

## Proclus (and Nicholas of Methone) in the Hesychast Controversy

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We<sup>1</sup> do not hear much of Proclus during the fourteenth-century Hesychast controversy, but we do hear mention of Pseudo-Dionysius, so I suppose the spirit of Proclus haunts this episode.<sup>2</sup>

This is what Ken Parry wrote in a brief overview of Proclean studies in Byzantium published a few years ago. Parry's supposition is undoubtedly correct. The interpretation of Ps.-Dionysian apophaticism lay at the very heart of the controversy, since it appeared to define the possible modes and methods of human participation in God. And behind Ps.-Dionysius loomed Proclus.

To what extent the main protagonists of the controversy were also under the direct influence of the Platonic Successor is a question as thorny as it is intriguing. They were obviously familiar with his name. It crops up a couple of times in the correspondence between Gregory Palamas and Barlaam of Calabria.<sup>3</sup> Both times the reference is to a couple of anecdotes reported by Marinus about phenomena observed in the vicinity of Proclus' head: the light that surrounded it during a public lecture and the Aesculapian serpent that visited it shortly before the death of its possessor.<sup>4</sup> Palamas connects the two anecdotes (obviously reinterpreting the serpent in a Christian sense) and suggests

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1 A first version of this paper was presented at a workshop devoted to "Proclus in Byzantium", organized by Charles Barber and Stephen Gersh at the University of Notre Dame's London Centre in the Spring of 2013. I am grateful to Joshua Robinson for the opportunity to revise it for publication in this volume.

2 K. Parry, "Reading Proclus Diadochus in Byzantium", in H. Tarrant, D. Baltzly (eds), *Reading Plato in Antiquity* (London: Bloomsbury, 2006), pp. 223–235, here p. 230.

3 Gregory Palamas, *Epistula 1 ad Barlaam*, ed. J. Meyendorff, in P.K. Chrestou (ed.), Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμᾶ Συγγράμματα, vol. 1 (Thessalonike: Kyromanos, 1988<sup>2</sup>), 47, p. 252, l. 27–253, l. 11; Barlaam of Calabria, *Epistula 3*, ed. G. Schirò (Palermo: Istituto Siciliano di Studi Bizantini e Neogreci, 1954), l. 325–331 TLG.

4 Marinus, *Vita Procli*, ed. H.-D. Saffrey, A.-P. Segonds (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2002), p. 23.14–29; p. 30.12–21.

that they reveal the true provenance of pagan “enlightenment”, for which Barlaam had expressed his admiration. In his reply, Barlaam sarcastically hints that the “uncreated” light experienced by the Hesychasts may be a similar phenomenon. These passages only illustrate the fact that in fourteenth-century Byzantium Proclus’ name was indeed a byword for all the dazzling and dangerous temptations of pagan philosophy.

To what extent Barlaam made actual use of Proclus’ works in the context of the controversy is not so easy to determine, since most of his writings from this part of his career (notably, *Against the Messalians*) were destroyed in 1341.<sup>5</sup> Still, Michele Trizio has not only discovered tacit borrowings from the Platonic Successor’s commentaries on Plato’s *Alcibiades* and *Parmenides* in Barlaam’s letters to Ignatius (*Ep.* 4–5); he has also identified a number of probable Proclean sources for the Calabrian’s lost works, on the basis of reports in Palamas’ works.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, John Demetracopoulos has suggested that the notion of the universal usefulness of dialectic (also in theology) expressed in Barlaam’s earlier (mid-1330s) treatises *Against the Latins* (1, 1.3 and 2, 1.9) is “inherited” from Proclus’ description of Socratic dialectic.<sup>7</sup> Demetracopoulos also suspects Proclean influence (from the *Platonic Theology*) on some of Barlaam’s terminology in the first treatise *Against the Latins*.<sup>8</sup> As for Barlaam’s only surviving work

5 R. Sinkewicz, “The Solutions Addressed to George Lapithes by Barlaam the Calabrian and Their Philosophical Context”, in *Mediaeval Studies* 43(1981), pp. 151–217, here p. 192.

6 M. Trizio, “Una è la verità che pervade ogni cosa’: La sapienza profana nelle opere perdute di Barlaam Calabro”, in A. Rigo (ed.), *Byzantine Theology and its Philosophical Background* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), pp. 108–140.

7 In his commentary on the *Parmenides*? He does not say. Cf. J.A. Demetracopoulos, “Thomas Aquinas’ Impact on Late Byzantine Theology and Philosophy: The Issues of Method or ‘Modus Sciendi’ and ‘Dignitas Hominis’”, in A. Speer, P. Steinkrüger (eds), *Knotenpunkt Byzanz: Wissensformen und kulturelle Wechselbeziehungen* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), pp. 333–410, here pp. 349–350.

8 J.A. Demetracopoulos, “Further Evidence On the Ancient, Patristic, and Byzantine Sources of Barlaam the Calabrian’s *Contra Latinos*: À propos de A. Fyrigos (ed.), *Barlaam Calabro, Opere contro i Latini*”, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 96(2003), pp. 83–122, here p. 85. The phrase concerned is τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐσιν ἄκρα in the sense of τὰ περὶ Θεόν. Demetracopoulos likewise argues (“Υστεροβυζαντινὴ κοσμολογία: ἡ κριτικὴ τοῦ Γρηγορίου Παλαμᾶ στὴ διδασκαλία τῶν Πλωτίνου καὶ Πρόκλου περὶ κοσμικῆς ψυχῆς”, in *Φιλοσοφία: Ἐπετηρὶς τοῦ Κέντρου Ἑρευνῆς τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Φιλοσοφίας* 31(2001), pp. 175–191, here pp. 186–187) that some of the terminology in Palamas’ description of the pagan conception of a world soul in *Capita CL* 3 (especially 3.35–40) is owed to Proclus’ *Platonic Theology* (1.14; 1.15; 1.27; 3.12; 5.31) and *Elements of Theology* (prop. 11). But as he himself notes elsewhere (“Γρηγορίου Παλαμᾶ Κεφάλαια ἑκατὸν πενήκοντα, 1–14: Ἐπερὶ κόσμου, Κείμενο, μετάφραση καὶ ἐρμηνευτικὰ σχόλια”, in *Βυζαντιακά* 20(2000), pp. 295–348, here p. 321; pp. 324–325), some of this terminology is used differently by Proclus and some of it is Neoplatonic commonplace.

in Greek with a more narrowly philosophical content, *The Solutions to George Lapithes* (mid-1330s), Robert Sinkewicz pointed out in a seminal paper that it features some distinctly Proclean terminology and occasional word-to-word correspondence to passages in Syrianus, Proclus' revered teacher (*In Metaph.*).<sup>9</sup>

If, however, we limit ourselves to extant and printed texts related to the controversy, there is really only one author who makes explicit reference to Proclus' doctrines. This is Nikephoros Gregoras, in two passages of his *Roman History* (Logos 23.2 and Logos 35.15–17). And these are the passages on which this paper will focus.<sup>10</sup>

Gregoras, it seems, harboured no doubts that Proclus exerted a direct influence over his main adversary, Palamas. In fact, he claims that the latter's doctrines are partly copied from the former's works. To ascertain the truth of this claim would require a more extensive study than I have been able to carry out for this occasion, but I will at least try to describe with some precision what it is in Palamas' doctrines that Gregoras accuses him of having lifted from Proclus. The claim is made explicitly in Logos 23.2 and recurs implicitly in Logos 35.15–17.<sup>11</sup> Both times it refers specifically to Palamas' doctrine of participation, at which, Gregoras suggests, his adversary has arrived by adopting some of the least palatable views of Proclus, although his error has been compounded by additions of his own, of which the Platonists would never have approved.<sup>12</sup>

9 Sinkewicz, "The Solutions", pp. 174–182.

10 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, ed. L. Schopen, vol. 2 (Bonn: Weber, 1830), p. 1094.7–1111.12, and Nikephoros Gregoras, *Historiae Byzantinae libri postremi*, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn: Weber, 1855), p. 481.22–483.11. For the sake of completeness I should also mention the quotation of Nicholas of Methone's *Refutation of Proclus' Elements of Theology*, 139 (ed. A.D. Angelou, Athens / Leiden: Academy of Athens / Brill, 1984, p. 129, l. 13–25), in a polemic against John VI Kantakouzenos, preserved in Vat. gr. 1096 and tentatively attributed by its editor, Polemis (*Theologica varia inedita saeculi XIV*, ed. I.D. Polemis, [Turnhout: Brepols, 2012]), to John Kyparissiotis, but more likely to be the work of the scribe himself, Gregoras' erstwhile student Isaac Argyros (see A. Gioffreda, M. Trizio, "Nicholas of Methone, Procopius of Gaza and Proclus of Lycia", in D. Calma (ed.), *Reading Proclus and the Book of Causes*, Vol. 2. *Translations and Acculturations* (Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2020), pp. 94–135, here pp. 124–128). Proclus is mentioned in this work (*Adversus Cantacuzenum* 158.1 TLG), but only in his capacity as author of the work refuted in the work from which the author of *Adversus Cantacuzenum* quotes (which the latter apparently believed to have been written by Procopius of Gaza: for the latest contribution to the debate over the authorship of Nicholas' *Refutation*, see Gioffreda, Trizio, "Nicholas of Methone").

11 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 23.2.6, p. 1103.1–6: Ἀλλὰ τοῦτον [sc. τὸν Πρόκλον] ὁ Χριστιανὸς ἐμιμήσατο Παλαμᾶς ἀμαθῶς τε καὶ κακοτρόπως [...]; Nikephoros Gregoras, *Historiae Byzantinae*, 35.15, p. 482.5–8: σκεπτέον οὖν καὶ ὅπως συμφώνως ἐκέινω [sc. τῷ Πρόκλῳ] καὶ Παλαμᾶς [...] ἐδογματίσεν [...]. See also n. 62 below.

12 It seems to have been Gregory Akindynos who first thought of comparing Palamas' views on participation to those of Proclus. Unfortunately, the work (ἑτέρα ἔκθεσις καὶ ἀνασκευῆ

These passages in the *Roman History* were written from the vantage-point of an already defeated man, in the summer of 1352 and later.<sup>13</sup> The final act of the Hesychast controversy had been played out in the early summer of 1351, when emperor John VI Kantakouzenos summoned all the bishops to a council in the palace of Blachernai, an event that Gregoras described as a Robber Council (ληστρικὸν συνέδριον),<sup>14</sup> in allusion to the council of Ephesus in 449.<sup>15</sup> The outcome of the council was a foregone conclusion. Kantakouzenos was a long-standing champion of Hesychasm. His intention was to restore peace to the divided church by having all its leading members ratify the decisions already made by two preceding councils, in 1341 and 1347. Since then, two successive Palamite patriarchs had worked indefatigably to fill the episcopal sees with dependable supporters. Palamas himself had been made archbishop of Thessaloniki. Most serious opponents had been put out of action. Barlaam of Calabria was chased into exile already in 1341. Patriarch John XIV Kalekas was deposed in 1347, the year of the plague, and died a few months later. Gregory Akindynos, too, shuffled off this mortal coil in 1348. It was left to Gregoras to speak on behalf of the anti-Palamites at Blachernai, although recurrent bouts of headache occasionally forced him to hand over the word to his students and other associates. In the end, he was excommunicated and placed under house arrest in the Chora monastery.

At the last session of the council, the triumphant Palamites made their first serious effort to codify their doctrines in the name of the Holy Orthodox Catholic Church. The results of their labours, published in the Synodal Tome,<sup>16</sup> were

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τῶν τοῦ Παλαμά πονηροτάτων αἱρέσεων) in which he is reported by J.A. Demetracopoulos to have done so is also still unedited, so I have not been able to make out what if any relation his comparison bears to that of Gregoras. Demetracopoulos refers to an edition then in preparation by J. Nadal Cañellas. Cf. J.A. Demetracopoulos, "Palamas Transformed: Palamite Interpretations of the Distinction between God's 'Essence' and 'Energies' in Late Byzantium", in M. Hinterberger, C. Schabel (eds), *Greeks, Latins, and Intellectual History 1204–1500* (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), pp. 263–372, here p. 277 and n. 35.

13 According to J.L. van Dieten, *Logoi* 18–27.8 were composed during Gregoras' house arrest between June and August 1352. J.L. van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras, Rhomäische Geschichte / Historia Rhomaïke*, vol. 4 (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1994), pp. 1–5.

14 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 20.7.8, p. 995.13, *et alibi*.

15 On the other hand, it is celebrated by some modern Palamites as the concluding part of the Ninth Oecumenical Council—the Eighth being the council of Constantinople in 879.

16 Edited by I.N. Karmiris and most recently by F. Lauritzen. Cf. I.N. Karmiris, *Τὰ Δογματικά καὶ Συμβολικά Μνημεία τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας*, vol. 1 (Athens: s.n., 1952), pp. 310–342; F. Lauritzen, "Synod of 1351", in A. Melloni (ed.), *The Great Councils of the Orthodox Churches: From Constantinople 861 to Constantinople 1872* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), pp. 179–218.

summarized in six paragraphs by one prominent 20th-century orthodox theologian and Palamite scholar as follows:<sup>17</sup>

1. There is a distinction between Divine Essence (οὐσία) and Divine Energy (ἐνέργεια). They differ from each other in that the Divine Energy is participated (μετέχεται) and divided indivisibly, and is named and somehow comprehended, albeit dimly, from its effects, whereas the Divine Essence is unparticipated (ἀμέθεκτος), undivided and nameless, that is, completely above names and incomprehensible.<sup>18</sup>
2. The Divine Energy is uncreated (ἄκτιστος).<sup>19</sup>
3. This does not give rise to any complexity in God.<sup>20</sup>
4. The Divine and uncreated Energy is called “Divinity” (θείότης) by the Saints.<sup>21</sup>
5. We know that the Divine Essence and the Divine Natural Energy are inseparable. For no energy can exist separately from the essence to which it belongs.<sup>22</sup>
6. The Light of the Lord’s Transfiguration is uncreated.<sup>23</sup>

According to his own account, Gregoras responded directly to the Synodal Tome with his Sixth Dogmatic Oration, which forms part of the third volume of his *Roman History* (*Logos* 35.3–46). This is where the claim that Palamas’ doctrine of participation is dependent on that of Proclus occurs for the second time in the *Roman History*.<sup>24</sup> Most of the Sixth Dogmatic Oration, including the passage asserting Palamas’ dependence on Proclus, is a reproduction with minor changes of one of the Orations included in Gregoras’ unedited *Antirrhetica posteriora*, or *Confutations of the Palamite Tome* (?1356).<sup>25</sup> Since Gregoras states in

17 P.K. Chrestou, ‘Ο Κήρυξ τῆς Χάριτος καὶ τοῦ Φωτός (Koufalia: Ἐκδόσεις Ἱερᾶς Μονῆς Ἁγίου Γρηγορίου Παλαμά, 1984), pp. 126–127, as quoted by Klemes, “Οἱ Ἡσυχαστικὲς Σύνοδοι τοῦ 14’ αἰῶνος ὡς ἡ Θ’ Οἰκουμενικὴ Σύνοδος τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας”, 2012, p. 10 (my translation).

18 Cf. the Synodal Tome, secs 19–29.

19 Cf. the Synodal Tome, secs 30–31.

20 Cf. the Synodal Tome, secs 32–33.

21 Cf. the Synodal Tome, secs 34–37.

22 Cf. the Synodal Tome, secs 38–45.

23 Cf. the Synodal Tome, sec. 46.

24 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Historiae Byzantinae*, 35.14–17, p. 481.5–483.11.

25 MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 56.14, ff. 83<sup>r</sup>–90<sup>v</sup> (Logos 6) ≈ Nikephoros Gregoras, *Historiae Byzantinae*, 35, p. 474.7–497.16. The passage on Palamas and Proclus is found at 85<sup>r</sup>–v. An edition of the *Antirrhetica posteriora* in preparation by M. Paparozzi is mentioned by H. Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1978), vol. 1, p. 52 n. 43, but has never appeared. The Laurentianus is *codex unicus*. On the work and the manuscript, see M. Paparozzi, “Appunti per lo stu-

both Orations that he has demonstrated Palamas' agreement with Proclus on many other points in his previous polemics (ἐν ταῖς προτέραις ἡμῶν ἀντιρρήσεσιν),<sup>26</sup> one would expect also to find some sort of comparison of their views in the *Antirrhetica priora*, or *Confutations of Those Who Introduce Newfangled and Unlawful Doctrines Into the Church of God* (?1347).

Any such expectations, however, are futile.<sup>27</sup> It is possible, in view of the fact that Gregoras in the same sentence equates Proclus' views with Plato's,<sup>28</sup> that the reference is to the comparison of Palamas' and Plato's views in *Antirrhetica priora* 1.10.6.<sup>29</sup> This would allow us, at any rate, to take the phrase "on many other points" literally, for the only comparison of Palamas' and Proclus' views in Gregoras' extant works concerns their doctrines of participation. And true as it is that the *Antirrhetica priora* contain a discussion about participation (*Logos* 2, cf. *Logos* 3.4), it is entirely based on patristic sources. Accordingly, the only way to take the statement that he has previously demonstrated Palamas' agreement with Proclus literally is to surmise that Gregoras really has in mind the passage in the *Roman History* in which the claim that Palamas' doctrine of participation is lifted from Proclus first occurs (i.e. *Logos* 23).

Anyway, to proceed in order, let us first look at the last-mentioned passage. It belongs to the lengthy report, in the second volume of the *Roman History*, of a discussion between Gregoras and his former friend, the renegade Demetrios Kabasilas, which is supposed to have taken place in the aftermath of the Council of Blachernai, in the autumn of 1351, at the Chora Monastery (*Logos* 22.4–23.3). In the following I will summarize and paraphrase Gregoras' texts

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dio degli inediti *Antirrheticici posteriores* di Niceforo Gregoras", in *Atti della Accademia dei Lincei* 1973, *Rendiconti: Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*, ser. 8, vol. 28, fasc. 7–12 (Roma: Tipografia della Accademia, 1974), pp. 921–951.

26 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Historiae Byzantinae*, 35.14, p. 481.5–9; *Antirrhetica posteriora* 6 (MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 56.14, f. 85<sup>r</sup>). Text in n. 28 below.

27 F. Tinnefeld maintains that the reference (in the *Roman History*) is indeed to the *Antirrhetica priora*, where Gregoras alludes "an drei Stellen ohne Namensnennung auf Proklos-Formulierungen"; but none of the three passages he cites can be described as a demonstration of Palamas' agreement with Proclus. F. Tinnefeld, *Nikephoros Gregoras, Rhomäische Geschichte / Historia Rhomaike*, vol. 6 (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 2007), p. 132 n. 430.

28 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Historiae Byzantinae*, 35.14, p. 481.5–9: (...) τῷ μὲν Ἑλληνι Πρόκλῳ, καὶ πάνθ' ὁμοδόξῳ Πλάτωνος, ὁμοδοξεῖν μὲν καὶ ἀλλαγῆ πολλαχῆ, καθὰ καὶ πρόσθεν ἡμῖν κατὰ τῶν πρόσθεν αὐτοῦ βλασφημιῶν ἐν ταῖς προτέραις ἡμῶν ἀντιρρήσεσιν ἀποδείκνυται (...); cf. Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 23.1.11, p. 1093.12–18: (...) εἴσεται δ' ἐν ταῦτῳ (sc. Proclus, *Elements of Theology*) καὶ τὴν Πλάτωνος περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα δόξαν ἐξ αὐτοῦ, εἴπερ αὐτὸς (sc. ὁ Πρόκλος) τῷ γε πλείονι μέρει τὰ κείνου φθέγγεται πάντα.

29 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Antirrhetica* 1, ed. H.-V. Beyer (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1976), p. 213.1–17. On this passage, see further below, nn. 36 and 59.

rather extensively. My excuse is that these texts seem to be little known, in part, no doubt, because there are no other translations than the Latin ones accompanying Schopen's and Bekker's editions,<sup>30</sup> plus van Dieten's and Tinnefeld's German summaries, which are sometimes exceedingly brief.<sup>31</sup>

The part of the discussion leading up to the passage in which Palamas is said to have copied Proclus contains some illuminating remarks on the relevance of pagan philosophy to theology. Gregoras' approach to this question is a classic example of what has traditionally been known as "Byzantine humanism". The world, he explains to Kabasilas, is the same for everyone, Christian or infidel, and so are the arts and the sciences. It is no wonder, then, if pagan and patristic authors, in spite of their religious differences, agree even on many points of theological significance.<sup>32</sup> In his debates with the Palamites, he says, he had first expected to be assailed precisely for having recourse, on occasion, to the arguments of pagan authors; however, Palamas has saved him the trouble of defending this practice by himself invoking the agreement of the Holy Fathers and the philosophers.<sup>33</sup> Consequently, Gregoras proceeds to examine the Palamite doctrines in the light of both pagan and Christian authorities.

He begins by laying out his opponents' theses: there is a difference between essence and energy in the simple and incorporeal nature that is God, such that God's essence is completely unparticipated by created beings, whereas His energy is participated (cf. the first paragraph of Chrestou's summary of the Synodal Tome quoted above). Both essence and energy are uncreated, but the essence is causally prior to the energy. The energy divides into various forms (εἶδη), such as Wisdom, Power, Life, Truth, Will, Sanctity.<sup>34</sup> As far as I can judge,

30 By Schopen for vol. 2; by Reisacker and Rosenstein for vol. 3, book 35.

31 van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras, Rhomäische Geschichte*, vol. 4; Tinnefeld, *Nikephoros Gregoras, Rhomäische Geschichte*, vol. 6.

32 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 23.2.4, p. 1099.3–21; cf. Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 23.1.4–5, p. 1086.16–1087.13, especially p. 1087.7–9: μηδὲ γὰρ εἶναι τῆς θρησκείας τὴν ἐπιστήμην, μηδὲ βλάβην ἐκείθεν ὑφορᾶσθαι μηδ' ἠντιοῦν (...).

33 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 23.1.2, p. 1082.14–1083.1; 22.4.10, p. 1074.6–10; 22.4.11, p. 1076.9–11; p. 1079.7–11.

34 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 23.1.4, p. 1086.2–16: Καὶ πρῶτον μὲν δὴ κείσθω ζήτημα τοῦτ' αἰς παρούσαις χρείαις· εἰ ἐπὶ τῆς ἀπλῆς καὶ ἀσωμάτου φύσεως (λέγω δὴ τοῦ θεοῦ) διαφορὰν ἠντιοῦν δογματίζειν οὐσίας καὶ ἐνεργείας ἐξείη· ὡς τὴν μὲν οὐσίαν ἀμέθεκτον εἶναι κτίσμασιν ἅπασιν κομιδῇ ("αὐτὴ γὰρ καθ' αὐτήν", φησίν, "ἡ θεία μετεχομένη τε καὶ λαμβανομένη φύσις ἢ φυρμὸν πείσεται, ἢ τὴν παθητὴν ἐξανάλωσει φύσιν, πρὶν ἂν ληφθῆ; οὐδεὶς γάρ, φησίν, ὄψεται τὸ πρόσωπόν μου, καὶ ζήσεται"), τὴν δ' ἐνεργεῖαν μόνῃ ἅπασιν κτίσμασιν γίνεσθαι μεθεκτὴν, μόνῃ μὲν τῷ ἀκτίστῳ μηδὲν ἐκείνης διαφέρουσιν· ὡς δ' αἰτίαν ὑπερκειμένην ἔχουσιν ἐκείνην, τούτῳ δὲ διαφέρουσιν εἶναι δὲ τὴν ἐνεργεῖαν εἰς εἶδη διαιρουμένην, σοφίαν, δύναμιν,

this is basically a fair summary of Palamas' position, although I am not aware of any such use of the word "forms" for the different manifestations of divine energy in his works.<sup>35</sup> Perhaps the word was chosen by Gregoras in order to suggest affinity with Plato's theory of Forms. Such an affinity is definitely suggested in the *Antirrhetica priora*, in a passage for which the editor, Beyer, has not found any Palamite source either.<sup>36</sup> The thesis that God's essence and His energy are related as cause and effect is not mentioned in Chrestou's summary of the Synodal Tome quoted above, but is in fact emphatically argued in the latter work (secs 27–28; for the hierarchical implications, cf. sec. 38).

Next Gregoras adduces passages from Plotinus and Aristotle to show that the pagan philosophers, contrary to what Palamas maintains, agree with the Fathers—he mentions Athanasius, Basil, Cyril and Theodore (Graptos) but quotes only Maximus the Confessor and Ps.-Dionysius—that there can be no such difference, either in God or in Intellect (which the Fathers alternately identified with God and His image). The same is obviously true of the One: Plotinus and Proclus, he says, testify to this.<sup>37</sup>

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ζωήν, ἀλήθειαν, βούλησιν, ἀγιασμόν, καὶ ὅσα μυρία τοῖς ἐντυγχάνουσι ταῖς αὐτοῦ διαίρεσιν ἔξεστι διαγινώσκειν σαφέστερον ὄψεσιν ἄγουσιν οἰκειάις εἰς πίστιν ἑαυτοῦς ἀκριβῆ.

- 35 Although Palamas does say, apparently paraphrasing a scholion on Maximus the Confessor, *Ad Thalassium* 61 (Σ 14), that the divine energy is an "illumination subsisting according to [or: on the level of] form [or species]" (τὴν κατ' εἶδος ἐνυπόστατον ἔλλαμψιν). The scholion refers to the author of *Ad Thalassium* 61 in the third person and is therefore not likely to be by Maximus, but was often cited by the Palamites as such. Cf. Gregory Palamas, *Pro hesychastis* 3, ed. P.K. Chrestou, in Chrestou (ed.), *Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμά Συγγράμματα*, 1.29, p. 641.5–8; M. Constan, *Maximos the Confessor, On Difficulties in Sacred Scripture: The Responses to Thalassios* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2018), pp. 55–57. Constan (*Maximos the Confessor*, p. 447 n. 37) explains that κατ' εἶδος would be understood by later Byzantine writers "as referring to a visible manifestation of the uncreated light of God", and helpfully refers to David Dishypatos, *Ad Nicolaum Cabasilam contra Barlaam et Acindynum* (p. 72.18–21 TLG), who cites the scholion and concludes that "they [sc. the theologians] also call the deifying energy a 'form'" (καὶ εἶδος οὖν τὴν θεοποιὸν ἐνέργειαν ὀνομάζουσι). Cf. David Dishypatos, *Ad Nicolaum Cabasilam contra Barlaam et Acindynum*, ed. D.G. Tsames, *Δαβίδ Δισυπάτου λόγος κατὰ Βαρλαάμ καὶ Ἀκινδύνου πρὸς Νικόλαον Καβάσιλαν* (Thessalonike: Centre for Byzantine Research, 1976), pp. 39–107.
- 36 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Antirrhetica* I, 1.10.6, p. 213.12–17; cf. Nikephoros Gregoras, *Antirrhetica* I, 1.8.2, p. 183.4–5 (with Beyer's n. o.).
- 37 No difference between essence and energy in God: Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 23.1.6–7, p. 1088.1–1090.4; in Intellect: Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 23.1.8–9, p. 1090.4–1091.19; in the One: Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 23.1.10, p. 1091.19–1093.12. The Plotinus citations in 23.1.6–9 are from *Enneads* 6.7–8 (for details, see van Dielen, *Nikephoros Gregoras, Rhomäische Geschichte*, vol. 4, p. 331 n. 558 and p. 333 n. 562). The Aristotelian passages are (a) a free rendition of *De interpretatione* 13, 23a21–

Clearly, then, Gregoras has no objection in principle to seeking guidance from pagan philosophers in general or Proclus in particular, even in theological matters. On the contrary, he first provides a rationale for seeking it and then acts accordingly. But he goes on to point out that it is all-important, in dealing with pagan material, to make sure that one does not, out of ignorance if not malevolence, adopt views that are in conflict with the traditional holy doctrines of the church. This, he explains, is what is so clearly illustrated by the case of the uneducated Palamites, who believe that there are no less than three natures involved in the transfiguration of the Saviour, one consisting in His humanity, and two in His two “divinities” (θεότητες), one of which is imperceptible and absolutely unparticipated by anything, and one of which is a second uncreated divinity, which *is* participated and which has been, in the phrase of Gregory of Nazianzus (*Oratio* 40.6), “shown forth” (παραδειχθείση θεότης).<sup>38</sup>

At the root of the Palamite error, Gregoras says, is Proclus’ doctrine of participation. Whereas most of Proclus’ theological doctrines steer clear of heresy, Palamas in his ignorance chose to cleave to this particular one, which is particularly unsound.<sup>39</sup> To prove his case, Gregoras quotes (both here and in the Sixth Dogmatic Oration) Prop. 24 of the *Elements of Theology*.<sup>40</sup> Not only does

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23 with Ammonius’ commentary (ed. A. Busse, Berlin: G. Reimer, 1897), p. 248.27–30 (or perhaps of a commentary or paraphrase based on the latter); (b) a free rendition of *De caelo* 2.3, 286a8–10 (or of a paraphrase of it); and (c) Theodore Metochites’ paraphrase of *De anima* 3.5 (MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. gr. 303, f. 175<sup>v</sup>; as van Dieten points out [*Nikephoros Gregoras, Rhomäische Geschichte*, vol. 4, 333 n. 562], 26 words of this quotation are missing in Schopen’s text). Ps.-Dionysius is consistently quoted from Euthymios Zigabenos’ *Panoplia dogmatica*, presumably because the original works were inaccessible to Gregoras in Chora. On Gregoras’ claims to have been deprived of his copies of the Bible and the Fathers, see van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras, Rhomäische Geschichte*, vol. 4, p. 332–333 n. 561. The Plotinus citations in 23.1.10 are from *Enneads* 6.9; for details, see van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras, Rhomäische Geschichte*, vol. 4, p. 333 n. 563. The Proclus testimony consists of *Elements of Theology* 3, proposition and proof, quoted in extenso, although Gregoras leaves it to his audience to ascertain Proclus’ general agreement in the *Elements of Theology* with Plotinus, “since my headache does not allow me to pore over it” (Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 23.1.11, p. 1093.12–16).

38 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 23.2.4–5, p. 1099.23–1100.20.

39 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 23.2.6, p. 1101.11–14: σκεπτέον ἔνταῦθα πρὸς θεοῦ, πὼς πολλῶν τῶν τοῦ Ἑλληνος ὄντων δογμάτων περὶ θεοῦ, ὧν τὰ πλείω τοῦ νοσεῖν πως ἀπήλλαχται, ὅδε τῷ μάλᾳ νοσοῦντι προσετέθηκει μέρος (...).

40 Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, ed. E.R. Dodds (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 24, p. 28.8–20 in Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 23.2.6 (p. 1100.22–1101.11); and Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, p. 28.8–18 in Nikephoros Gregoras, *Historiae Byzantinae*, 35.14 (p. 481.11–21).

he quote the full text of the proposition with its proof, he also provides his own critical commentary.

On Gregoras' reading of *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 24, Proclus distinguishes three ranks (τάξεις): one to which he assigns the unparticipated and superordinate God, a second to which he assigns the participated class of things, and a third to which he assigns the participating things. What is unparticipated is as much superior to the participated things as the latter are to the participating things. Thus far we have a relatively straightforward paraphrase of Proclus' words. All this, however, Gregoras continues, is in contradiction to what Proclus has previously tried to demonstrate, namely, that the One as the principle of all things (*Elements of Theology*, Prop. 21) is in every way participated by every manifold entity (*Elements of Theology*, Prop. 1 and 5), that is, by all things.<sup>41</sup> Gregoras suggests that the reason why Proclus inserted a second rank between God and the participating things is that he feared lest God would be partitioned by His participants, as though He were a corporeal thing. For he had not yet understood that God, being simple, is present as a whole everywhere and nowhere, and is participated by everything, but unparticipatedly, and is divided, although undividedly.<sup>42</sup>

It is tempting to read the last statement as a concession that Proclus had not read the works of Dionysius the Areopagite.<sup>43</sup> If this is what Gregoras means, he has a different opinion from that of Nicholas of Methone, who adhered, in his *Refutation of Proclus' Elements of Theology*, to the thesis, proposed already in the *Suda*, that Proclus plagiarized Dionysius.<sup>44</sup> Apparently, then, Gregoras must have explained the similarity of Proclus' and Ps.-Dionysius' views in some other way, probably by assuming that they drew on the same Platonic tradition (he shows elsewhere that he has no qualms about assuming the dependence of the Fathers on pagan philosophers).<sup>45</sup>

41 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 23.2.6, 1101.15–1102.7. Cf. Proclus, *Elements of Theology* 1, p. 2.1: Πάν πληθος μετέχει πη του ενός; *Elements of Theology* 5, p. 6.2–3: πάντη ἄρα μετέχει [τὸ πληθος] του ενός.

42 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 23.2.6, p. 1102.7–11: ἀλλ' ἔοικε δεδιότι, μή και τὸ θεϊον ὑπὸ τῶν πασχόντων, καθάπερ τὰ σώματα, μερισθῆ. οὐδὲ γὰρ ἔφθη μαθῶν, ὡς ὁ θεός ἀπλοῦς ὦν πανταχῆ ἔστιν ὀλικῶς, και οὐδαμοῦ· και μετέχεται μὲν ὑφ' ἀπάντων, ἀμεθέκτως δέ· και μερίζεται μὲν, ἀμερίστως δέ (...). For the last part, cf. Nicholas of Methone's comments on the *Elements of Theology* 166 (ed. Angelou, p. 147.6–11) and especially on the *Elements of Theology* 103 (ed. Angelou, p. 100.32–101.10).

43 Cf. (Ps.-)Dionysius the Areopagite, *De divinis nominibus*, 2.5, ed. B.R. Suchla (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1990), p. 128.17–129.3.

44 In his comment on the *Elements of Theology* 122 (ed. Angelou, p. 117.25–29). Cf. *Suda*, ed. A. Adler (Leipzig: Teubner, 1928–1935), δ 1170, vol. 2, p. 108.24–30.

45 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 23.1.1, p. 1080.6–1081.4: ἦς [sc. Μούσης Ἑλληνικῆς

Yet there can be no doubt that Gregoras' remark about Proclus' inconsistency is based on his reading of Nicholas. The resemblances are too close to be coincidental, not only as regards the general drift, but even down to some details of phrasing (see below). The charge of inconsistency between the *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 24 on the one hand and *Prop.* 1 and 5 on the other is made by Nicholas already in his proem (p. 4.3–15 Angelou) and repeated in his comment on Prop. 24 (p. 32.20–33.7 Angelou). And in his comment on Prop. 23 (p. 31.15–32.5 Angelou), Nicholas offers the same explanation as Gregoras does of Proclus' reluctance to allow participation in the One, namely, that the philosopher lapsed into thinking in corporeal terms about incorporeal things and thus feared that the One if participated might suffer something like corporeal division and lose its unity. This fear, Nicholas implies, is unwarranted, since, he says, there are even corporeal things, like vocal sounds, as well as intelligible things of the lowest order, such as the individual thoughts of a teacher, which are shared by many (listeners), and to that extent divided, without losing their essential unity. There is all the more reason, then, he concludes, to think that incorporeal things of a higher order can be participated while preserving their unity.

Gregoras comes to the same conclusion, but uses a different counterexample to block the inference from participation to partition: after all, the soul is participated (albeit unparticipatedly) by all the body parts and yet exists as a whole in each of them. There are no special souls for special organs; rather, each body part is activated by the whole soul in accordance with its nature and position: if the hand were constructed like a mouth, it would presumably also be able to speak.<sup>46</sup>

Dependence is also suggested by the verbal correspondences between the following three passages (Gregoras on the left):

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καὶ πάσης ἐπιστημονικῆς μαθησεως] οἱ μὲν θύραθεν ἔφθισαν παραδόντες σοφοί, τῶν τε θείων προστάται δογματῶν τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἐκείθεν παρειληφότες τὴν τε γλώτταν ὥπλισαν ἀσφαλῶς καὶ ἅμα κατ' ἐκλογὴν τὸ μὲν ἐξεταστικόν τε καὶ θεωρητικὸν ἐδέξαντο, ὅσον δ' εἰς δαίμονας φέρει καὶ ἀπωλείας βυθὸν διέπτυσαν (...).

46 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 23.2.6, p. 1102.11–19: κατὰ τὴν εἰκόνα τῆς ἡμετέρας ψυχῆς, ἀπλῆς οἶον οὐσίας καὶ αὐτῆς. καὶ γὰρ καὶ αὕτη πανταχοῦ τοῦ σώματος ὅλη ὀλικῶς ὑπάρχουσα μετέχεται μὲν ὑφ' ἐκάστου τῶν τοῦ σώματος μερῶν, ἀμεθέκτως δέ. οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδὲν ἰδίᾳ τούτων οὐδαμῆ γίνεσθαι πέφυκε ψυχὴ· πλὴν ἕκαστον τῶν τοῦ σώματος μερῶν, ὡς ἔχει φύσεως ἅμα καὶ θέσεως, ὑπὸ γε τῆς κινούσης ὁμοῦ καὶ ζωούσης ἐνεργεῖται ψυχῆς· ὥστε καὶ εἰ ἦν ἐν τραχήλῳ ἢ ἐν χειρὶ κατασκευὴ στόματος, λάλος ἂν (οἶμαι) ἦν καὶ ἡ χεὶρ καὶ ὁ τράχηλος.

He seems to fear lest even the divine may be divided, like bodies, by the things that are affected.<sup>47</sup>

For he seems to fear lest, in saying that the one and whole is participated, he might divide it like a body (...).<sup>48</sup>

If this is the case, then *a fortiori* God, who is present everywhere and fills all things, will be participated by all things.<sup>49</sup>

How could that which is equally present in all things and fills all things not be participated by all things?<sup>50</sup>

For even when He becomes present in all things individually He is a whole, and He remains a whole in Himself and in all things and before all things, and the same [God] is as a whole participated and as a whole unparticipated.<sup>51</sup>

[For the incorporeal is not divided, but,] even when it becomes present in all things individually, it is a whole and remains a whole in itself, so that the same thing is in all things and before all things both participated as a whole and unparticipated as a whole.<sup>52</sup>

On the other hand, Gregoras' two quotations of Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 24, as transmitted in MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. gr. 1095, f. 82<sup>v</sup> and f. 245<sup>v</sup>, provide no firm evidence for his dependence on

47 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 23.2.6, p. 1102.7–8: ἄλλ' ἔοικε δεδιότι, μὴ καὶ τὸ θεῖον ὑπὸ τῶν πασχόντων, καθάπερ τὰ σώματα, μερισθῆ.

48 Nicholas of Methone, *Refutation*, 23, p. 31.17–18: δεδοικέναι γὰρ ἔοικε μὴ τὸ ἐν καὶ ὅλον εἰπῶν μεθεκτὸν μερίση σωματικῶς (...). I have used J.M. Robinson's excellent translation ("Nicholas of Methone's *Refutation* of Proclus: Theology and Neoplatonism in 12th–Century Byzantium", PhD Thesis, University of Notre Dame, Indiana) as a basis for the passages of Nicholas, but modified it considerably in order to bring out the similarities to Gregoras.

49 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 23.2.6, p. 1102.19–21: εἰ οὖν οὕτω τοῦτο, πολλῶ ἄν μάλλον ὑπὸ πάντων μετέχοιτο θεός, ὁ πανταχοῦ παρῶν καὶ τὰ πάντα πληρῶν.

50 Nicholas of Methone, *Refutation*, 23, p. 32.12–13: Τὸ πᾶσιν ὁμοίως παρὸν καὶ πάντα πληροῦν πῶς οὐχὶ καὶ ὑπὸ πάντων μετέχεται;

51 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 23.2.6, p. 1102.21–1103.1: καὶ ἐν ἐκάστῳ γὰρ τῶν πάντων γινόμενος ὅλος ἐστί· καὶ ὅλος μένει καθ' ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἐν πᾶσι καὶ πρὸ τῶν πάντων· καὶ ὅλος μεθεκτὸς ὁ αὐτὸς καὶ ὅλος ἀμέθεκτος.

52 Nicholas of Methone, *Refutation*, 23, p. 32.14–17: οὐ γὰρ μερίζεται τὸ ἀσώματον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν ἐκάστῳ τῶν πάντων γινόμενον ὅλον ἐστί καὶ ὅλον μένει καθ' ἑαυτὸ, ὥστε ἔστι καὶ ἐν πᾶσι καὶ πρὸ τῶν πάντων καὶ μεθεκτὸν ὅλον τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ ὅλον ἀμέθεκτον.

any particular textual source. There is one notable variant in each of them.<sup>53</sup> In Logos 23.2.6, p. 1101.1–2 Schopen (the first quotation), Gregoras writes (a) ἀτελής μὲν ὄν πρὸ τῆς μεθέξεως instead of Dodds' πρὸ τῆς μεθέξεως ἀτελής ὄν (*Elements of Theology*, Prop. 24, p. 28.10); in Logos 35.14, p. 481.15–16 Bekker (the second quotation), he writes (b) κατὰ τοῦτο (...) instead of Dodds' ταύτη (...) (*Elements of Theology*, Prop. 24, p. 28.12).<sup>54</sup> Since the second quotation has Proclus' text instead of (a) and the first quotation has Proclus' text instead of (b), it seems *prima facie* likely that these two variants were introduced by Gregoras himself. The alternative, of course, is to assume that he used a different exemplar for each quotation. Now, in the case of (a), the *prima facie* likelihood is strengthened by the fact that Gregoras' variant is not represented in the direct tradition of the *Elements of Theology* (including Nicholas' *Refutation*); in the case of (b), however, the matter is complicated by the fact that M exhibits κατὰ τοῦτο added by a second hand above the line in the *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 24, p. 28.12, which has then been interpolated before ταύτη in its descendant O (dated 1358). It is possible that this variant in M has its origin in Gregoras' quotations.<sup>55</sup>

In his quotation of the *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 3 (cf. n. 37 above),<sup>56</sup> finally, Gregoras is closer to the MSS of Nicholas (and B, which belongs to the same family) than to any other MS, but there are also a couple of deviations from their text: p. 4.2 ἀπὸ μὲν γὰρ οὐχ ἔν ἐστι Dodds B C D E Greg.: om. M P Q; p. 4.8 ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ἐνόησ Dodds M P Q: ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ἔν εἶναι B C D E: τῶ μὴ ἔν εἶναι Greg.; p. 4.8bis ἀπὸ τοῖς Dodds M P Q Greg.: ἀπὸ τῶ B C D E.

In sum, Gregoras may well have drawn on more than one MS of the *Elements of Theology*, but at least one of them also contained Nicholas' refutation.

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- 53 I refer to Proclus MSS by the sigla employed by Dodds: B = MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. gr. 237; C (*Nicholas' Refutation*) = MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. gr. 626; D (*Nicholas' Refutation*) = MS Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, P 206 sup. (Martini-Bassi 648); M = MS Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, gr. Z 512 (coll. 678); P = MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, grec 2423; Q = MS Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, gr. Z 521 (coll. 316); E (*Nicholas' Refutation*) = MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, grec 1256; O = MS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud gr. 18. Readings are as reported by Dodds, except for E, which I have collated myself, since it is only occasionally cited by Dodds. I'd like to thank Carlos Steel for helpful discussion of M.
- 54 The second quotation is identical to that in MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 56.14, ff. 85<sup>r-v</sup> (see n. 25 above).
- 55 There are also a few variants common to both quotations: p. 28.10 μὲν om. O Greg.; p. 28.11 γενόμενον B C M P<sup>ac</sup> Q: γινόμενον D P<sup>ac</sup> E Greg. In p. 28.12, Gregoras follows the majority of MSS in writing καθὸ where B and D have καθ' ὃ, and likewise in not writing ἄν after γὰρ as in P and Q.
- 56 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 23.1.11, p. 1093.19–1094.6; MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. gr. 1095, f. 80<sup>v</sup>.

When Nicholas and Gregoras criticize Proclus for inconsistency, this may seem slightly disingenuous. After all, they both themselves affirm that God is both participated as a whole and unparticipated as a whole.<sup>57</sup> What they really cannot accept, of course, is Proclus' resolution of this apparent contradiction, that is, the introduction of a second rank consisting of participated things, whose function is to bridge the gap between divine immanence and divine transcendence.<sup>58</sup> Now, what Palamas has done, according to Gregoras, is to follow Proclus both in positing an unparticipated and superordinate God and in positing a second rank consisting of participated and subordinate divinities (his θεότητες) as well as a third rank consisting of human beings and other virtuous things in the sensible realm. The only difference in this regard that Gregoras notes between Proclus and Palamas is that Proclus does not qualify the entities in the second and third ranks as uncreated (ἄκτιστα) and unoriginated (ἀναρχα), whereas Palamas gratuitously makes this addition.<sup>59</sup>

Gregoras later argues in much the same way concerning the relation between Plato and Palamas: Palamas follows Plato, except that he calls his secondary divinities “uncreated”, which neither Plato nor Pythagoras nor any other Greek philosopher would ever do.<sup>60</sup> There is a complication here, in that Gregoras begins by comparing Palamas' divinities to the created gods in *Timaeus* 41a–b, but then makes it clear that he in fact equates them with Platonic Forms, which he describes as “co-unoriginated and co-eternal [sc. with the creator], but other-natured”,<sup>61</sup> and yet apparently denies that Plato (or any other Greek philosopher) would ever have called “uncreated”.<sup>62</sup>

57 Cf. Nicholas of Methone, *Refutation*, 69, p. 69.28–71.5; 81, p. 84.5–19; see further J. Robinson, “Dionysius Against Proclus: the Apophatic Critique in Nicholas of Methone's Refutation of the Elements of Theology”, in D.D. Butorac, D.A. Layne (eds), *Proclus and His Legacy* (Berlin & Boston: De Gruyter, 2017), pp. 249–269, here pp. 257–263.

58 As observed, in the case of Gregoras, by E. von Ivánka, and, in the case of Nicholas, by Robinson. E. von Ivánka, *Plato Christianus: Übernahme und Umgestaltung des Platonismus durch die Väter* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1964), p. 403. Robinson, “Dionysius Against Proclus”, p. 263.

59 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 23.2.7, p. 1103.1–1104.4. The allegation that Palamas ascribes uncreatedness and unoriginatedness to third-rank entities is baffling: τρίτην δὲ χάραν ἔνειμε τοῖς τε ἀνθρώποις καὶ ὅσα ὑπὸ τὴν αἴσθησιν ἐνάρετα πράγματα, καθὰ πολλάκις εἴρηται τε καὶ εἰρήσεται ἡμῖν καὶ ἅμα ἀναρχά τε καὶ ἀκτιστα εἶναι ὠρίσατο, μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς αὐθεντίας ποιησάμενος τὴν προσθήκην (p. 1103.10–13). The same allegation recurs at Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 23.2.10, p. 1108.17–20.

60 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 23.2.9–10, p. 1106.18–1108.20. The argument also occurs in Nikephoros Gregoras, *Antirrhetica* 1, 1.10.6, p. 213.

61 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 23.2.10, p. 1107.10–11: (...) συνανάρχους μὲν καὶ συναϊδίους, ἑτεροφυεῖς δέ.

62 It may of course well be true that no Greek philosopher described the Forms as ἀκτιστα:

In short, then, Gregoras in the second volume of the *Roman History* accuses Palamas of following Proclus in positing secondary and participated divinities and for departing from Proclus (and everybody else) in calling these divinities “uncreated” and “unoriginated”.

Turning now to the Sixth Dogmatic Oration (*Logos* 35.3–46), we will find that Gregoras has altered his interpretation of the *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 24, but still maintains that Palamas’ three-ranks theory is identical with that of Proclus, except in ascribing uncreatedness to the second-rank entities. The alteration consists in understanding Proclus’ second rank as being filled by entities both participating and participated, something which seems to throw the Platonic Successor’s entire system into confusion.<sup>63</sup> Why has Gregoras altered his interpretation of Proclus in this peculiar way? One possibility is that he has adapted it to fit his interpretation of Palamas, whose uncreated light is also described in the same passage as both participating and participated.<sup>64</sup> Whether—and if so, why—Gregoras’ interpretation of Palamas changed between the composition of *Logos* 23 and that of *Logos* 35, I cannot say, but Palamas does in fact seem to identify the divine energies with the participations-in-themselves (ἀυτομετοχαί) mentioned by Ps.-Dionysius in two passages,<sup>65</sup> which are said, in one of these passages (*Div. nom.* 5.5), to participate in being.<sup>66</sup> Palamas frequently cites the other passage (*Div. nom.* 12.4) in support of the view that there can be priority and posteriority within God,<sup>67</sup>

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the word is first attested in the very passage of Plutarch quoted by Gregoras at Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 23.2.10, p. 1108.5–12.

- 63 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Historiae Byzantinae*, 35.15, p. 481.22–482.12: Ὁρᾶς πῶς καὶ Πρόκλος ἐκεῖνος ὁ τοῖς εἰδώλοις προσκειμένος τρεῖς παραδίδωσι τάξεις, καὶ τῇ μὲν πρώτῃ τὸ ἀμέθεκτον ἀπονέμει καὶ τέλειον καὶ ἡγούμενον εἴτουν ὑπερκείμενον, τῇ δὲ δευτέρᾳ τὸ μετέχον καὶ μετεχόμενον καὶ τοῦ πρώτου καταδεέστερον, καὶ ἅμα μέσον ἀτελοῦς καὶ τελείου, τῇ δὲ τρίτῃ τὸ τε ἀτελὲς καὶ μετέχον μὲν, οὐ μετεχόμενον δέ. σκεπτέον οὖν καὶ ὅπως συμφώνως ἐκεῖνῳ καὶ Παλαμάς ὄντα διπλοῦν τὸν Χριστὸν καὶ μόνων δυοῖν φύσεων, θεότητος λέγω καὶ ἀνθρωπότητος, σύνθετον, εἰς τριπλοῦν αὐτὸς αὐτὸν κατὰ τὸ Θαβώριον ἐδογματίσεν ὅρος μεταπεπλάσθαι· μέσην γὰρ ἄλλην ἄκτιστον παρεμβάλων θεότητα, τὸ φῶς ἐκεῖνο, ὑφειμένην ἐκήρυξε καὶ αὐτὸς κατὰ Πρόκλον κεκτῆσθαι τὴν τάξιν μεταξύ τελείου καὶ ἀτελοῦς, καὶ μετέχον καὶ μετεχόμενον εἶναι.
- 64 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Historiae Byzantinae*, 35.15, p. 482.8–12 (text in the preceding note).
- 65 (Ps.-)Dionysius the Areopagite, *De Divinis nominibus*, 5.5, p. 184.11–16; 12.4, p. 225.17–20.
- 66 (Ps.-)Dionysius the Areopagite, *De Divinis nominibus*, 5.5, p. 184.12–15: (...) τὰς αὐτομετοχὰς εὐρήσεις τοῦ εἶναι πρώτων αὐτὰς μετεχούσας καὶ τῶ εἶναι πρώτων μὲν οὐσας, ἔπειτα τοῦδε ἢ τοῦδε ἀρχὰς οὐσας καὶ τῶ μετέχειν τοῦ εἶναι καὶ οὐσας καὶ μετεχομένας. Εἰ δὲ τὰτα τῇ μετοχῇ τοῦ εἶναι ἔστι, πολλῶ γε μάλλον τὰ αὐτῶν μετέχοντα.
- 67 Gregory Palamas, *Epistula 3 ad Acindynum*, ed. J. Meyendorff, in Chrestou (ed.), *Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμά Συγγράμματα*, vol. 1, p. 305.9–30; *Orationes antirrheticæ contra Acindynum*, ed. L. Kontogiannes, B. Fanourgakes, in Chrestou (ed.), *Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμά Συγγράμματα*, vol. 3, 4.12.29, p. 262.28–263.10; 5.12.45, p. 321.12–29; *Orationes dogmaticæ*, ed. G. Mantzar-

and so does the Synodal Tome of 1351 (sec. 39). It is true that Palamas, in his most extensive discussion of this aspect of the divine energies,<sup>68</sup> takes pains to explain that the participations in question are not themselves in any way participating in anything in their capacity of participations and first principles, but only participate in being-in-itself in their capacity of being, but this was evidently enough for Gregory Akindynos to infer that they cannot possibly be unoriginated, but must be created.<sup>69</sup>

The same conclusion is also reached by Gregoras, but via a different trajectory, in which the divine energies' participation in being plays no part. At the end of his discussion of Palamas' doctrine of participation,<sup>70</sup> he attempts to prove his saintly adversary's mistake with the help of a hypothetical syllogism. The phrasing is a bit messy, but the argument, I think, is this: If God surpasses all things, those participated as well as those participating, infinitely many times infinitely, as Maximus says and Palamas agrees,<sup>71</sup> and if, as Basil the Great said,<sup>72</sup> those things are equal which are in equal measure surpassed, it follows that the participated light must be equal to all participating things. Hence, since everything is either created or uncreated, and created and uncreated things cannot be equal, either the participated light is created or all participating things are uncreated.<sup>73</sup> Since the latter disjunct is impossible, then, the former must be true.

If we turn back to Gregoras' discussion of the identity of Palamas' and Proclus' doctrines in *Logos* 35.14–16, it is worth noting that it is immediately preceded by a passage (*Logos* 35.11–13) in which he attempts to show that the Council of Blachernai has distorted the sense of a patristic text that it adduced in support of a real distinction between two uncreated divinities (Synodal Tome of 1351, sec. 46). This text is a snippet from Maximus the Confessor's *Diversa cap-*

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ides, in Chrestou (ed.), *Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμᾶ Συγγράμματα*, vol. 2, 5.24, p. 250.14–251.15; 6.8, p. 267.29–268.19; *Contra Gregoram* 2, ed. P.K. Chrestou, in Chrestou (ed.), *Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμᾶ Συγγράμματα*, vol. 4, 37, p. 291.25–292.14.

68 Gregory Palamas, *Capita CL*, ed. R.E. Sinkewicz (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1988), 87–89, pp. 184–188.

69 Gregory Akindynos, *Refutatio magna*, ed. J. Nadal Cañellas (Turnhout: Brepols, 1995), 2.19, ll. 53–76, p. 112.

70 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Historiae Byzantinae*, 35.16–17, p. 482.17–483.11.

71 Maximus the Confessor, *Capita ducenta ad theologiam Deique Filii in carne dispensationem spectantia* 1.49, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: Migne = PG90, 1865), col. 1101A; Gregory Palamas, *Pro hesychastis* 3, 2.7, p. 662.16–21 *et alibi*; see also Beyer in Nikephoros Gregoras, *Antirrhetica* I, p. 178 n. b.

72 Basil the Great, *Adversus Eunomium* 1.27 (Paris: Migne = PG29, 1857), col. 569C.

73 Cf. Nikephoros Gregoras, *Antirrhetica priora*, I, 3.4.14–15, pp. 403–405.

*ita ad theologiam et oeconomiam spectantia* (1.7),<sup>74</sup> according to which God, “in whose essence created beings do not participate (...) wills that those capable of so doing shall participate in Him according to some other mode.”<sup>75</sup> Gregoras points out that the subsequent lines, not quoted in the Synodal Tome of 1351, state that “even that mode (ὁ τρόπος) according to which He wills to be participated in remains perpetually concealed (ἀνέκφαντος) from all men”,<sup>76</sup> and thus, he concludes, is *not* “manifest” (φαινομένην [sc. ἐνέργειαν]), let alone “visible”.<sup>77</sup>

This appears not to be such an efficient argument against the visibility of the uncreated light, since the Palamites may reasonably reply that the visibility of the means or medium of participation in no way precludes the concealedness of the mode of participation (in other words, it may be possible to participate in God through uncreated light regardless of whether it is possible to understand how this could work). On the other hand, the quotation may be seen to support a general argument against any sort of attempt to explain how it is that human beings can participate in God, so that is probably how it is intended. After all, what is offered by the theory of the uncreated light is an explanation as to how it is that God can be participated in spite of being essentially unparticipated.

Gregoras’ own doctrine of participation is traditional but hardly intellectually satisfying. As Ps.-Dionysius said (quoted, as always, from the paraphrase in Euthymios Zigabenos’ *Panoplia dogmatica*),<sup>78</sup> God is participated by everything, according to his essence no less than according to his “energies”, although, of course, unparticipatedly. And that is all there is to the matter.<sup>79</sup> The upshot seems to be that Gregoras’ criticism of Palamas for having introduced a second rank of uncreated divinities is fundamentally motivated by his rejection of the applicability of the categories of the human intellect to the mysterious realm of the divine.

74 Maximus the Confessor, *Diversa capita ad theologiam et oeconomiam spectantia* (Paris: Migne = PG90, 1865), coll. 1180C–1181A.

75 *The Philokalia: The Complete Text*, transl. G.E.H. Palmer, P. Sherrard, K. Ware, vol. 2 (London: Faber & Faber, 1982), p. 165.

76 *The Philokalia*, p. 165. Gregoras actually quotes the main clause as “(...) is comprehensible to God alone and concealed to all other [beings]” (Nikephoros Gregoras, *Historiae Byzantinae*, 35.13, p. 481.1–2).

77 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Historiae Byzantinae*, 35.13, p. 480.22–481.5; “visible”: Nikephoros Gregoras, *Historiae Byzantinae*, 35.16, p. 482.14.

78 Euthymios Zigabenos, *Panoplia dogmatica* (Paris: Migne, 1865) PG 130, 132A; cf. (Ps.-)Dionysius the Areopagite, *De Divinis nominibus*, 2.5.

79 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 23.2.8, p. 1104.5–1105.10. Cf. Nikephoros Gregoras, *Antirrhetica posteriora* 4, MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 56.14, f. 47<sup>r-v</sup>.

At the end of the day, I suppose the really interesting question is the one that I have evaded in this paper, namely whether Gregoras was right. Regardless of the dubious accuracy of Gregoras' interpretations of Palamas' and Proclus' doctrines of participation, is there any reason to suspect that Palamas—who was not by any standards a “Byzantine humanist”—was indeed drawing directly on Proclus, or is all the Proclean influence on Palamism mediated by Ps.-Dionysius and his followers? Well, as I said at the outset, this is a question for a more extensive study. But in order to end on an encouraging note—and with another quotation—some scholars who have discussed the question seem to be inclined to think that Gregoras was right, for instance John Demetracopoulos, who argues in a recent paper that “Palamas consciously and directly integrated some of Syrianus' and Proclus' metaphysical tenets (...) in his description of the structure of divine reality.”<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> J.A. Demetracopoulos, “Palamas Transformed”, p. 278; cf. pp. 355–356 with n. 293. See also Carlos Steel's contribution to this volume. A cautionary note is struck by S. Mariev, “Neoplatonic Philosophy in Byzantium: An Introduction”, in S. Mariev (ed.), *Byzantine Perspectives on Neoplatonism* (Berlin & Boston: De Gruyter, 2017), pp. 1–29, here pp. 16–18.

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