties perceived this conflict as being quintessentially religious and dogmatic in its nature at the time. The same can be said of the anti-Western stance of Mark Eugenikos at the Council of Florence (1439). From a hesychast point of view, any political consideration had to be subordinated to the *fundamentally apolitical* truth of Christian faith.

³ *Political Hesychasm and its tradition according to the social concept of the Russian Orthodox Church*, in Russian *Политический исихазм и его традиции в социальной концепции Московского Патриархата* (Sankt-Petersburg: Aletheia, 2009). See *Basis of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church*, document adopted by the Moscow Patriarchate in 2000, accessed 27 May 2018, <https://mospat.ru/en/documents/social-concepts/>.

⁴ This concept of 'political hesychasm' is of course contrasted with the abhorrent political thinking of the Western Papacy. It is not clear, however, how it differs from the famous 'Two-Swords' doctrine that characterised the Medieval Latin Church, a doctrine that implied both the independence of the Church

these studies abundantly display the intensity and pervasive influence of hesychasm throughout the formative period of the Moscow State, they most of the time come short of describing the concrete impact of such influence on its nascent political structure. True, rather than 'political hesychasm' one should speak here of 'hesychastic (or hesychastising) politics', but this is not to minimise the importance of genuine hesychasm in this issue. On the contrary, the question is whether the doctrine and practice of hesychasm, with all their transcendent aloofness, can provide keys to understand the fundamental logic of the Muscovite regime, a logic that later became integral to Imperial Russia's political self-awareness.

At this point, I would like to relate the issue of 'political hesychasm' to the ongoing discussion, among political thinkers and historians of Russia, regarding the specific nature of the State that emerged and developed under the aegis of the Danilovich dynasty. One can easily trace the core of the problem back to Montesquieu's *Esprit des Loix*. Unlike Aristotle (*Politics*, 1285a), Montesquieu was unwilling to draw a distinction between, on the one hand, tyranny—that is, the supreme rule of a single individual that hinges on systematic, military-enforced fear—and, on the other hand, despotism—that is, the supreme rule of an individual as voluntarily embraced by its subjects. In a philosophical framework where political progress went together with the reasonable acquisition of civil liberties, voluntarily agreeing to submit oneself to the will of a single ruler in the absence of legal guarantees and boundaries could only be ascribed to some naïve form of collective deception—and since a deception of this kind was unlikely to survive either the trial of time or the advancement of knowledge, let alone the example of other types of government, the façade of 'popular despotism' was destined to disintegrate rapidly, revealing the true nature of the regime that had always been hiding behind it; namely, tyranny. For Montesquieu, there are only three basic types of government: republican, monarchical, and despotic, the last owing its existence to its capacity of keeping the entire population in a constant state of fear.⁵ While Montesquieu had primarily the Ottoman empire in mind when he forged the notion of 'oriental despotism', there is little doubt he viewed Russia as pertaining to this category.⁶ The approaches to the Muscovite State of a political thinker such as R. Pipes, or historians like M. Poe and R. Hellie, are rooted in Montesquieu's perspective, even if they sometimes attempted to qualify it.⁷ In all their works, what comes to the fore are a type and degree of political submissiveness, on the part of the

from the State and its leading role in defining the fundamental values of any political and social order.

⁵ *The Spirit of Laws*, chapters 1 and 9. K. Wittfogel does not conceive of the idea that oriental despotism could be even possible otherwise: 'Total terror—Total submission—Total loneliness', see *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), c.5, at 137.

⁶ 'According to Mr. Perry, the Muscovites sell themselves very readily: their reason for it is evident; their liberty is not worth keeping', *The Spirit of Laws*, ed. M. J. Adler, (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1990), 111.

⁷ R. Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, second edition (London: Penguin books, 1993); R. Hellie, 'Why did the Muscovite elite not rebel?', *Russian History* 25 (1998): 155–62; M. Poe, *A People Born to Slavery* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000).

subjects of the Sovereign, that have never seen any equivalent in Western Europe. But is it true that, in the case of the Muscovite State, such submissiveness should be wholly ascribed to the fear generated by external constraint as Montesquieu argues in his considerations on 'oriental despotism'? This aspect has been called into question by a number of researchers associated with the self-styled 'Harvard School'.⁸ These scholars have tried to show that the submissiveness of the Muscovite population was far from being absolute. Was not the power of the Great Prince subject to limitations from 'above' as well as from 'below'? Above him, there was God. How could the Prince have thought of challenging the ethical standards defined by the Christian tradition?⁹ Below the Prince, there were the *grandeės*, princes more or less closely related to his kin, and boyars, heirs to his forefathers' companions-in-arms (*drujiniki*). Was the Prince not to heed their advice, at least in the official settings of appointed Councils (*boyarskaja дума*) as well as reckon with their networks of political influence?¹⁰ And far below the boyars, there were the simple people. Why did, for instance, Great Princes—already 'Tsars'—like Ivan IV 'the Terrible' insist on convoking 'assemblies of the people' (*zemskie sobory*), including representatives from all the layers of society? Should we think of 'the Terrible' himself as frightened by popular dissent? Besides, a setting of defined customs and traditions preexisted the advent of a sovereign. How could the newcomer lightly treat the holy traditions of the Land and the customs cherished by his fathers?¹¹

Still, it does not take much effort to show that, as to their overwhelming majority, these sources of counter-power were informal. During the period concerned (fourteenth to sixteenth centuries), the power of the Muscovite autocrat was not legally or objectively bound by anything nor anyone.¹² The question therefore reads: if the acceptance by Russian citizens of their sovereign's formally unlimited power did not draw on fear or military intimidation, as the representatives from the 'Harvard school' claim, what can explain it? What could grant to this form of government some intrinsic and immediately perceptible meaningfulness, so that simple and educated citizens alike would deliberately welcome it and eagerly become part of it? Here, I believe the scholars that are commonly associated with the 'State school' of Russian historiography, an academic lineage dominated by the impressive figure

⁸ N. S. Kollmann, D. Rowland and V. Kivelson can be listed among the scholars who further developed the approach sketched out by E. I. Keenan in his 'Muscovite Political Folkways', *Russian Review* 45 (1986), 115–81.

⁹ See D. Rowland, 'Did Muscovite literary ideology place any limits on the power of the Tsar?', *Russian Review* 49 (1990): 125–56.

¹⁰ See N. S. Kollmann, *Kinship and Politics: The Making of the Muscovite Political System, 1345–1547* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987); *By Honour Bound, State and Society in Early Modern Russia* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999).

¹¹ See E. L. Keenan, 'Muscovite Political Folkways', *Russian Review* 45 (1986): 115–81; V. Kivelson, '"Citizenships": Right without Freedom', *The Journal of Modern History* 74, no. 3 (2002): 465–89.

¹² See M. Poe, 'The Truth about Muscovy', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 3, no. 3 (2002): 1–14; C. Soldat, 'The Limits of Muscovite Autocracy: The Relations between the Grand Prince and the Boyars in the Light of Iosif Volotskii's *Prosvetitel*', *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 46, no. 1–2 (2005): 265–76.

of V.O. Kliuchevskii (+1911) have something to say, no matter how critically their works were received by the leading lights of the 'Harvard School'. And yet, while striving to give a factual account of the formation of the Muscovite State, these Russian historians have seldom felt the need to isolate some core logic, in terms of political theory, that would stand behind the emergence of the Muscovite regime and account for its fateful success. What is missing is the simplicity of an intuition that would unify and make sense of all the scattered elements brought forward by these historians.

In the pages that follow, I will argue that the political logic according to which the nascent Muscovite State evolved is closely connected with the inseparably theological and practical teachings that characterise hesychasm. I will first summarise a passage from Gregory Palamas' writings in order to isolate what I regard as the fundamental structure of the divinisation process. I will then proceed to briefly recall how hesychastic theory and practice spread to the Russia of the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries. Finally, I will explain why and how the fundamental structure of the divinisation process was adjusted to the concrete political situation of early modern Russia in order to supply a new concept of political government.

*Divinisation: Palamas on Formulating the Transcendent
Principles of Hesychastic Practice*

Divinisation is doubtlessly the goal of hesychastic practice. However, divinisation is not a qualitatively self-enclosed condition that would have nothing to do with the process leading to it. Rather, divinisation is this process itself. It is the gradual and transforming realisation of the action of the Holy Spirit at work in the heart of any baptised Christian. The acquisition of a new and divinised state of soul and body goes with the gradual eradication of what stands between us and the full realisation of the action of the Holy Spirit in us; that is, the damaging passions of the soul. From this point of view, spiritual intercourse with an elder is part of this divinisation process as well as the solitary practice of prayer. One cannot follow the path of divinisation alone, at least before having been thoroughly initiated into it. But in what manner can we understand or theoretically contemplate the interaction between the work of God and our own will in this divinisation process? Writing metaphysical treatises should not be a primary concern for a hesychast except when this spiritual path is being accused of falsehood and deception. Then comes the need to explain and justify this path by conceptualising what actually happens during the process of divinisation. This is how a monk called Gregory Palamas was asked by his brethren from the Holy Mountain to defend hesychastic practice against the accusations of heterodoxy levelled at it by Baarlam the Greek. In the process of answering Barlaam, as well as the few theologians that espoused his criticism of hesychasm—Gregory Akyndinos and Nikephoros Gregoras among the principal ones—Palamas came to

an increasingly clear and precise understanding of this interaction, an understanding that, according to him, echoed the most authentic tradition of the Fathers. I would like to examine the considerations that Palamas developed in a treatise on *Unity and Distinction in God against Barlaam and Akyndinos* as an example of his view on this interaction.¹³ In this long passage (chapter 3 on ‘Deifying Participation and Supernatural Simplicity’, §1–23), Palamas refutes the notion that postulating the uncreated character of divine grace would transform all the elements of the universe, inanimate and animate alike, into ‘parts of God’. Not only does this notion of divinisation rely on a mistaken understanding of participation, as the general manner in which creatures are receptive to the grace of God, but it does not do justice to the specific character of divinisation that relates to intellectual creatures. I will merely provide a summary of the content, dedicating particular attention to the connection between the thought of Palamas and that of Maximus the Confessor.

First, Palamas emphasises that being above the natural order of the created cosmos pertains to the essential character of divinisation. It involves divine grace—the very energy-activity (*energeia*) of God—that transforms the created being who receives it, raising his faculties high above the natural order (§1–2). Palamas relies here pre-eminently on Maximus the Confessor. Among other texts, he brings forth a shortened version of a passage from *Ambiguum* 7: ‘So that from the same source whence we received our being, we should also long to receive being moved, like an image that has ascended to its archetype, or rather it will have become God by divinisation—experiencing far greater pleasure in transcending the things that exist and are perceived to be naturally its own. This occurs through the grace of the Spirit which has conquered it.’¹⁴ This ‘divine energy’ is the Holy Spirit, writes Palamas (§3), which is ridiculous to ascribe to the created order. It is the prerogative of those intellectual creatures who partake by faith of the Spirit of Christ, as distinguished from any type of participation pertaining to the natural order of God’s creation (§4). In this process of divinisation, it is not the uncreated reality participated—that is, the divine energy of the Holy Spirit—that is multiplied in distinct parts, but it is the manner in which it is participated by the created participants that ‘multiplies’ the uncreated reality. While it remains unalterably One in this process, the same reality becomes greater or smaller as it is received in each participant according to its capacity (§4–6). Configuration to God cannot be understood in a purely natural or physical manner. As Palamas writes,

Without union, configuration will not achieve divinisation. And when I speak of configuration, what I have in mind is what comes to be through

¹³ *Πραγματεῖαι*, in *Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμᾶ συγγράμματα*, ed. P.K. Chrestou (Θεσσαλονίκη, 1966), 2:69–277. To the best of my knowledge, there is no translation into English of this text.

¹⁴ *Ambiguum* 7, 1076C, in N. Constan, trans., *On the Difficulties of the Church Fathers*, Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 1:91.

the activity-energy associated with the divine commandments and that of keeping them, something which cannot be achieved through simple natural imitation but requires the power of the Holy Spirit that descends according to the sacred rebirth and ineffably settles in those who are baptized (§7).¹⁵

This life of the Holy Spirit that shows itself to be stronger than physical death and that the Son of God chose to impart us through baptism is not to be conceived as a communication of the essence of God but of his radiance or activity-energy. Contrary to substantial participation, energetic participation does not modify what is participated, but affects the participants in a variety of ways according to what they are. Communicating life, sensation, or even intellectual activity is a participation in the energy of God that does not exceed the natural order. But when God communicates himself to intellectual creatures as in the divinisation of the Holy Spirit, this process wholly exceeds the order of creation and the laws of nature (§8–11). Here again, Palamas heavily relies on Maximus, quoting *Ambigua* 10 regarding the ‘grace without beginning’ among other passages (§12–13).¹⁶ Creatures participate in the divine activity-energy as artificial products participate in the thinking of the one who crafts them. But the relation of the saints to the creative energy of God does not only come from the fact that it created them; they ‘receive’ it, as finite vessels that are filled with a boundless and incomprehensible flow of life (§14–15). This is the ineffable light that the eyes of a purified heart are given to contemplate—not only participation but exchange (‘μὴ μετέχοντες μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ μεταδιδόντες’) (§16–17). The experience of divinisation is comparable to a ceramic cup thrown into the fire from which it was originally made and taken out of it again: changing colour, it retains the energy of the fire through its unnatural dryness and hotness (§18). This is about a union and an inhabitation (‘θεοῦ θεία ἐνώσει τε καὶ ἐνοικήσει’), not about the divine command of creation (‘οὐ δημιουργικῶ προστάγματι τελεῖται’) (§19). This union is the source of the radiance that transfigures Christ and the saints, as witnessed by the apostles on Mount Thabor, by Paul and Stephen, but also by Moses and Elijah according to Maximus (§20). On them have been bestowed the uncreated gifts that come from the one who espoused all the infirmities of our flesh. At this point, Palamas goes back to the passage from *Ambiguum* 7 quoted earlier, providing a few lines at the end that were previously omitted:

This occurs through the grace of the Spirit which has conquered it, showing that it has God alone acting in it, so that through all there is only one energy, that of God and those worthy of God, or rather of God alone, who in a manner befitting his Goodness integrally interpenetrates all who are worthy (§21).¹⁷

¹⁵ Translation mine.

¹⁶ Maximus the Confessor, *On the Difficulties of the Church Fathers*, §48, 224.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Those who have received the seal of the Holy Spirit in this manner are moved toward an ineffable union with their Archetype, according to the mystery of the union between Christ and his Church (§22). However, those who call created the uncreated gift of God dangerously confuse the distinction formulated by John Damascene between created and uncreated energies, the two energies that, as argued by Maximus, jointly work in Christ, since one and the other proceed without confusion from his divine and human natures. As those people go around professing that the created is uncreated and vice-versa, they multiply what is one and treat as one that which is multiple (§23).

Throughout these considerations, Palamas defines divinisation in reference to the connection between participation in God's uncreated energies and supernatural inhabitation. By contrast to natural participation, where the infinity of God's power is kept separate from the finite realities that it brings forth, the finite being of the saints somehow becomes the receptacle of the infinite power that divinizes their being. However, this 'exchange' is not a synthetic mixture as in essential participation. An active cause does not blend with its effect according to its nature, just as a seal does not become part of the wax that it configures, or the fire part of the ceramic pot that becomes burning hot through its contact with it. What happens is that the components of the effect are so much affected by the energising cause that their own operations cease to exist according to their natural mode. Without ceasing to exist absolutely, their operations themselves are now entirely operated according to the power of the energetic cause, just as the imprint on the wax is the effect of the seal or the hotness of the pot that of the fire. This is what makes Maximus state that 'there is only one energy, that of God and those worthy of God, or rather of God alone' in the passage of *Ambiguum* 7 quoted by Palamas. Claiming, on the one hand, that the energy that interpenetrates the saints is both theirs and that of God, and, on the other hand, that this energy is that of God alone, does not imply contradiction; it only involves a distinction of points of view. The two energies, the one created and the one uncreated, are preserved without confusion *according to their nature* but the former is so much subordinated to the latter *according to its mode of existence* that it is reduced to being the channel of the latter's divine impulse.¹⁸ In other words, divinisation is achieved through deliberately letting the will and energy of God take the place of one's own will and energy—this is the only way in which fragile human nature can be raised to the height of a union that totally exceeds its natural abilities. In the beginning of the passage of *Ambiguum* 7 that Palamas refers to, Maximus emphasises that such a dismissal of one's own will is a deliberate action: 'I am not

¹⁸ In a short treatise, Maximus goes back to this passage of *Ambiguum* 7 to dismiss any...ambiguity in that regard: 'I have not suppressed the natural energy of those who are meant to experience these [divinising] effects...I have only shown the super-essential power that produces divinisation and becomes these realities for the benefit of those it divinises', *Opuscula theologica et polemica* 1 (PG 91:33A–D—translation mine).

implying the destruction of our power of self-determination (οὐ γὰρ ἀναίρεσιν τοῦ αὐτεξουσίου γίνεσθαι φημί), but rather affirming our fixed and unchangeable natural disposition, that is, a voluntary surrender of the will (ἐκχώρησιν γνωμικήν), so that from the same source whence we received our being' (here starts Palamas' quotation).¹⁹ Graphically, one could represent the process of divinisation as an ascending spiral where the second phase (created energy of man is raised to a superior stage of power and union with God through God's uncreated energy) both reverses the first (created energy is totally taken over by God's uncreated energy) and carries it higher.

What Palamas is describing here is the illumination-transfiguration of the saints, the goal of hesychastic practice. The created will that is freely abandoned in order to be taken over by God's energy is a will that is already purified. In order to reach that point, the hesychast must learn to freely abandon a will that is not yet purified. As Palamas declares in one of his homilies, how can one reach a perfect love of the neighbour, according to the precept of Christ, without deliberately cutting off or letting go one's own will, 'ἀφιέναι τὸ οἰκεῖον θέλημα'?²⁰

There is little doubt that this teaching was a point of emphasis of the spiritual movement that Palamas defended and illustrated on theoretical grounds. At the beginning of his *Discourses against Jews*, the former *basileus* and now 'slave of Christ' John VI Cantacuzenos, Palamas' faithful ally turned into the humble monk Joasaph, contrasts the enslavement to pleasures with 'another kind of slavery (οἶδα δ' ἔγωγε καὶ δουλείαν ἑτέραν)', the one accomplished on behalf of 'love', an enslavement that is 'greater and more eminent than any kind of freedom' as it can lead to a 'celestial mode of existence'. It consists of 'discarding any will of one's own (τὸ πᾶν ἑαυτοῦ θέλημα περιελεῖν), cutting off all capacity of decision (πᾶσάν τινα περικόψαι προαίρεσιν), offering and submitting oneself to some divine man capable of leading to God those who will eagerly follow people of his kind.'²¹

Indeed, in hesychastic practice just as in the ascetic literature that precedes it, obedience, especially to a spiritual father, is the way through which the will is purified: doing the will of an elder instead of following one's own is the manner in which one's will can be conformed to that of God—which implies that the will of a spiritual father must be welcomed as a manifestation of God's will. Symeon the New Theologian typically writes:

Those who...have planted their feet firmly on the rock of obedience to their spiritual father; who listen to his counsel as if it came from the mouth of God; and who with humility of soul build all this on the basis of obedience—such

¹⁹ Maximos the Confessor, *On the Difficulties of the Church Fathers*, 90–91.

²⁰ Όμιλία 44, Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμᾶ ἅπαντα τὰ ἔργα, Έλληνες Πατέρες τῆς Έκκλησίας, ed. P. K. Chrestou, vol. 11 (Θεσσαλονίκη, 1986), s.9, 114.

²¹ Ιωάννου Στ Καντακουζηνού Κατὰ Ἰουδαίων, Λόγοι Έννέα, ed. C.G. Soteropoulos (Αθήνα, 1990), Or.1, 1.50, *Online Thesaurus Linguae Graecae: A Digital Library of Greek Literature*, www.tlg.uci.edu (translation mine).

people will succeed immediately. They will achieve that great and primary task of denying themselves. *For to fulfil the will of another and not one's own* entails not only the denial of one's own soul but also mortification towards the whole world.²²

To summarise, the role of a spiritual father in the education of the one who starts walking on the path toward holiness is analogous to the role of God in the divinisation of those who have somehow reached the end of the path: his will takes over the will of the one who has deliberately surrendered his own will in order to raise this foreign and fragile will to a higher level of communion with God. But since the will of the novice is not yet purified, this process has a therapeutic rather than a deifying character. The purification of the will is liberation from the passions that damage the soul and prevent it from accessing higher stages of divinisation. In his *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, a main reference of the hesychastic tradition, John Climacus emphasises that the recovery of genuine freedom is the counterpart of the mortification of one's own will:

So you have decided to strip for the race of spiritual profession, to take Christ's yoke on your neck, to lay your own burden on the shoulders of another, *to pledge your willing surrender to slavery* (ὅσοι τὰς ἐαυτῶν ὠνάς γράψαι ἐκουσίως σπεύδετε, literally: 'to deliberately sell yourself by contract'). And for this you want it in writing that *you get freedom in return* (ἀντ' ἐκεῖνων ἐλευθερίαν γραφῆναι ὑμῖν βούλεσθε) even when you swim across this great sea borne up on the hands of others? Very well, then. But you had better recognise that you have undertaken to travel by a short and rough road, along which there is only one false turning, which they *call self-direction and if that is avoided*—even in matters seemingly good, spiritual, and pleasing to God—then straightaway one has reached journey's end. For the fact is *that obedience is self-mistrust up to one's dying day*, in every matter, even the good (Ὑπακοή γάρ ἐστιν ἀπιστία ἐαυτῷ ἐν τοῖς καλοῖς ἅπασι μέχρι τέλους ζωῆς).²³

²² One Hundred and Fifty-Three Practical and Theological Texts 44, in *The Philokalia: The Complete Text*, Kindle Edition, ed. R.P. Pryne (Philadelphia, PA, 2015) 17603–4 (emphasis is mine). This ascetic tradition goes back to the desert fathers. Thus, Cassian evokes the teaching of Abba Moses in his treatise on *The Holy Fathers of Sketis*: 'True discrimination comes to us only as a result of true humility, and this in turn is shown by our revealing to our spiritual fathers not only what we do but also what we think, *by never trusting our own thoughts*, and by following in all things the words of our elders, regarding as good what they have judged to be so', *Philokalia*, Kindle edition, 1339–41. Obedience to a spiritual father goes with the dismissal of one's own will: '42. Do not judge the actions of your spiritual father but obey his commands.... 43. A monk who disobeys the commands of his spiritual father transgresses the special vows of his profession. But he who has embraced obedience and *slain his own will with the sword of humility* has indeed fulfilled the promise that he made to Christ in the presence of many witnesses', *ibid.*, 5799–804.

²³ *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1982), 92.

Since the novice has totally surrendered his will to his spiritual father, the spiritual father becomes responsible for the path of the novice toward salvation: 'A corpse does not contradict or debate the good or whatever seems bad, and the spiritual father who has devoutly put the disciple's soul to death will answer for everything'.²⁴

Undoubtedly, the dialectic between the deliberate surrendering of one's will and a union with God's will that coincides with one's maximal state of freedom, lies at the core of hesychastic practice, just as it is at the core of Palamas' understanding of divinisation. But to what extent does this scheme account for what we defined as 'political hesychasm'? Is the connection between this spiritual-metaphysical scheme and the constitution of the Russian State in the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries a pure chimaera? After developing a few considerations on the religious and political situation of Russia in that period, I would like to show how the scheme we brought forward sheds a decisive light on the emergence of the Muscovite principality as a national and world power.

Hesychasm in Russia and the Western Perception of 'Oriental Despotism'

If the type of hesychasm originating from Byzantium exerted such a thorough influence on Russian culture, it is certainly because it coincided with a genuine revival of monastic spirituality stemming from the depth of Russia itself. The spiritual friendship and political alliance between St Sergius of Radonezh (+1392) and Metropolitan Cyprian (+1407), sent to Russia by Constantinople's Patriarch Philoteos Kokkinos, Palamas' early and faithful companion-in-arms, epitomises this historic encounter.²⁵ The initial difficulties to understand Palamas' ideas were quick to dissipate, and these were officially received by the Russian Church already by the end of the fourteenth century.²⁶ However, as most historians observe, this hesychast influence in Russia proved to be more of a spiritual than of a conceptual kind. Translations from the great authors of the *Philokalia*—John Climacus (sixth century), Isaac the Syrian and Abba Dorothee (seventh century), Symeon the New Theologian and Nikitas Stetathos (eleventh century), Gregory the Sinaite (fourteenth century) among others, not to mention Gregory Palamas himself—are abundantly produced and widely circulated during this period. After the Lavra of St Sergius at the turn of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the monastery of

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ It is Philotheos that asks Sergius to reform his monastery according to the Athonite standards of coenobitism in 1354.

²⁶ In his 'Epistle on Heavens' (1347), Fiodor, Bishop of Novgorod, refutes the possibility of a direct contemplation of divine realities in this life. Regarding the *Tshin Pravoslavia*, the old-Slavonic text that contains the essential dogmatic claims of Palamism, see F. I. Uspenskii, *Synodikon for the Week of Orthodoxy*, in Russian, *Синодик в Неделю Православия*, (Odessa, 1893). On all these matters, see G.M. Prokhorov, 'Hesychasm and Social Thinking in 14th c. Eastern Europe', in Russian, 'Исихазм и общественная мысль в Восточной Европе в XIV в.', *Trudy Otdela Drevnerusskoj Literatury* 23 (1968): 86–108.

Kirilo-Belozersk becomes the centre of diffusion of this 'literature from the cells' (G.M. Prokhorov) from the last third of the fifteenth century onwards.²⁷ Indeed, the remarkable expansion of monasticism is the agent of Byzantine Hesychasm's influence on Russian culture throughout this period. While ninety monasteries were founded between the eleventh and the beginning fourteenth centuries on the territory of Russia, the fourteenth century witnessed the establishment of eighty new monasteries merely in its northern part alone.²⁸ It is the same revival of Russia's ascetic tradition that gave rise to the most celebrated expressions of Russian iconography with Theofan the Greek (+1410), Andrei Rublev (+1428), and their disciples. Unsurprisingly, Russia's 'literature from the cells' emphasises the deliberate renunciation to one's private will that characterises hesychastic practice and underlies Palamas' understanding of divinisation. One of these widely circulated texts invokes the authority of St Basil the Great as it gives the following advice to the one who has found a worthy spiritual father: 'Give yourself to him completely, reject your will entirely and throw it away, so that you be found to be a pure vessel, preserving the good things stored in you for your own praise and glory'²⁹. Nil Sorskii (+1508), probably the perfect instance of Russian hesychasm and a dedicated translator of the corresponding type of literature himself, insists on the need to submit to a spiritual father in order to overcome the passions that enslave our will: 'We have witnessed this style of life on the holy Mt. Athos and also in and around Constantinople, and in many other places, namely, a starets or elder living with one or two disciples or sometimes even three if there were a need'.³⁰ St Kornel Kormelskii (+1537), his disciple, repeatedly emphasises that condition to enter the monastery he founded is to 'not have one's own will, *своя воли не имети*'.³¹

Assuming that the influence of the fourteenth-century ascetic revival on Russia's—more widely than Muscovite—civil society was limited to monastic circles would be a mistake. As 'Manhood in the didactic literature of ancient Russia', V. P. Adrianova-Peretz's seminal study showed, monastic ideals were translated into a language accessible to the widest public possible at a time when reading skills were scarce.³² Collections of passages mostly related to moral themes from the Fathers of the Church and various authors of the ascetic tradition, such as the late four-

²⁷ G. M. Prokhorov, 'The Hesychastic literature from the cells in Ancient Russia—The Transfer to the North', in *Ancient Russian as an Historical and Cultural Phenomenon*, in Russian *Древняя Русь как историко-культурный феномен* (Sankt-Petersburg: Olega Albyshko, 2010), 210–11.

²⁸ See Prokhorov, 'Hesychasm and Social Thinking', 106.

²⁹ *Sermon 11* (PG 31:632), see B. Maslov, 'Oikeiôsis pros Theon: Gregory of Nazianzus and the Heteronomous Subject of Eastern Christian Penance', *Journal of Ancient Christianity* 16, no. 2 (2012): 309–41, at 339.

³⁰ *The Complete Writings*, ed. G. A. Maloney & B. McGinn (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2003), 113. Relying on the reading of Sacred Scriptures comes second only when the guidance of a spiritual father is not available, see Rule (*Ustav*), 'Importance of a Spiritual Guide', *ibid.*, 48.

³¹ Rule (*Ustav*), 29 December 2017, www.sedmitza.ru/text/443481.

³² 'Man in the Didactic Literature of Ancient Rus', in Russian, 'Человек в учительной литературе древней Руси', *Trudy Otdela Drevnerusskoj Literatury* 27 (1972): 3–68.

teenth-century *Izmaragd (the Pearl)*, were soon to be systematised and popularised in works such as the fifteenth-century *Domostroi (Household manual)*, a book that will remain the archetype of elementary culture in Russia for centuries onwards.³³ There we are instructed to 'respect our spiritual fathers and to obey to them' (chapter fourteen):

Respect your spiritual father, obey him in everything, repent before him with tears, confessing your sins without scruple or shame, and follow his instructions...Bow deeply (*bej chelom*) before him, come in his presence with feelings of fear and gratitude....[To our spiritual fathers] is entrusted the care of our souls and they will answer about us on the day of Judgment.³⁴

The same era—from the second part of the fourteenth century to the first half of the sixteenth century—witnesses the historic rise of the Muscovite Principality. Until the battle of Kulikovo (1380), the Princes of Moscow, a minor *udel* (apanage) inherited by Daniel in 1283, had been vying with their peers, mainly those of Tver, for leadership, and striving to obtain the favour of the Khan to that effect. The situation turned definitively to the advantage of Moscow from the moment Dmitri Donskoy challenged the 'Tatars' political supremacy at Kulikovo. After the battle, nothing would stop the rise and expansion of Moscow to the detriment of its neighbours, including the sovereign Republic of Novgorod. By the end of the fifteenth century, the Muscovite principality had become one of the richest and most powerful States on the Old Continent.

There is much reason to assume that the monastic efflorescence in Russia and the extraordinary emergence of Moscow during the same period are not two unconnected phenomena. According to the early hagiography of Sergius of Radonezh, Kulikovo seals some paradigmatic alliance between the Danilovichs and the monastic world, as the holy monk blesses the Prince and his armies before the battle. But the first signs of such an implicit alliance are already manifest before Kulikovo. Dmitri, Ivan Kalita (+1340), the son of Daniel and the real initiator of Moscow's political ascension, ended his days at St Saviour Monastery, a monastery that he erected, eventually taking religious vows. Simon the Proud, his son (+1353), and Basil III (+1533) followed his example, receiving the monastic schema on their deathbeds. The figure that is most known for his passionate relationship to monastic tradition is undeniably the last Tsar to come out of the dynasty, Ivan IV, the so-called 'Terrible', in the sixteenth century (+1584). 'The light of monks are angels; the light of laypeople are monks'—Ivan places this saying, which he falsely ascribes to the 'Sacred Scriptures', at the beginning of his *Epistle to the monks of the Kirilo-Belozerskij Monastery* (1573), a letter where he tells about the steps he already took in order to take monastic vows:

³³ See *Domostroi*, ed. D.V. Kolesov, Introduction and Comments (Moscow: Nauka, 1994).

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 141 (translation mine).

‘And it seems to me, o unfortunate, that I am already half of a monk, even if I have not yet completely forsaken worldly vanities; I already carry with me the blessing that pertains to the monastic way of life.’³⁵

If the Great Princes of Moscow, those who increasingly start calling themselves ‘Tsars’, cultivate a particular fondness and reverence for the monastic tradition, the opposite also holds true.³⁶ Most voices that exalt the position of the Tsar and the holy fear that it should inspire originate from the monastic world. In an old-Slavonic addition to the Russian *Nomokanon* (*Kormtshaja Kniga* or collection of Church laws), going back to the fourteenth century, one already reads ‘Who blames the Tsar or a Prince regarding a matter of justice will be punished, who starts a fight [with him] will be expelled, who lies [to him] will be excommunicated.’³⁷ The main theoretician of the rising autocracy is none other than Joseph Volotskii, the powerful abbot of Volokolamsk (+1515). It is Joseph who inserts the famous—and implicit—quotation from Agapetos’ sixth-century *Ekthesis* in his *Enlightener* (*Prosvetitel*): ‘For in body the king is like unto all men, but in power he is like unto God almighty.’³⁸ Metropolitan Daniel, Joseph’s disciple, writes that earthly powers are established to remind people of the fear God should inspire in them—‘actually, those who fear earthly rulers will not devour one another like fish do.’³⁹

Reflecting on the concomitance between the diffusion of hesychasm and the rise of the Moscow Principality, one is led to conjecture that there might be more to the notion of ‘political hesychasm’ than religious companionship and a crucial convergence of political interests between the monastic world and the rulers of Moscow. Indeed, the political regime associated with the Danilovichs that emerges in the fourteenth century is not simply a more politically skilful and historically fortunate version of the neighbouring regimes in Russia—neither is it a copy of the Byzantine political order, even if it purposefully presented itself as its heir. There was no attempt at importing the heavy legal apparatus of Byzantine civil society, fruit of a bimillennial evolution, to the nascent Russian State. The new regime was essentially a reconfiguration of the previous local order—prince and his *drujini*—

³⁵ *Послание в Кирилло-Белозерский монастырь*, ed. E. I. Vaneeva (Moscow: Russian Acad. Of Sciences, 2006–2011), 6 January 2018, <http://lib.pushkinskiydom.ru> (translation mine). Ivan’s parody of conventual life with his *oprishniki*, the members of his secret guard, at the Alexandra Sloboda, is an additional illustration of Ivan’s obsession with monasticism.

³⁶ The Byzantine world has known of a few emperors becoming monks. I mentioned John Cantacuzenos. The unfortunate John IV Laskaris (+1261) is another example. But never did a Byzantine dynasty of *basileis* as such develop a type of closeness to the monastic world similar to that of the Danilovichs.

³⁷ Canon 69 ascribed to Basil the Great/apostolic rule 84. See M. Diakonov, *The Power of Muscovite Sovereigns*, in Russian, *Власть московских государей* (Sankt-Petersburg, 1889), 169 (translation mine).

³⁸ ‘царь оубо естеством подобен человеку, властью же подобен естъ вышнему Богу’, in *The Enlightener*, in Russian *Просветитель* (Kazan: Dukhovnaja Akademia, 1896), 547.

³⁹ See V.E. Valdenberg, *Russian Medieval Teaching on the Limits of the Tsars’ Power*, in Russian *Древнерусские учения о пределах царской власти* (Moscow: Territoria budushevo, 2006), 186, n 92. The bloody row between Ivan IV and Metropolitan Philip, rebelling against the multifarious abuses of the Tsar, indicates the first crack in what had hitherto been an indefectible alliance between the Danilovichs and the so-called ‘black clergy’.

ki-boyars, hereditary estates (*vochiny*), contractual relations with the peasantry, etc.—that increasingly relied on the religious legitimacy of the Byzantine emperor to impose itself. Starting with the transfer of the Metropolitan see to Moscow in 1325 down to the marriage of Ivan III with Sophia Palaiologina in 1472, via the unilateral rejection of the Union with Rome in 1439 and the mythopoetical speculations on the ‘Third Rome’ that followed the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the lineage between Byzantium and Moscow was deliberately established along the lines of divine foresight, not of political imitation. The Third Rome was intrinsically different from the Second, and this is the reason why it would never replicate its fall.

The newness and radical originality of the Moscow regime notoriously struck foreign observers. It did so in such a negative manner that one can trace the notion of ‘oriental despotism’ to their written accounts that began to circulate in Western Europe from the early sixteenth century onwards. The most often cited passage comes from Herberstein’s, a diplomat of the Holy Roman Empire to the court of Basil III’s *Notes on Muscovite Affairs*:

[The Prince] uses his authority as much over ecclesiastics as laymen, and holds unlimited control over the lives and property of all his subjects: not one of his counsellors has sufficient authority to dare to oppose him, or even differ from him, on any subject. They openly confess that the will of the prince is the will of God, and that whatever the prince does he does by the will of God; on this account they call him God’s key-bearer and chamberlain, and in short they believe that he is the executor of the divine will. Thus if at any time petitions are presented on behalf of any captive, or with reference to any important business, the prince himself is accustomed to reply, ‘when God commands, he shall be liberated.’ In like manner also, if anyone enquires respecting some doubtful and uncertain matter, the common answer is, ‘God and the great prince know.’⁴⁰

Ascribing to the diffusion of hesychast spirituality the origin of ‘oriental despotism’ as an original type of political regime, sounds very much like a Western provocation aimed at belittling the positive contribution of Byzantine tradition to the formation of Modern Russia. But one forgets too easily that the notion of ‘oriental despotism’ in itself betrays how difficult it is for foreign minds to understand the real nature and inner logic of the regime they came to be confronted with. The implicitly negative value judgment contained in the observations of Herberstein and his peers might be due to their inability to appreciate the positive intuition that lay behind the new political order established by the Danilovich. In this context, ‘positive intuition’ does not imply a value judgement regarding the nature of this

⁴⁰ Vol.1 (London, 1851), 32.

regime; nor does it involve polemical innuendos against Western political tradition. What I have in mind is an intuition that, just as the guiding political insight associated with the Western type of democratic regime, is efficient because it has the capacity of bringing together the greatest number of citizens, with the purpose of having them willingly contribute to the welfare of the State as a whole. The question therefore reads: To what extent does the diffusion of hesychasm in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Russia help us to fathom what precisely eludes—and still mostly eludes—Western minds that grapple with the emergent Muscovite order; namely, the genius of the political intuition that presided over its creation and development?

The New Muscovite State: A 'Hesychastic' Social Contract

I wrote in the beginning that true hesychasts could hardly be politicians, but that the opposite formula was conceivable: Politicians may well find inspiration in the hesychast tradition. This is about transposing the dynamics of a disciple's path to God to the sphere of politics, integrating the process that leads to divinisation into the relationship between the ruler and its subjects, the mechanisms of legal commands and civic obedience. As we saw, the central insight of hesychast practice is the notion that the condition for welcoming the transforming will-energy of God is the surrendering of one's own private will-energy. This is a deliberate surrender of the will since it is done for the sake of achieving a higher degree of freedom—the sort of freedom that only union with God can bring forth. In Herberstein's account, all the citizens of Russia surrender their individual wills as they conform themselves to the will of the ruler. This is because the will of the ruler is taken to convey the will of God himself: 'They openly confess that the will of the prince is the will of God, and that whatever the prince does he does by the will of God'. In the realm of social organization, the private will of citizens does not only concern what they do but what they own. Citizens have private properties. But in a state where the ruler is 'God's key-bearer and chamberlain', as Heberstein writes, he is also the ultimate possessor of everything citizens possess, so that they may not entirely use their own property according to their private will—they know that their properties can be reclaimed by the ruler at anytime. Finally, citizens are not the ultimate owners of their very material existence itself—they surrender their fundamental urge to protect their lives, the very principle of a human being's private will, to the will of the ruler as to the will of God: '[The Prince]...holds unlimited control over the lives and property of all his subjects'.

From a material point of view, the condition of these citizens is not different from that of slaves, a category of people who are legally deprived of liberty of action, private possession, and mastery over their own existence, even if they are allowed to enjoy all of these privileges according to the revocable will of their masters. All historians of Medieval Russia observe that the advent of the new Muscovite regime

went with the use of the term *kholop* or *smerd*, i.e., peasant-slave, to designate all categories of citizens, from simple soldiers to boyars, whenever they interacted with the Great Prince.⁴¹ This linguistic custom did but gradually become a rule that would not tolerate exception. A grandee like Prince Kholsmkii could still call himself a 'servant (*slug*) of the Tsar' in his dealings with Ivan III (+1505) but he already applies the term '*kholop*' to himself when addressing Basil III, Ivan III's successor, Basil III (+1533). That these formulas were not pure rhetoric is witnessed by the behaviour of the same Basil III, whose manner of government was depicted by Herberstein. It is recorded that Basil once violently dismissed one of his closest boyars that had tried to express an opinion different than his, with the following words: 'Away, slave (*smerd*), I have no need of you!'. The contrast with Basil's great ancestor, Dmitri Donskoy, is striking when one recalls how the victor of Kulikovo addressed his boyars on his death-bed: 'With you I have reigned, with you I have preserved the land of Russia....I do not call you boyars but Princes over my land'.⁴²

There is no denying that the dismissal of the citizens' personal will or dominion over their lives and properties, their reduction to the condition of 'slaves' of the Tsar, characterise the fundamental change brought about by the enduring efforts of the Danilovichs to reform the traditional organisation of feudal Russia. The question is whether Russian private citizens *deliberately* submitted their will to that of their rulers. For the Western followers of Montesquieu, conscious and deliberate abandonment of one's freedom is almost impossible to conceive. R. Hellie, for instance, listed a few reasons that could explain this change without implying such a mindset. One of them is military coercion exerted over civil society. However, according to the same author, it appears that there was little of it at the time, just as there was little sign of rebellion, on the side of the powerful, against State violence deprived of legitimacy.⁴³ On the contrary, the primary reason for the rise of the Muscovite Principality was its considerable power of attraction that made independent princes rally to it in large numbers. Another reason stated by Hellie, along with R. Pipes, has to do with the patrimonial regime promoted by the Muscovite principality. In a State where almost all land properties ultimately belonged to the ruler and where the elites received all their assignments, as well as their material benefits, from his benevolence, it was more difficult to rebel. But this explanation rests on a confusion between cause and consequence. The question reads: Why did the elites accept to give up their private hereditary properties, *votshiny*, in the first place, being granted instead a *pomestie*, a land estate that they were supposed to take care of on behalf of

⁴¹ I will not attempt to specify the notions of '*kholop*' or '*smerd*' from a sociological point of view. As will be said later, I take these notions to have a metaphorical meaning that loses sight of their origin in the diverse and ever-changing context of Medieval Russian social organisation.

⁴² Regarding these episodes, see for instance N. L. Pavlov-Silvanskii, *Feudalism in Russia*, in Russian *Феодализм в России* (Sankt-Petersburg, 1907), 119.

⁴³ Precisely, Hellie asks why *elites* did not rebel? See 'Why Did the Muscovite Elite Not Rebel?', *Russian History* 25, no. 1-2 (1998): 155-62.

a State conceived as one large, all-inclusive and personal *votshina* or *otshina*? Why did members of the elite accept their *de facto* metamorphosis into civil servants at a time when they still could have avoided it? The third reason stated by Hellie is the aura of a ruler that, with the support of the Church hierarchy, claimed to be the voice of God. True, believing such doctrine might be a deception, but clinging to a deceptive belief remains a conscious and deliberate act on the part of those who believe; in no way is it a coerced form of behaviour.⁴⁴ Other scholars, such as M. Poe, have argued that the 'Master-Slave' system of interaction between the Muscovite ruler and his subjects, while originating in the patrimonial type of policy promoted by the Danilovichi, rapidly tended to become a purely ceremonial habit deprived of substance.⁴⁵ The truth, according to Poe, is that, contrary to real slaves, Russian citizens did enjoy private property and a considerable liberty of action. However, the difference between, on the one hand, those whose legal status was that of slave—either permanent or temporary, either as a result of violence or out of their own initiatives—and, on the other hand, free citizens, whatever be their social rank, never ceased to be a fundamental feature of Muscovite society under the rule of the Danilovichi. The question therefore reads: Why did free citizens of Russia ever embraced a type of relationship to their ruler that was, at least externally, modelled on the relations between 'true slaves' and their masters? What was the *rationale* behind it?

We saw earlier that, in the hesychast tradition, slavery is not necessarily a bad thing. According to Cantacuzene, there is a most excellent kind of slavery, a slavery 'greater and more eminent than any kind of freedom' that is plainly the opposite of the slavery of sin; namely, the slavery-in-Christ, that consists of deliberately 'discarding any will of one's own' and submit to 'some divine man capable of leading to God'.⁴⁶ From a hesychastic perspective, the surrendering of one's will to the benefit of a stranger's will is a perfectly rational gesture as long as it is the condition to reaching a higher state of freedom, the freedom-of-God associated with divinisation. Manifestly, the Danilovichi were from the very beginning, familiar with the traditional Byzantine way of designating Christians, and especially members of the Church hierarchy, as 'slaves of God', *δοῦλοι Θεοῦ*.⁴⁷ Far from the abasement of

⁴⁴ If there is currently any North Korean citizen who sincerely believes that there can be no better head of State than Kim-Jong-Un, then this citizen has a few good reasons to deliberately entrust the ruler with his life and personal properties.

⁴⁵ 'What Did Russians Mean When they Called Themselves "Slaves of the Tsar"?', *Slavic Review* 57, no. 3 (1998): 585–608.

⁴⁶ *Ἰωάννου Στ Καντακουζηνού Κατὰ Ἰουδαίων, Λόγοι Ἐννέα*, Or.1, l.50.

⁴⁷ See G.W.H. Lampe's *Patristic Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), art. 'doulos', B.2. On the manuscript of a Gospel going back to the year 1340, one reads the inscription: 'This Gospel was copied in the city of Moscow that is on the river Dvina on the order of the slave of God monk Ananias'. Likewise, Ivan Kalita's last will (*dukhovnaja gramota*), probably prior to the Moscow Gospel by one year, opens with the following words: 'In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, I, the sinful and miserable slave of God Ivan, write this Testament', see N.S. Borisov, *The Political Activity of the Princes of Moscow, 13th-14th c.*, in Russian, *Политика Московских князей, конец XIII—первая половина XIV в.*, (Moscow: MGU

material slavery, becoming a slave *in this sense* was such an honour that it could not go without the avowal of one's unworthiness, even if one happened to be Prince of Moscow.⁴⁸ But why and how did this insight become prevalent in the political strategy of the Muscovite rulers during the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries?

To understand how this 'slavery-in-God' became a political concept designating the universal condition of the Prince's subjects, we need to briefly recall a few elements from early Medieval Russia's inseparable cultural and political contexts. There is an ancient Russian use of the term *volja* that is both specifically political and axiologically positive. It is the equivalent of *samovlastie*, ἀὐτεξούσιον, of the power of self-determination, which was predominantly used in the theological sphere: 'Man was created in the image of God, free to determine himself (*samovlasten*) either for the good or for the bad.'⁴⁹ At the same time, by indicating the fact of not being submitted to any social authority, of not needing to refer to anyone as to deciding about the direction of one's existence, the term *volja* preserved something of an originally pagan dimension of absolute boundlessness. It defined the very mode of existence of the Russian *bogatyry*, the wandering knight-warriors that gave birth to numberless tales of Russian folklore. It was the main value on which drew the *drujiniki*, the companions-in-arms of a prince—and later whoever from among the nobility would decide to join the service of a particular prince. 'Between us, princes, and free (*vol'ny*) boyars and servants, there is freedom (*volja*)'—this clause applied to all contracts of service and guaranteed that a noble serviceman could annul the contract at will, possibly transferring himself with his own troops to the service of another prince.⁵⁰ Not only would individuals define their social and political status in reference to their *volja*, but also collective political bodies such as the Republic of Novgorod. The most striking illustration of this is probably the custom of the Princes, protectors of the city, to literally 'kiss the cross on the freedom (*volja*) of Novgorod' as a sign that they would respect the administrative autonomy that its citizens had acquired for themselves.⁵¹ However, from the moment of the Tatar conquest (1240), the negative sides of such *volja* as guarantor of political cohesion became manifest. The mid-thirteenth-century *Tale of the Battle on the Kalka River*

University Press, 1999), 329.

⁴⁸ The same goes for the famous *chelobitie*, the gesture of bowing one's head so low before the sovereign that it touched the ground, becoming the general term designating the action of addressing a request to the Tsar. This mimesis of the condition of slave, in which Herberstein saw the clear manifestation of the totalitarian nature of the Muscovite State (*Notes upon Russia*, 125), can be understood as a secularised version of monastic *metanoies* or prostrations.

⁴⁹ Creed from the twelfth to thirteenth centuries, , quoted in G. P. Fedotov's *The Russian Religious Mind*, in Russian, *Русская религиозность* (Moscow: Martis, 2001), 202.

⁵⁰ Quoted in Pavlov- Silvianskii, *Feudalism in Russia*, 72.

⁵¹ 'A.D. 1229, A.M. 6737. Prince Mikhail came from Chernigov to Thomas's Week, and the men of Novgorod were glad at their choice; and he kissed the Cross on the whole liberty of Novgorod, *na vsej voli Novgororodstoj*, and on all the charters of Yaroslav'. *The First Chronicle of Novgorod*, in Russian, *Новгородская первая летопись* (Sankt-Petersburg, 1888), 230. There are a number of references to the *volja* of Novgorod throughout the Chronicle.

describes how hatred and envy between the Russian Princes led to the ruin of the defensive campaign against the Tatars. The fact that each Prince would act according to his own will to the detriment of the common cause repeatedly doomed efforts to get rid of the Tatar yoke. That each boyar could withdraw from the service a Prince as soon as his own interests would cease to coincide with that of his Master resulted in continuous political instability. The same can be said of Novgorod's political life in the fourteenth century, torn apart between the mutually exclusive interests of the very social classes that were supposed to preside over its destiny in unison.⁵²

Men are free, but when they freely use their will to satisfy their passions, they lose their *samovlastie*, their power of self-determination, becoming slaves of sin.⁵³ The fact of doing one's will becomes a vector of personal and collective chaos.⁵⁴ In the sphere of politics, the clashes of individual or clan ambitions led to arbitrary oppression and social disintegration. Among other negative consequences, they resulted in the loss of Russia's traditional *samovlastie* and the enduring political enslavement associated with the Tatar yoke.

The hesychast remedy to the enslavement of the will by passions is its deliberate surrendering to the will of a divine man; the complete espousal of this foreign human will as if coming out of God himself. The hierarchs of the Church who, throughout the Tatar yoke, conveyed to Russian princes the concerns of Byzantium regarding the inseparably political and religious unity of the Land, supplied the Moscow principality with the divinised concept of imperial power that went back

⁵² See V.O. Kliuchevskii on Novgorod's social feud, *Course of Russian History*, in Russian *Курс русской истории*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Mysl', 1988), 93–94.

⁵³ Traditional optimism regarding the fundamentally free nature of human beings was balanced by a pessimistic view regarding the possibility of using this freedom for good after the Fall. The twelfth to thirteenth-century creed that describes the inalienable freedom of a man created in the image of God (see footnote 48) adds: '[Man] was cast out of the abundance of grace and heavenly life; he became prey to death and corruption, changing into a slave of Satan'. Answering to Sigismund II, king of Poland, in 1567, Ivan the Terrible writes: 'You, our brother write that God created man giving him freedom (*vol'nost'*) and honour. But elsewhere what you write strays away from the truth. There it is also written that God gave to Adam, the first man that he created free (*samovlasten*) and noble, the commandment of not eating of the Tree. How terrible the judgment that fell upon him....Do you not see that freedom is presently nowhere to be found, so that your writing thoroughly strays from the truth?'. *Epistles of Ivan The Terrible*, ed. V.P. Andrianov-Peretz (Moscow: Russian Academy of Sciences, 1951), 242 (translation mine).

⁵⁴ That the very freedom granted to human beings as to the determination of their will could become the reason of their damnation is a recurrent theme of Russian Medieval spiritual culture: 'Sinners have an advantage. God lets them act according to their will, *противу изволению их бог им попусти*, and because of that did not allow them heavenly food'; Slavic Prologue of the *Cheti Minei*, Sept–Dec., in *Monumenta from Ancient Russian Religious Didactic Literature*, in Russian *Памятники древнерусской церковно-учительной литературы*, ed. A.I. Ponomareva (Sankt-Petersbourg, 1896), 107. The term *svoevol'stvo* that designates the ability to do one's will, is still viewed positively in the sixteenth century translation of *Barlaam and Josaphat*, where it stands for the Greek *αὐτεξούσιον*, a term that, as we saw, was sometimes also translated as *samovlastie* (see footnote 48). However, a manuscript of the fourteenth century (the *Rules of Metropolitan Ioann*, where it renders *αὐτοβούλως*) already bears witness to the negative semantic register that will become prevalent in Russian culture: 'act according to one's whim', 'not submit oneself to any authority', 'transgressing the law', etc. On *svoevol'stvo* and cognate terms, see for instance *The Dictionary of Russian Language, 11th–17th c.*, in Russian, *Словарь русского языка XI – XVII вв.*, vol.23, (Moscow: Nauka, 1996).

to the era of Justinian: 'For in body the king is like unto all men, but in power he is like unto God Almighty' (Joseph Volotsky).⁵⁵ However, if there is a political genius specific the Danilovich dynasty—and I am convinced there is—it is about conceiving the concrete means and steps that would induce individual Russian actors as well as collective bodies to surrender their autarchic and mutually conflicting *svoevolje* to the one supreme and all-provident *volja* of the Great Prince.⁵⁶ Where there used to be a free contract between the Prince and the members of the elite, preserving the private possessions of the contractors and setting conditions to their mutual commitment, a personal and absolute exchange of power and duties took shape, gradually becoming a law that would not suffer exception. Members of the elite gave *everything* to the Prince—that is, their right to govern their possessions, goods, estates as well as men, according to *their private will*—so that the Prince might give them back everything—goods, estates and men—to administrate *according to his official and governmental will*. The progressive restrictions and eventually abolition of their archaic right to leave the service of the Prince at their convenience, a policy that led to *de facto* transformation of their estates in domains of the Crown, the progressive formation of a sophisticated hierarchy among them (*mestnichestvo*), the concomitant development of a State administration, all these reforms that characterise the government of the Danilovich made the evolution toward a personal and absolute type of relationship between the Tsar and his subjects irreversible. Kissing of the Cross, a symbolic gesture that used to be a sign of equality between all those who complied with it, became the very expression of the voluntary and complete subordination of the grandees and political bodies to the Great Prince.⁵⁷ This new social contract between the once-independent nobility and the Great Prince rebounded to the administrators, peasants, and even to the *khology-smerry* of the nobility as these servicemen became *de facto* property of the Tsar through their masters' oath of

⁵⁵ I quoted earlier (see note 34) Metropolitan Daniel's justification of the Prince's absolute authority: 'those who fear earthly rulers will not devour one another like fish do'.

⁵⁶ In 1478, after a series of humiliations, the notabilities of Novgorod, the proud republic, are summoned to 'kiss the Cross' of the Great Prince 'on the legal rescript (*gramota*)', that he drafted, so that their homeland will finally 'submit in all to the will (*volja*) of the Great Prince', see S. Soloviev, *The History of Russia from the Most Ancient Times*, in Russian, *История России с древнейших времен*, vol. 5 (Google books reprint, 2017), 37–40 (quoting from the *St Sophy Manuscript*). In 1510, when Basil III orders that the bell-tower, the symbol of Pskov republic's former independence, be pulled down, the citizens of Pskov are described as—literally—'crying over their past and their [lost] will (*volja*)', *ibid.*, 339.

⁵⁷ The gesture was very well-known in Novgorod, but was used in contexts such as political assemblies and courts of justice where everyone was required to acknowledge God's ultimate authority in case of dis-sension, see R. Hellie on Novgorod's judicial charter in *Cambridge History of Russia*, ed. M. Peerie, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 372. In Muscovy, meanwhile, the custom of having nobles suspected of wishing to leave service kiss the Cross as a token of fidelity to the Great Prince became the origin of a system of personal obedience that was superimposed on previous laws and customs, eventually overshadowing them entirely, see M. Diakonov, *The Power of Muscovite Sovereigns*, 182. The fact is that Great Princes of Moscow were reluctant to officialise the abolition of the ancestral right to resign and leave of their nobles and administrators, lest the news would stem the inflow of servants leaving the service of other princes to their benefit.

fidelity. Even if not everyone became a civil-servant, all became citizens of a national State through the duties and rights that stemmed from the will of the sovereign. Work on behalf of a prince or boyar, whether based on life-long commitments or temporary contracts, served a purpose that was no longer exclusively defined by the private interests of their local employers as it necessarily reflected decisions dictated by the Tsar's concern for the good of the whole nation. Through an obedience ultimately vowed to the Tsar, simple people were now working for themselves—for their own material and spiritual welfare—just as a novice hesychast knows that embracing the will of an elder will eventually result in his own spiritual advantage.⁵⁸ In some respect, they saw themselves as contributing to shaping the destiny of their country on the same level as the members of the social classes that were above them, merchants, clerics, as well as nobles.⁵⁹

Whatever specific measures of coercion were taken by the Danilovichi to guarantee that this evolution would not be stalled, the fact remains that their policy was immediately perceived by a number of princes, boyars, and members of lower social classes as *the* remedy to the chronic weakness of the ancient *Rus'*, the territory once bequeathed to the offshoot of Vladimir the Great. From this point of view, V.O. Kliuchevskii was essentially right when he claimed that the rule of the Danilovichi and the progressive gathering of lands around Moscow went together with a powerful surge of patriotism.⁶⁰ The deliberate surrendering of their political will by each of the members of the rising State was the condition according to which they would be free as a whole body politic, a *samovlastnoe gosudarstvo*—in what was to become one word and enduring concept: a *samoderjavie* (autocracy).⁶¹ What is most difficult for Western minds to conceive is a collective capacity of self-determination that does not rest on taking the political views of each member of the State into consideration,

⁵⁸ The sixteenth century witnesses a remarkable growth of a sense of citizenship among the lower classes of society, as a consequence of the Tsars' policy. With the establishment of *vojevody*, the Princes of Moscow tried to assume control over the use of power by their local *namestniki*. In matters of justice for instance, the constitution of courts formed by locally elected members (*gubnye golovy*) was promoted. The *zemskie sobory*, extraordinary parliaments summoned by the Tsars, gathered representatives from all walks of life throughout the sixteenth century.

⁵⁹ In the *Belozerskaja gubnaja gramota* (1569), a document related to the establishment of justice courts, Ivan the Terrible introduces himself as the 'Great Prince of all Russia' and immediately thereafter starts listing out what, or rather who, the notion of 'all Russia' includes; that is, 'princes, boyars, peasants, huntsmen, fishermen, beaver-trappers...and simply everyone without exception'. The Prince is one with the whole nation he represents.

⁶⁰ *Course of Russian History*, vol. 2, Lesson 21, 5–26.

⁶¹ A passage from *The Conversation at Valaam monastery* (*Valaamskaja beseda*), a work from the middle of the sixteenth century that originates in monastic circles that sided with Nil Sorkii's 'non-possessors' party, clearly implies that the reason for the establishment of the State lies in the condition of a human will inherently non-free or enslaved by sin: 'Many today in the world claim that God created man master of his will (*samovol'ny*). But if God had created man free (*samovlasten*), he would not have established Tsars, princes, and other civil powers; he would not have distinguished between the different bodies invested with political authority (*ordy*). God created the pious Tsars, the great princes, and other political powers in order to exert control [over evil desires] in this world and on behalf of the salvation of our souls', quoted in Valdenberg, *Russian Medieval Teaching on the Limits of Tsars' Power*, 187 (translation mine).

but on the ability of *one* man to formulate where the interest of the whole nation lies. Here, self-determination refers to the universal belief that the commands of this one man, far from aiming at satisfying his personal desires, manifest the *real will* of the nation as an organic body. Another thinker affiliated to the 'State historians', B. N. Mironov, has more recently formulated the content of the new social contract in a remarkably concise manner:

Surrendering its own will to the benefit of the Sovereign, the nation (*narod*) embraced the authority of a superior, divine will by the same token. But the Tsar himself would surrender his private will and conceive his [royal] service as a work of obedience (*poslushanie*). *The power of the sovereign was understood as an onus that God had laid upon him, so that in no manner could he shy away from it.*⁶²

From this perspective, the slave of the Tsar is true master of himself as he obeys himself when he obeys the Tsar.⁶³ Just as a novice hesychast striving to recover his 'real will' or self-mastery (*samovlastie*) by surrendering a private will (*svoevolie*) prone to sinning to that of a 'divine man', likewise citizens, each of them individually substituting the Tsar's commands to that of their egoistic will, would eventually enjoy a condition of collective political self-determination. And just as in the Hesychast teaching on divinisation, this fullness of self-determination could not be dissociated from a state of intimate union with God. The fact is that, from the moment the Great Prince of Moscow was enshrouded with the divinized aura of the Byzantine *basileus*, he was given a role of spiritual father, guiding his subjects, individually and collectively, to salvation.⁶⁴ This aspect of spiritual direction was foreign to the traditional

⁶² *Social History of Russia*, in Russian, *Социальная история России*, vol. 2 (Sankt-Petersburg: Dmitri Bulanin, 2000), 117 (emphasis of the author).

⁶³ This was expressed with the utmost clarity by Iurii Krizanic (+1683) in his time: 'To be Tsar is to serve God, but to be the slave of the Tsar of one's own people, *this is honorable and is actually a kind of freedom*' (emphasis mine), see L. M. Mordukhovich, 'Manuscript materials from Iu. Krizanic', in Russian, 'Из рукописного наследия Ю. Крижанича', *Istoricheskii arkhiv* 1 (1958): 185.

⁶⁴ I earlier mentioned Joseph Volotskii's implicit quotation from Agapetos' sixth-century *Ekthesis* regarding the divine nature of the Tsar (see footnote 37). Few scholars have paid attention to the immediate context of this quotation: 'You who have received the sceptre of stardom from God, see to it that you satisfy Him who has given it to you, *and you are about to answer to God*, who gave you power. [Here follows the quotation from Agapetos]. But as God wants to save all people, *so the Tsar also wants to save all that has been given to him from all spiritual and bodily woes*, you...' (emphasis mine). Nowhere in Agapetos' *Ekthesis* is it said that the divine status of the *basileus* implies a concern for the spiritual salvation of his subjects. Rather, what is at stake there is the administration of the State according to justice. The notion that the Tsar is responsible for the salvation of his people is repeatedly emphasised by Ivan IV in his *Correspondence* with Prince Kurbskii. According to Ivan, the difference between him and 'priests' (Ivan has obviously monks in mind) is that while the latter are busy seeking salvation for themselves, a Tsar has the spiritual care of the whole nation: 'It is one thing to save one's own soul, but it is another to have the care of many souls and bodies: it is one thing to abide in fasting; it is another to live together in communal life', *The Correspondence between Prince A. M. Kurbsky and Tsar Ivan IV of Russia, 1564–1579*, ed. J. L. I. Fennell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955), 57–59. The concern for the souls of those who are entrusted to

Byzantine political theology that was based on Justinian's 'division of tasks' between State and Church matters (*symphonia*). It witnesses the 'hesychastic adaptation' of the political order in early modern Russia. From this point of view, it is not wrong to define the State that arose under the heavy and steady hand of the Danilovichs as a 'popular', 'national', or even 'democratic Monarchy' as a number of Russian 'State historians' did.⁶⁵ In no way is the existence of official or unofficial counter-powers the reason why Russian citizens put a brave face on the rise of the new Muscovite power, as the representatives from the Harvard School would have it. For that matter, it does not mean that popular expressions for the regime were fake or coerced, as a more conservative line of Western thinkers have been claiming. It is the very nature of an absolute power—a power without any institutional counter-power—that captured the enthusiasm of Russian citizens as they recognized in it both a medium of collective empowerment and of personal salvation.⁶⁶ As Aristotle taught:

There is another sort of monarchy, examples of which are kingships existing among some of the barbarians. The power possessed by all of these resembles that of tyrannies, but they govern according to law and are hereditary; for because the barbarians are more servile in their nature than the Greeks, and

him, the responsibility before God for their fate, are features that define a spiritual father in the hesychastic tradition as well as in its Russian popularised version: '...submit in everything to your spiritual fathers. They exercise care over our souls and will answer about us on the day of the Great Judgment (*Strashny Sud*)'; *Domostroi*, ed. D.V. Kolesov., 141 (translation mine).

⁶⁵ According to Kliuchevskii 'narodnost', the concept of Russia as a one people-nation, is the 'deep understanding' that accompanied the Danilovichs' strategy of territorial expansion, giving to the Moscow principality a character completely different from rival Russian entities, see *Course of Russian History*, vol.2, 107. S.F. Platonov explains that the thoroughly patrimonial nature of the Moscow State did not exclude a dimension that he calls 'democratic': 'If the power of the Sovereign rested on the consciousness of popular masses who saw in the Tsar and Great Prince of all Russia an expression of the nation's unity and a symbol of national independence, the democratic character of this power becomes evident, as well as its independence from any other private authority or force in the country. In this manner the power in Muscovy proved to be both an absolute and democratic power', *Essays on the History of Troubles in the Muscovite State 16th-17th c.*, in Russian, *Очерки по истории смуты в Московском государстве XVI-XVII вв.*, (Moscow: Pamyatniki istoricheskoi mysli, 1995), 87 (translation mine). During the reign of Ivan IV the Terrible, lower classes were for the first time given a status of active political subjects as the Tsar sought their support in order to bring down the power of the boyars. V.R. Vipper spoke of a 'democratic monarchy' in this context—'populistic' would probably be more accurate, see *Ivan the Terrible*, in Russian, *Иван Грозный*, ed. D.M. Volodikin (Moscow: University Ross. Akad. Obrazovaniia, 1998), 112. But Ivan's dictatorial populism laid bare the very essence of the Danilovichs' concept of State: those who obey are *in reality* (i.e., through the devoted care of the Tsar) those in command.

⁶⁶ With his *oprishnina*, Ivan IV pushed this political logic to the extreme: citizens had to trust that the Tsar was the interpreter of God's will and had only the best interest of the country in mind at the very moment when his decisions seemed to lose sight of elementary justice and systematically wreck the prosperity of the nation. In his correspondence with Ivan, prince Kurbskii vents a resentment that, beyond the vilification of Ivan's policy, questions the legitimacy of the whole political order associated with the Danilovichs; he blames Ivan for tacitly forcing his grantees to kiss the Cross; he remembers the time when 'Yuri of Moscow in the Horde dared to raise his hand against Mikhail Prince of Tver'; he speaks of 'the immemorably bloodthirsty family' of Ivan; etc., see the *Correspondence between Prince A. M. Kurbsky and Tsar Ivan IV of Russia*, ed. Fennell, 207, 211, 213. But Kurbskii voiced his criticism from a land of exile, knowing that frontal opposition to the Tsar had no chance of success in Russia itself.

the Asiatics than the Europeans, they endure despotic rule without any resentment.⁶⁷

The Stagirite was right and Montesquieu wrong: in some countries, a majority of citizens may actively come to support the absolute rule of one individual over them. However, invoking the existence a 'servile nature' might miss the reason behind this state-of-affairs. True, to Western eyes, the type of regime established by the Danilovichs gave the impression of a political enslavement of everyone and everything. But there was a tacit *rationale* behind the general acceptance of this evolution. It drew on the spiritual teachings that began spreading to Russia, pervading all levels of society in the aftermath of Palamas' canonisation and the final victory of the hesychast party in Byzantium. Just like becoming the slave of God, becoming the slave of the Tsar came with an empowerment, as it meant for grantees the end of political chaos and for simple people freedom from the obligation to serve private interests. To all, the service of the Tsar gave a sense of purpose and unity. Universal obedience to his will was the way through which a pacified nation-society would strive towards its own material prosperity and spiritual good, each class contributing to the commonweal according to its social status and economic function. The Western world will probably never cease to ask about Russians the question that Montesquieu famously formulated about Persians; namely, *how can one be a Persian?* Referring to the notion of 'political hesychasm', in the sense developed above, is probably not the only way to solve the mystery that has to do with Russians being Russians, but I cannot help being convinced that it is definitely part of the answer.

⁶⁷ *Politics* 1285a, ed. H. Rackham, vol. 21 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1944), <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>.

THE AUTHORITY OF EXPERIENCE IN THE HESYCHAST SAINTS ACCORDING TO ST GREGORY PALAMAS: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ONTOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY REVISITED¹

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Does a direct experience of God and the associated grace-filled transformation make people infallible, or can even saints still be wrong when they interpret who can be saved and who cannot, what forms of life people should choose, which political systems, figures and positions they should support? This article examines what St Gregory Palamas says on the nature of the saints' experience and knowledge, how stability and progress are interrelated in his notion of deification, and what the consequences are of his differentiation between knowledge coming from above and natural knowledge.

Among the reasons for the appreciation of St Gregory Palamas in twentieth and twenty-first century theology is undoubtedly his emphasis on the real presence of God in creation, and, in particular, in the human experience of being reached, purified, and transformed by God, who through his grace joins to himself whom he wishes. It could be argued that his essence-energy distinction, or his accounts of the psychosomatic techniques of prayer, all serve this one goal: to defend the reality of divine-human communion. Preserving divine simplicity, on the one hand, and the possibility of human deification, on the other, Palamas argued that the eschatological divine fullness of life can irrupt into this life, as in the case of Christ's Incarnation. Through Christ, it can transform people who are found worthy to see this fullness in terms of the uncreated deifying light. In this article, I will examine the epistemological consequences of the direct experiences of and participation in God. My basic question will be: according to Palamas, does the experience of the deifying light make holy men and women infallible in their theological statements, in their discernment of what are, and what are not, good morals or even good political decisions?

To answer this question, the different layers that we need to be aware of in Palamas' experiential theology will first be considered. Then, the conditions under which

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Palamas speaks about a permanent transfiguration of the saints into the likeness of God will be explored: how he links this transformation to Christ, and in which sense the uncreated deifying light cooperates with human desire and effort. From there we will move to the centrality of the heart and the role of human growth. Finally, the impact of the participatory knowledge of God on orientation in the world will be addressed. We will return to the question of the relation between a realist ontology and epistemology in Palamas. In the conclusion, we will also pay attention to some weak points in Palamas' approach, including the application of his theological principles to his attitudes towards others, especially towards his opponents. With that in mind, we will ask what we can learn from Palamas' experiential theology emphasizing both the unity of and the difference between grace, being and knowing.

Different Layers of Experiential Theology

Palamas claims that 'knowledge of God by experience comes from the grace that grants man the likeness of God'.² This is a starting point for his theology.³ And if we want to take it seriously, we need to bear in mind what Nikolaos Loudovikos stresses as a necessary attitude: 'to respect what we do not possess and consent to learn from Palamas'.⁴ This does not exclude a critical attitude to Palamas' theological interpretation and practical attitudes that emerged from the experiences he had with the holy hesychasts during his monastic life and from his own experience of God. To speak of experientially-based theology adequately,⁵ however, we need to take the testified experience first as a given, and follow its inner logic.

For Palamas, experience has several different layers. First, it is the experience of the holy hesychasts, from whom he learned the life of asceticism and prayer, and whose positions he wished to defend. These include diverse figures. We find among them Theoleptos of Philadelphia, a monk of Athos, later metropolitan bishop of Philadelphia, a firm opponent of the council of Lyons and of reunion with the Roman Catholic Church,⁶ whose spiritual guidance Palamas experienced in his youth, and who, like Palamas himself later on, combined the ascetic life with ecclesial and

² Gregory Palamas, *Triad* III.3.13. I have made use of the English translation by Nicholas Gendle from the selection from *The Triads* in 'The Classics of Western Spirituality' series, in Gregory Palamas, *The Triads*, ed. John Meyendorff (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1983), 109.

³ Basil Krivochéine has already pointed out, that 'the starting point of his [Palamas'] theologising was his own spiritual experience, not only the study of the holy books of the holy Fathers'. Basil Krivochéine, 'The Ascetic and Theological Teaching of Gregory Palamas', *Eastern Church Quarterly* 4 (1938, reprinted in 1954): 1–67, here 48.

⁴ Nikolaos Loudovikos, 'Initiating the Discussion. For the Fall and Rising of Many: St Gregory of Palamas at the Crossroad of Interpretations', *Analogia* 3 (2017): 1–7; at 3.

⁵ Elisabeth Behr Sigel confirms the importance of such an approach, writing: 'True theology is an experiential knowledge of God'—Elisabeth Behr Sigel, *Le lieu du coeur: Initiation à la spiritualité de l'Eglise Orthodoxe* (Paris: Cerf, 1989), 66.

⁶ See Alice-Mary Talbot, 'Theoleptos', in Alexander Kazhdan, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 2056–57.

political engagement. Then there was Saint Nicodemus of Vatopedi, who came to Mount Athos from a monastic settlement near Chalcedon, and who lived ‘*in fasting and vigil and sobriety and prayer without ceasing*’.⁷ Palamas joined Nicodemus in his hermitage near the monastery for the last three years of his life. After that, in a hermitage called Glossia, Palamas lived with famous hesychasts like St Gregory of Sinai, who brought a method of prayer of the heart from the monastery of St Catherine on Mount Sinai and from Crete to Athos, gathering round himself a circle of disciples, including the future Patriarch Kallistos. This circle played a significant role in the hesychast controversy, even if Gregory of Sinai himself did not take part in it. In 1330, he left Athos and founded a monastery in Parosia, from where hesychasm spread further to Slavic lands.⁸

When Palamas was asked by other monks on Athos to defend their way of prayer and their understanding of grace and participation in God, these would be some of the examples of holy hesychasts he would have had in mind.⁹ The experiential basis of Palamas’ theology includes his experience with them, their experience of God witnessed to him and to others, their interpretation of the experiences of others testified to in the tradition, as well as his own experience of God interpreted through the prism of tradition. Thus, in other words, we could say that the experiential basis of Palamas’ theology is both direct and mediated. It includes direct experience of God and the hermeneutics of tradition.

This direct experience is joined to tradition in two ways. Even where Palamas speaks from his own experience, this experience is grasped through concepts borrowed from the tradition. The experience of others goes back to the Scriptures and the tradition of the fathers, but it includes also the saints Palamas knew personally. The link to tradition does not in any way minimise the importance of the direct experience of God. However, when spoken about, this experience is mediated. Palamas’ experiential theology consists of these different layers of claims to directness and mediation of the experience of God. And while there is a difference if one speaks from one’s own experience of God or out of an experience testified by others, in Palamas’ theology we do not always know which is which. But we do know that he inhabited the world he wrote about, and in this sense, his knowledge of that world, its spiritual practices, struggles associated with them, and encounters of transfiguring grace ground his theology.

⁷ Georgios Martzelos, ‘Saint Nicodemus of Vatopedi, Elder and Teacher of Saint Gregory Palamas’, accessed 16/1/2018, published at <http://pemptousia.com/2014/07/saint-nicodemus-elder-and-teacher-of-st-gregory-palamas-the-monastery%E2%80%99s-saints/>.

⁸ See Yannis Spiteris, *Řehoř Palama (1296–1359): milost a zkušenost* (Olomouc: Refugium, 1998), 22–23.

⁹ See Grégoire Palamas, *Défense des saints hésychastes: Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes*, I–II, ed. Jean Meyendorff (Louvain: Spicilegium Sacrum Louvainense, Études et documents, fasc. 30, 1959).

Deifying Light and Christocentric Holiness

Now, direct experience of God comes from uncreated grace. According to Palamas, it transforms some people permanently, making them 'receptive of deifying grace',¹⁰ granting them the likeness of God in the 'deification that endures'.¹¹ In support of this position, he cites St Gregory Nazianzen, saying that God purifies people who desire him to such a degree that, 'He creates men of divine character, conversing with them as with friends with those who have attained this state;... uniting Himself as God with gods'.¹² Understanding grace as an uncreated energy of God, as uncreated light, has Christological foundations. Christ, the incarnated divine Logos, both is and gives the light. In John's Prologue we read: 'In him was life and the life was the light of men' (John 1:4). Those who believe in Christ, with this power of life and light, and who receive him, John calls the 'children of God'. They 'were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God' (John 1:13). Palamas draws on this Johannine understanding, according to which being the children of light means being rooted in relationship to Christ.¹³ As participation in the Kingdom of Heaven, such a relationship opens and involves being made capable of beholding the divine radiance of Christ.¹⁴

This eschatological vision is, for Palamas, not just reserved for the afterlife. He defends the claim that the uncreated light irrupts into this life. The prime example is the transfiguring encounter with this light on Mount Tabor,¹⁵ where Peter, John, and James were counted worthy to see Christ transformed by the light.¹⁶ The light goes on to appear to saints throughout the ages, and it is of particular importance for Palamas to stress that this very light, uncreated and deifying, is central to the spiritual experience of the holy hesychasts.¹⁷ As Mantzaridis summarises, 'The light

¹⁰ Palamas, *Triad* III.3.12; *The Triads*, 109.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.* He refers to St Gregory Nazianzen *Homily* 45.3 (PG 36:625C–628A).

¹³ See John 12:36.

¹⁴ See Gregory Palamas, *Homily* 34 (PG 151:432C).

¹⁵ The identification of the Mount of Transfiguration with Mount Tabor appears already in Origen in the third century. From the fourth century it became a pilgrim site, and during the Byzantine period churches dedicated to the holy event were built there.

¹⁶ See Matt 17:1–9; Mark 9:2–9; Both Matthew and Mark place the story just after Jesus's saying that there are some 'standing here', who would see—according to Matthew 'the Son of man coming in his kingdom', according to Mark 'that the kingdom of God has come with power'—before 'tasting death' (Matt 16:28; Mark 9:2).

¹⁷ Palamas shows that the transfiguring light illuminated not only the apostles on the mountain, but the saints throughout the ages who have had a share in this light, as they are with Christ (1 Thess 4:17). For him, Moses was radiant with the light when he descended from the encounters with the Lord (Exod 34:33–35), but as we read in 2 Corinthians, Moses had to 'put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not see the end of the fading splendour' (3:13). In those who 'turn to the Lord', the veil is taken away, and the Spirit permits them to behold the glory of the Lord with 'unveiled face', while being changed into his likeness, from one degree of glory to another (2 Cor 4:16–18). The Spirit brings along a realised eschatology, as the light illuminating and transforming the saints; it is the very light illuminating the new Jerusalem, it is the glory of God and the Lamb (John 21:23–24; 22:5). See Grégoire Palamas, *Triad* III.1.10–11, in Grégoire Palamas, *Défense des saints hésychastes: Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes*, vol. 2, ed. Jean Meyendorff, (Louvain: Spicilegium Sacrum Louvainense, Études et documents, fasc. 30, 1959),

of Mount Tabor is also that seen by the hesychasts in their mystical experiences, and in the age to come all saints will behold it'.¹⁸ He sees Palamas' position in line with the previous tradition, which interprets Christ's transfiguration in terms of realised eschatology, and identifies the light of transfiguration with the Kingdom of Heaven.¹⁹ He says that, for Palamas, 'the coming of the Kingdom of God is not a question of movement from one point of space to another, but of revelation. The Kingdom of God is present everywhere. If the believer is suitably prepared, the glory of God's Kingdom is revealed to him by God's grace'.²⁰

Speaking of human holiness—in particular, the holiness of the hesychasts, whose practices, experiences, and theology he defended—Palamas continued in the tradition of a synergic anthropology.²¹ The stress in that tradition on divine-human cooperation enabled him to hold at the same time the primacy of grace and the value of asceticism,²² the human effort invested into the process of purification. And again, Palamas demonstrates that such understanding has a basis in the Scriptures, where we see holiness in terms of righteousness.²³

The choice of those who would see the uncreated light/the power of the divine Spirit/the Kingdom of God coming in power is made by God. According to Palamas, the transfiguring power of the divine Spirit is 'made manifest, not merely to anyone, but only to those standing with the Lord, that is to say, to those established in His faith, to those who like Peter, James and John have previously been taken by the Logos to a high mountain, that is to say, those who have been elevated above our natural estate'.²⁴ In order to explain that this is possible, Palamas links incarnation and deification. Again, drawing on the Johannine imagery, he says that God descends 'from His own sphere' in order to raise us up 'from our low estate', and that

556–692, here 574–79.

¹⁸ Mantzaridis, *The Deification of Man*, 123.

¹⁹ See *ibid.*

²⁰ Mantzaridis, *The Deification of Man*, 124. He cites Palamas' own interpretation of Mark 9:1: 'The King of all is everywhere, and His Kingdom is everywhere, so that for His Kingdom to come does not mean that it has to come from another place, but it means that it has to be revealed through the power of the divine Spirit. For this reason He said, "come with power"'. Palamas, *Homily 34* (PG 151:428C).

²¹ The synergic attitude is based on the interpretation of St Paul's emphasis on people who follow Christ being the 'fellow workers of God' (1 Cor 3:9). The synergic anthropology then draws on St Irenaeus' emphasising that people are created to be alive, and that: 'The glory of God is the living human, and the life of the human is the vision of God'. Irenaeus, *AdvHaer* (= *Adversus Haereses*) 1.22.1 (SC 264:308–310); 2.25.2–3 (SC 294:250–256) *AdvHaer* 3.6.1–4 (SC 211:64–76); *AdvHaer* 4.26.2 (SC 153:330–338). I borrow this inclusive language translation from Mary Ann Donovan, 'Alive to the Glory of God: A Key Insight in St Irenaeus', *Theological Studies* 49 (1988): 283–297, at 283. Donovan points out that this motif recurs throughout *Against Heresies* (*AdvHaer*). Irenaeus responds in this way to the Valentinian gnostic postulate of multiple figures involved with the creation, while the one Supreme God remains totally out of any direct contact with it. See especially, *AdvHaer* 1.22.1; 2.25.2–3; 3.6.1–4; 4.26.2; in Donovan, 'Alive to the Glory of God: A Key Insight in St Irenaeus', 286, n.11.

²² See Maxym Lyscak, 'Asceticism in the Homilies of Saint Gregory Palamas', *Analogia* 3 (2017): 19–40.

²³ See, for example, Matt 13:43, 49; 25:37–46; Luke 1:6; 2:25. These texts speak of righteousness as a synonym for holiness. Self-righteousness is quite another matter.

²⁴ Palamas, *Homily 34* (PG 151:428C–429A).

God does this already here on earth, to 'a limited extent...so far as was right', so that 'the uncircumscribed might be contained in a mortal nature'.²⁵

The permanence of the impact of deifying grace does not exclude the permanent need for purification on the human side. On the contrary, without the ongoing purification in which all human faculties need to participate, people might think that they can use the experience of the divine for their own corruptible ends. But the grace of God has no share in such an abuse, and participation in it causes people to lose a share in grace. Palamas states: 'Indeed, it is impossible to make a bad use of *this* light, for it instantly quits anyone who leans towards evil, and leaves bereft of God any man who gives himself over to depravity'.²⁶ Thus, not only are errors possible but also regression in spiritual life, even for those who have seen the light and have possessed grace. This is how the permanence of grace coexists with the dynamics of purification in Palamas' thought. Bearing this in mind, we can now ask how, according to Palamas, the deifying experience of God transforms human knowing.

What and How the Saints See

In line with his emphasising that the experience of God does not come on the basis of human effort but by grace, Palamas claims a discontinuity between human created faculties and the direct experiential knowledge of God. As was stated above, he speaks about the knowledge of the saints in terms of seeing in the spiritual light. Palamas says:

This spiritual light is thus not only the object of vision, but it is also the power by which we see; it is neither sensation nor an intellection, but a spiritual power, distinct from all created cognitive faculties in its transcendence, and made present by grace in rational natures which have been purified.²⁷

The knowledge possessed by the saints is not rooted in the senses, in what the eyes see, neither is it rational knowledge, nor even contemplative knowledge based on the capacity of human *nous*. Aristotle Papanikolaou, interpreting Palamas through the lenses of Vladimir Lossky and John Zizioulas, points out that, according to both, Palamas breaks with the line of thought going from Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen to Augustine and Aquinas, in which truth is linked to human *nous*. Instead—following the line running from Irenaeus, Athanasius, the Cappadocians, Dionysius, Maximus, and John of Damascus—Palamas links the truth to 'the incorruptibility of eternal life', as Lossky puts it, or, in Zizioulas's words,

²⁵ Palamas, *Homily* 34 (PG 151:428C–429A).

²⁶ Palamas, *Triad* III.2.17; *The Triads*, 101.

²⁷ Palamas, *Triad* III.2.14; *The Triads*, 100.

to the ‘incorruptibility of being’.²⁸ This is an important insight when we follow the foundations and the content of what the saints know as Palamas describes it, and the authority he gives to such knowledge. In the *Triads* he states: ‘Do you not see that these divine energies are *in* God and remain invisible to the created faculties? Yet the saints see them, because they have transcended themselves with the help of the Spirit’.²⁹

The way Palamas presents the essence-energy distinction affirms that there is no division in God.³⁰ When the saints participate in the energies of God, they participate in God, while God at the same time remains an imparticipable mystery. This antinomy both grounds Palamas’ apophaticism and safeguards it from the agnosticism that he criticised in Barlaam.³¹ For Palamas, the divine energies are ‘unoriginated and endless rays...other than the imparticipable essence of God, and different (albeit inseparable) from the essence’.³² While what the saints see, and the power enabling them to see it, does not come from the human capacity for cognition,³³ what they see and how they see is adaptable to their condition. Palamas puts it in the following way: ‘In the first place, that essence is one, even though the rays are many, and are sent out in a manner appropriate to those participating in them, being multiplied according to the varying capacity of those receiving them’.³⁴

As demonstrated in this article so far, seeing the divine uncreated light, experiencing the deifying grace, and sharing in the Kingdom of God coincide in Palamas. Furthermore, he assumes that there is a multiplicity of ways in which and by which people can see, experience and share, which includes adaptability to the specific condition of each person. The emphasis on the divine-human synergy which runs through Palamas’ theology joins together divine infinity and the human need to

²⁸ See Aristotle Papanikolaou, *Being with God: Trinity, Apophaticism, and Divine-Human Communion*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 11; he refers here to Vladimir Lossky, *Vision of God*, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1983), 34; John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1985), 80.

²⁹ Palamas, *Triad* III.3.10; *The Triads*, 107.

³⁰ Joost van Rossum says: ‘The essence of God is “God as He is”, while the divine energies are acts of his free will. God is able to transcend Himself by his own free will, “to go out of Himself”. And that is possible, because He is a *personal* being, or the “Life-giving Trinity”. The act of creation is, therefore, a personal act of God. It is an act of his energies, and not merely of his essence. The divine energies are not impersonal “powers”, like the divine emanations in Neo-platonism, but in “each of his divine energies God is totally present”, says Palamas....The term “distinction” is often misunderstood as some kind of separation in God. However, it was just a way of saying that God always remains transcendent with regard to created, human persons, though he is able to “go out of his transcendence”’. Joost van Rossum, ‘Palamas and Aquinas’, *St Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 59, no. 1 (2015): 29–41; at 35; he cites Palamas, *Triad* I.3.47; III.2.7, *Défense des saints hésychastes* I, 213; II, 657.

³¹ Here I have in mind especially Palamas’ first critique in which he addresses Barlaam’s interpretation of the *Filioque* as something which cannot be proved or disproved on the grounds of syllogism. See Spiteris, *Řehoř Palama (1296–1355)*, 24–25.

³² Palamas, *Triad* III.2.13; *The Triads*, 99.

³³ Palamas sees his position in continuity with Gregory of Nyssa as he talks ‘of a vision accessible through the Spirit, not a form of cognition’. Palamas, *Triad* III.3.5; *The Triads*, 104.

³⁴ Palamas, *Triad* III.2.13; *The Triads*, 99.

grow. These are important points to bear in mind as we return to the questions sketched in the opening of the article. Let me now express them more explicitly. If people in the present life can ‘share in the eschatological glory of the Kingdom of God, and receive the pledge of the vision of Him “face to face”’,³⁵ can they, at the same time be wrong in their theological and moral convictions, and in their political views? Let me provide some contemporary examples: denying the value of conversations with Christians from other confessions other than those which would lead to their conversion to Orthodoxy; convictions concerning subordination of women to men in family, in the church as well as in the society; stating that homosexual relations are perverse and cannot be genuinely loving; denying any value to human rights; supporting anti-democratic political systems or political figures with totalitarian ambitions and practices. If we do not want to say that people who hold on to such views cannot have any genuine experience of God, can we go in the opposite direction and say that such convictions really have the authority of the direct experience of God, divinely granted? Such questions are of vital importance when we look at the use and abuse of hesychasm both in history and today,³⁶ and if we want to follow Palamas’ theology while avoiding a simplified black and white distinction between who can have a genuine experience of God and who cannot. Palamas’ practice, as we will see later, might be different, but his theological claims about the supremacy of grace and the impossibility of holding on to grace when one abuses it are very helpful here.

Centrality of the Heart

Wisdom of God and human wisdom (or its caricature) differ radically, according to Palamas, and to understand how the wisdom of God can dwell in people, we need to start by looking at the interaction between divine grace and the human heart.

For the hesychast tradition which Palamas defends, the human heart is central for the right knowing of God, of oneself, as well as of the world. He states: ‘Thus our heart is the place of the rational faculty, the first rational organ of the body’.³⁷ For support, he refers to Christ’s sayings about the heart in the Scriptures: ‘We did not learn this [the centrality of the heart] from any man, but from Him who moulded man, who showed that “it is not what goes into a man that defiles a man, but what goes out by the mouth”, adding “for it is from the heart that evil thoughts come”’.³⁸

³⁵ Mantzaridis, *The Deification of Man*, 124.

³⁶ Here I would agree with Pantelis Kalaitzidis who states: ‘Monasticism is the eschatological watchman, the eschatological conscience of the church. And it is precisely this kind of monasticism—that based on the spirit and mindset of the desert rather than on an imitation of heavy-handed political methods—that we Christians in the world so urgently need today’. Pantelis Kalaitzidis, *Orthodoxy & Political Theology* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2012), 139.

³⁷ Palamas, *Triad* III.2.17; *The Triads*, 101.

³⁸ Palamas, *Triad* III.2.17; *The Triads*, 101. He refers here to Matt 15:18–19; and Mark 7:18–23. There are other parts of the Gospels supporting the very same point, like Jesus’ saying that a good person brings

The emphasis on the heart as a psychosomatic centre of the human person is thus free of idealisation. The heart is not just an alternative to the concept for *nous*, a way of placing the possibility of understanding God within the human capacities innate in people. The heart needs conversion, and only then, when purified and transformed by grace, can it direct people towards God. There is nothing mechanistic in the mind's descent into the heart and discovering Christ alive and acting there. It is not a process explainable by causal relations. It does not support a reverse movement in which the mind leaves the heart and, while it uses the natural faculties, gives them the authority of what transcends the mind.

Such a reverse movement would be worse than a conviction that one can use human reason for understanding, and human logic for describing, the matters of God.³⁹ When Palamas speaks about what he calls 'natural wisdom', he stresses that, before purification and illumination, it is useless in the most important matters.⁴⁰ Afterwards, when one has received grace, the 'natural wisdom' may become useful, but only to a certain degree, and it cannot be claimed as a spiritual thing sent from on high. The 'wisdom from outside' is not reducible to the 'wisdom from inside' neither before nor after divine illumination.⁴¹

He who has purified his body by temperance, who by divine love has made an occasion of virtue from his wishes and desires, who has presented to God a mind purified by prayer, acquires and sees in himself the grace promised to those whose hearts have been purified. He can then say with Paul: 'God, who has ordered light from darkness, has made his light to shine in our hearts, in order that we may be enlightened by the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ'; but he adds, 'We carry this treasure in earthen vessels.'⁴²

The mind of a holy man or woman is guarded within the body, in the deepest interiority of the body, in the heart. For Palamas, there 'the spiritual mind seeks ever to acquire a spiritual sense', and he rebukes, 'let us not cease to seek that sense since it is in us, yet not in us.'⁴³

out of his/her heart good things, bad person bad things—Matt 12:34–35; Luke 6:45; or his explanation of the parable on the sower, in which he speaks about sowing the word of the kingdom to the heart—Matt 13:19; but also his emphasis on where people's treasures are, there their hearts will be too—Matt 6:21; Luke 12:34.

³⁹ Metropolit Amphiloque Radović warns that 'Human logic always runs the danger either to confuse or to divide when it tries clearly to describe and to define the mystery...'. Amphiloque Radović, *Le mystère de la Sainte Trinité selon saint Grégoire de Palamas* (Paris: Cerf, 2012), 244.

⁴⁰ See Palamas, *Triad* I.1.22; *The Triads*, 30. Natural wisdom, he says, is aided by philosophy, but does not have the power to take away sins or grant eternal wisdom. See *ibid.*

⁴¹ See Palamas, *Triad* I.1.21; *The Triads*, 29.

⁴² Palamas, *Triad* I.2.2; *The Triads*, 42. The quotations come from 2 Cor 4:6–7.

⁴³ Palamas, *Triad* I.2.4; *The Triads*, 43.

The Role of Human Growth

Palamas' position on the continuous need to grow resembles that of Gregory of Nyssa, in particular, his understanding of *epektasis*, a progress first towards and then in God, which, like God, is infinite.⁴⁴ Even saints who have been transfigured by the light of Tabor do not stop there, according to Palamas, as the vision of God develops infinitely, here as well as in the age to come. He argues that 'we do not know and have never heard of anyone from the beginning of time who, having received this vision while on earth, has not desired a still more perfect vision'.⁴⁵ The connecting point between the saints and God here is desire: 'Thus, since the desire of those who have achieved this vision is limitless, since the grace already granted them gives them the power to receive greater vision,...acquiring grace after grace and joyfully ascending the ascent that never wearies'.⁴⁶ For Palamas, 'He who gives Himself is infinite', and hence his infinity grounds also the infinite possibilities for progress of those who are joined to him, those whom Palamas calls 'the sons [we could add, and daughters] of the age to come'.⁴⁷

There are two important points we need to make as we ask what impact the progress from grace to grace in those who already tasted the vision of God has on knowledge involving the human *nous*. First, as was pointed out, Palamas does not place his trust in the *nous*, as it is not fit to comprehend the matters of God. Second, as the *nous* is an integral part of the human person, it participates in the transformation brought by the Spirit in the vision of the uncreated light. The question now is how the *nous* participates in this process, and whether such participation brings along with it an infallible conceptual knowledge in matters of theology, morals, or politics. The provisional answer is: no, it does not. But let me give still some more reasons for this negative response, drawn directly from Palamas' own theology.

Impact of the Participatory Knowledge of God on Orientation in the World

Palamas says that the saints who 'transcended themselves with the help of the Spirit', perceive with their inner senses not only God, but in God also the 'inner

⁴⁴ The concept of *epektasis* is taken from St Paul, from Phil 3:13, where he speaks about himself as '*epekteinomenos*'—striving forward to what lies ahead; Gregory speaks of the constant striving and straining of humankind on a limitless journey towards God, a journey which does not end even after resurrection, but, rather, enters into a new phase, and thus people can never become bored with gazing into the glory of God, as there is always more to see. At the same time, however, humankind will never be equal to God in whom it participates, and to the divine infinity. See Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* I.290–291, in *Contra Eunomium libri I et II*, ed. W. Jager (Leiden: GNO I, 1960), GNO I.112, 9–20. Palamas cites St Dionysius in support of his argument, his saying that even the angels continuously advance in the vision of God. See Dionysius the Aeropagite, *De caelesti hierarchia* 4.2 (PG 3 :180A), in Grégoire Palamas, *Défense des saints hésychastes* 2.11, *Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes*, vol. 1, ed. Jean Meyendorff, (Louvain: Spicilegium Sacrum Louvainense, Études et documents, fasc. 30, 1959), 340.

⁴⁵ Palamas, *Triad* II.2.11; *Défense des saints hésychastes* I, 340.

⁴⁶ Palamas, *Triad* II.2.11; *Défense des saints hésychastes* I, 340.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

principles of created things, through a simple and indivisible knowledge'.⁴⁸ Reading further, we learn that this knowledge is inseparable from the direction of their gaze, as 'the power of the Spirit' not only 'penetrates their faculties', but also enables them to focus on things 'which are beyond us'.⁴⁹

As the knowledge of God which he defends leads to the realm of the 'supernatural and superessential', it is 'different from all things'.⁵⁰ Claiming that there is a simple continuation of this knowledge, which is absolute, into the realm of the created (into doctrines, morals, political attitudes) would mean, according to Palamas' theology, reducing this difference. It would run dangerously close to 'regarding God as sensible reality', or cognisable reality, something Palamas wants to avoid.⁵¹

Thus, even when someone is not motivated by vices (by a desire to profit or to dominate, to control how the truth can be manifested, and which facets of it should be at the forefront and which in the background, etc.) but by the virtue of service, there remains this difference between the participatory knowledge of God and knowing created things discursively, even when we are speaking about those who were spiritually illuminated. Perhaps, the closer one is to God, the more one is aware of this difference. Knowing other things in their inner principles, as Palamas says, is not the same as knowing the details of how they evolve in time and space in their different stages. Holy people may have what follows through their participation in God, for example, the knowledge of the heart of others, *kardiognōsis*,⁵² but they do not have an infallible knowledge of what exactly will happen to them tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, which discipline they should study, which job to take, which person to marry, which house to buy or which politician to support. And if they attempt to predict such matters, they can be wrong. Tradition does indeed know prophetic dreams and visions, but this is not what I am criticising here. Rather, I have in mind the confusion between spiritual/eschatological knowledge and the realm of assumptions; and there we still need to differentiate between assumptions based on sound knowledge of earthly things, and assumptions which lack such sound knowledge. The first can bring at least some good, the second not.⁵³ Still, in both cases, when the assumptions of religious people are given an eschatological authority of the kind a direct participatory knowledge of God has, it is a sign of regression in the proximity to God of those who do such things. Palamas says that the uncreated light, which was seen and by which one saw, leaves when one tries to put it to 'bad use'.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Palamas, *Triad* III.3.10; *The Triads*, 107.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Palamas, *Triad* I.3.22; *The Triads*, 39.

⁵¹ See Palamas, *Triad* III.3.10; *The Triads*, 107.

⁵² See Luke 16:15; John 2:24–25; Acts 1:24.

⁵³ 'Nonetheless, if you put to good use that part of the profane wisdom which has been well exercised, no harm can result, for it will naturally have become an instrument for good. But even so, it cannot in strict sense be called a gift of God and a spiritual thing, for it pertains to the order of nature and is not sent from on high'. Palamas, *Triad* I.1.21; the translation is from Palamas, *The Triads*, 29.

⁵⁴ Palamas, *Triad* III.2.17; the translation is from Palamas, *The Triads*, 101.

But even such things can and do happen on the spiritual journeys of people and of religious communities. They just need to be recognised for what they are. When this happens, and conversion and penitence follow, learning from such situations can stimulate further growth in one's relationship with God and with one's neighbours. We can see such things even in the lives of the saints. If we return to the foundational image of encountering the uncreated light—that of the disciples, Peter James and John on the mountain of transfiguration—we know that after that experience, Peter will still fall, he will deny knowing Jesus, and also the other disciples will experience being helpless, being without a vision at Christ's cross.⁵⁵ They will not become infallible even after Pentecost when they will have the power of the Spirit, and, as the Scriptures testify, a direct knowledge of God.⁵⁶

Palamas' theology gives space and tools for understanding that the journey of deification involves both progression and regression this side of the *eschaton*. Moreover, even those who were found worthy to experience a share of the future promise, the saints, still pray for the Kingdom of God in which they participate to come; and having a seed of perfection, they still grow towards that for which they pray.

Conclusion

The authority given to the direct experience of God claimed by the hesychast saints is, in Palamas' theology, joined to what he sees as his main principles. Norman Russell expresses it as follows: 'The knowledge of God is not a result of rational inquiry but is a fact of personal relation'.⁵⁷ As we have seen, this principle has a number of advantages and some weaknesses. Among the advantages, we can name that relation always involves more than one party. Palamas speaks about the realism of the divine-human communion. The relation can be experientially known. Palamas is careful in how he links a realist ontology to a realist epistemology. He insists on both the supremacy of grace and the divine-human synergy. His understanding of grace as uncreated is sound, and it helps in seeing human deification as real. His understanding of grace in terms of light, as it is worked with in the Johannine tradition, joins incarnation and deification and shows that the process is Christocentric. The uncreated light grants what we see, but also that we see. Deification is dynamic. Palamas keeps an antinomic relation between the permanence of deification in the saints and the process of growth, involving on this side of the *eschaton* the possibility of error and failing, but also of rising again, and both now and after death

⁵⁵ See Matt 26:34–35, 69–75; Mark 14:30–31, 66–72; Luke 22:31–34, 56–62; John 16:29–33.

⁵⁶ For the direct knowledge, see John 16:25; Acts 4:20; 22:6–9; 2 Cor 5:16; Eph 1:17–19; 1 John 1:1–3; for the fallibility, see, for example, Peter's unwillingness to eat with Hellenic Christians in Antioch—Gal 2:11–14; the disputes and controversies leading to the Jerusalem council—Acts 15:1–29; or Paul's argument with Barnabas concerning Mark, when both are convinced that they are right—Acts 15:35–40.

⁵⁷ Norman Russell, 'Inventing Palamism', *Analogia* 3 (2017): 75–96; at 88.

the dynamics of growth. The human participation in this relation is psychosomatic rather than purely intellectual. The mind needs to descend into the heart, and remain there, in order to be illuminated together with the heart. If the mind moves out of the heart again, and if someone starts claiming divine authority for his/her own convictions, they act outside the divine-human relationship, and lose the relationship until they return.

Now, let me address some of the weaknesses. Aristotle Papanikolaou rightly criticises Palamas, asserting that his approach does not give much space to philosophy and other forms of human creativity, and that he assumes that this is a position shared by all of the Fathers.⁵⁸ The first problem was sufficiently documented in the text of this article. Regarding the second, the unanimity of the Fathers is found not only in Palamas' neo-Patristic interpreters but also in Palamas' own writings.⁵⁹ Rowan Williams makes the following point. Such an assumption grounds the critique of and the opposition to the West, making this 'homogenous, continuous Eastern spiritual and theological tradition...opposed to the fragmented, corrupted, rationalistic divinity of the Western schools'.⁶⁰ A similar point is made by Nikolaos Loudovikos, who states that Orthodox theologians of the last century had the tendency to turn Palamism into the binding interpretative scheme of Orthodoxy: 'Palamas offered an easy schematisation of Orthodox experience, in such a way that the whole of Orthodoxy could be transposed into Palamism, and, in this manner, be turned into an ideology'.⁶¹ However, the roots of this position are already found in Palamas.

In my opinion, however, the biggest problem arises when we seek for a consistency between Palamas' theology and his practical attitudes towards others, especially towards his opponents. One can certainly agree with Spiteris that, without polemics, we would not have Palamas' theology,⁶² but also when following his life and work, at least from what is available to us, one has the impression that controversy is almost

⁵⁸ See Papanikolaou, *Being with God*, 11; for the consequences of such a position, see also Aristotle Papanikolaou, 'Tradition or Identity Politics: The Role of the "West" in Contemporary Orthodox Theology', *Teologia* 3–4 (2010): 18–25; *The Mystical as Political: Democracy and Non-Radical Orthodoxy* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), 197–98.

⁵⁹ He claims: 'Moreover, the Holy Fathers affirm unanimously that it is impossible to find a name to manifest the nature of the uncreated Trinity, but that the names belong to the energies'. Palamas, *Triad* III.2.10; *The Triads*, 97. The simplicity projected onto the unanimity of the fathers has a still stronger expression when Palamas projects the simplicity onto the unity of the saints: 'when we refer to one, we mean all saints', this is how Palamas explains Jesus' prayer for the unity of the disciples. See John 17:20–23. See Palamas, *Triad* III.3.14; *The Triads*, 110.

⁶⁰ Rowan Douglas Williams, 'The Philosophical Structures of Palamism', *Eastern Churches Review* 9 (1977): 27–44; at 28.

⁶¹ Nikolaos Loudovikos, 'Ο Μόχθος τής Μετοχής. Είναι και Μέθεξι στον Ιρηγόριο Παλαμά και τον Θωμά Ἀκινάτη (Athens: Armos, 2010), 9, cited in Russell, 'Inventing Palamism', 95.

⁶² 'The difficulties with Palamas—even accompanied with violence—appeared already in his lifetime. We could say that he himself emerged as a result of these polemics....If Barlaam and after him Gregory Akindynos and Nikeforeos Gregoras did not provoke him, he would have remained an unknown monk in the Holy Mountain of Athos, of whom we might have perhaps heard at most because of some ascetic or hagiographic writings'. Spiteris, *Řehoř Palama* (1296–1359), 16.

a natural mode of his expression. He started by entering into a controversy with the Messalians, an ascetic group that lived near his first monastery. The twenty-year-old Palamas already then tried to accuse them of error.⁶³

Then, it was he who first attacked Barlaam's position, and not the other way round. Palamas attacked Barlaam for his views concerning the impossibility of defending or rejecting the *Filioque* on rational grounds, and this started the thirty-year-long controversy which shifted towards the grounds hesychasts had for claiming the direct knowledge of God. And if we examine some of his statements against his opponent, it is striking how much they lack charity.⁶⁴ Then, in the same breath, he speaks about the love of God, which leads us to love others, to care for others, to unite us with others; as he cites, it is on the two commandments of love, towards God and towards neighbours, that all the Law and the Prophets hang.⁶⁵ He forgets, perhaps, that the very same love also covers many transgressions,⁶⁶ and asks of us to be merciful as the Father in heaven is merciful.⁶⁷

Having mentioned some of the weaknesses, it would be a grave mistake to reduce Palamas to any of them or all of them together. While Palamas' theology can also be understood as a critique of some of his own positions, we should not forget that it is he who mediates the insights to us. Moreover, just as there are different saints, some personally more approachable, others less, some confirming the goodness in people, others pointing at the danger of their failings, we can appreciate Palamas' important place in this crowd of witnesses. We can rejoice in the reality of God's actions towards them and towards us. Finally, with Palamas' help, we shall not mistake the authority of their experience with infallibility in all things.

⁶³ See *ibid.*, 20.

⁶⁴ Palamas calls the work of his opponents, a following in 'wretched source of heresy' (Palamas, *Triad* III.2.18; *The Triads*, 102). He accuses Barlaam: 'you purposely vilify God and His saints' (Palamas, *Triad* III.3.11; *The Triads*, 108), he says that Barlaam 'has transformed virtue into vice' (Palamas, *Triad* III.3.15; *The Triads*, 111), and that he is left only with the 'dim illumination' (Palamas, *Triad* III.3.12; *The Triads*, 109). Palamas was hard even on his fellow monks. After twenty years of living on Athos, Palamas together with other monks had to leave the Holy Mountain due to the attacks of the Ottoman pirates. On his return, Palamas was made abbot of the Esphigmenon Monastery, but before long he was forced to resign. Other monks found his austerity unbearable. A sharpness of his tone comes across also many years later, when he returns to his bishopric in Thessaloniki, and addresses people gathered in Hagia Sophia with his speech *On Peace*. See Spiteris, *Rehoi Palama*, 21, 43.

⁶⁵ Palamas, *Triad* III.3.15; *The Triads*, 111. Compare to Matt 22:39.

⁶⁶ See Matt 16:14–15; Mark 11:25–26; 1 Pet 4:8.

⁶⁷ See Luke 3:36.

THE USE OF HUMAN REASON AND NOETIC ENERGY ACCORDING TO SAINT GREGORY

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Saint Gregory Palamas, continuing the teaching of the earlier Fathers, distinguishes between man's two cognitive faculties: reason (*dianoia*), which is related to logic, and the intellect (*nous*), which is related to immediate, intuitive perception. While reason is the vehicle of created knowledge, the logical power that can be expressed through reasoning about sensible and spiritual things, the intellect is the intuitive (*noera*) energy within man's heart, which constitutes the means of divine vision, and becomes the only vehicle of the uncreated knowledge of God. The discovery of the intellectual (*noera*) energy within the heart of a man that lives in repentance contributes to the unification of the powers of the soul, to the purity of the heart, and to the acquisition of self-knowledge and firm faith, thus signalling the spiritual completion of man through participation in the uncreated deifying energies.

In his second homily *On the Entrance of the Mother of God*, where he presents our Lady as a model of the hesychast life, Saint Gregory Palamas discusses at length the five powers of the soul: sense, imagination, thinking, intellection, and *nous*.¹ Here, the great anatomist of the human soul makes the distinction that intellection is the power of reason which, through a variety of successive syllogisms, completes

¹ Gregory Palamas, 'Ὁμιλίας ΚΒ', *Σοφοκλέους τοῦ ἐξ Οἰκονόμων* (Ἀθήνα: Φ. Καραμπίνη καὶ Κ. Βαφᾶ, 1861), Ὁμιλία 53.35, pp. 172 ff. On the distinction between the terms *nous*, intellect, heart and soul, see Metropolitan Ierotheos of Nafpaktos, *Ὁρθόδοξη Ψυχοθεραπεία* (Λεβαδεία: Ἱερὰ Μονὴ Γενεθλίου τῆς Θεοτόκου, 1986), 91–228, where, on pp.111–17, he notes that the Fathers often interchange the terms, characterizing the *nous* sometimes as intellect or the noetic energy of the soul and sometimes as the essence of the soul. In Western theology, the *nous* is always understood as the intellect and reason. For theologians in the West, there is no such thing as 'noetic energy'. We would note here: 'Νοῦς λέγεται καὶ ἡ τοῦ νοῦ ἐνέργεια ἐν λογισμοῖς συνισταμένη καὶ νοήμασι. Νοῦς ἐστὶ καὶ ἡ ἐνεργοῦσα ταῦτα δύναμις, ἥτις καὶ καρδιά καλεῖται παρὰ τῆς Γραφῆς' (Τρία κεφάλαια περὶ προσευχῆς καὶ καθαρότητος καρδίας 3, in *Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμᾶ, Συγγράμματα*, ed. P. Christou, vol. 5, [Θεσσαλονίκη: Κυρομάνος, 1992], 159 [hereafter *Συγγράμματα*]). 'Ὅταν δὲ ἀπαιτώμεθα εἰπεῖν τί νοῦς καὶ τί διάνοια, τὸν μὲν νοῦν οὐσίαν λέγομεν, τὴν δὲ διάνοιαν οὐσιώδη ἐνέργειαν... ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐστὶ ποτὲ χωρὶς νοῦ ἡ διάνοια' (Επίτομος διήγησις Φακρασῆ Πρωτοστράτορος 26, *Συγγράμματα*, vol. 4, 229). And Isaac the Syrian, *Λόγος* 83, Spetseris, 320: 'Ὁ μὲν γὰρ νοῦς μία ἐστὶ τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς αἰσθήσεων· ἡ δὲ καρδιά ἐστὶν ἡ περιέχουσα καὶ κρατοῦσα τὰς ἔνδον αἰσθήσεις. Καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ρίζα'.

the thought process² and has the brain as its seat.³ The *nous* is a self-sufficient entity, the main energy of which is noetic. When it declines from this activity, however, it is restricted to a merely intellectual life.⁴

People have two eyes of the soul.⁵ The first is the intellect, which has as its object created knowledge. But our intellect is also capable of studying the uncreated, of engaging, under certain circumstances, with a variety of spiritual ‘theories’.⁶ The intellect is not the chief eye of the soul, because it is unable to know the treasures of heaven empirically: ‘through itself, it makes intelligible both the perceptible and the noetic’.⁷ The second eye of the soul is the *nous*, that is the noetic energy within our heart, through which we can inspect the divine and gain practical experience of God, through the uncreated, deifying energies of God.⁸ The practice of the virtues has as its aim our union with God through his uncreated grace. Through the virtues, we can be brought to the likeness of God. Without the attainment of perceptible, ontological union by grace, however, we do not achieve, we do not ‘suffer’ deification.⁹

² ‘Διάνοια δὲ λογικὴ μὲν ἐστὶν αἰεὶ, διεξοδικῶς δὲ πρόεισιν εἰς τὴν μετὰ λόγου δόξαν ἀποτελεωτῶσα.’ Ὁμιλία 53, 36, Οἰκονόμου, 174.

³ Ibid. ‘Πᾶσαι δ’ αὐταὶ δι’ ὄργανου πρώτου συνεισθήκασιν καὶ ἐνεργοῦσι τοῦ ψυχικοῦ ἐν ἐγκεφάλῳ Νοῦ δὲ ὄργανον οὐδὲν ἐστίν, ἀλλ’ αὐτοτελὴς ἐστὶν οὐσία καὶ καθ’ ἑαυτὴν οὐσα ἐνεργητικὴ, εἰ καὶ πρὸς τὴν κατὰ διάνοιαν ψυχικὴν τε καὶ ἀνελιγμένην ζωὴν ὑποκαταβιβάζει ἑαυτὸν πνεύματος.’

⁴ Ibid. ‘Νοῦ δὲ ὄργανον οὐδὲν ἐστίν, ἀλλ’ αὐτοτελὴς ἐστὶν οὐσία καὶ καθ’ ἑαυτὴν οὐσα ἐνεργητικὴ, εἰ καὶ πρὸς τὴν κατὰ διάνοιαν ψυχικὴν τε καὶ ἀνελιγμένην ζωὴν ὑποκαταβιβάζει ἑαυτὸν’. On the distinction between the energies of the soul, in modern terminology and formulation, see Monk Chrysostomos Dionysiatos, *Θεὸς Λόγος καὶ ἀνθρώπινος λόγος* (Ἁγίου Ὁρος, 1998), 47. His following statement might be an interpretation of the above passage in Palamas: ‘Ὅταν ἡ ἐνέργεια τοῦ νοὸς ἐγκλωβίζεται στὴν αἴσθησις ἢ τὸν λόγο, ἡ διανόηση (λογικὴ ἐνέργεια) λειτουργεῖ ὡς ὑποκατάστατο τῆς νοήσεως (νοερᾶς ἐνέργειας). Ἡ διάνοια ὑπολείπεται ἀπὸ τὸν νοῦ σὲ δυνατότητες, διότι πάντοτε ἐνεργεῖ δια-λογιζόμενη, ποτὲ ἐνορατικά.’

⁵ Cf. Ὑπὲρ τῶν ἱερῶς ἡσυχάζοντων 2, 3, 15, *Συγγράμματα*, vol. 1, 551.

⁶ The word ‘θεωρία’, the ‘ἄληκτος γνώσις’ in Patristic terminology, is polysemous. It sometimes means physical vision, the physical revelation of God (not, of course, the *analogia entis* of Western theology), which occurs through the λόγοι τῶν ὄντων, by reason, and is the cataphatic way, a direct movement of the human intellect, through the creation, towards God. At other times, it means the vision of God, either ‘through a glass darkly’, at the stage of enlightenment, or ‘face to face’, in deification, which is the apophatic method, the spiralling or cyclical motion of the *nous* towards God. Vision becomes ‘αὐτοκίνητη’ or ‘κατ’ ἐπιβολήν’ when we, of our own accord, create in our intellect various concepts which derive from knowledge of God’s beneficence, from death and the judgement, perceptible and notional beings, the incarnate providence of God and the other dogmas concerning him, initially without the participation of Grace. It is ‘ἐτεροκίνητη’ or ‘κατὰ παραδοχήν’ when, through the Grace operating in the heart, the intellect is caught up into vision without the person concerned wishing it to be. On the distinction between these two visions and the superiority of the latter, see the work of Saints Callistus and Ignatius Xanthopoulos, *Μέθοδος καὶ κανὼν ἀκριβής* in the sixty-eighth chapter of *Φιλοκαλία τῶν Ἱερῶν Νηπτικῶν*, vol. 4 (Ἀθήνα: Ἀστήρ, 1961), 262.

⁷ Ὑπὲρ τῶν ἱερῶς ἡσυχάζοντων 1,3,45, *Συγγράμματα*, vol. 1, 445.

⁸ ‘Τῆς οὖν καθ’ ἑαυτὸν ἐνεργείας γενόμενος ὁ νοῦς, ἥτις ἐστὶν ἡ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν στροφή καὶ τήρησις, δι’ αὐτῆς ὑπερاناβαίνειν ἑαυτὸν, καὶ Θεῷ συγγένοιτ’ ἄν’. Ὑπὲρ τῶν ἱερῶς ἡσυχάζοντων 1, 3, 45, *Συγγράμματα*, vol. 1, 457.

⁹ ‘Δεῖ μὲν γὰρ ἡμῖν ὁμοιώσεως, ὡς ἐναρμονίως σχῶμεν πρὸς τὴν ἔνωσιν ἐκείνην, δι’ ἧς ἡ θέωσις τελεῖται. Χωρὶς δὲ τῆς ἐνώσεως ἡ ὁμοίωσις οὐκ ἀποχρήσει πρὸς θέωσιν’. *Περὶ θεοποιοῦ μεθέξεως* 7, *Συγγράμματα*, vol. 2, 142.

After the fall of the first-created our spiritual powers were disturbed and fragmented.¹⁰ These powers, especially the noetic, must now, by God's grace and our own efforts, be restored and united within the locus of the heart, which is the spiritual centre of the human person, the throne of divine grace.¹¹ In this way we rediscover our 'ancient beauty'¹² and our real personhood is re-established.¹³ According to Palamas, the *nous* has essence and energy, just as God does.¹⁴ The essence of the *nous*—the seat of which is in the heart,¹⁵ in the 'first ratiocinating organ of the flesh'¹⁶—is unmoving, 'never departing from it'.¹⁷ The energy of the *nous*, however, does move,¹⁸ and spills outwards through the senses and thoughts. An ascetic tries to bring back this energy to the essence, through noetic prayer (the prayer of the heart), so that the *nous* can return to itself and thereupon be united with God.¹⁹ It may be that, in some people, this noetic energy is active, but, because they do not know the teachings of the Fathers, they may not have realized precisely what is happening in the realm of their heart; though they certainly have the sense of divine experiences of the heart. The union of created persons with the uncreated God through the noetic energy of their heart cannot happen without God's grace. People cannot even be aware of noetic energy without the energy of divine grace.²⁰ We can say that

¹⁰ The Roman Catholics claim that, after the fall, human nature remained intact (John Romanides, *Τὸ Προπατορικὸν ἁμάρτημα* (Αθήνα: Δόμος, 1992), 156. In other words, at the fall, an error occurred through human reason and the cure for human personality lies in the correction of reason. This is the start of all the rationalism of Western theologising, which was accepted and then dogmatised in the position of Thomas Aquinas that human reason is in accord with divine revelation (cf. S. Papadopoulos, *Φιλοθωμισταὶ καὶ ἀντιθωμισταὶ ἐν Βυζαντίῳ* [Αθήνα, 1967], 126–27). Some Protestants, on the other hand, believe that, at the fall, the human personality was completely distorted, even as regards free-will and self-determination, and so were brought to absolute predetermination (e.g., Calvin).

¹¹ Ὑπὲρ τῶν ἱερῶς ἡσυχάζόντων 1, 2, 3, *Συγγράμματα*, vol. 1, 396.

¹² Προὔργου δὲ αὐτοῖς ἡ τοῦ νοῦ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ἐπιστροφή καὶ σύννευσις, μᾶλλον δὲ πασῶν τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς δυνάμεων, εἰ καὶ θαυμαστὸν εἰπεῖν, πρὸς τὸν νοῦν ἐπιστροφή καὶ ἡ κατ' αὐτὸν τε καὶ Θεὸν ἐνέργεια, δι' ἧς ἐπεσκευασμένοι πρὸς τὸ πρωτότυπον εὖ διατίθενται, τὸ ἀρχαῖο ἐκεῖνο καὶ ἀμήχανον κάλλος, ἐπανθούσης τῆς Χάριτος. Ἀντιρρητικὸς πρὸς Ἀκίνδυνον 7, 40, *Συγγράμματα*, vol. 3, 492.

¹³ 'The Lord's appeal is first of all to the heart, the spiritual centre of the *persona* ... The flame of this love draws the mind (*nous*) wholly into the heart, where it merges into one with the heart and contemplates Being in the Light of Divine Love. We become "whole" —we are healed.' See Archimandrite Sophrony, *We Shall See Him as He Is* (Essex: Stavropegic Monastery of St John the Baptist, 2004), 177.

¹⁴ Ἄλλο μὲν οὐσία νοῦ, ἄλλο δὲ ἐνέργεια. Ὑπὲρ τῶν ἱερῶς ἡσυχάζόντων 1, 2, 5, *Συγγράμματα*, vol. 1, 397.

¹⁵ In his refutation *Κατὰ Θωμᾶ*, the hesychast Kallistos Angelikoudis (who wrote some time in the second half of the fourteenth century) defines the heart as 'τὸ περιεκτικὸν τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀπασῶν δυνάμεων' (cf. S. Papadopoulos, *Ορθόδοξη καὶ Σχολαστικὴ Θεολογία* [Αθήνα, 1970], 201). Saint Nicodemus the Athonite defines it as the natural, unnatural, and supernatural centre. Cf. Ὁ ἅγιος Νικόδημος, *Συμβουλευτικὸν Ἐγχειρίδιον* (Αθήνα, n.d.), 110–15.

¹⁶ Ὑπὲρ τῶν ἱερῶς ἡσυχάζόντων 1, 2, 3, *Συγγράμματα*, vol. 1, 396.

¹⁷ Ὑπὲρ τῶν ἱερῶς ἡσυχάζόντων 2, 2, 26, *Συγγράμματα*, vol. 1, 533.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ In Ὑπὲρ τῶν ἱερῶς ἡσυχάζόντων 1, 2, 5, *Συγγράμματα*, vol. 1, 398, Saint Gregory uses the classic passage from Basil the Great's letter, *Πρὸς Γρηγόριον Θεολόγον* 2, 2 (PG 32:228A): 'Νοῦς μὴ σκεδαννύμενος ἐπὶ τὰ ἔξω ἐπάνεισι πρὸς ἑαυτὸν, δι' ἑαυτοῦ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν.' Cf. also Ὑπὲρ τῶν ἱερῶς ἡσυχάζόντων 2, 2, 25, *Συγγράμματα*, vol. 1, 532.

²⁰ Οὕτω καὶ ὁ νοῦς ἂν ἥ νοερὰν ἔχων αἴσθησιν ὁρώη καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἐνεργεῖα γένοιτο μὴ τοῦ θεοῦ μετασχών

noetic energy points the way to the discovery of God's grace.²¹ Those who participate in and commune with the uncreated, deifying energy, recognise from experience the noetic energy of the soul in their heart at the time of prayer.²²

We should stress that when our rational energy is considered to be an authority in its search for the uncreated, it can produce delusion, which is related to three categories of people and is reflected in the spiritual life of each group. In the first kind of delusion, reason displaces faith. People who accept as reality solely that which is allowed by their reason, through natural laws, and what they themselves experience as life, through their senses, cannot receive the seed of faith in their heart. They are unable to accept that there is knowledge and a reality which is beyond reason, beyond the senses, beyond nature. As Palamas says, faith alone can approach and be receptive to the truth which is beyond reason.²³ The delusion created by reason and placed in the second category is associated with those who believe in God, but in a mistaken manner. These may be heterodox Christians or adherents of any other religion. The theology created by heterodox Christians is intellectual, not empirical, and is not the fruit of God's Revelation. The god to whom created people are drawn through reason always acts within the bounds of createdness and is a god they construct as they wish him to be.²⁴ In his interpretation of the cause of the many misinterpretations and false doctrines of the Scholastic Barlaam,²⁵ Saint Gregory Palamas says that the latter attempts, through reason and natural philoso-

φωτός, *Ἀντιρρητικός πρὸς Ἀκίνδυνον* 7, 33, *Συγγράμματα*, vol. 3, 485. See also Ὑπὲρ τῶν ἱερῶς ἡσυχάζοντων 1, 3, 46, *Συγγράμματα*, vol. 1, 458 'χωρίς (τὸ ἄκτιστο φῶς) οὐδ' ἂν νοῦς ἢ νοερὰν ἔχων αἰσθησιν ὁρῶη τοῖς ὑπὲρ ἑαυτὸν ἐνούμενος καθάπερ οὐδὲ ὀφθαλμὸς σώματος τοῦ κατ' αἴσθησιν φωτός χωρίς'.

²¹ Ἡ χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ βλέπεται νοερῶς καὶ γνωρίζεται ἐν αἰσθήσει νοὸς μόνον ἐν ᾧρα τῆς προσευχῆς. Elder Joseph the Hesychast, *Ἡσυχαστοῦ, Ἐκφρασις Μοναχικῆς Ἐμπειρίας* (Ἅγιον Ὅρος: Ἱερὰ Μονὴ Φιλοθέου, 1992), 335. See also Archimandrite Ephraim, former Abbot of the Holy Monastery of Filotheou, 'ὅπου ἡ ἐνέργεια τῆς εὐχῆς, ἐκεῖ ὁ Χριστὸς σὺν τῷ Πατρὶ καὶ τῷ Ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι, ἡ ὁμοούσιος καὶ ἀδιάρετος Ἁγία Τριάς' (*Κεφάλαια περὶ προσευχῆς*, *Σύναξη* 10, no. 2 [1984]: 43).

²² To those saying the Jesus Prayer—'Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy upon me'—Saint Nicodemus recommends, 'ὁ λόγος νὰ μελετᾷ τὴν εὐχὴν αὐτήν, ὁ δὲ νοῦς νὰ καταβιβάζῃ τὴν νοερὰν ἐνέργειάν του μέσα εἰς τὴν καρδίαν καὶ νὰ προσέχῃ νοερῶς μὲ ὅλην τὴν δύναμίν του' (Nicodemus the Athonite, *Ἐξομολογητάριον*, 'Ὁ ἅγιος Νικόδημος' [Ἀθήνα], 44–45).

²³ Καὶ οὗτος ἂν μὴν πίστην προσαγάγῃ τὴν μόνην τῆς ὑπὲρ λόγον ἀληθείας δεκτικὴν, Ὑπὲρ τῶν ἱερῶς ἡσυχάζοντων 2, 2, 12, *Συγγράμματα*, vol. 1, 519.

²⁴ G. Mantzaridis, *Ἡ ἐμπειρικὴ θεολογία στὴν οἰκολογία καὶ τὴν πολιτικὴ* (Θεσσαλονίκη: Πουρναράς, 1994), 27–28.

²⁵ Although he initially wrote against the Doctor Communis, Doctor Angelicus, Princeps Scolasticorum Thomas Aquinas (†1274), the rationalist Barlaam (1290–1350), later Bishop Ierakos (1341–1350), could very well be placed among the Scholastic theologians of the West, since he shared their philosophical assumptions (on the evolution of the Schools in the West, see E. Moutsopoulos, *Ἡ Σχολαστικὴ διανόησις*, Ἀθήνα, n.d.). Barlaam's philosophizing dialectical theology, which is not based upon spiritual experience, leads to agnosticism and, in the end, the acceptance of the *Filioque*, the lack of distinction between divine essence and energy, the vision of the divine essence, created grace, and other false, for the Orthodox, doctrines. Barlaam's theological/philosophical system is an amalgam of theological shortcomings (cf. *Ἐκθεσις δυσσεβημάτων*, *Συγγράμματα*, vol. 2, 579–86). Barlaam seems to be an adherent of Western theology and certainly not of the Orthodox Byzantine tradition. On these positions, see Fr Theodore Zisis, *Ὁ ἅγιος Γρηγόριος Παλαμάς* (Ἀθήνα: Imago, 1984), 31–34; also the work by Monk Theoklitos Dionysiatis, *Ὁ ἅγιος Γρηγόριος Παλαμάς* (Ἀθήνα: Σπηλιώτης, 2001), 42–46, n. 380.

phy, to investigate that which is beyond reason and beyond nature.²⁶ From the time of Saint Augustine²⁷ until today, the West has been dominated by the temptation of reason in theology²⁸ and this is responsible for the secularisation of other dogmas in the West.²⁹ Logicity or rationality is why so many different forms of heresies have arisen.

At the same time, we have the religio-philosophical systems which have arisen out of Asia. Their belief is in an impersonal god and, through their ascetic practices, they offer their adherents the opportunity to discover the highest contemplative state, called by many a noetic state or condition, which brings devotees to self-realization, self-deification. The spiritual experiences offered by these groups, and which attract those who have not experienced divine grace within the Church of Christ, are based on psychotherapeutic techniques and greater emphasis on the utilisation of the intellect, which will bring them to these supposedly divine experiences and visions. Their heart remains impassioned and cannot, of course, open and become the point of entry for noetic energy and the grace of God.³⁰

The third kind of delusion of reason is associated with nominal Orthodox and is more difficult to discern. It occurs with those who have come to believe in the existence of the supernatural, the uncreated, that which is, in reality, beyond reason,

²⁶ 'Πόθεν δὴ τῷ τηλικούτῳ βόθρῳ περιέπεσεν; ἔροισί τις ἄν. Ἐπεὶ λόγῳ καὶ φιλοσοφίᾳ φυσικῇ τὰ ὑπὲρ λόγον τε καὶ φύσιν ἐξηρεύνησεν'. Ὑπὲρ τῶν ἱερῶς ἡσυχάζοντων 3, 3, 3, *Συγγράμματα*, vol 1, 680.

²⁷ Influenced by the philosophy of Neo-Platonism and without knowledge of Patristic literature, Augustine (354–430), fell into error when he spoke of pre-destination, divine Grace, and the Holy Trinity, concerning which he attempted to demonstrate the self-existent provenance of the persons through syllogisms, by the method of psychological analogies. Anslem of Canterbury (1033–1109), the most acute mind (*fides quaerens intellectum*) among the dialecticians continued this, with his '*credo ut intellectum*'. Thomas Aquinas, a saint of the Latin Church, held as dogma that human reason can achieve knowledge of the essence of God, which is the ultimate happiness. In our own time, modern Western theologians such as R. Bultmann speak of the necessity for the *Entmythologisierung* of Holy Scripture.

²⁸ Believing the mind to be the authority, rationalism has entered modern theology, too, through philosophy, Scholasticism, academic, and non-empirical theology. On the identification of Scholastic thought with academic theology, see the N. Matsoukas's paper '*Ἡ διπλὴ θεολογικὴ μεθοδολογία τοῦ ἁγίου Γρηγορίου Παλαμᾶ, Πρακτικὰ Συνεδρίου ἁγ. Γρηγορίου Παλαμᾶ*' (Θεσσαλονίκη: Ἱ. Μητρόπολις Θεσσαλονίκης, 1986), 84, where Professor Matzoukas indirectly distinguishes between reason and noetic energy, since Patristic theology has a double theological method: charismatic theology, in which the uncreated is experienced (with the mind as the organ of divine supervision); and academic, which is performed through reason. Scholastic theology, on the other hand, has only one method and that is through reason. For an analysis of the theological method, see John Romanides *Δογματικὴ καὶ Συμβολικὴ θεολογία τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας*, vol. 1, (Θεσσαλονίκη: Πουρναράς, 1999), 10–20 and 65–109.

²⁹ It also threatens the *typicon* of the Orthodox Church, through seemingly attractive proposals such as, for example, the removal of the iconostasis, changes in ecclesiastical language, shortening the services and so on. Moreover, it constitutes a threat to the life of the Church in general, with the ordination of women, the acceptance of homosexuality, and so on.

³⁰ The opening of the heart and the entry of the mind (noetic energy) into it can occur only in the presence of divine Grace. Conditions, spiritual experiences, as described by Eastern Mysticism as a pulsation of the heart, mental attitude, ecstasy, and the vision of spiritual lights are either emotional movements of the heart, intellectual, imaginary or, in the end, the vision of lights created by the human mind and by demons. They are in no way an experience of uncreated divine Grace. Indeed, such 'experiences' are not without peril for our psychosomatic life and, in many instances, have even resulted in death (see Fr Antonios Alevizopoulos, *Προσευχή ἢ διαλογισμός* [Ἀθήνα: Ἀποστολικὴ Διακονία, 1993], 197–98).

but who, because of their inflated reason and the passions which dwell 'in the holy place',³¹ that is their heart, have not actually achieved union with the supernatural, the Uncreated God. To this category belong those who have an intellectual relationship with God, those who are content that they know him. These are people who, externally, may have a moral lifestyle, but who, in essence, do not know what purity of heart means, do not know themselves and have no faith in the miraculous acts of the saints. According to Palamas, entry of noetic energy into the heart assists in the unification of the powers of the soul and reveals the purity of the *nous*.³² Then people are able to receive the divine gifts of insight and foresight.³³ Some may talk or write about God, or theologise, without knowing him empirically.³⁴ True, unerring theology derives from participation in the uncreated, deifying energies, from the supernatural union 'from which alone the ability to theologize reliably derives'.³⁵ Saint Gregory asserts that, if theology remains on the level of intellection and is not the result of the vision of God, there is a huge gap between the two positions. It is as if you were talking about something you have not seen have not nor acquired.³⁶ Gifted theologians have developed both their noetic and rational energy to the fullest extent. We should applaud those modern academic theologians who note that the 'key' to understanding the dogmas, the path of authoritative theologising, is the experience of grace, the experience acquired through Orthodox asceticism, the quest and concern for purity of heart.³⁷ The central and essential point of Saint

³¹ Cf. Ps 23:3.

³² 'Όταν γάρ ἅπαν αἰσχροὺν πάθος ἐνοικον ἀπελαθῇ καὶ ὁ νοῦς ... αὐτὸς τε πρὸς ἑαυτὸν καὶ τὰς ἄλλας τῆς ψυχῆς δυνάμεις ἐπιστρέψας ὁλοκλήρως τῇ γεωργίᾳ τῶν ἀρετῶν φιλοκαλήσῃ τὴν ψυχὴν, προϊὼν ἐπὶ τὸ τελειώτερον καὶ πρακτικὰς ἔτ' ἀναβάσεις διατιθέμενος καὶ ἐπὶ πλέον, Θεοῦ συναιρουμένου, πλύνων ἑαυτὸν, οὐ τὰ τοῦ πονηροῦ μόνου ἀποσμήχει κόμματος, ἀλλ' ἅπαν ἐπίκτητον ἐκ μέσου ποιεῖται, κἂν τῆς χρηστοτέρας ἢ μοίρας καὶ διανοίας'. Αντιρρητικός πρὸς Ἀκίνδυνον 7, 34, Συγγράμματα, vol. 3, 487. See also Πρὸς Ξένην 58, Συγγράμματα, vol. 5 (Αθήνα: Κυρομάνος, 1992), 223.

³³ 'Ἐντεῦθεν ἡ κατ' ἀρετὴν θεοειδὴς καὶ ἀπαράμιλλος ἔξις καὶ τὸ πρὸς κακίαν ὅλως ἀκίνητον ἢ δυσκίνητον, αἶ τε θαυματοποιαί καὶ τὸ διορᾶν τε καὶ προορᾶν'. Εἰς τὸν Βίον τοῦ ὁσίου Πέτρου τοῦ ἐν Ἄθῳ 20, Συγγράμματα, vol. 5, 172, and Πρὸς Ξένην, 225, and Αντιρρητικός πρὸς Ἀκίνδυνον 7, Συγγράμματα, vol. 3, 491.

³⁴ 'Οὕτω κἂν μυριάκις περὶ τῶν θείων θησαυρῶν διανοήσῃ, μὴ πάθῃς δὲ τὰ θεῖα, μηδὲ ἴδῃς τοῖς νοεροῖς καὶ ὑπεράνω τῆς διανοίας ὀφθαλμοῖς, οὔτε ὄρᾳς, οὔτε ἔχεις οὔτε κέκτησαι τι τῶν θείων ἀληθῶς'. Ὑπὲρ τῶν ἱερῶς ἡσυχάζόντων 1, 3, 34, Συγγράμματα, vol. 1, 445.

³⁵ Ὑπὲρ τῶν ἱερῶς ἡσυχάζόντων 1, 3, 15, Συγγράμματα, vol. 1, 425.

³⁶ Cf. Ὑπὲρ τῶν ἱερῶς ἡσυχάζόντων 1, 3, 34, Συγγράμματα, vol. 1, 445 and 1, 3, 42, 453.

³⁷ From the purely academic sphere we would mention Professor G. Mantzaridis, who, borrowing the term 'understanding sociology' from Max Weber, speaks of an 'understanding academic theology': 'Κατ' αὐτὴν ὁ ἐρευνητὴς ὄχι μόνον δὲν ἀποκλείει ἀπὸ τὴν ἐρευνά του τὴν θεολογικὴ ἐμπειρία, ποὺ εἶναι ἐμπειρία τοῦ ἀκτίστου, ἀλλὰ καὶ προσπαθεῖ, ὅσο μπορεῖ, νὰ τὴν κατανοήσῃ καὶ νὰ τὴν παρουσιάσῃ. Ἡ κατανοήσῃ ἐδῶ δὲν ἔχει βέβαια διανοητικό, ἀλλὰ βαθύτερο πνευματικὸ χαρακτήρα. Δὲν πρόκειται γιὰ διανοητικὴ προσπέλαση, ἀλλὰ γιὰ πνευματικὴ προσέγγιση, ποὺ πραγματοποιεῖται μὲ τὴν ἐνέργεια τοῦ ἀνθρώπινου νοῦ, ὅπως ἐπισημαίνεται στὴν βιβλικὴ καὶ τὴν πατερικὴ ἀνθρωπολογία'. Further on he emphasizes that: 'ἡ ἀσκησις γίνεται μέθοδος τῆς θεολογικῆς γνώσεως ἢ τῆς θεολογικῆς ἐπιστήμης. Καὶ ἡ μεθοδολογία τῆς θεολογικῆς ἐπιστήμης συμπίπτει οὐσιαστικὰ μὲ τὴν μεθοδολογία τῆς ἀσκητικῆς τελειώσεως... Ἡ καθαρὴτητα δηλαδὴ τῆς καρδιάς ἀποτελεῖ τὴν προϋπόθεση τῆς θεοπτίας, ποὺ εἶναι ἡ πηγὴ τῆς ἐμπειρικῆς θεολογίας' (Georgios Mantzaridis, Πρόσωπο καὶ θεομοί [Θεσσαλονίκη: Πουρναρά, 1997], 64 and 73). See also the passage by Saint John of the Ladder, 'τέλος ἀγνείας, θεολογίας ὑπόθεσις', Λόγος 30 (Ὡρωπὸς Ἀττικῆς: Ἱερά Μονή

Gregory Palamas' teaching is that our deification is not a moral event, founded on human logic, but an ontological, empirical event involving the whole of our being. It is personal participation in the uncreated energies of the personal God.

We will make good use of the rationality bestowed on us by God only if, through the ascetic tradition of the Orthodox Church, we discover the noetic energy in our heart. Then we who are 'potential' persons will begin to become 'active' persons, when 'the person hidden in the heart'³⁸ is revealed and transformed through God's grace. When the 'revolting mask'³⁹ falls and in its place the Christ-like face is revealed. Only those who have become persons through God's grace can make good use of their logicity,⁴⁰ because those who are at the stage of enlightenment have been liberated from the bonds of the passions and do not allow their reason to take precedence in the experience of God. In this empirical relationship with God, our noetic energy, the *nous*, as the only organ of divine scrutiny is united with the uncreated, deifying energy which is common to the three Persons of the Holy Trinity. God will be revealed in the *nous*, and reason as energy will be that which formulates and expresses the experiences of the *nous*.

People today are either devoted to unrestrained hedonism and perverseness or are hemmed in by the rationality and dependence on technology which are typical of the age in which we live, and so they let themselves down. They abandon the realm of freedom of the spirit for the temporal level. Palamas presents to the people of today the truth and life which open up the human person to infinitude. In this way, life on earth becomes a preparation for eternity and we are consciously and freely transformed by God's grace into eternal persons, in the image of God. Any proper management of the rapid technological advances, particularly in genetics and information technology, and, indeed, of an ecological catastrophe, can be effected only by scientists and political agencies whose noetic energy—their direct experience of and communion with God—is as well-developed as their rational powers. Otherwise, reason and any other intellectualist ethic are powerless in the face of the great challenges arising either from modern scientific achievements or insatiable consumerism. People are 'weary and heavily laden'⁴¹ by sin, by the stress of their materialistic and prosperity-based manner of life and, directly or indirectly, seek to see and live for themselves that experience which will relieve their burdened conscience and fill every kind of void in their existence.

Παρακλήτου, 1978): 376.

³⁸ 1 Pet 3:4.

³⁹ "Όταν ἀνακύψει καὶ κατοπτρεύσει τὸν ἐντὸς ἄνθρωπον, τέως μὲν ἐνιδὼν τὸ προσγεγόμενον εἰδεχθὲς προσωπεῖον... Εἰς τὸν βίον τοῦ ὁσίου Πέτρου τοῦ ἐν Ἄθῳ 18, Συγγράμματα, vol. 5, 171.

⁴⁰ 'Μία φιλοσοφία ποὺ θέλει νὰ ἐξηγήσῃ τὰ πάντα μὲ βάση τὴν λογικότητα τῆς ὑπαρξης, δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ βρῇ λογικότητα σ' αὐτὴ τὴν ὑπαρξη ἔξω ἀπὸ τὸ πρόσωπο ποὺ τὴν παράγει, τὴν μεταδίδει καὶ τὴν συλλαμβάνει. Κάποτε, οἱ ἄνθρωποι εἶχαν ἐξαπατηθῇ ἀπὸ μία τέτοια φιλοσοφικὴ ἢ ἐπιστημονικὴ "λογικὴ" ἐξήγηση τῆς ὑπαρξης'. Fr D. Stanilaos, Ἀγίου Μαξίμου Ὁμολογητοῦ, Φιλοσοφικά καὶ θεολογικά ἐρωτήματα, Ἐπὶ τὰς πηγὰς (Ἀθήνα: Ἀποστολικὴ Διακονία, 1978), 33.

⁴¹ Cf. Matt 11:28.

We promote the experience which is in accord with the Patristic Tradition. The return to the Fathers, the ‘watch-word’ that once again has begun to dominate the conscience of the Church in recent decades, does not mean that we should seek to enrich our knowledge by reading Patristic literature — which would be a process of reason — but that we should apply the Patristic experience, which is revealed through the discovery of noetic energy in our heart, through God’s grace. In referring to the component parts of the human being, Saint Gregory Palamas, the initiate and herald of grace,⁴² writes: ‘Spiritual persons are made up of three parts: the grace of the heavenly Spirit; a rational soul;⁴³ and an earthly body.’⁴⁴ Therefore, if spiritual people are to learn about their body in detail, they ought to know about uncreated, deifying grace, about the powers of their soul and, in particular, how to discover the noetic energy which enables them to share in the deifying energy of the Holy Trinity and, as Palamas says, makes them without beginning and eternal, a new creation, new persons,⁴⁵ gods by grace.⁴⁶

⁴² Cf. the Dismissal Hymn of the saint. In his apologetical works, Palamas often says that he ‘is defending grace’.

⁴³ In this passage, when Palamas says the soul is rational he does not mean that it is not also noetic. Following Saint John Damascene (see *Ἐκδοσις ἀκριβῆς τῆς ὀρθοδόξου πίστεως*, κεφ. 26 [PG 94:920BC] ‘*ψυχὴν δὲ λογικὴν καὶ νοερὰν διὰ τοῦ οἰκείου ἐμφυσηματος δὸς αὐτῷ*’, and further on, ‘*ψυχὴ τοίνυν ἐστὶν οὐσία ζῶσα... λογικὴ τε καὶ νοερὰ*’ (924BC)). When he wishes to define the soul, he does not forget ‘noetic’. See, for example, in *Κεφάλαια, Συγγράμματα*, vol. 5, ‘*πᾶσα λογικὴ καὶ νοερὰ φύσις ... ἀλλ’ ἡ μὲν ἐν ἡμῖν λογικὴ καὶ νοερὰ φύσις*’, 30, p. 51. ‘*Ἡ λογικὴ καὶ νοερὰ ψυχὴ οὐσίαν μὲν ἔχει τὴν ζωὴν*’ 33, p. 52. ‘*Ἡ νοερὰ καὶ λογικὴ φύσις τῆς ψυχῆς*’, 39, p. 56. ‘*Μόνοι γὰρ ἡμεῖς τῶν κτισμάτων ἀπάντων πρὸς τῷ νοερῷ τε καὶ λογικῷ τε καὶ τῷ αἰσθητικῷ ἔχομεν*’, 63, p. 71. On the three hypostases of the human person, see also the wonderful passage by Saint Symeon the New Theologian from *Catechesis* 15 (SC 109, 228), ‘*Ὁ τοῦ θαύματος, ὅτι ἄνθρωπος Θεῷ ἐνοῦται πνευματικῶς τε καὶ σωματικῶς, εἴπερ οὐ χωρίζεται τοῦ νοῦ ἡ ψυχὴ οὐδὲ τῆς ψυχῆς τὸ σῶμα, ἀλλὰ τῇ οὐσιῳδῇ ἐνώσει γίνεται τρισυπόστατος κατὰ Χάριν καὶ ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς θέσει Θεὸς ἐκ σώματος καὶ ψυχῆς καὶ οὐπερ μετέιληφε θείου Πνεύματος*’.

⁴⁴ *Ὑπὲρ τῶν ἱερῶς ἡσυχάζοντων* 1, 3, 43, *Συγγράμματα*, vol. 1, 454.

⁴⁵ ‘*Καὶ ὁ ἐπιτυχὼν τῆς θεώσεως ἄνθρωπος ἐπ’ ἀμφοτέρων εἰκότως, καλεῖται νῦν μὲν ἄναρχος καὶ αἰδιος καὶ οὐράνιος, ὡς ἀνωτέρω μικρὸν ἀκηκόαμεν, διὰ τὴν Χάριν τὴν ἄκτιστον καὶ αἰεὶ οὖσαν ἐκ τοῦ αἰεὶ ὄντος Θεοῦ, νῦν δὲ καινὴ κτίσις καὶ νέος ἄνθρωπος*’. *Ἀντιρρητικός πρὸς Ἀκίνδυνον* 3, 15, *Συγγράμματα*, vol. 3, 172.

⁴⁶ Cf. *Ὑπὲρ τῶν ἱερῶς ἡσυχάζοντων* 3, 2, 12, *Συγγράμματα*, vol. 1, 666.