

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)

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*Sigla*

NB, unless otherwise cited, English translations and emphases in bold are our own, while we also modify some English translations.

- Acta Graeca* *Quae supersunt Actorum Graecorum Concilii Florentini*. CFDS Series B, vol. 5, books 1–2, ed. J. Gill (Rome: PIOS, 1953).
- Acta Latina* *Acta Latina Concilii Florentini*. CFDS Series B, vol. 6, ed. G. Hofmann (Rome: PIOS, 1955).
- Ad Thalassium* Maximus Confessor, *Quaestiones ad Thalassium*. Corpus Christianorum: Series Graeca 22, ed. C. Laga and C. Steel (Turhout: Brepols, 1990).

- Amb.* Maximus Confessor, *Ambigua ad Iohannem*. Corpus Christianorum: Series Graeca, 18, ed. Edouard Jauneau, (Turnhout: Brepols, 1988).
- BAV Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana.
- Caritas* J. Isaac Goff, *Caritas in Primo: A Historical Theological Study of Bonaventure's "Quaestiones Disputatae de Mysterio Ss. Trinitatis"* (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2014).
- CFDS Concilium Florentinum Documenta et Scriptores Series B, ed. G. Hoffman and M. Candal (Rome: PIOS, 1942, 1952).
- CUP Cambridge University Press.
- Capita 150* Gregory Palamas, *The One Hundred and Fifty Chapters (Capita 150)*, ed. and trans. R. Sinkewicz (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1988).
- Chrestou Gregory Palamas, *Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμᾶ συγγράμματα*, 5 vols., ed. P.K. Chrestou (Thessaloniki: Ethniko Idrima Erevnon, 1962–1992).
- “De distinct” Titus Szabó, “De distinctionis formalis origine bonaventuriana disquisitio historico-critica,” in *Scholastica ratione historico-critica instauranda*, ed. Charles Balić (Rome: Antonianum, 1951), 379–445.
- DSSB *Doctoris Seraphici S. Bonaventurae Opera Omnia*, 9 vols. (Quarrachi: Ad Claras Aquas, 1882–1901).
- “First Antir” Mark Eugenicus, “First Antirrhetic on the Distinction between Essence and Energy: First Antirrhetic against Manuel Kalekas. Editio princeps,” ed. M. Pilavakis (PhD diss., University of London, 1987).
- Lectura* John Duns Scotus, *The Examined Report of the Paris Lecture*. Reportatio I-A, 2 vols., eds. A. Wolter and O. Bychkov (St. Bonaventure, NY: Bookmasters, 2004).

- OCCS* George-Gennadius Scholarius, *Oeuvres Complètes de Georges Scholarios*, 8 vols., ed. L. Petit, X. Sidéridès, and M. Jugie (Paris: Maison de la Bonne Presse, 1929–1935).
- Ord.* John Duns Scotus, *Doctoris Subtilis et Mariani Ioannis Duns Scoti Ordinis Fratrum Minorum opera omnia*. Opus Oxiense, 14 vols., ed. C. Balić, M. Bodewig, et al. (Vatican City: Polyglott, 1950–2013).
- OUP* Oxford University Press.
- GLIH* J.A. Demetracopoulos, “Palamas Transformed: Palamite Interpretations of the Distinction between God’s ‘Essence’ and ‘Energies’ in Late Byzantium,” and Georgi Kapriev, “Lateinische Einflüsse auf die Antilateiner. Philosophie versus Kirchenpolitik?,” in *Greeks, Latins, and Intellectual History 1204–1500*, ed. M. Hinterberger and C. Schabel (Paris: Peeters Leuven, 2011), 263–272; 385–395.
- PG* *Patrologiae cursus completus, series graeca* (Paris: Migne, 1862–1866).
- PP* John Scottus Eriugena, *Periphyseon*. Corpus Christianorum: Continuatio Medievalis, 161–165, five vols., ed. E. Jeauneau (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996–2003).
- PIOS* Pontificium Institutum Orientalium Studiorum.
- ScG* Thomas Aquinas and Sylvester Ferrariensis, *Summa contra Gentiles. Commentari Ferrariensis. Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Doctoris Angelici opera Omnia*, vols. 13–15 (Rome: Riccardi Garroni, 1926).
- “Second Antir” Manuel Kalekas, “Second Antirrhetic against Manuel Kalekas. Editio princeps,” ed. M. Pilavakis (Athens, Ph.D. diss forthcoming).
- S.Th.* *Summa Theologiae*.
- SVTQ* *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly*.

- Theo dogmatica* Martin Jugie, *Theologia dogmatica christianorum orientalium ab Ecclesia Catholica dissidentium*, vol. 2 (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1933).
- Tomo Sinodale* Neilus Cabasilas and Philotheus Kokkinos, *Τόμος κατὰ τοῦ μοναχοῦ Προχόρου τοῦ Κυδώνη*, in *Gregorio Palamas e oltre: studi e documenti sulle controversie teologiche del xiv secolo bizantino*. *Orientalia Venetiana* 16, ed. A. Rigo (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2004), 1–134.
- Triads* Gregory Palamas, *The Triads*. The Classics of Western Spirituality: Gregory Palamas, ed. J. Meyendorff, trans. N. Gendle (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1983).

### ***Introduction***

Scholars show ever-increasing interest in the “essence-energies” distinction of Gregory Palamas. This essay confronts unresolved difficulties that persist in spite of David Bradshaw’s *Aristotle East and West: Metaphysics and the Division of Christendom* (2004) and its virtual sequel, *Divine Essence and Divine Energies* (2013). In the latter compilation of essays, Bradshaw dialogues with critics discussing patristics, medieval theology, and modern philosophy. Our present essay confronts three major themes of the two aforementioned books: (1) Palamas’ place in the general history of philosophy and theology; (2) Palamas’ singularity vis-à-vis the essence-energies distinction; and (3) Palamas’ unparalleled distinction among Latins. The essay compares primary Orthodox sources, such as Palamas and Mark of Ephesus, to primary Latin sources, such as Bonaventure of Bagnoregio and John Duns Scotus. Furthermore, this essay critiques Bradshaw as well as classic Renaissance and Enlightenment schoolmen, to offer a global perspective of Palamas’ historical role within the context of forgotten or ignored historical chronicles that challenge

present historical narratives. It ends by suggesting areas of further investigation to arrive at a satisfactory description of Palamas' historical role in East and West.

The question of the so-called “real distinction (*pragmatikê diakrisis*)” between God's essence and his energies continues to inspire lively debate and discussion, as evidenced in the recently published *Divine Essence and Divine Energies* (hereafter, *DEDE*). In view of the popular and scholarly success of David Bradshaw's *Aristotle East and West* (hereafter, *AEW*)<sup>1</sup> and the more recent book of 2013 we provide a careful read of this eclectic collection of essays, offering an historically based and selective critique, along with a constructive corrective, to the book. We also intend to weigh specific strengths and weaknesses of the work on two outstanding points summarized by a co-editor, Christoph Schneider, within his introduction:

- 1) For most contemporary Orthodox theologians the distinction between the divine essence and energies belongs to the very core of the Orthodox tradition and has no direct equivalent in the West (*DEDE*, 9).
- 2) David Bradshaw, Constantinos Athanasopoulos, and Nikolaos Loudovikos share the view that the essence-energy distinction is a key doctrine in the Orthodox tradition that is without parallel in the West (*DEDE*, 10).

We begin our critique by including an additional point of Bradshaw (hereafter, B.) within his original work (*AEW*, x–xi), wherein he clearly desired a future place in “the history of philosophy” for Palamas. In fact, B.'s desire inspires our own effort to respond to *AEW* and its virtual supplement in *DEDE*.

### ***I. An Eclectic Approach to Palamas***

The essays in *DEDE* are interesting in and of themselves. B.'s in-depth philological study of energy (*energeia*) in *AEW* provided strong foundations for arguments on behalf of Pala-

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<sup>1</sup> David Bradshaw, *Aristotle East and West: Metaphysics and the Division of Christendom* (New York: CUP, 2004).

mas. Furthermore, B.'s philosophico-theological chronicle of "energy" from Aristotle to Palamas evoked even begrudging praise from B.'s most ardent critics. Nonetheless, upon B.'s comparison between Aquinas and Palamas, he predictably provoked reactions to his critical positions. *DEDE* reflects a scholarly attempt to further B. claims with recourse to diverse methods of reading much of the same source material in *AEW*. Besides, *DEDE* attempts to provide B. with critical comments from scholars about *AEW*, especially vis-à-vis Palamas' fundamental metaphysical positions.<sup>2</sup>

In chapter one of *DEDE* (published 2013), B. summarizes his understanding of the essence-energies distinction to set the stage for his interlocutors' subsequent chapters. Actually, the first chapter is merely a reprint of an article published in 2006.<sup>3</sup> B. read aloud his 2006 article to the audience at the Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies on 5 December 2008.<sup>4</sup> By reprinting an antecedently published article, the editors mean to provide the reader of 2013 with an abbreviation of *AEW*. Therefore, the reader should not expect new developments. Nevertheless, the original 2006 article was an excellent summary of *AEW*.<sup>5</sup> One of B.'s important observations (*DEDE*, 28) attributes Palamas' orphan status in the history of theology and philosophy to a neglect among scholars to contextualize Palamas within the "history of philosophy" and biblical theology. We agree and, for this reason, "the historical reception" of Palamas ought to be a predominant scholarly concern to fill the void à propos Palamas' historic contribution. After all, a subtle and highly metaphysical school adopted

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<sup>2</sup> We intend "metaphysical" to describe being beyond Aristotle's categories of being and, thus, a "transcendental science" leading to knowledge of attributes characteristic of necessary, infinite being.

<sup>3</sup> David Bradshaw, "The Concept of the Divine Energies," *Philosophy and Theology* 18 (2006): 93–120.

<sup>4</sup> David Bradshaw, "The Concept of the Divine Energies in Eastern Orthodoxy" (a colloquium on David Bradshaw's book *Aristotle East and West: Metaphysics and the Division of Christendom*, University of Cambridge, filmed May 12, 2008, 2:33:37, posted 2009, <http://sms.cam.ac.uk/media/517136>).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* See his presentation at: 10:30–1:10:33/2:33:26.