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## Theology in the Thirteenth Century: Methodological Contrasts\*

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The sack of Constantinople by the Crusaders in 1204 and the Mongol invasion of Eastern Europe in 1237-1240 were catastrophic events which challenged the very existence of Eastern Christendom as a social and cultural entity. It survived, nevertheless, with a remarkable commitment to theological continuity. The same thirteenth century saw the emergence, in the Latin West, of a new and dynamic framework for intellectual creativity the universities and the religious orders, which changed radically the way in which Christian theology was “made”.

In the context of the period, the term “theology” itself demands a definition. In Byzantine society— as well as in the Western, early medieval world— theological concepts, convictions and beliefs were present in practically all aspects of social, or individual life. They were not only used at episcopal synods, or polemical debates between representatives of divided churches, or enshrined in treatises, sermons, anthologies and patristic collections. They were heard or sung, on a daily basis, even by the illiterate, in the hymnology of the church. They were unavoidable in political matters, based on a religious view of Kingship. To limit ourselves to the thirteenth century, it is sufficient to recall the debate on the use of Holy Chrism (*myron*) in the anointment of emperors, and, therefore, on the nature and significance of the chrism itself, as discussed by Demetrios Chomatianos in connection with the coronation of Theodore Lascaris in Nicea (1208).<sup>1</sup> Theological presuppositions were also involved in economic and social realities, as

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. on this issue, A. Karpozilos, *The Ecclesiastical controversy between the Kingdom of Nicea and the Principality of Epirus (1217-1233)* (Thessaloniki, 1973); and my discussion of the events at the Byzantine Congress in Athens in 1976 (‘Ideological Crises in Byzantium 1071 to 1261’, (repr. in *The Byzantine Legacy in the Orthodox Church* (Crestwood, NY, 1982), pp. 67-85).

shown, for example, in the Church's attitude towards usury, or in requirements connected with marriage, or the religious basis of regulating church property, or the theological rationale which determined forms of art and iconography.

It is therefore very difficult to give a really strict and clearly limited definition of "theology" in a Byzantine or early medieval Western context. However, precisely in the thirteenth century, an institutional, social and conceptual bifurcation establishes itself between the Latin West and the Greek (and Slavic) East. The first part of my paper will point to that new contrast. The following two parts will briefly discuss the theological confrontation between East and West in the thirteenth century, and the new emergence of a "monastic" theology in the Byzantine world.

## 1. The West: Universities and Religious Orders

A brief of Pope Innocent III, published around 1211, gave a new legal and canonical status to the *Studium parisiense*, a corporation of teachers and students, who were dispersing and receiving learning under the auspices of either the cathedral, or the monastery of Sainte-Genevieve in Paris. The brief stipulated that a "proctor" of the new University would represent it at the papal court. In 1215, a papal legate, Robert de Courson, sanctioned the University's statutes. Although the King Philip-Augustus also recognized the new institution, it is the papal decree which gave it a universal significance. However, the "universality" of the Latin world of the thirteenth century was a relative concept. In any case, its world-view was defined without any reference to the tradition of the East. It was dominated by the concern of the Latin Church for the integrity of its tradition, which was challenged not by Greeks, but by a flow of truly revolutionary ideas, resulting from the translation of Aristotle from Arabic into Latin, and the infusion—together with that translation— of Arab philosophy, which itself was rooted in Neo-Platonism. To use a phrase of Etienne Gilson: "The *studium parisiense* was established as a spiritual and moral force, whose deepest significance is neither Parisian, nor French, but Christian and ecclesiastical. It became an element of the Universal Church, in exactly the same way as the Priesthood and the Empire".<sup>2</sup>

The tremendous expansion of knowledge and methodology, contained in the newly available texts and ideas, was not confronted, in Latin Christendom, with old patterns and forms, inherited from Late Antiquity, but through the creation of new tools and new institutions, generating new forms of thought and intellectual creativity, which were, however, to be directed and controlled by the *magisterium* of the Church. This new and

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<sup>2</sup> *La philosophie au moyen-âge, des origines patristiques à la fin du XIV(e) siècle* (Paris, 1952), p. 395.

creative initiative, which will have such a fundamental importance for the development of modern Europe placed the *Studium* on the same level with the *Sacerdotium* and the *Imperium*. According to the Franciscan chronicler Jordan of Giano the three institutions were like the foundation, the walls and the roof of a single building— the Catholic Church— which without their cooperation could not achieve proper structure and growth.<sup>3</sup>

Although the two English Universities, created a few decades later at Oxford and Cambridge, were less tightly attached to the Roman *magisterium*, they reflected the same basic trend towards structure and professionalism. The consequences for the very nature of *theology* were radical: it became a science— the highest of all, of course— to which the other disciplines, including philosophy and the natural sciences, were to be subservient. It was taught by licensed professionals at a special Faculty, the Faculty of Theology, whose teaching was supervised on a regular basis, by the *magisterium* of the Church. This supervision was direct and concrete. In 1215, the papal legate, Robert de Courson, forbade the teaching of physics and metaphysics in Paris. In 1228, Pope Gregory IX reminded the Faculty that theology should direct other sciences, as the spirit directs the flesh, and, in 1231, he called the masters of theology “not to try to appear as philosophers.”<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, even if these papal reminders made plain the requirement for the *Studium* to act in accordance with the *Sacerdotium*, the main results of the work of the Universities was a new creative synthesis, known as Scholasticism, as best exemplified in the work of St. Thomas Aquinas— a synthesis between Christian revelation and Greek philosophy, clearly distinct from both the platonic legacy of St. Augustine, or the Greek legacy of Origen and the Cappadocian Fathers of the fourth century, which were accepted as major criterion of orthodoxy in the East.

Another decisive factor which enhanced professionalism in theology was the rise of religious orders— an institution also unknown in the East— and whose role in education and development of theological schools would be extraordinary. In 1216, Pope Honorius III formally sanctioned the existence of the Order of the Preachers, or “Dominicans”, which made the study of theology so much of an obligation for its members, that seven of them went to Paris that same year. Half a century later, the theology of one great Dominican, Thomas, would dominate the Latin world. The order of St. Francis also became, under its “second founder” St. Bonaventure (1257-74), a major promoter of

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<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Gilson, *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Cf. texts quoted in Gilson, *La philosophie*, p. 396.

theological study. Even the Cistercians followed the general mood, establishing houses of study in Paris and Oxford, where both Dominican and Franciscan priories had obtained almost a monopoly in teaching theology.

Such scholastic professionalism— clerical monopoly of Latin learning— was quite foreign to the Byzantines. In the East, not only clerics and monks, but also laymen— including emperors and civil officials— could be involved in theology and publish theological treatises. There were no organized theological schools. Theology was seen as a highest form of knowledge, but not a “science” among others to be learned at school. The patriarchal school of Constantinople never developed into a hotbed of new theological ideas. It trained primarily ecclesiastical administrators and canonists.<sup>5</sup> In the twelfth century, very sophisticated debates had taken place in the Byzantine capital, involving Eustratius of Nicea (1117), Soterichus Panteugenos (1155-6), Constantine of Corfu and John Eirenikos (1167-70), but these were aftermaths of old christological controversies, involving dialogues with Armenians<sup>6</sup>— nothing really related to the problems of the day. The gigantic intellectual development, happening in the West, was apparently passing Byzantium by. As late as 1347, after all the events of the thirteenth century, the Byzantine aristocrat Demetrius Kydones is surprised when he discovers that Latins “show great thirst for walking in those labyrinths of Aristotle and Plato, for which our people never showed interest.”<sup>7</sup>

If one considers the autobiographies of two prominent Greek theologians of the thirteenth century, Nicephorus Blemmydes and Gregory of Cyprus, who were directly involved in contacts with the Latins, one discovers that neither of them received a structured, theological training, comparable to what the rise of Scholasticism was making available to their Latin counterparts. Both were quite learned men, but their education was acquired by methods identical to those used since Late Antiquity, in various places and under individual masters. Theology, as a formal discipline is not even mentioned in the curriculum covered by Blemmydes under a certain Monasteriotes in Brusa, under several unnamed teachers in Nicea, under Demetrios Karykes (who was invested with the formerly prestigious title of *Apatos tôn philosophôn*) in Smyrna, under his own father (with whom he studied medicine), and under a certain Prodrornos in a small city on the

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. R. Browning, ‘The Patriarchal School at Constantinople in the Twelfth Century’, *B*, 32(1962), 167-202; 33 (1963), 11-40.

<sup>6</sup> The best recent review of these debates, whose results were enshrined in the *Synodikon of Orthodoxy*, is by J. Gouillard, ‘Le Sinodikon de l’orthodoxie. Edition et commentaire’, *TM*, 2(1967), 1-316.

<sup>7</sup> *Apology I*, in G. Mercati, *Notizie di Procoro e Demetrio Cidone (ST 56, Citt del Vaticano, 1931)*, p. 366; also F. Kianka, ‘The Apology of Demetrius Cydones’, *Byzantine Studies*, 8(1980), 57-71.

river Skamandron. He was tested in rhetorical skills at the court of Emperor John Vatatzes in Nymphaeum, before entering a monastery, where finally, on his own, he consecrated himself to the study of Scripture and patristic writings.<sup>8</sup> Gregory of Cyprus, eventually a patriarch of Constantinople, does not mention theological training at all in his Autobiography,<sup>9</sup> but points to some elementary education at a *Latin* school under the Latin archbishop of Nicosia, followed by wanderings in search of knowledge, which he finally acquired primarily under the humanist George Acropolites in Constantinople (1267-74).

The best of the Byzantine theologians of the period did not lack sophistication and basic information about Greek philosophy and patristic theological tradition. However, in meeting their Latin counterparts, who were graduates of Western Universities, they encountered not only professionalism and argumentative skills unprecedented in Christendom, but also a sense of academic and cultural self-sufficiency, which often bewildered them making them even more defensive in their attitude towards Latin Christendom.

No real attempt was made, until the second half of the fourteenth century, by any Greek theologian to get acquainted with the real substance of Latin theology and Latin intellectual methods. The Greek translation of Augustine's *De Trinitate* by Maximus Planudes (d. 1310) remained the work of an isolated humanist, whose work was hardly ever used by Byzantine theologians.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. Nicephorus Blemmydes, *Curriculum vitae et carmina*, ed. A. Heisenberg (Leipzig, 1896), pp. 2-18; new ed. by J.A. Munitiz, *Autobiographia sive curriculum vitae*, (CCGS,13, Turnhout and Louvain, 1984), pp. 4-15; English translation with full commentary by J.A. Munitiz, *Nikephoros Blemmydes. A partial Account* (Louvain, 1988) (= *Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense* 48), pp. 43-57. On secular studies in the Nicean empire, see particularly M.A. Andeeva, *Ocherki no kul'ture vizantiiskago dvora v XIII veke* (Travaux de la société royale des sciences de Bohême. Classe des lettres. Nouvelle série, VIII, 3), Prague, 1927, pp. 128-160; also M. Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile. Government and Society under the Laskarids of Nicaea (1204-1261)* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 174-81.

<sup>9</sup> Ed. W. Lameere, with French tr. (*La tradition manuscrite de la correspondance de Grégoire de Chypre* [Brussels-Paris, 1937], pp. 176-91); Russian tr. by I.E. Troitsky in *Khristianskoe Chtenie* (St. Petersburg, 1870), I, pp. 164-177.

<sup>10</sup> It has been suggested that the Augustinian "psychological images" of the Trinity, learned from the translations of Planudes had inspired one passage of the *Capita* of Gregory Palamas. But the parallelism is in fact quite superficial (cf. M.E. Hussey, 'The Palamite Trinitarian Models', *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, 16(1972), 83-9).

## 2. Theological Encounters

The establishment in 1204 of the Latin Empire of Constantinople and of the various Latin principalities in the Orient, as well as the expansion of the mercantile empires of the Italian city-republics, were hardly conducive to fraternal intellectual dialogues between Greeks and Latins.<sup>11</sup> The Greek intellectuals, who possessed theological skills, left for either Nicea, or Epirus. The clergy remaining under Latin occupation struggled for the preservation of its Orthodox identity. Forced to engage in various forms of institutional and canonical compromises,<sup>12</sup> it was not prepared for dialogue on academic competition. The unprecedented installation, formally confirmed by Innocent III, of a Latin patriarch, the Venetian Thomas Morosini, at St. Sophia provoked a renewed, and more articulate Greek polemics against the Latin interpretation of “Petrine” primacy,<sup>13</sup> but still the Trinitarian problem connected with the Latin addition of the *Filioque* to the Nicean-Constantinopolitan Creed, remained as in the past, the focus of all theological debates, which would continue to take place within and beyond the borders of the Latin Empire.

It is obviously impossible to review here all such encounters and episodes.<sup>14</sup> The three most important ones are: 1) The meetings of Nicea and Nymphaeum in 1234, which witnessed an initial encounter between the Greeks and the new breed of Latin

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<sup>11</sup> On the period, see K.M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571)*, I (Philadelphia, Pa., 1976).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. for instance the disputations of Nicholas Masarites in Constantinople in 1206 (Ed. A. Heisenberg, ‘Aus der Geschichte und Literatur der Palaiologenzeit’, in *Sitzungsberichte der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philos. Philolog. und hist. Klasse*, 1922, 5; repr. Variorum, London, 1973), and a curious letter by the Greek clergy of Constantinople to Innocent III, accepting to commemorate the pope, as a secular ruler, but not as an ecclesiastical authority (PG 140, col. 297 C; cf. P. L’Huillier, ‘La nature des relations ecclésiastiques grécolatines après la prise de Constantinople par les Croisés’, *Akten da XI. Internationalen Byzantinisten-Kongress*, 1958, Munich, 1960, pp. 317-8).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. my old article ‘St. Peter in Byzantine Theology’, in *The Primacy of Peter in the Orthodox Church*, ed. J. Meyendorff (London, 1963), pp. 7-29.

<sup>14</sup> For basic bibliography, see V.I. Barvinok, *Nikifor Vlemmid i ego sochineniya* (Kiev, 1911)— a very careful study deserving a reprint; I.E. Troitsky, ‘K istorii spora ob iskhozhdenii Sv. Dukha’, *Khristianskoe Chtenie*, 1889, I, pp. 338-77; 581-605; II, pp. 280-352, 520-70; D.J. Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus and the West: A Study in Byzantine-Latin Relations* (Cambridge, 1959); J.Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy, 1198-1400* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1979); A. Papadakis, *Crisis in Byzantium. The Filioque Controversy in the Patriarchate of Gregory II of Cyprus (1283-1289)* (New York, 1983); D.M. Nicol, several articles reprinted in *Byzantium: Its Ecclesiastical History and Relations with the Western World* (London, Variorum, 1972); J.M. Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 211-9

“scholastic” theologians, 2) The encounter in Nicea between a legate of Innocent IV, the Franciscan, John of Parma, and Nicephorus Blemmydes, and 3) The events connected with the Council of Lyons (1274). At that Council itself, no theological debate took place, but the formal decree of union was followed by a prolonged crisis within the Byzantine Church, resulting in a conciliar decision defining the position of the Byzantine Church on the *Filioque* issue.

The debates of 1234 resulted from a correspondence between Pope Gregory IX and Patriarch Germanus II. The pope appointed two Dominicans and two Franciscans, as spokesmen for the Latin Church, whereas the Greek side was represented by the patriarch himself. The actual speakers for the Greek point of view were two laymen, Demetrios Karykes (the “consul of philosophers”) and the young Nicephorus Blemmydes. The Emperor John Vatatzes presided.

Lasting over four months,<sup>15</sup> the debates were concerned with the *Filioque* issue and, at the insistence of the Greeks, with the use of the unleavened bread in the Eucharist by the Latins. In oral argument with the Friars, the first Greek spokesman Karykes was totally confused, but a written document submitted by Blemmydes showed the two respective positions to be irreconcilable.

The debates in Nicea between John of Parma and the Greeks (1250), as reported by the main Greek participant, the same Nicephorus Blemmydes— now a monk and a priest— also brought no agreement, but it focused the argument on Greek patristic texts, which describe the Holy Spirit as “acting *through the Son*” (*di’ huiou*). The Latins used such texts to prove their point: acting “through the Son”, they said, is the same as proceeding “through the Son”, because “through”, in this context, means the same as “from”.

In his public replies to the Latin theologians, Blemmydes tried to show that the problem is not in finding accommodating synonyms, but in preserving the *hypostatic*, or personal characteristics of each Divine Person. Indeed, as most scholars today would agree),<sup>16</sup> the real difference between the Latin— Augustinian— view of the Trinity, as a single Essence, with personal characters understood as relations, and the Greek scheme,

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<sup>15</sup> The report of the Friars to the pope has been published by G. Golubovich in *Archivium Franciscanum Historicum*, 12(1919), 428-65; cf. an older edition in Mansi, *Collectio Conciliorum* XXIII, cols. 279-320D.

<sup>16</sup> “Latin philosophy considers the nature in itself and proceeds to the agent; Greek philosophy considers the agent first and passes through it to find the nature. The Latins think of personality as a mode of nature; the Greeks think of nature as the content of the person”, Th. de Régnon, *Études de théologie positive sur la Sainte Trinité*, Paris, 1892, p. 433; cf. also Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology. Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (New York, second edition, 1983), pp. 180-189.

inherited from the Cappadocian Fathers, which considered the single divine Essence as totally transcendent, and the Persons, or *hypostaseis*— each with unique and unchangeable characteristics— as revealing in themselves the Tripersonal divine life, was the real issue behind the debates on the *Filioque*. The Greeks would not understand the Latin argument, which affirmed: the Father and the Son are One Essence; therefore they are the One source of the Spirit, proceeding “from both” (*a Patre Filioque*).

Blemmydes did remain faithful to the Greek scheme of the Trinity. But, after his talks with the Latins in 1234 and 1250, he became personally strongly committed to the cause of church unity and defended the idea that the image of the Spirit’s procession “through the Son”, can serve as a bridge between the two theologies. In two short treatises addressed respectively to a friend, Jacob, archbishop of Ohrid and to Emperor Theodore II Lascaris (whom he had tutored and for whom he also wrote a book called *Basilikés Andrês*— “the Model of an Emperor”), Blemmydes collected patristic texts using the formula “through the Son” and attacked those Greeks who out of anti-Latin zeal, were refusing to give it enough importance.<sup>17</sup> In general, and already since Photius, the Greek position consisted in distinguishing the *eternal* procession of the Son from the Father, and the *sending* of the Spirit *in time* through the Son and by the Son. This distinction between the eternal processions and temporal manifestations was among the Byzantines the standard explanation for the numerous New Testament passages, where Christ is described as “giving” and “sending” the Spirit, and where the Spirit is spoken of as the “Spirit of the Son”. In his letters to Archbishop Jacob and Emperor Theodore Lascaris, however, Blemmydes specifically avoided the distinction between eternity and time: the patristic formula “through the Son” reflected both the eternal relationships of the divine Persons and the level of the “economy” in time.

Blemmydes hoped to satisfy both sides by his approach: “Our times call us to draw many people to concord in Christ”, he wrote.<sup>18</sup> He was challenging the stubborn

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<sup>17</sup> *Treatise to Jacob*, PG 142, cols. 553-65; *To Theodore Lascaris*, *ibid.*, cols. 565-84. The treatises were private reports, not designed for wide circulation. According to Nicephorus Gregoras he wrote them “secretly” (*lathra*, *Byz. Hist.*, V, 6, PG 148, col. 269A). The life and thought of Blemmydes have been controversial in his lifetime, in the following generation (Pachymeres, Gregoras) and among later historians. L.Allatius considered him a crypto-Latin (cf. *Ecclesiae Occidentalis abque Orientali perpetua consensione*, Cologne, 1648, p. 712ff). For E.Voulgaris (*Anakrisis peri tou Nikêphorou tou Blemmydou*, in *Iosêph Bryenniou ta Paraleipomena* III, Leipzig, 1784, pp. 307-400) and A. Dimitrakopoulos (*Ekklesiastikê Bibliothêkê*, [Leipzig, 1866], pp. 25-34) see him as a staunch Orthodox. For modern judgements on his treatises to Jacob and the Emperor Theodore, see Barvinok, *Nikifor Vlemmid*, pp. 109-145 and Gill, *Byzantium*, pp. 152-7.

<sup>18</sup> *To Jacob*, PG 142, col. 560 B.

defensiveness of Byzantine polemicists, who were calling in question the opposition between the “eternal” and the “temporal” in Trinitarian relations. Was not the coming of the Spirit through Christ a manifestation of the eternal life of God, and, therefore, manifested the eternal relationships of the divine Persons? But, then— some of his readers would ask— were not the Latins right in speaking of the eternal procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son?

Blemmydes himself always remained faithful to the Greek patristic vision of the personal relationships in the Trinity.<sup>19</sup> But he was a searching mind, liked to take some risks. However, he had neither the time, nor the opportunity to draw all the conclusions of his search. Others will draw such conclusions, but in different directions.

In 1274, Emperor Michael VIII Palaeologus signed a Confession of faith, drafted, in full conformity with Latin theology, by four Dominican friars sent specially by Pope Gregory X to Constantinople. The signature, given in advance, made the emperor eligible to participate through delegates in the ecumenical council of Lyons, where a union of the churches was proclaimed without further discussion. It is unfortunate that the Confession, under the obvious influence of the new systematic approach to theology in Western Scholasticism, also included a new element, which had never before been debated formally between East and West: the Latin doctrine of the purgatory.<sup>20</sup> The issue remained on the agenda until the council of Florence.

It is obviously impossible to discuss here all the participants and the episodes of the debates spurred in Byzantium by the Union of Lyons. There is an abundant secondary literature on the subject.<sup>21</sup> I would like simply to point at one fact: the decisive bifurcation between two main Greek protagonists— John Beccos and Gregory of Cyprus— was based on the views expressed by Nicephorus Blemmydes, from which they drew different conclusions. John Beccos, became convinced, after reading Blemmydes,<sup>22</sup> that

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<sup>19</sup> He expressed it forcefully in his treatise *On the Faith (Peri Pisteôs)*, which was a sort of testament left to his monastic community before his death (PG 142, cols. 585-605). It seems quite unnecessary to suppose that he “modified his views certainly once, possibly twice” (Gill, *Byzantium*, p. 152).

<sup>20</sup> Text of the Confession in H. Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, ed. K. Rahner (Freiburg, 1952), pp. 214-5. It seems that the first mention of the Purgatory, as a problem between the churches, occurred in 1235-6, when a Franciscan, Fra. Bartholomew, began to interrogate a Greek ambassador, the metropolitan of Corfu, George Bardanes, on this subject at Orvieto (cf. M. Roncaglia, *George Bardans et Barthélemy* (Rome, 1953) (= *Studi e Testi Francescani*, 4); cf. also J.M. Hoeck and R.J. Loenertz, *Nikolaos-Nectarios von Otranto* (Ettal, 1965), p.155.

<sup>21</sup> The last very well-documented study is by A. Papadakis, *Crisis*, where previous publications are studied in detail.

<sup>22</sup> Pachymeres, *De Michaele et Andronico Palaeologis*, ed. Bekker (Bonn, 1835), I, p. 381.

the formula “through the Son”, since it designates the *eternal* procession of the Spirit, fully justifies the Latin *Filioque*. He was promoted to the patriarchate by Michael VIII and became the great defender of the Decree of Lyons. Gregory of Cyprus, the Orthodox successor of Beccos, a former partisan of the Union and, undoubtedly, also a reader of Blemmydes, accepted the latter’s idea that the formula “through the Son” reflects eternal divine life. However, he refused to follow Beccos in the Latin camp: his resistance to the Latin conception of the Trinity was based on the distinction between the nature of God, and His *charismata*, or “eternal manifestation” (*ekphansis aidios*): the eternal, divine *charismata* of the Spirit, he proclaimed, are indeed manifested “through the Son”, but the personal “hypostatic” *existence* of the Spirit is from the Father, who is the unique personal source and origin of the Son and the Spirit, as persons.<sup>23</sup> This theology of Gregory of Cyprus provoked quite some discussion in Constantinople, anticipating the debates between Palamas and his adversaries in the following century,<sup>24</sup> but it was endorsed by the Council of Blachernae of 1285.<sup>25</sup>

### 3. Monastic theology

The adjective “monastic” is used here for lack of a better term. It is true Byzantine theology of the period is often associated with “Hesychasm”— a movement traced back to the writings of Nicephorus the Hesychast, and other spiritual authors of the late thirteenth century, who promoted a psychosomatic method of using the “Jesus prayer”. However, the *theological* trend, represented in the fourteenth century by Palamism, was not coextensive, or identical with individual ascetic mysticism, evoked by the term “hesychasm.”<sup>26</sup> Palamas himself, when he refers to recent “authorities” for his own theological formulations, mentions particularly Theoleptus of Philadelphia and Patriarch Athanasius I,<sup>27</sup> whereas his main disciple, Philotheos Kokkinos refers to Gregory of

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<sup>23</sup> Blemmydes did not establish any distinction between the Spirit as person, and the *charismata*. Neither did Beccos (cf. Papadakis, *Crisis*, p. 98, note 33). The distinction is the principal contribution of Gregory of Cyprus.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. many texts are gathered in V. Laurent and J. Darrouzès, eds., *Dossier Grec de l’Union de Lyon, 1273-1277* (Paris, 1976).

<sup>25</sup> The text of the *Tomos* is in PG 142, cols. 233-46; English tr., in Papadakis, *Crisis*, appendix I, pp. 155-165.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. my article ‘Is Hesychasm the right word?’ in *Okeanos. Essays presented to Ihor Sevcenko*, 1983) (= *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* VII), pp. 447-57.

<sup>27</sup> Tr. I, 2, 12; II, 2, 3, in J. Meyendorff, ed., Palamas, *Défense des saints hesychastes* (Louvain, 1973, seconde edition) (= *Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense*, 30-31), pp. 99, 323-24.

Cyprus.<sup>28</sup> The antecedents of the theological revival of the fourteenth century are therefore not exclusively “monastic”. Nevertheless, in the Palaeologan period the Byzantine Church gradually became dominated by monastic clergy. This domination was really completed in 1347 with the victory of the civil war by John Cantacuzenos, but the process had begun already with the patriarchate of Athanasius I (1289-1293, 1303-1310). This “monastic” trend was contemporary with a theological revival which was not directly connected with union negotiations or anti-Latin polemics, but emerged within the Byzantine church itself, reflecting its intellectual and spiritual concerns, and the social issues of the day. Its orientation consisted in placing strong emphasis on spirituality and sacramentalism, as evidenced in works— largely unpublished still— of the metropolitan of Philadelphia, Theoleptus (ca.1250-ca.1324),<sup>29</sup> or the dynamic, and sometimes fanatical social activism of Patriarch Athanasius.<sup>30</sup> In the late thirteenth century however, the major theological issue which confronted everyone of these authors was connected with church order and ecclesiology: the lingering “Arsenite schism”, whose leadership was also predominantly monastic, often invoked the “spiritual” authority of “holy” individuals to the sacramental and canonical responsibility of bishops. Men like Theoleptus and Athanasius, who did not always agree with each other on methods and persons, were nevertheless concerned with reforming the episcopate and the monasteries simultaneously, and both saw many bishops and many monks as unworthy of their calling, or misunderstanding their roles and responsibilities within the Church. It is interesting to note that most of the Byzantine writing of the period is connected with “ecclesiology”, but it is not so much preoccupied with the issue of papal primacy, as with

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<sup>28</sup> *Contra Gregoriam Antirrh.*, VI, PG 151, col. 915CD; cf. another palamite theologian, Joseph Calothetos, *Life of Athanasius*. ed. D. Tsames, *Ioséph Kalothétou Syggrammata* (Thessaloniki, 1980), p. 482. The antipalamite Akindynos is understandably a critic of Gregory of Cyprus (cf. J. Meyendorff, *Introduction l'Étude de Gregoire Palamas* [Paris, 1959], English tr. 2nd ed., Crestwood, NY, 1974, p. 24).

<sup>29</sup> The interesting personality of Theoleptus deserves further study, as can be seen from preliminary investigations, such as those of S. Salaville (cf. particularly two articles in the *REB*, 5(1947), 101-15, 116-36; also ‘Un directeur spirituel à Byzance au début du XIVe siècle: Théolepte de Philadelphie, *Mélanges J. de Ghellinck*, II Gembloux, 1951, pp. 877-87), V. Laurent, (‘Les crises religieuses à Byzance: Le schisme anti-arsénite du métropolitain Théolepte de Philadelphie’, *REB*, 18(1960), 45-54), and D. Constantelos (‘Mysticism and social involvement in the Later Byzantine Church. Theoleptus of Philadelphia: a Case Study’, *Byzantines Studies*, 6(1979), 49-60).

<sup>30</sup> The personality and works of Athanasius became much better known after the partial publication of his writings by A.M. Talbot, *The Correspondence of Athanasius I Patriarch of Constantinople* (trans., text and commentary, Washington, DC, 1975 = *CFHB*, VII). Cf. also J.L. Boojamra, *Church Reform in the Late Byzantine Empire* (Thessaloniki, 1982).

the internal issues of the Eastern Church itself.<sup>31</sup> This spiritual, but at the same time social and reformist orientation of the theologians, whom I call “monastic”, stands in some contrast with the writers of intellectuals like Nicephorus Blemmydes. This contrast anticipates the confrontation, which will begin more distinctly in the fourteenth century, between lovers of secular “Hellenic” learning and the Palamites.

In spite of the vast difference in intellectual make-up and methodological approaches to theology between the professional “scholastics” of the West and the old-fashioned sophisticated scholars of Byzantium, the massive Latin ecclesiastical presence in the East, from Palestine to Greece and to the Italian commercial centers on the Northern shores of the Black Sea, made the thirteenth century a time for inevitable encounters. In Latin occupied areas, the animosity between the two communities did not prevent friendlier meetings on the level of popular piety: the local population could use a Greek translation of the Roman mass,<sup>32</sup> whereas some Latins liked Byzantine icons and commissioned some.<sup>33</sup> One can be sure that if, instead of formal, officially-sponsored debates of theologians on the *Filioque* issue, more spontaneous and direct encounters were possible between early Franciscans and Byzantine hesychasts, the dialogue would have followed somewhat different directions. But we do not know anything about such encounters and the historical and cultural conditions of the day did not favor them. The professional Latin theologians were commandeered to refute the Greek positions on the basis of the achievements of the new Scholastic synthesis: St. Thomas Aquinas himself was asked to prepare an anti-Greek *dossier* for the council of Lyons.<sup>34</sup> All three major religious orders— Dominicans, Franciscans and Cistercians— established centers in conquered Romania.<sup>35</sup> The Dominican house in Pera established under the Latin Empire across the Golden Horn from Constantinople, remained active even after 1261, and served as a major point of contact between Byzantine intellectuals and the Latin Church.

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. J. Darrouzès, *Documents inédits d'ecclésiologie byzantine*, (Paris, 1966), pp. 86-106, 340-413.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Heisenberg, 'Aus der Geschichte', pp. 46-52.

<sup>33</sup> K. Weitzmann, 'Icon painting in the Crusader Kingdom', *DOP*, 22(1966), 81-3.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. A. Dondaine, 'Contra Graecos. Premiers écrits polémiques des Dominicains d'Orient', *Archivium Fratrum Praedicatorum* 21 (1951), 320-446; 'Nicholas de Cotrone et les sources du "Contra errores Graecorum" de Saint Thomas', *Divus Thomas* 28 (1950), 313-40.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. R.J. Loenertz, *Byzantina et Franco-Graeca* (Storia e Letteratura: Raccolta di Studi e Testi, Rome, 1970) (articles on the Dominicans, published between 1935 and 1966); D.J. Geanakoplos, 'Bonaventura, the two mendicant orders, and the Greeks at the Council of Lyons (1274)', in D. Baker, ed., *Studies in Church History*, 13 (Oxford, 1976), pp. 183-211; D.M. Bolton, 'A Mission to the Orthodox? The Cistercians in Romania', *ibid.*, pp. 169-181.

Were there concrete results? Yes, in terms of the wholesale adoption by some Greeks of the Latin Thomistic world view. There was no real “move” on the Latin side towards discovering that Christian unity might consist in anything else than the simple “conversion” of the Greeks (*reductio Graecorum*). The Orthodox side, however— from Blemmydes, to Gregory of Cyprus and to Palamas— was gradually transcending a purely defensive stand, by discovering that the real problem of the *Filioque* lies not in the formula itself, but in the definition of God as *actus purus* as finalized in the *De ente et essentia* of Thomas Aquinas, vis--vis the more personalistic trinitarian vision inherited by the Byzantines from the Cappadocian Fathers.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Cf. J.M. Hussey's observations, leading to similar conclusions in her brilliant book *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 248-9.