

# The Reception of Palamas in the West Today\*

NORMAN RUSSELL\*\*

In the twenty-first century Palamas is still able to generate a good deal of *odium theologicum*. The Palamite controversy lives on in current theological debates centred on various issues, such as how receptive Palamas was to the ideas of St Augustine, what the nature was of his relationship to Dionysius the Areopagite and Maximus the Confessor, how indebted he was to Neoplatonism, whether his essence-energies distinction is philosophically coherent, and whether this thinking as a whole is compatible with that of Thomas Aquinas. In this paper I shall review the history of the reception of Palamism in the West, passing from Martin Jugie's polemical assessment of Palamas in 1931 to John Meyendorff's magisterial rebuttal of Jugie in 1959 and thence to the reactions both positive and negative to Meyendorff that have governed the debate on Palamism from the 1970s to the present day. In conclusion I shall suggest some ways in which the debate might be taken forward in an eirenic spirit.

The main issues that still govern the debate were brought to the attention of a wide audience by a learned study of Palamas and Palamism published by Martin Jugie in vol. 11 of the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* (1931)<sup>1</sup>. It may be justly said that all the work by both Western and Orthodox scholars in the last eighty years has been related in some way to the positions laid out by Jugie. Not that he made any claim to impartiality. He saw his task as one of evaluating Palamism from the viewpoint of the Neo-Thomist Roman Catholic orthodoxy of his day. He regarded Palamas as an innovator led by his defence of the hesychasts to invent a new theology ('une théologie nouvelle'<sup>2</sup>, Jugie 1931: 1759,

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\*Τὸ κείμενο ἀποτελεῖ ἐπεξεργασμένη μορφή εἰσήγησης στὸ Πατρολογικὸ Σεμινάριο ποὺ διοργανώθηκε ἀπὸ τὴν Ἀκαδημία Θεολογικῶν Σπουδῶν Βόλου στὴν Ἀθήνα στὶς 3 Μαρτίου 2012, μὲ θέμα: «Ἡ ὑποδοχὴ τοῦ Παλαμισμού στὴ Δύση σήμερα».

\*\* Ὁ Norman Russell εἶναι διδάσκων στὸ Heythrop College τοῦ Πανεπιστημίου τοῦ Λονδίνου.

1. JUGIE MARTIN 'Grégoire Palamas' in *DTC* (1931) vol. II. 1375-76 and 'Palamite (controverse)' in *DTC* (1931) vol. II. 1777-1818.

2. *Ibid*, 1759, 1777.

1777) unknown to the Fathers, a theology that treated the essence and the operation of God as ‘two things really distinct’<sup>3</sup> even if inseparable (1931: 1750). Palamas’s teaching on ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ divinities is a ‘gross error’<sup>4</sup> (1931: 1760) and the other Palamite theses on uncreated deifying grace, uncreated gifts of the Spirit, and uncreated glory visible to eyes of flesh are also ‘erroneous and verging on heresy’<sup>5</sup> (1931: 1764). Ten years later Jugie returned to the same theme in his *Schisme Byzantin*<sup>6</sup> (1941), and repeated his assertion that Palamas’s teaching was ‘a new theology unknown to the ancient Fathers’<sup>7</sup> (1941: 381). Moreover, he argued that Palamism had more or less dropped out of Orthodoxy since its apogee in the fourteenth century, appealing to the nineteenth-century Russian theologians, Macarius Bulgakov and Silvester Malevanskii, as evidence for the Russian rejection of Palamism: ‘Le palamisme comme dogme de l’Église gréco-russe est donc bien mort’<sup>8</sup> (1941: 382).

The necrology notice turned out to be premature. Three years later Vladimir Lossky brought out one of the most influential Orthodox works of the twentieth century, his *Essai sur la Théologie Mystique de l’Église d’Orient*<sup>9</sup> (1944; ET 1957). Although Jugie’s opinions on Palamas are never cited (there is only one reference to the *DTC* article, a quotation from a passage of Mark of Ephesus cited from an unedited manuscript), the work is clearly a response to Jugie. Lossky consistently sets Palamas in a patristic context – there is no ‘théologie nouvelle’ here! He defends ‘the apophatic and antinomial spirit of eastern orthodoxy’ against the intellectualism of its opponents, insisting that the essence-energies distinction is ‘the dogmatic basis of the real character of all mystical experience’<sup>10</sup> (1957: 86). The emphasis is on experience rather than intellectual analysis, for the goal of Orthodox spirituality is not the contemplation of the divine essence but participation in the very life of the Trinity<sup>11</sup> (1957: 65).

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3. Ibid, 1750.

4. Ibid, 1760.

5. Ibid, 1764.

6. Idem, *Le schisme byzantin: aperçu historique et doctrinal*, Paris: Lethielleux 1941.

7. Ibid, 381.

8. Ibid, 382.

9. LOSSKY VLADIMIR, *Essai sur la théologie mystique de l’Église d’Orient*, Paris: Aubiey 1944, english translation: *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, London: James Clarke, 1957.

10. Ibid, 86 (ET).

11. Ibid, 65 (ET).

Lossky's book was followed up in 1959 by a work which immediately established itself as the definitive study of Palamas, John Meyendorff's *Introduction à l'étude de Grégoire Palamas*<sup>12</sup> (1959). Meyendorff confronts Jugie more directly than Lossky did but does not seek to refute him systematically. He defends the integrity of the Tome of 1341 against Jugie's claim that the document which has come down to us is not a faithful record of the debates, arguing that there were two councils in that year, one in June the other in August<sup>13</sup> (1959: 81-2; ET 52-4), and he objects to Jugie's assertion that the Patriarch Philotheos promoted a 'mitigated Palamism'<sup>14</sup> (1959: 310; ET 226-7). Throughout the book his guiding idea is that Palamas presents a personalist and existentialist metaphysics derived from the Fathers against an essentialist metaphysics derived from Greek philosophy<sup>15</sup> (stated succinctly on p. 310; ET 226). By implication, Jugie follows the essentialist metaphysics of Palamas's opponents, which bears a striking resemblance to the Neo-Thomist metaphysics of Jugie's Roman Catholic contemporaries.

Meyendorff's book was initially welcomed with very few reservations. 'Fr John Meyendorff's work,' said Louis Bouyer, 'at last enables us to see the true origins of the Palamite controversy, and to appreciate objectively the merits of this man who was the last great spiritual writer of Medieval Athos, and certainly its most powerful theologian'<sup>16</sup> (1961: 585). Bouyer goes on to criticise Jugie for errors in his presentation of the hesychast controversy. Referring to the *DTC* articles, he says: '[T]he first modern scholar in the West who applied himself to the study of these disputes, Fr Martin Jugie, A. A., contributed not a little to obscure their exact import by supposing that Barlaam was in fact an intrepid defender, in the East, of Aristotelian and Thomistic thought. The most obvious result of the simplification was not only to make Gregory Palamas appear, quite gratuitously, a heretic in the eyes of modern Catholics, but also to

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12. MEYENDORFF JOHN, *Introduction à l'étude de Grégoire Palamas*, Paris: Seuil, 1959. English translation *A study of Gregory Palamas*, Leighton Buzzard: Faith Press, 1959.

13. *Ibid.*, 81-2, ET 52-4.

14. *Ibid.*, 310, ET 226-7.

15. *Ibid.*, 310, ET 226.

16. BOYER LOUIS, 'Byzantine Spirituality' in Jean Leclercq, Francois Vandenbrouche and Louis Boyer (eds), *A History of Christian Spirituality*, vol II (1961), 545-90, here 585.

give the Eastern Christians the most fantastic misconceptions of what authentic Thomism is'<sup>17</sup> (1961: 585).

We need to pause at this point to appreciate the full import of what Bouyer is saying. There is a sub-text here that calls for elucidation. Bouyer belonged to a school of thought that had been dubbed by the Vatican '*la nouvelle théologie*'<sup>18</sup> (Boersma 2009: 8). You will recall that this was precisely the term Jugie had applied to Palamas. *La nouvelle théologie* was a movement of protest that began in France in the 1930s against the neo-scholasticism that had been imposed by Rome since the beginning of the century. For the ecclesiastical authorities it was important to maintain on the one hand that human reason was autonomous, and on the other that grace was a purely gratuitous gift bestowed by God. This neo-scholastic position had been developed in the early sixteenth century by the Dominican Cardinal, Thomas de Vio, known as Gaetano, or in English, Cajetan. Cajetan made a sharp distinction between what was purely human and what was divine in order to preserve the gratuitous nature of divine grace. He held that the human person could be defined in purely natural terms<sup>19</sup> (Milbank 2005: 17). Against this, Henri de Lubac and others, principally of the Jesuit house at Lyon, believed that there is no intelligent being that is not oriented by grace towards deification. Grace for them could not be 'extrinsic' – one of de Lubac's favourite terms. Going back beyond Cajetan to Aquinas himself, the *nouvelle théologie* held grace to be a *desiderium naturale*. It is entirely consistent with this that Jean Daniélou, another of the Lyon Jesuits, was to write later of his excitement at coming across in Myrrha Lot-Borodine's *La déification de l'homme selon la doctrine des Pères grecs*<sup>20</sup> (first published in 1932-33) what he says he had unconsciously been seeking for a long time, 'a vision of humanity transfigured by the divine energies'<sup>21</sup> (Lot-Borodine 1970: 10). Daniélou, de Lubac and others labelled as adherents of *la nouvelle théologie* were implicitly censured by Pius XII's 1950 encyclical *Humani Generis*: 'Others', it said, de-

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17. Ibid, 585.

18. BOERSMA HANS, *Nouvelle Theologie and Sacramental Theology*, Oxford: DUP, 2009, 8.

19. MILBANK JOHN, *The Suspended Middle: Henri de Lubac and the Debate concerning the Supernatural*, London: SCM Press, 200 s. 17.

20. LOT-BORODINE M., *La Deification de l'homme selon la doctrine des Pères grecs*, Paris: Cerf, 1970.

21. Ibid, 10.

stroy the gratuity of the supernatural order, since God, they say, cannot create intellectual beings without ordering and calling them to the beatific vision.' This reaffirmation of the neo-scholastic view of human nature was to influence the approach of Roman Catholic scholars to Palamism.

Père Bouyer, having received his early theological formation in the Lutheran Church stood somewhat outside this conflict. So did a friend of Bouyer's the distinguished Anglican Thomist, Eric Mascall. With Mascall we touch on another route by which Western theologians encountered Palamism, the route of ecumenical conferences. In Mascall's case this first occurred at a conference of the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius held in 1949, which was also attended by Vladimir Lossky. The conference ended with a celebrated scene in which Lossky and Mascall recited together the latter's poem: 'The Thomist and the Palamite were walking hand in hand.' Towards the end of the sixties, Mascall was invited to give the 1970-71 Gifford Lectures at the University of St Andrews in Scotland. In the resulting book, *The Openness of Being*<sup>22</sup> (1971), he includes a long appendix on 'Grace and Nature in East and West'. He takes the opportunity provided by his essay to comment on the report of an ecumenical meeting held at Chevetogne in 1954, at which John Meyendorff had been one of the participants. Mascall notes that the report of this meeting presents Palamism as a defence of mystical realism against nominalism and essentialism. 'Viewed from this aspect,' he says, 'the doctrine of the divine energies can appear even to a Western in a less baffling light'<sup>23</sup> (1971: 222). He then goes on to contrast St Thomas's focus on the principle of *existence* (*esse*) with the primacy Cajetan and the neo-scholastics give to the principle of *essence* (*essentia*). He notes that modern Thomists and John Meyendorff find common ground in regarding St Thomas and St Gregory as proponents of a true existentialism and suggests that an important topic for investigation would be 'whether Thomas and Gregory were not ultimately concerned with the same theological and religious question, even if they expounded it in terms of divergent metaphysical systems'<sup>24</sup> (1971: 222).

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22. MASCALL E.L., *The Openness of Being: Natural Theology today*, London: Parton, Longman and Told 1971.

23. *Ibid*, 222.

24. *Ibid*, 222.

This warm reception of Palamas through the work of John Meyendorff was not to last. A reaction set in during the 1970s led by a special issue of the French Dominican journal *Istina* published in 1974 which was devoted entirely to Palamas. The unsigned editorial challenges Meyendorff's interpretation of Palamas and goes back to the theses advanced by Jugie. It objects to a real distinction between the essence and the energies and regards any promotion of a graduated participation in God, *une participation dégradée*, as smacking of Neoplatonic emanatism. Palamism, it insists, cannot be seen as complementary in any way to the Roman Church's scholasticism. This intransigent view is backed up by four essays which seek to undermine the continuity of Palamas with the patristic tradition. The first, by Jean-Philippe Houdret OCD, examines the Cappadocian background for Palamas's essence-energies distinction and concludes that none of the Cappadocian Fathers supports it. The second, by Jean-Miguel Garrigues OP, does the same with regard to St Maximus the Confessor. The third, by Juan Nadal SJ, expounds the arguments of Palamas's principal opponent in the early years of the controversy, Gregory Akindynos. And the fourth, by Marie-Joseph Le Guillou OP, in a study of the Transfiguration expresses support for a doctrine emphasizing the transfiguration of the Christian but is reserved about a Palamism that seems to the author to teach an ontological participation in God.

This learned counterblast to Meyendorff's theses from the neo-scholastic camp provoked a vigorous response from several Neo-Palamites and their sympathizers. André de Halleux (who the previous year had defended Palamas against criticisms expressed by Endre von Ivánka in his *Plato Christianus*) published an article in *Irénikon* in 1975 countering the *Istina* arguments for Palamas's disconnection from the patristic tradition. In the same year, an article by Georges Barrois (himself a former Dominican) was published in *Saint Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* subjecting the *Istina* articles to a detailed critique and accusing their authors of failing from their neo-scholastic perspective to understand the nuances of Palamas's position. The essence-energies distinction, for example, is a real one, 'but not as two self-standing entities', nor as the difference between substance and accidents, but as something in between – Barrois calls it 'an actual distinction of formalities'<sup>25</sup> (1975: 223). The *Istina* authors'

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25. BARROIS GEORGE, 'Palamism Revisited', *SVTQ* 19, 211-31, here 223.

refusal to see any merit in the distinction leaves their God an *Actus Purus* who is 'a prisoner of his own transcendence'<sup>26</sup> (1975: 209).

Barrois is supported in the same issue of *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* by Christos Yannaras, who subjects Garrigues' arguments in particular to a much more thorough-going analysis. Rightly seeing the soteriological implications of the arguments for or against Palamas as the most important aspect of the debate, Yannaras probes the meaning of participation in God. Garrigues' restriction of participation to the moral dimension makes deification not a transformatory experience but merely a matter of a union of the will or intention. A different vision of truth is implied here, not just on the theoretical level but on the level of mode of existence – a return, in Yannaras's view, to 'a new kind of sterile scholasticism'<sup>27</sup> (1975: 243).

The waves generated by the *Istina* theologians, particularly Fr Garrigues, did not subside at once but continued to rock the Palamite boat for several more years. In 1975 Archimandrite (as he then was) Kallistos Ware published an article in the *Eastern Churches Review* on the essence-energies distinction. This was not intended as a piece of controversial writing but had been prepared as a preparatory paper for the Anglican/Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Discussions held in England in that year. In this paper Ware mentions the argument put forward by Rowan Williams (the present Archbishop of Canterbury) in his (unpublished) doctoral thesis on Lossky that although the essence-energies distinction might be helpful on the epistemological level, it should not be projected onto the level of metaphysics. In other words, the distinction was a mental one, not a distinction within God himself. Against this Ware flatly declared that in the Orthodox tradition the distinction was a real one, a *pragmatiki diakrisis*, not merely a notional one, a *diakrisis kat'epinoian*<sup>28</sup> (1975: 134). Responses were not long in coming.

These responses, from a Roman Catholic religious philosopher, Dom Illtyd Trethowan, and from Rowan Williams himself, were published, together with a further comment from Ware, in a special issue of the *Eastern Churches Review*

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26. Ibid, 209.

27. YANNARAS CH., 'The Distinction between Essence and Energies and its Importance for Theology', *SVTQ* 19, 232-45, here 243.

28. WARE UALL. (Arch), 'God Hidden and Revealed: The Apophatic way and the Essence - Energies Distinction', *ECR* 7, 125-36, here 134.

devoted to Gregory Palamas<sup>29</sup> (vol. 9, 1977). Trethowan is in fundamental agreement with Ware on the necessity of an apophatic approach, but objects to the notion of ‘antinomy’ which Ware (following Lossky) relies on when discussing the nature of God. This seems to Trethowan to be a retreat into obscurantism precluding rational discussion. With regard to essence and energies, Trethowan, like many before him, finds the distinction unintelligible because it seems incompatible with divine simplicity. He prefers to speak with Aquinas of God who is Pure Act. If the essence-energies distinction is pressed in order to account for our union with God, Trethowan finds it unnecessary. ‘In our ordinary human experience,’ he says, ‘the known is present to the knower,’ for human knowledge itself is a ‘union without confusion’<sup>30</sup> (1977: 22). Why do we need to speak of essence and energies simply because our human knowledge is limited? He supports Rowan Williams in regarding it as a mistake ‘to “externalize” the limitations of our knowledge of God and treat them as distinctions *within God himself*’<sup>31</sup> (1977: 24), and is disappointed to find Williams’s proposal dismissed by an appeal to authority. The essence-energies distinction seems to him a philosophical error, ‘a piece of scholasticism of no vital importance’<sup>32</sup> (1977: 25).

In his own article, drawing on Trethowan and Garrigues – he refers to Garrigues’ *Istina* article as ‘brilliant’ – Williams argues that Palamas gets into a philosophical muddle because he applies the extreme realism of Neoplatonic metaphysics to Aristotelian logic. He complains in particular about ‘a near-materialist idea of participation which leads to grave terminological incoherences’<sup>33</sup> (1977: 42). He defends Aquinas’s teaching that the vision of God after this life is a vision of God’s *essentia*, which is not a comprehension of what-it-is-to-be-God, but God’s *actus essendi* present to us directly without the intervention of any mediating created *species*. Like Trethowan, he takes ‘participation’ to signify an intellectual and moral relationship, the identification of the human will with God’s will. It does not signify ‘having a share in God’ in a quasi-physical sense.

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29. ECR, vol. 9, 1977.

30. TRETOWAN DOM ILL., ‘Irrationality in Theology and the Palamite Distinction’, *ECR* 9, 1977, 19-26, here 22.

31. *Ibid.*, 24.

32. *Ibid.*, 25.

33. Williams Roman D., ‘The philosophical Structure of Palamism’, *ECR* 9, 27-44, here 42.



In his rejoinder, Ware defends Palamism vigorously against the charges of irrationality, obscurantism and philosophical incompetence. Antinomy, he argues, is not irrational; it simply takes account of the fact that the whole of divine reality cannot be contained within our human categories of thought. Indeed there is Western support for antinomy in Newman's dictum, 'saying and unsaying to positive effect'. Williams's strictures, moreover, are of an abstract nature without any clear historical perspective, with the result that the opponent he attacks is largely imaginary. Palamas was not developing a system of thought in opposition to the Latin West. His concern was to defend the reality of the hesychasts' experience of God. The essence-energies distinction, Ware insists, 'was made not for philosophical but for experiential reasons'<sup>34</sup> (1978: 58 – his emphasis). It is a mistake to treat Palamas as a religious philosopher in the mode of Thomas Aquinas, intent on constructing a metaphysical theory. As for the telling charge that Palamas ontologizes what properly belongs to epistemology, however, Ware does not offer a detailed rebuttal. He simply poses three questions: (1) 'Does the term "real distinctions" as understood by Western scholasticism correspond precisely to what Palamas was trying to say? (2) Is not the positing of sharp distinctions between epistemology and ontology based on Western categories alone? (3) It is legitimate to suppose a sharp contrast between the essence and the energies of God?'<sup>35</sup> (1977: 59-60). In sum, interpreting Palamas from a neo-scholastic point of view seriously distorts his thinking.

In the course of his article, Ware notes that Jugie's negative evaluation of Palamas, which had been dominant in the earlier part of the twentieth century, was largely reversed by Meyendorff's work, but that by the mid-1970s Meyendorff's interpretation was itself attracting increasing criticism. Indeed, other Western scholars were soon to voice reservations about Palamite doctrines similar to those we have already noted in Trethowan, Williams and the *Istina* theologians. In the same year as the *ECR* articles, Gerhard Podskalsky published his *Theologie und Philosophie in Byzanz*<sup>36</sup>, in which he takes up a position generally favourable to Jugie and hostile to Meyendorff. In 1980 Dorothea Wende-

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34. WAIZE KALL. (Arch), 'The Debate about Palamism', *ECR* 9, 1977, 45-63, here 58.

35. *Ibid*, 59-60.

36. PODSKALSKY GERHARD, *Theologie und Philosophie in Byzanz: Der Streit um die Theologische Methodik in der spätbyzantinischen Geistesgeschichte, seine systematischen Grundlagen und seine Historische Entwicklung*, Munich: Bech 1977.

bourg issued her important work *Geist oder Energie*<sup>37</sup>, in which, also aligning herself with Jugie against Meyendorff, she finds Palamas's theology defective and lacking continuity with that of the Fathers. This approach still thrives today. Dirk Krausmüller's chapter on hesychasm, for example, in the authoritative *Cambridge History of Eastern Christianity* (2006)<sup>38</sup> is as hostile a statement that can be found as any. Arguing in full Jugie mode, he claims that Palamas's thinking was alien to that of Maximus the Confessor, that Palamas himself was indifferent to the dangers of mystical experience, that he eliminated the role of discretion at all stages of the spiritual life, and that on the level of natural contemplation he rejected analytical thought in favour of a vague sense of wonder and awe<sup>39</sup> (2006: 122-3). He charges Palamas with personal ruthlessness and philosophical incoherence. 'His main achievement,' he says, 'was to give the hesychastic vision a theological foundation and to have this foundation imposed on the Orthodox Church at large'<sup>40</sup> (2006: 124).

The more welcoming approach to Palamas that followed the publication of Meyendorff's *Introduction* in 1959 and faded in the 1970s has also reappeared in recent years, most notably in an attempt to present Thomas Aquinas and Gregory Palamas as two different but complementary expressions of the same truth. The important study in this vein is Bruce Marshall's article in vol. 39 of *Saint Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* (1995), 'Action and Person: Do Palamas and Aquinas Agree about the Spirit?'<sup>41</sup>, which, incidentally, takes up Mascall's suggestion of 1971 that the topic is one that should be investigated. Marshall begins with a methodological discussion, arguing that agreement need not be as strong as identity of meaning but must be more than bare consistency. Palamas and Aquinas must have enough in common 'to make plausible the claim that they are both talking about the same thing'<sup>42</sup> (1995: 382). His findings are that

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37. WENDEBOURG DOROTHEA, *Geist oder Fuergie: Zur Frage der innergöttlichen Verankerung des christlichen Lebens in der byzantinischen Theologie*, Munich: Kaiser Verlag, 1980.

38. KRAUSMÜLLER DIRU, 'The Rise of Hesychasm' in Michael Angold (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Eastern Christianity*, Cambridge: CUP, 2006, 121-26.

39. *Ibid*, 122-123.

40. *Ibid*, 124.

41. MARSHALL BRUCE D., 'Action and Person: Do Palamas and Aquinas agree about the Spirit', *SVTQ* 39, 1995, 379-408.

42. *Ibid*, 382.

Palamas and Aquinas do in fact hold beliefs that may be shown to be compatible. Stronger on Aquinas than on Palamas (Marshall was writing as a Lutheran who was later to become a Roman Catholic), he presents a very helpful explanation of 'created grace', rejecting the simile of mortar that unites two bricks while keeping them apart, and bringing forward the simile of the impression made in wax by a signet ring. The wax is changed by the ring in order to enable it to make contact with it. Marshall's attempt to make Palamas and Aquinas compatible on the essence-energies issue on account of different notions of *participation* is also very suggestive. Though he does see a problem with how the energies are to be related to the persons of the Trinity: 'The undivided character of God's actions *ad extra* seem to make it difficult or impossible for those actions to display the distinctions between the divine persons. This threatens to reduce the Trinity to a piece of information which God reveals about himself, but which has no bearing on his creative and saving work in the world'<sup>43</sup> (1995: 394). Nevertheless, after discussing the role of the Spirit in the adoption and deification of the Christian, he concludes that Palamas and Aquinas 'appear to agree on the contours of the Spirit's deifying action'<sup>44</sup> (1995: 401).

Anna Williams pursues this line in a short and somewhat superficial book, *Ground of Union*<sup>45</sup> (1999), that does not in the end take the argument much further, simply concluding that 'the ground that Aquinas and Palamas share is vast compared to the points at which they diverge'<sup>46</sup> (1999: 175). A sharp rejoinder was provoked from a former student of Meyendorff's, Joost van Rossum, who remains unconvinced of the compatibility of Aquinas and Palamas. The God of Thomism, he claims, is the God of Aristotle. Transcendence in Aquinas's system is based on the limitations of the human intellect. We have in the end, in his view, two different concepts of God.

Where does all this leave us? Jugie's line, as I have indicated, is still vigorously maintained by Western scholars, particularly Byzantine specialists. Meyendorff's approach continues to be defended by a number of Orthodox the-

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43. Ibid, 394.

44. Ibid, 401.

45. WILLIAMS ANNA N., *The Ground of Union: Deification in Aquinas and Palamas*, New York and Oxford: OUP, 1999.

46. Ibid, 175.

ologians, especially by Meyendorff's former students such as Van Rossum and Golitzin, although the latter does correct and refine it, as, for example, in his 2002 article on Palamas's reception of Dionysius the Areopagite. The lines of demarcation are still clearly drawn. A number of Western scholars have done valuable work in a non-partisan spirit to illuminate various aspects of Palamas's thought – I am thinking especially of Lison and Sinkewicz and the excellent selection of texts edited by Perrella. But there is also scholarly work that while purportedly dealing with historical theology, lightly conceals an anti-Palamite, or more precisely, an anti-Neo-Palamite, agenda. I would place the work of Nadal (one of the *Istina* theologians) on Gregory Akindynos and of Reinhard Flogaus on Palamas's use of Augustine in this category.

Much still requires to be done for Palamas to be given a sympathetic reception in the West by those who do not share his presuppositions. Possibly fruitful lines of research would seem to me to include the following:

(1) A further consideration of the nature of 'antinomies', which continue to give rise to accusations of incoherence in works otherwise very positive towards Palamas (e.g. Gunnarsson's *Mystical Realism in the Early Theology of Gregory Palamas*).

(2) An exploration of whether we can speak of different concepts of participation in Palamas and in his critics (building on suggestions offered by Yannaras and Ware).

(3) A deeper investigation of how appropriate it is to apply Thomist terms to Palamas. What, for example, is implied by a *distinctio realis*? Does this correspond to what Palamas intends by his essence-energies distinction?

(4) Continuing reflection on the claimed 'mitigation' of Palamas by his immediate followers, which was first proposed by Jugie<sup>47</sup> (1931: 1795), was denied vigorously by Meyendorff<sup>48</sup> (1959: 310; ET 226-7), and has recently been pressed again by John Demetracopoulos with a wealth of documentation.

On the last point, I wonder whether Philotheos and others don't express the mind of Palamas correctly when they speak of distinguishing the energies from the essence *kat'epinoian*. I am inclined to think that they do, as I hope to show

47. JUGIE M., op. cit. 1795.

48. MEYENDORFF J., op. cit. 310 (ET. 226-7).

in a forthcoming study. At all events, because any discussion of Palamas is not simply a matter of historical theology but touches on Christian ecumenical issues, and indeed on matters of personal faith, the debate is bound to go on<sup>49</sup>.

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49. For Further selected bibliography on this topic of DEMETRACOPOULOS JOHN, 2011, 'Palamas Transformed. Palamite Interpretations of the Distinction between God's "Essence" and "Energies" in Late Byzantium', in Martin Hinterberger and Chris Schabel (eds), *Greeks, Latins, and Intellectual History 1204 – 1500*, Leuven-Paris-Walpole MA: Peeters.

FLOGAUS REINHARD 1998, 'Palamas and Barlaam Revisited: A Reassessment of East and West in the Hesychast Controversy of 14<sup>th</sup> Century Byzantium', *SVTQ* 42, 1-32.

– 2008, 'Inspiration-Exploitation-Distortion: The Use of St Augustine in the Hesychast Controversy' in A. Papanikolaou and G. Demacopoulos (eds), *Orthodox Readings of Augustine*, Crestwood SVS Press, 63-80.

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