

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 (*προτερόν 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 *πραγματικάί*—*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 εἰσίν*)—*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 (ἐπινόια)—which Barlaam and Akindynos rigorously asserted. Scholarios rejects the assertions that this distinction is made only within the psyche by secondary thoughts (δεύτεραι ἐπινόιαι), 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 καὶ 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 πράγματος ὄντα καὶ ἐν τῷ πράγματι*)’. 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’ (*πραγματικάς*) (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 πράγματος καὶ ἐν τῷ πράγματι*)’. 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 (ὁρισμός) 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 (ἀρχὴ 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.

distinctio 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 Scholarios', *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 κἄν 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 (*τὸ 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 *‘πρᾶγμα’*. 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 (*πρᾶγμα*) 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 and 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 ἔνωσις*). 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 (ἀδιαίρετως 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 ὑφ' ἑσθ' ἐστίν). 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 ἐστίν). 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. Demetrapoulos, ‘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: *διαφορὰ τῷ πράγματι* (the term *πραγματική* used by Guichardan is not applicable, according to Grumel) and a *διαφορὰ 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’ (*πραγματική 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*.