

Intellect or Heart, Reason or Faith? Some Instances of *crede ut intellegas* in Damascene and Maximian Reflections

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Abstract

Addressing the imputed opposition between Christian theology and metaphysics from the premise of the inadmissibility of severing ties with the Holy Fathers of the Church, this paper argues for the necessity of revisiting dogmatical works like the *Fountain of Knowledge* and *Ambigua* with the scope of ascertaining their perspective on the issue. Brief textual analyses will show why the sublation of the Messalian and Evagriian extremes by the Orthodox Byzantine synodal theology (with the purpose of a Union in God) *was* and *remains* necessary. On a third layer, the paper gives some indications of the relation in which certain methodological and systematical traits of the cataphatic and apophatic Orthodox dogmatic theology stand to scientific thought.

Keywords: St. John of Damascus, St. Maximus the Confessor, Orthodox dogmatics, philosophy, science, metaphysics, intellect, perception.

“Thy Nativity, O Christ our God,
hath shined the light of knowledge upon the world”
(*Canon of the Nativity*)

“Philosophy is love of wisdom; true wisdom is God [...].
Theoretical philosophy [...] is the consideration of God [...]
– therefore, *theology*.”
(St. John of Damascus, *Dialectics* §67¹)

¹“Φιλοσοφία ἐστὶ φιλία σοφίας· σοφία δὲ ἀληθῆς ὁ θεός ἐστιν. [...] Θεωρητικὸν μὲν οὖν ἐστὶ τὸ κατανοεῖν [...] περὶ θεοῦ [...] τοίνυν ἐστὶ τὸ θεολογικόν.” St. John of Damascus, *Φιλοσοφικά Κεφάλαια*, commonly called “*Dialectics*” (hereafter: *Dial.*), (chapter) 67 (in: *Patrologia Graeca* (PG), (volume) 94: (columns) 669C–672A. Emphasis: P.M.) Complete references will be made only for quotations or for specific indications, for the rest only chapter numbers will be given. As an orientation for the translations, an

“There are, however, some who have endeavored
to suppress philosophy.”
(St. John of Damascus, *Dialectics* §3²)

IN SPITE OF THE “ARCHAEOLOGICAL” approaches to the topic³, few efforts to reconstruct the application of Late Antique and Byzantine logical and philosophical instruments in systematic theology have acknowledged their perennial relevance. As long as this goes on, a genuine “return to patristics” and a rediscovery of the meaningful complexities hidden behind a familiar surface is unattainable. The Dogmatics of the Orthodox Church is the only place to look for *consensus patrum*. Dogma does not mean narrowness, but that noetic essence donated to us by the Absolute Infinite, Who personally awaits us in it. It is the duty of dedicated Orthodox contemporaries to unite in refining and elaborating the general guidelines given by patristic texts in order to respond to today’s questions, with all due meekness, in the naturally unifying Light of the Dogmas. But what *means* should be used for this?

With the arrival of the new millennium⁴, the neglected Byzantine philosophical heritage has begun to be addressed appropriately. Besides important monographs⁵, some collective volumes do now exist (e.g. the ones edited by Katerina Ierodiakonou⁶ and Mikonja Knežević⁷), in which researchers offer comprehensive insights, albeit generally setting philosophy apart from theology and surrendering to an understandable scholarly historicist tendency. Studies such as the one of Slobodan Žunjić, which highlight the synthetic unity of the philosophical legacy with the

English edition and a Romanian bilingual one have been used: St. Ioannes Damascenus, “The Philosophical Chapters,” in *Saint John of Damascus. Writings*, trans. Frederic Hathaway Chase, vol. 37, Fathers of the Church (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1999), 7–110; id., “Dialectics,” in *Complete Works I* [in Romanian], trans. Adrian Tănăsescu, Cornel Coman, and Cristian Chivu, vol. I (București: Gândul Aprins, 2015), 27–207. Unfortunately, unlike PG and the English edition, the Romanian edition considered a part of chapter 16 to stand on its own. After chapter 16, one should always be subtracted from this edition’s chapter-number. This requires attention and can lead to potential confusions.

²“Ἄλλ’ ἀναιρεῖν ἐπεχείρησάν τινες τὴν φιλοσοφίαν [...]” *Dial.* 3, PG 94:536B.

³See, e.g. the monographs listed in footnote 5 below, with the exception of the one of Kapriev. His work shows the teleological movement of the synthetical Byzantine thought and it hints toward its perennial relevance.

⁴The following overview is suggestive, not exhaustive.

⁵Among others one can enumerate Eduard Zeller’s *Philosophie der Griechen*, (Tübingen, 1844-1852), *La philosophie byzantine* by Tatakis (Paris, 1949), Podskalsky’s *Theologie und Philosophie in Byzanz* (München, 1977) or Kapriev’s *Philosophie in Byzanz* (Würzburg, 2005).

⁶Cf. Katerina Ierodiakonou, ed., *Byzantine Philosophy and Its Ancient Sources* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

⁷Mikonja Knežević, ed., *The Ways of Byzantine Philosophy* (Alhambra: Sebastian Press, 2015).

Christian theological thought, remain nevertheless highly meritorious⁸. However, daring to uphold relevant perennial analytic instruments, systematical arguments and contemplative methods needs more. What it takes is to acknowledge the basis of Orthodox synodal Dogmatics and to strive for that judiciousness (cf. *διάκρισις*) which enables the identification of essential patristic claims (the historicization of which would be wrong) and which enables the identification of the domain of relevance of western commentaries. While the Western error has been the intellectualization of the Supra-Intelligible (which replaced the observation of the way in which the Latter offers the Revelation of Himself in the medium of the intelligible), the Eastern deficiency (due to historical adversities mainly) has been the one of losing touch with the intelligible. With a background in the study of the Est-West relation⁹ and a vivid interest in articulating a theologically relevant concept of the *transcendental*¹⁰, Father Grigore Dinu Moș has recently published a schematic exposé of the topic of unity and diversity¹¹ (building on Constantin Noica and Florin Octavian), a first part of a more extensive study about apophatism¹² and (this spring) a volume of Dogmatics-Studies coauthored with Florin Octavian¹³, all of which reveal and clarify the abiding importance of making rigorous distinctions in theology as well as of acknowledging the link between Theology and Metaphysics. It can only be hoped that his endeavor will continue.

Romanian efforts to explore the link between theology, philosophy and science have been led in the last years by Magda Stavinschi (*ADSTR, IT4S*) with the aid of the John Templeton Foundation and resulted in several programs of international importance, in the *Science and Religion* publication series and in the *Transdisciplinary Studies* journal.

⁸Slobodan Žunjić, "John Damascene's "Dialectic" as a Bond Between Philosophical Tradition and Theology," in *The Ways of Byzantine Philosophy*, ed. Mikonja Knežević (Alhambra: Sebastian Press, 2015), 227–70.

⁹Grigore Dinu Moș, *Orthodoxy and Occident: The Problem of Heterodox Influences in Orthodox Theology* [in Romanian] (Cluj-Napoca: Renașterea, 2013).

¹⁰Grigore Dinu Moș, "The Idea of the Transcendental in Theology: Anticipations in the Patristical Anthropology and Contemporary Formulations" [in Romanian], in *Orthodox Anthropology from the Ecclesial Perspective: The Challenges of Postmodernism* (Craiova: Editura Mitropoliei Olteniei, 2018), 411–26.

¹¹Grigore Dinu Moș, "Unity and Diversity. The Values of the Contemporary World in the Light of the Dogmas of the Church," [in Romanian], in *Unity and Identity: The Orthodoxy of the Romanians Between the Eastern Communion and the Dialogue with the Occident: [Proceedings of the International Symposium of Theology, History, Musicology and Art, 5-6 November 2018]. Vol. 1*, ed. Vasile Stanciu and Paul-Bogdan Siladi (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2018), 428–41.

¹²Id., "Negation as Infinite Affirmation: The Apophatic Theology of Saint Dionysius the Areopagite," *Diakrisis Yearbook of Theology and Philosophy* 2 (2019): 25–36.

¹³Grigore Dinu Moș and Florin Octavian, *Notebooks of Dogmatics*, vol. 1, *Architectonics and Apophatism* [in Romanian] (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2020).

Such ambitions are continued in the present e.g. by the Greek program “Science & Orthodoxy around the World.” In Romanian theology, notable contributions have been made by Fr. Doru Costache in cosmology and patristics¹⁴, Fr. Sorin Mihalache in popularizing the recent scientific surpassing of materialism and the shaking of naturalism (which opens a possibility to close in towards theology)¹⁵ and, last but not least, Nicolae Turcan, foremost in exposing the failure of the so-called “postmodern” paradigm¹⁶.

The new challenge on the horizon of such research is to determine whether the activity of the above-mentioned disciplines, despite all interdisciplinary “openness,” should be considered disjunct and dissonant, discordant and even alien to each other. This challenge can be stated in the form of the following two questions: 1. Is reason only relevant for “external” observations and technical improvements (while often being incapable of assessing the risks of its products) and will its main achievement, as seen from a theological perspective, remain its capacity to objectively review its own limits? 2. Will faith only reign in the “subjective” domain, aiding to improve the environment by improving the ego(s)? One of the notable paths towards providing solid (negative) answers to these questions is the investigation led by Paul L. Gavrilyuk, who aims at formulating an Orthodox epistemological doctrine of the spiritual sense (continuing the work of the likes of K. Rahner and William P. Alston)¹⁷. In contrast to such a major enterprise, the present paper attempts only to give a hint about what makes such an investigation type *necessary*.

The paper will start by steadily outlining the relation between orthodox theology and the notional fields of “concept,” “intellect” and “philosophy,” turning in the first two chapters to St. John of Damascus’ stance against extremes like syllogistically attempting to “establish” God or “theologically” renouncing philosophy. Saint Maximus the Confessor’s treatment of the queen of the sciences and of the intellect will be sampled through a short textual analysis in chapter 3, together with an assessment of the relation between theology and science. The

¹⁴ Cf. Doru Costache, “The Orthodox Doctrine of Creation in the Age of Science,” *Journal of Orthodox Christian Studies* 2, no. 1 (2019): 43–64.

¹⁵ Cf. Sorin Mihalache, *The Light of the Unseen One: A Theological Gaze in the Rationality of Creation and the Recent Scientific Theories About the Universe* [in Romanian], vol. I, II (București: Editura Basilica, 2016).

¹⁶ Nicolae Turcan, *Postmodernism and Apophatical Theology: An Apology facing the weak thought* [in Romanian] (Cluj-Napoca: Limes, 2014).

¹⁷ Paul L. Gavrilyuk and Sarah Coakley, eds., *The Spiritual Senses: Perceiving God in Western Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). Paul L. Gavrilyuk and Frederick Aquino, eds., *Sensing Things Divine: Towards a Constructive Account of Spiritual Perception* (forthcoming with Oxford University Press).

last chapter will try to reach a conclusion by pointing out the answer of the Church to the question “Intellect or heart, reason or faith?” This paper, especially dedicated to the contemporary Romanian theology in general, will choose not to conceal some polemical emphases directed against the use of the antagonist categories of “Saints” versus “Rationalists”¹⁸.

“Us” and “them”

In St. John of Damascus’ synthetic compilation entitled *On Heresies*¹⁹, the Philosophy / Theology contrast corresponding to the pairs of opposites mentioned in the title begins to be felt starting from the description of the Aetians. The text describes this kind of heretics as the ones who want “to establish God [τὸν θεὸν παριστᾶν] by Aristotelian and geometric syllogisms”²⁰. This chapter’s considerations will not focus on the historical value of this report (Aëtius of Antioch and his followers were, above all, *Arians*²¹), but upon what it means to bear the described *guilt*.

If one regards the pairs of opposites referred to in the title-question as denoting opposing fractions, St. John’s criticism begins with “the ones” to which today’s Orthodox schools refer to with the two standard reductive and degrading hyperonyms – “scholasticism” and “rationalism.” They are the objectifying promoters of arid arguments, who, instead of acknowledging and loving Christ from all their heart, dedicate themselves to an impersonal nature of an intellectual “absolute”; the ones who may even avoid speaking about the Revelation; the ones who through rationalization murder belief – or, at best, replace it with deism. In this sense, it can perhaps be argued that in his *Dialectics*, St. John refers to τὰ ἐν καρδίᾳ νοήματα²² to stress the centrality of the heart, in what can be seen as his move to distance himself from speaking too much about the intellect. In *Dogmatics* (I, §13), St. John states clearly (though briefly) that, besides its

¹⁸ Italics will be used also for this purpose, besides their common function of indicating titles or certain syntagms, or certain important aspects.

¹⁹ The same two editions mentioned above in note 1 have been used as an orientation for the translations from *Περὶ αἰρέσεων*: St. Ioannes Damascenus, “On Heresies,” in *Saint John of Damascus. Writings*, trans. Frederic Hathaway Chase, vol. 37, Fathers of the Church (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1999), 111–63; id. St. Ioannes Damascenus, “On Heresies” [in Romanian], in *Complete Works*, trans. Adrian Tănăsescu, Cornel Coman, and Cristian Chivu, vol. I (București: Gândul Aprins, 2015), 209–93. The same style of references will be used.

²⁰ St. John of Damascus, *Περὶ αἰρέσεων ἐν συντομίᾳ ἑκατόν, ὅθεν ἤρξαντο καὶ πόθεν γέγοναν*, commonly called *On Heresies* (hereafter: *Her.*), (chapter) 76 (in:) PG 94:725A. More gravely, the Aetians try, by the same means, “to show that Christ cannot be from God.”

²¹ For St. John’s handling of Arianism, cf. *Her.* 69.

²² *Dial.* 30, PG 94:592A.

verbalized form, “word” also means “that internal one which is spoken in the heart”²³, in a way which is distinct from the epitomes of what the νοῦς does (i.e. “κινεῖται καὶ νοεῖ καὶ λογιζέται”²⁴).

And after all, St. John mentions the “many inane controversies” of the “outside philosophers” in the *Dialectics*²⁵. This fact surely adds to the justification of an attempt to reconcile his theology with contemporary accents, so that all of this is to be seen as St. John’s effort to distance himself from that which in modern times came to be called “concept.” Or is it? If the assumption is true, the small stumbling blocks which can be found residing in the invoked pieces of evidence could be easily removed. Alas, what may at first be perceived to be small, at times reveals itself to be increasingly annoying upon closer look. For instance, later in the *Dogmatics*, St. John writes again about the “ἐνδιάθετος λόγος,” stating that it takes place “ἐν τῷ διαλογιστικῷ”²⁶. One may perhaps decide to elude the fact that “ἐνδιάθετος” is developed from “διάθεσις” (ordering), and translate the phrase just as “internal/inner speech.” However, one cannot circumvent its location indicated this time around, which is the *discursive faculty* (“διαλογιστικός”). The necessary perspective which has to be adopted in order to surmount this apparent contradiction will be reconstructed at the end of this paper.

As for *On Heresies*, whoever takes St. John’s stance to be the one exposed above will have dashed expectations. The text asseverates that, starting “from the foundation of the world”²⁷, “in the midst” of the traditions that are called the “mothers and prototypes of all heresies”²⁸ (Hellenism included), there existed, nevertheless, “an ingrained godliness character, along with the force of the natural law,” which “lastly converged with the religion of Abraham”²⁹. Anybody surprised by this will marvel at yet another (troublesome) context of the *Dialectics*, in which St. John implicitly calls the representatives of the classical philosophy (Plato and Aristotle, as one can infer)

²³ “Λόγος [...] ἐστὶν ὁ ἐνδιάθετος ὁ ἐν καρδίᾳ λαλούμενος.” St. John of Damascus, Ἐκδοσις ἀκριβῆς τῆς ὀρθοδόξου πίστεως, commonly called *Dogmatics* (hereafter *Dogm.*), (book) I, (chapter) 13, PG 94:857A. As an orientation for the translations, two English editions and a Romanian one have been used: St. Ioannes Damascenus, “An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith,” in *NPNF Hilary of Poitiers, John of Damascus*, eds. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, trans. S.D.F. Salmond, Christian Classics Ethereal Library, vol. 9, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers 2 (Grand Rapids, Mi.: Eerdmans, 1979), 541–781; id., “The Orthodox Faith,” in *Saint John of Damascus. Writings*, trans. Frederic Hathaway Chase, vol. 37, Fathers of the Church (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1999), 165–406; id., *Dogmatics* [in Romanian], trans. Dumitru Fecioru, Apologeticum 2004, Great Christian Writers (București: Scripta, 1993).

²⁴ *Dogm.* I, 13 PG 94:857A.

²⁵ *Dial.* 30 PG 94:592B.

²⁶ *Dogm.* II, 21 PG 94:940B.

²⁷ *Her.* 1 PG 94:681A.

²⁸ *Her.* 1 PG 94:677A.

²⁹ *Her.* 1 PG 94:681A.

“wise and godly”³⁰. All of this occurs after the programmatic announcement made at the beginning of the Damascene’s *Fountain of Knowledge*, which states that the author will approach the existence of *something good* endemic in the contributions of the Greek philosophers – and that he will do this because everything that is *good* has been given to men *by God* (James 1, 17)³¹.

This chapter will try to give a hint about the reason for which, although consisting in serious stumbling blocks for any attempt to defend the contemporary accents mentioned above, St. John’s work and thus Orthodox dogmatic theology has nevertheless good reasons to incriminate the “Aetian” guilt. As will be seen at the end of the paper, Saints John of Damascus and Maximus the Confessor, among so many others, nevertheless remind us that, in order to understand what God *is not*, we have to understand what *is not God*. And to glorify Him for everything which partakes to Him, through contemplating the orderings established by His energies. To anticipate, the whole Church would unite in stating that to employ e.g. περινοία or other thought processes *with the purpose of comprehending God Himself* would mean nonexistent humility and the hybris of pride. But to demand that all should have the experience of Holy Darkness in a domain reserved by God’s Providence to *rational clarity* would mean *exactly* the same – or ignorance, at best. The relation between man and God and even the Incarnation and Labour of Christ were possible because of the Will of the Super-intelligible God. He wants that which is “around” Him to be reflected in this fallen world – in what even after the fall has still been His created *image*; in the intelligible, and even in the sensible. These become transparent for the Saints. According to their testimony, such experiences of His Love, in which the Super-intelligible reveals Himself, generously *augment* the intelligible instead of shattering it, *without* crushing the Blagian corolla of wonder. Thus, the “micro” is being lightened qua *integral whole*. Concrete universals – the λόγοι – are revealed from behind formal correspondents.

To close this necessary digression with an open call to back away from a familiar kind of theological sermon, it should be cautioned against the easy lapse into the sin of idle talk about the superiority of “our” love, in a way as if we are the ones who came to God and not the other way around. Love is a deed, not an oration. On the other side, love is not ignorance and knowledge has *different* intertwined layers, which do not stand in the tension of any contradiction³². The rancorously combated “concept” (from the Latin *concipere* and *capere*) – which has admittedly disembodyed into detrimental medieval and modern nominalistic and conceptualistic reveries – entered the scene of history with Thomas Aquinas. The purpose of this terminolog-

³⁰ *Dial.* 2 PG 94:533A.

³¹ *Prolog.* (Prologue to the *Fountain of Knowledge*), PG 94:524C.

³² Cf. Moş, “Negation as Infinite Affirmation: The Apophatic Theology of Saint Dionysius the Areopagite,” 430-434.

ical fixation was to coin the traditional distinction between the perception of sensible species and the one of intelligible species. Today, however, even in the post-Fregean world³³, due to the long and troubled history of the concept of “concept,” it remains a blurred blanket term, especially within contemporary Orthodox theology. This is why it became possible to affirm that the use of concepts (i.e. of universals) would lead to a “conceptualization” of faith³⁴, and that science (or philosophy) would pretend to be an alternative to Revelation. It is clear, therefore, that the history mentioned above needs much more attention from a theologian’s side. “White,” “the brother of St. Apostle Peter” and “cause” are all *concepts*³⁵. The beginning of Frege’s *Begriffsschrift* is a handy introduction into what this means, into what is (empirically) *attainable* and *achievable* and (logically) *justifiable* and *demonstrable*, as well as into the meaning of “representation,” “judgement,”

³³ Eric Margolis and Stephen Laurence, “Concepts,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Summer 2019 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2019), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2019/entries/concepts/>.

³⁴ St. Gregory of Nyssa’s stance on this matter cannot be used to argue for this. When writing about the peril of idolatry in the notorious passage about Moses’ experience of the Sinaite “Darkness,” St. Gregory – a scholar well-educated in philosophy – does not simply state *that concepts create idols*. Such a blanket assertion would imply, indeed, a fundamental danger lurking in reasoning itself, because all reasoning is “conceptual” thinking. However, St. Gregory’s subject that would constitute an idol 1. would do so only if it meets an explicitly stated condition and 2. its linguistic form not only lacks the plural, but is 3. none of the common terms which may, eventually, be translated as “concept” (e.g. “νόημα,” “ιδέα,” “εἰδός,” “ιδίου,” “τῶ τι,” or even “πῶς,” “ὄρον,” etc.). His description, which reads “τοῦ κατὰ τινα περιληπτικὴν φαντασίαν ἐν περὶ νοῖα τινὶ καὶ στοχασμῶ τῆς θείας φύσεως γινομένου,” has been translated 1. by Daniélou as “tout concept formé par l’entendement (*phantasia périleptikè*) pour essayer d’atteindre et de cerner la nature divine” (St. Gregorius Nyssenus, *Contemplation sur la vie de Moïse ou Traité de la perfection en matière de vertu*, trans. Jean Daniélou, Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1941, 112), 2. by Ferguson and Malherbe as “every concept which comes from some comprehensible image by an approximate understanding and by guessing at the divine nature” (St. Gregorius Nyssenus, *Gregory of Nyssa: The Life of Moses*, trans. Everett Ferguson and Abraham J Malherbe, New York: Paulist, 1978, §165, p. 95) and, e.g. 3. by Stăniloae as “orice înțele care se ivește în cugetarea sau socotința firii [divine] prin vreo imagine care mărginește” (St. Gregorius Nyssenus, *Writings of Saint Gregory of Nyssa. Part One* [in Romanian], trans. Dumitru Stăniloae, PSB 29 [București: Ed. IBMBOR, 1982, 74]). Thus, *that which God obviously condemns*, according to St. Gregory’s rightful interpretation, is *not generally the employment of universals in theology*. (“How could theology exist without them?” would St. John ask – cf. *Dial.* 3, PG 94:536B.) It is not the employment of universals in theology, *but rather the one of any construct which would claim to understand the nature which lies beyond any understanding*. And this is a lenient interpretation, in which the subject is seen to be *any construct*. However, φάντασμα constitutes a clear reference to *empirical* constructs.

³⁵ Other examples: sentence, triangle, whole, size, identity, roundness, succession, number, negation, extension and intension, courage, causality, pile, mammal, “the victors of the battle from Plataea,” object. The next level is to ask what *kind* of concepts each of these are, because among them there are determined and undetermined ones, epistemological and psychological ones and even some of the ones studied by Kant as “categories.”

and conceptual “content”³⁶. When theology, seen as a way of life and science, has reached the age of discretion, (quasi-)Montanist extremism and the drawing caricatures of philosophy³⁷ lose any legitimacy.

Returning to *On Heresies*, a real change in tone and a switch towards a more critical stance towards “philosophy”³⁸ does in fact begin to be felt starting with the itemization of the Gnostics and continuing with the one of the deviant Christians. It is among the ranks of the latter that the Aetians mentioned above are enumerated. Admittedly, a rigorist reader could answer to this by pointing out that on St. John’s list of heresies the thesis of a pernicious (“deceiving”) influence exerted by philosophy can be seen as having been diagnosed already twenty entries before the one of the Aetians, namely in the case of Bardesianes. This influential scholar is said to have been a Christian who “at first excelled in philosophy,” but then “fell away from the truth and came to teach nearly the same as did Valentinus”³⁹. Upon a closer look, this fragment can be interpreted to the benefit of “philosophy.”

In spite of eventual signs of the mentioned circumspection, St. John’s first lengthy programmatic digression is instead being dedicated to exposing no other heretics than the anti-intellectual “praying” pietistic Messalians (§80). According to the principles to which these adhere, the human intellect, first of all, is possessed by demons. Second, their special prayers can bring about invulnerable perfection and sensations of the Holy Ghost of such a kind that makes them equally ranking with dogmas and, at the same time, makes the Holy Sacraments of the Church perfectly redundant. St. John’s veridical description gives a clear indication of the Messalian Pelagianism and Gnosticism condemned at the Council of Ephesus in 431.

Subsequently, monophysitism is offered a highly technical analysis, which builds on the whole Aristotelian logic. It is no coincidence that St. John preventively (re)organized the foundations of this logic in his *Dialectics*. In fact, the role of the latter was to serve as an instrument for exposing all heresies⁴⁰. After discussing monophysitism, St. John adds at the side of the Messalians the so-called “fighters-against-knowledge” – the Gnosimachs. They assert “that those who search for knowledge in the sacred Scriptures are doing something useless, because of the Christian God requires nothing other than good deeds”⁴¹. Whoever may consider their attitude vindicated by a certain divine council given, according to the *Patericon*, to Abba

³⁶Gottlob Frege, „Begriffsschrift“ [1879], in *Begriffsschrift und andere Aufsätze*, ed. Ignacio Angelelli (Hildesheim: Olms, 1993), V–88.

³⁷What is meant hereby is e.g. the fomenting of what were likely “patricidal” tendencies of a neopatristic frontrunner.

³⁸Mind the blanket term, inherited from St. Johns’ sources. *On Heresies* is, as mentioned above, a compilation.

³⁹*Her.* 56 PG 94:711A-B.

⁴⁰*Dial.* 1 PG 94:530B.

⁴¹*Her.* 88 PG 94:758A.

Anthony the Great, is wrong. The notorious advice meant here was the one *not to peer* into God's Providence when confronted with the world's injustice, but to simply take care of one's own things⁴². Actually, anyone would receive such a council when missing the point that the good care God has for each of us is, in the first place, a radically *personal* one. Therefore, the practical dimension of administering one's own deeds should not be confused with the theoretical dimension of the contemplation of God. Since the latter is done with faith, awe, humble restraint and the will to glorify God, it can never mean blasphemously peering "into" Him. In this sense, "knowledge through faith is an entirely different kind of knowledge"⁴³ – "an infinite knowledge"⁴⁴, "a new mind"⁴⁵.

Hybris is always brought about by (pseudo-judicious and actually) *evil* intentions: The "Aetian" arrogance described comes from believing that God can be rationally *established*. The affected *rationalist* ventures in such a quest forgetting that God would not reveal to us *constraining* reasons to accept Him, because this would mean bereaving us of (faith grounded in) free choice. To believe this would mean to miss the essence of dogmatic knowledge. It is precisely for the same reason that the Scripture can be *scholarly* misinterpreted, warns St. John (*Her.*, §97).

In contrast, a *rational* Christian (examples are given in the next paragraph) understands the essence of the dogmatic knowledge in the following way: *When honestly faced with the content of the Revelation* which is alive in the Church (the Holy Scripture and the Holy Tradition, including the dogmatic definitions of the Ecumenical Councils) – i.e. when faced with the antinomical Super-Intelligible⁴⁶ – *thought cannot but prostrate itself*. When God offers a vision of Himself to a contemplative intellect as a gift, harboring doubts means hybris. Mistaking νοῦς for διάνοια (v.i.) and trying to fabricate a comprehensive argument "ladder" to inexorably "prove" God means hybris. It would mean blindness too – for on its own, finite thought cannot "climb upon its own head" (if a German metaphor is allowed), i.e. cannot overtake itself. Without *faith*, finite thought cannot gaze into infinity. In order to understand God, the intellect has to believe. Faith cannot be fabricated, but only searched for, and received from the Merciful Father (Lk 6:36).

It is of critical importance to notice that the misguided rationalists envisaged by St. John do not lapse into heresy because of having traded a Christian life led in divine Grace for relishing mundane culture, like some extremists may express things today. The guilt of such misguided

⁴² Cristian Bădiliță, *Patericon or the Aphorisms of the Desert Fathers: the Alphabetical Collection* [in Romanian] (Iași: Polirom, 2007), 43.

⁴³ George Remete, *Being and Faith*, vol. 3, *Faith* [in Romanian] (București: Paideia, 2016), 47.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 138, cf. *ibid.*, 138-146.

⁴⁶ Florin Octavian, "The Ontology of the Infinite," [in Romanian] *Castalia*, no. 1 (2003), 26, sqq.

rationalists would not be the one that, instead of living a life in Grace, they prefer engaging in rational enquiries. Rather, it would be that they have not made proper *use* of the latter. St. Basil the Great would certainly make a better point here, if he would still be (biologically) alive, teaching young men the right use of “non-Christian” literature. If these points are true – as the considerations to follow will suggest –, this should ring a bell whenever someone listening to the *Synaxarion* hears one particular unfortunate kind of phrase employed in the *Lives of the Saints*, consolidated within Orthodoxy during adverse historic circumstances: “Venerable X studied rhetoric and philosophy, but, renouncing them, has devoted himself to God.” Generally, when such things are being said, the original, concealed message should be understood as being the one that theology *crowned* the philosophical preoccupations of those main Pillars of the Church, existing among the ranks of the Holy Fathers. The luminaries which stand out are the likes of St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory of Nazianzus (former colleagues at the *Platonic Academy*), St. Justin the Martyr and Philosopher, St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, Saints Pamphilius and Eusebius of Caesarea, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Maximus the Confessor, St. John of Damascus, St. Photius the Great, Saints Cyril and Methodius (the former was even given a chair for philosophy at the Imperial University of Constantinople), and St. Gregory Palamas. Besides, as proven by Justinian’s *Codex*, the emperor’s purgation program of 529⁴⁷ did not take aim at the philosophical activity of the stricken *Academy*. Instead, it outlawed the *religion* which the latter came to nourish and to adhere to^{48,49}, being set off by devious⁵⁰ Neoplatonic conjectures. At

⁴⁷The prohibition could also have had little effect, considering that the voluntary “exile” of the scholars only began in the year 532.

⁴⁸James Hannam, “The Emperor Justinian’s Closure of the School of Athens,” 2016, <https://jameshannam.com/justinian.htm>.

⁴⁹Christian Wildberg indicates the exact articles of the law of April 529 which are “explicitly directed against heretics, Manichaeans, Samaritans, and pagans” – *Codex Justinianus* 1.5.18.4–11, and the author points out that Malalas’s *Chronicle* also describes the crack-down as a measure against blasphemy (and not against philosophy). Christian Wildberg, “Philosophy in the Age of Justinian,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian*, ed. Michael Maas (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 316–40, see page 331.

⁵⁰For a quick assessment of the degree to which Plato’s philosophy has been deformed in the history of its reception, it suffices to remember its skeptical turn (in the third century BC), then the Stoical one (first century BC and finally, on top of all, its Neoplatonical turn (starting from the third century AD). Gradually, almost all of those appointed as Plato’s heirs became instead a sort of religious worshippers, e.g. by expanding the cosmological allegory -and- thought experiment entitled *Τίμαιος* into a full-blown religious (pseudo-) mythos. So, as Endre von Ivánka in his *Hellenisches und Christliches* insightfully pointed out, “[...] the reinterpretation of Platonism in a religious direction happened because of the fact that late stoicism transformed the worldview of *Timaeus*, which Plato actually considered just myth and parable, into the guideline of a cosmological interpretation, declaring *Timaeus* to be ‘a text worthy of interpretation’ – in other words, a ‘Holy Scripture’.” Endre von Ivánka,

that time, though, the Imperial University retained *active philosophy chairs*⁵¹. Needless to say, at the University and in the Patriarchal School, the study of philosophy was based – as always – on handbooks teaching Aristotle’s logic⁵². Among them, St. John of Damascus’ *Dialectics* has been just the most famous (for a good reason). Also, in contrast to Aquinas’s *Summa*, St. John’s systematization of the *Dogmatics* never became *aristotelianist*. As for the *Dialectics*, it is to be considered as the decisive first part of that tripartite Orthodox treatise which best uncovers the “Aufhebung” of classical philosophy through dogmatic theology.

So “us” and “them” were not – and could not have been – tags used to distinguish between theology and philosophy (or between theology and pre-modern science, for that matter). If they did come to be used, it was only for a faintly related purpose, namely, to single out *specific* philosophical tendencies. But during the Byzantine millennium, “them” never meant Plato, Aristotle or, generally, the metaphysics which these godly men helped establish. Should the latter ever *seem* targeted during this period, the first working assumption to be checked is whether it is a superficial appearance of a context dealing actually with *the right use* of investigated philosophical matters⁵³.

What *are not* “inane controversies” of the “outer philosophers”?

St. John defines [O]ὐσία, i.e. God and anything participating in Him⁵⁴ (cf. Acts 17:28), as “πρᾶγμα αὐθύπαρκτον”⁵⁵ in his *Dialectics* – in other words *as that which has self-existence* (and a kind of beginning within itself, cf. “ὑπάρχω”). No Orthodox objections to St. John’s formulation seem to have ever been recorded – neither against the concept used, nor against this definition, which marks an important development of cataphatic theology. Considering that “almost all of Damascene’s philosophical propositions

Hellenic and Christian in Early Byzantine Spiritual Life [in Romanian], trans. Vasile-Adrian Carabă (București: Nemira, 2013), 18.

⁵¹ Demetrios J Constantelos, “The Formation of the Hellenic Christian Mind,” in *Christian Hellenism: Essays and Studies in Continuity and Change*, myriobiblos.gr (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Aristide D. Caratzas, 1998), http://www.myriobiblos.gr/texts/english/Constantelos_1.html.

⁵² Slobodan Žunjić, “John Damascene’s “Dialectic” as a Bond between Philosophical Tradition and Theology,” in *The Ways of Byzantine Philosophy*, ed. Mikonja Knežević (Alhambra: Sebastian Press, 2015), 238 seqq.

⁵³ In the alternative case, the metaphysics established by Plato and Aristotle would really be targeted by an Orthodox theologian of the byzantine period. The author would then be one of the very few extremists of those times.

⁵⁴ *Dial.* 4 PG 94:537B.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

have been taken over from preceding philosophical manuals”⁵⁶, the assertion in question surely belonged among many other similar philosophical descriptions and analyses which, at that time, were considered to be patristic commonplaces. This can be true. However, at the same time, it nevertheless so happens that St. Athanasius the Sinaite treated the same particular concept of ἀνθύπαρκτον as one stemming from the “outer philosophers”⁵⁷. Judging by this, the matter exposed here is a clear indicator of a collective historical admission and understanding that even a certain “external” philosophical insight can be theologically beneficial.

Nevertheless, in an even more spectacular way, the text of the *Dialectics* also offers what appears to be a personal admission of St. John’s (or a proposal) of a similar kind, which should also be briefly approached. Thus, one of the reports offered about the particularities of the “outer philosophers” is the fact that they “have discriminated between *being* [οὐσία] and *nature* [φύσις]”⁵⁸, whereas the Holy Fathers “paid no attention” to this distinction, which belongs among the other “many inane controversies”⁵⁹. Although St. John seemingly justifies this equation/indifference of the (anonymous) Holy Fathers, in chapter 40 of the *Dialectics* it is exactly *nature* that St. John sets apart. The definition of nature is treated distinctly from the one of οὐσία (§39) and of *form* [μορφή](§41). Even if the §40 does not mark an essential, complete dissociation from οὐσία, it does give the indication that there are enough necessary reasons to mark their difference in meaning by way of a terminological distinction. Thereafter, this distinction is being systematically employed by St. John. In subsequent references to the investigative practice of the Fathers, St. John contents himself to politely indicate blurred domains (e.g. genus undifferentiated from species in §48), without finding a fault in this, from their side. So his attitude expresses 1. historical awareness regarding the progress of cataphatic theology; 2. the high standards reached by theological studies in Byzantium and 3. the acknowledged need for ever enhanced accuracy by philosophical calibration.

The purpose of the Church is not polarization, but Union in God. As it shall be mentioned in the final section beneath, starting at latest with the work of St. Diadochus of Photiki, already with St. Gregory Palamas), the Holy Fathers achieved the sublation of the two main one-sided and extremist historical approaches to God – the Evagrian “pure” γνώσις and the Messalian “pure” αἴσθησις. “Sublation” does not mean repurposing. Not even the Roman basilica has been “adopted” or “repurposed” by Christianity. Even it has been revealed as being fit, in a mysterious way,

⁵⁶ Žunjić, “John Damascene’s “Dialectic” as a Bond between Philosophical Tradition and Theology,” 269.

⁵⁷ Anastasius Sinaites, *Quest.* 54, PG 89:1401A, *apud*: Žunjić, “John Damascene’s...,” 249.

⁵⁸ *Dial.* 30 PG 94:589C, emphasis: PM.

⁵⁹ *Dial.* 30 PG 94:592B.

for the cruciform logos of the living Church and of “the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made by hands” (Heb 9, 11). The way in which the Church identified *the right use* of partial truths, and in which it provided irenic solutions for all the honest souls which have been led astray by such exaggerations, this way reveals nothing else than *the work of the Grace*. Testimony to this God-given capacity of philosophical discernment bear not only the Pseudo-Macarian Homilies, penned within the Cappadocian Fathers’ sphere of influence with the aim to offer the Messalians a suitable tempering, but also the way in which Saints Basil and the two Gregories have salvaged Plato⁶⁰ from Origen’s gnostic and neoplatonic tendencies (and even salvaged good original insights of their mentor). Subsequently, this allowed the formulation of the divinely inspired metaphysical foundations of the synodal dogmatic theology, and the definitive tackling of the inherited issue of *The One and the Many* through the Revelation of *The Multiple One*⁶¹. (The dogmatic Truths revealed in the Ecumenical Councils implicitly foreshadowed and betokened a whole series of implicit scientific solutions, which, even remaining opaque at that time, later found their Christian discoverers⁶².) Finally, such testimony is further given by the way in which the work of St. John Cassian the Proto-Romanian saved those useful Evagrian themes which continue to shape Orthodox asceticism to this day.

That the Church – just like St. John of Damascus recounts – demands for νοῦς and (especially) for διάνοια to be cleansed in order to mirror God when being lit by the illuminating (φωταγωγός) Grace⁶³ is an *uncontroversial* fact, which *does not come from the “outer philosophers.”* This is further explained in the first chapter of the *Dialectics*. In its very first sentence, St. John invites us to admit that the same is true of the fact that “nothing is more estimable than knowledge, for knowledge is the light of the rational soul”⁶⁴. Its lack turns the soul into being worse than irrational⁶⁵. Knowing is the faculty of

⁶⁰ Ivánka, *Hellenic and Christian in Early Byzantine Spiritual Life*, 64.

⁶¹ Cf. Moş, “Unity and Diversity. The Values of the Contemporary World in the Light of the Dogmas of the Church,” 430-434.

⁶² Modernity has been built upon the Christian theological foundation which led to the belief in actual created (ineligible) infinity. Be it in post-classical philosophy, which had to wait for Nicolaus Cusanus’ developments of the ontological consequences of dogmatic theology (e.g. the *interminatum*), be it in mathematics, where these consequences found their continuation, anticipating solutions of the non-Euclidian geometry and of the Cantorian theory – everything began from fundamental Christian premises. The infinitesimal calculus started only with the Christians Descartes, Newton and Leibniz. Set theory was discovered by Georg Cantor, the Christian believer. The artistic masterworks of the middle ages (the counterpoint and the polyphony; the Renaissance and the gothic architecture) and the natural sciences of the 17th century both grew out of the “mathematization” of reality. Christianity “gave birth” to technology as it did to Dante and Shakespeare, Palestrina and Beethoven, Michelangelo and Rembrandt, Hegel and Dostoyevsky.

⁶³ Preface to *The Fountain of Knowledge*, PG 94:521B-523B.

⁶⁴ *Dogm. I*, 4 PG 94:529A.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

the νοῦς, which is like *an eye of the soul* and which is being taught by Christ the love of learning through the Revelation⁶⁶ (cf. Mt 6, 23) and the humble way of being “*guided by sense perceptions up to that which is beyond all sense perception and comprehension*”⁶⁷. Having been provided with such a foundation by God, once we have truly put our trust in the Savior, St. John incites us (like Christ Himself in John 16, 33) *to take courage* – “Furthermore, since the divine Apostle says: ‘But prove all things: hold fast that which is good,’ let us *also* investigate the words of the outer philosophers [καὶ τῶν ἕξω σοφῶν τοὺς λόγους], for we may find something in them worth carrying away”⁶⁸.

The νοῦς is the natural receptacle capable of mediation between man and God and the intellectual place assigned to Christ, the Sole Mediator. With regard to this, the macro-micro correspondence invoked by the Savior (Mt 6, 22; Lk 11, 34) is always abundantly clear in the Maximian and Damascene heritage. At the end of book I of the *Dogmatics*, St. John draws attention to God’s activity of “seeing with His divine, all-seeing, and immaterial eye all things at once, both present and past and future”⁶⁹. In the next one, he unequivocally articulates the importance of the νοῦς: “The soul does not have the intellect as something distinct from itself, but as its purest part [καθαρώτατον] (for, as the eye is to the body, so is the intellect to the soul)”⁷⁰. In the third book he introduces the Mediator: “The Word of God, then, was united to flesh through the medium of intellect which is intermediate between the purity of God and the grossness of flesh. For the intellect [νοῦς] holds sway over soul and body, but while the intellect is the purest part of the soul, God is that of the intellect.”⁷¹. Therefore, “what is that which was in His own image, unless mind [νοῦς]? [...] For mind is [...] the image of God. Mind, then, mingles with mind”⁷².

These may be scandalous things to say today. If they are scandalous, the fact should be taken into consideration that there is no way in which, remaining true to ourselves, we can “rescue” less “problematic” parts of their heritage and not sever the communion with those Pillars of the Triumphant Church. Could they have been misguided “by philosophy”? As always, the only way forward is to take a step back and re-acknowledge, in an anamnestic fashion, the Teaching of the Revelation which (is actually Christ Himself, Who) traverses the history of the Church.

⁶⁶ *Dogm.* I, 7 PG 94:529B.

⁶⁷ *Dogm.* I, 10 PG 94:532C, emphasis: PM.

⁶⁸ *Dogm.* I, 9 PG 94:532A.

⁶⁹ *Dogm.* I, 14 PG 94:860D.

⁷⁰ *Dogm.* II, 12 PG 94:924B. (Cf. Plato, Πολιτεία, 533c-d)

⁷¹ *Dogm.* III, 6 PG 94:1005B.

⁷² *Dogm.* III, 18 PG 94:1073A. The *Mind* is God. Against an Origenist stance, here should also be mentioned that in the case of the Savior, his human mind was united with God the Word only through the Incarnation, and has then been called Christ (IV,6,76b).

An attentive reading will discover that, in spite of any such an eventual appearance, none of the Evagrian exaggerations exists within St. John Damascene's works. There is no need to disguise his message, e.g. with a "tempering" translation like the Romanian one realized by father Dumitru Fecioru⁷³. From the beginning of the *Dogmatics* and lasting up to the very last context which does not yet make such a choice impossible, father Fecioru translated every νοῦς-based adjective with "spiritual," discarding the right – but perhaps unsettling – corresponding term, "intellectual." Because of this option, he afterwards (e.g. in IV, §11) had to appeal to the Romanian synonym "duhovnicesc" instead of "spiritual" in order to translate "πνευματικός," resulting in the implicit suggestion that St. John distinguishes between "intellectual," "spiritual" and the even more pious "duhovnicesc."

Observing how St. Maximus the Confessor moves "around the Divine" in *Ambigua* 10

In order to shed some light upon the sources which legitimate St. John of Damascus' position, the present analysis briefly turns to his main forerunner, St. Maximus the Confessor. Among the other Fathers who paved the way to St. John's Orthodox dogmatical synthesis, St. Maximus stands out as the trialed and tortured heroic defender and victor of orthodox Christology, confirmed by the Sixth Ecumenical Council.

In his tenth *Ambiguum*⁷⁴, St. Maximus argues in support of St. Gregory of Nazianzus and against the claims according to which St. Gregory would have affirmed that the Saints "pursue divine philosophy solely through 'reason' and 'contemplation'" (§1,2⁷⁵). As a matter of fact – maintains St. Maximus – "practice is absolutely conjoined with reason, and the judgment it presupposes is contained in contemplation" (§1,2). Still, this should in

⁷³ St. Ioannes Damascenus, *Dogmatics* [1938].

⁷⁴ The *Ambigua* (the 10th chapter of which will be commented upon) has been newly translated and organized by Nicholas Conostas in 2014, in what has since become the most practical bilingual edition of the *Ambigua*: St. Maximus Confessor, *On Difficulties in the Church Fathers. The 'Ambigua,'* ed. and trans. Nicholas Conostas, vol. 1, *Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 2014). *His systematization of the text will lead the references given hereafter.* All references will be made to *Ambigua* 10. The symbol "§" in front of a digit will indicate the number attributed by Conostas to Maximus' subchapters (which are not numbered in PG). This will be followed by a comma and then by the paragraph number of the original text, numbered from the beginning of *Ambigua* 10 (page 151 in Conostas' edition) and given by Conostas on the right side of his translation. The translation offered here follows the original text and has been compared to Conostas' translation and to the one of Stăniloae: St. Maximus Confessor, *Ambigua*, trans. Dumitru Stăniloae, PSB 80 (București: Ed. IBMBOR, 1983).

⁷⁵ For an explanation of the references, please see the previous note (number 74).

no way mean that the hierarchy should be flattened or overturned, for it is “through the medium of reason [that] they raised up to the level of intellect their power of sensation, [entering the state of] possessing the simple spiritual λόγοι of sensible things” (§3,9). Furthermore, the right (Christian) use of philosophy, being the love of wisdom, “unifies character and choice, practice and contemplation, virtue and knowledge” (§19,40), truly opening the way to that unification of the soul envisaged by Plato and brought about by life in Christ. Its finality is partaking to God and the contemplation of the “magnificence that lies within created things consistent with the λόγοι,” as well as of “the deeper meaning hidden in the words of the Holy Scripture, into which only the νοῦς may be initiated” (§31a,64). For this reason, for St. Maximus, at Mt 7, 6, Christ Himself “called our power of intellection ‘holy,’ since it is an image of the divine glory” (§50,11) – and since soundness of mind (σωφροσύνη) is the mark “of the new man created by God” (§72,118).

What theology warrants all such affirmations? The answer should be given through an investigation of what can be considered a typical assertion of St. Maximus, and of the Church as a whole:

[T]he Divine *is* beyond closure in language or thought [ἀνεπίδεκτον⁷⁶], which is why when we *say* that the Divine “exists,” we do not predicate of it the category of “εἶναι,” for though εἶναι is derived from God, God Himself is not “εἶναι” as such. For God is beyond εἶναι [...] (§38,92⁷⁷)

God does not fall under categories, as the context of this quotation explains. No *definition* can be stated of Him. What is even more – everything that can be said of Him is the fact that He “is” – strictly in a “simple,” that is *essentially godly* way. But for all of that, a quite complex fact has just been stated about Him, just like the emphasized verbs of the quotation suggest. Furthermore, called “the Divine,” God has been *considered* from quite a specific point of view here, and the dogmatics (of St. Maximus, e.g.) contains elsewhere a remarkable great deal of additional revealed Truths concerning God. Therefore, to the contemporary reader this fragment, like the whole *Ambigua*, could appear to hide self-contradictions.

Actually, whatever the Church teaches about God is always taught with the conscience of the importance of employing apophatism and cataphatism while expressing anything about the Revelation of His Υπερουσία. First of all, this has to be conceded. Returning then to the quoted fragment, an analysis undertaken with the aim to do justice to the fragment’s message would start from the employment of the “εἶναι” – the equivalent of “to be.” Generally, all “εἶναι”-related expressions state something about the *essence* of things. Next, by taking into account the context of the quotation,

⁷⁶I.e. “does not admit” it.

⁷⁷Emphasis: PM.

one can finally reach the conclusion that – in what is definitely the same Aristotelian tradition confirmed by St. John of Damascus as being well and alive a century later⁷⁸ – the purpose of this fragment is to round out the following fact: One can predicate something about anything in only two ways – either about τὸ τί ἐστὶ, i.e. about its essence, or about τὸ ποῖόν τί ἐστὶ, i.e. about the way it (contingently) is. The point further is that, when God comes in question, neither of these two kinds of predication fit (in the way they do with regard to everything else).

So, it is true: God does not fall under categories. But this is so because God stands *above and beyond* them (cf. §41,98). God is the Creator Who brings the very categories into (created) being and νοῦς. Solely He gave and gives them their specifying power. Saint Maximus' arguments fully comply with the rest of what the Holy Fathers argue about such things. It is very important to notice that even for St. Dionysius Pseudo-Areopagita, relating to God does not entail employing non-thought or non-language – or even worse, “anti-....” Instead, He “is” Super-Existence, Super-Being, Super-Love etc.⁷⁹, as it is repeated e.g. in *Ambiguum 10*, §19: God is *beyond thought in an absolutely positive sense*. As St. Maximus puts it, “being teaches us theology” (§19,36) and it teaches us that God's “divine and blessed οὐσία” is of “utter simplicity,” a “simplicity” which lies beyond categories (§41,98).

“Akin” to us in the way a Super-rational Creator is “akin” to his rational creature, God is the “*intelligible sun of righteousness*” (§27,59⁸⁰). Of course, our νοῦς is merely made in the image of God, i.e. infinitely inferior. But, nonetheless, it is by the “movement according to intellect” (§3,9) that God is known beyond knowledge. For God “is” “in a simple, infinite, and absolute sense,” and *like* God, the intellect is “simple and inexplicable, since it is the movement of the soul circling around God” (§3,9). Even if it is just an image, it is “an image of the divine glory” (§50,117). Creatural thinking is feeble and fallen thinking is corruptible, but St. Maxim carefully maintains a coherent picture, identifying cases of *impassionate thinking* (another Platonic *topos*) as cases of a vitiated λογισμός, meaning vitiated computational thought (cf. §49,116). In such cases, the law holding reasoning together and “yoking [the passionate parts of the soul] like slaves” (§43,107) is no longer the power of the pure and “zealous” *reason*, of “the high priest” (§49,116)⁸¹. Nevertheless, impassionate thinking never means vitiated νοῦς (intellect), for conscience (its practical side) can only be dormant, not corrupted.

Intellect alone, according to St. Maximus, allows man to participate to God's monadic λόγος: “Knowing that the soul lies between God and matter,

⁷⁸ Cf. *Dial.*, §15.

⁷⁹ Moṣ, “Negation as Infinite Affirmation: The Apophatic Theology of Saint Dionysius the Areopagite,” 28, seqq.

⁸⁰ Emphasis: PM.

⁸¹ This “yoking” under the leadership of the intellect can be considered a direct reference to Plato – see his chariot allegory form Φαῖδρος 246a–254e; cf. Πολιτεία: 375c; 410; 503; 589d.

with the potentialities to be united to either,” the Saints “completely swept aside sense perception along with what is perceived through it” (§43,106) – in a pure Platonic, *non-gnostic* fashion – and they have done this in order to reach the goal of self-unity in union with God⁸². For it is “by means of the intellect alone they ineffably assimilated the soul to God” (§43,106). Enabling this participation, the intellect also makes the two main other complementary ones possible – the participation to God’s Love for the *whole* of mankind and (thus) to His Goodness (§51,119).

This being said, even though we can name God with names beyond all names, He remains, in His “essence,” beyond anything that can be “understood by us or any other” (§41,99). *What He is* remains beyond anything that we can understand in the fashion in which we understand, e.g., the non-absolute⁸³ monad “1.” However, we *can* cataphatically come to know God “through faith, [...] from God’s creations” (§42,100), and *we can even logically demonstrate the coherence of Him being the Sole Principle of everything* (except of evil) – in a similar manner to St. Maximus and St. Dionysius do. Such an approach does not mean impiety. It does not infringe the principle according to which such knowledge “reveals to us the *fact* that God exists, but not *what He is*” (§42,100).

It seems that such delimitations are much more relevant, actual and helpful than the contemporary mantra of “God cannot be enclosed in concepts” – which is something much more easily said than understood⁸⁴. Even today, cataphatically (faithfully) understanding the fact that God exists, is not just a sufficient reason for further inquiries – it is something amazingly exciting. St. Maximus’ Grace-conducted considerations constitute an enduring model. For instance, just in the larger context of the quotation from the tenth *Ambiguum* analyzed above (§§35-41) he reenacts the θεωρία φυσική in which the Saints came to intellectually contemplate the fact that our Creator is also our Provider, by having discerned the λόγοι of beings, with His help. The following pieces of evidence are introduced, to the conclusion that all things are “moved” and have a beginning: the logical process of the contraction and expansion of the most generic genera; the fact that every (normal) existence (which has essence and quiddity) is definite (posited) and temporal; the impossibilities of an infinite diversity of things, of matter “possessing” existence on its own and of an absolute dyad (God and an eternal matter). Therefore, the conclusion states, only God, the Prime Mover, is infinite. Only God, the Monad can be infinite in a way “absolutely beyond relation” (§40,95).

⁸² Cf. §41,97; §43,107; §45,112; §51,119.

⁸³ Gods monadic Attribute, on the other side, is the logos of non-enumerability and of being the cause of every number.

⁸⁴ Cf. notes 27 and 30 above.

These pieces of evidence should be tested and amended, or even replaced. Or can it be that those Saints to which St. Maximus refers to, along with himself, all had similar errant contemplations? When the answer to this will be a clear negation, a better question will arise: *In which way* did the Saints of the Church cataphatically conceive and grasp *the fact* that God exists? As the text of *Ambigua* 10 suggests, this happened by faithfully considering one of the divine Attributes, e.g. the mentioned Attribute (λόγος) of *God's Infinity* – an Infinity “incomprehensible in respect of its substance, inconceivable in respect of its power, and unlimited in respect of its activity, having no beginning on the upper end of the scale and no end on the lower, and, to put it simply and more accurately [...] in every way unbounded” (§41,96).

Perhaps the time has thus come to reconsider the theological approach to the observations of the contemporary natural science, the advances of which can be seen as fumbling for a way out of the sensible and towards the true intelligible. Many scientific issues wait for an Orthodox bioethical answer. Scientific efforts to understand “information”⁸⁵ and “superposition” can, furthermore, function as incentives for an increased theological refinement. Scientific conclusions about *epistemologically apophatic certainties* (Gödel’s incompleteness, Heisenberg’s uncertainty etc.) invite theology to simply be aware of them⁸⁶ – and to also become aware, it can be added, of the positive contributions brought by Pascal⁸⁷ and Kant, the great delimiters of discursive reason. To such purposes it seems it is, high time to remember the True Subject of metaphysics.

In His Providence, that Subject – the Source of being itself – has a plan for everything in the world, even if that teleology has been concealed by Adam’s Fall. During its history (either directly or indirectly), theology loosened the essential truths left unfinished by classical Greek philosophy by providing them with their sole suitable Foundation, and it included them inside a coherent picture. That God “they” referred to, but did not know, was proclaimed to them as the Holy Trinity (cf. Acts 17,23). The (revealed) principles of *The Uncreated*, of *creatio-ex-nihilo*, of *Absolute Actual Infinite* (together with the sense of a created and mediating αἰών, “co-extensive with eternal things after the fashion of some sort of temporal period”⁸⁸) began to spring up where before only the possibility of potential infinity (the indefinite ἄπειρον) has been conceived – except for some Parmenidian intuitions

⁸⁵ Cf. Gennaro Auletta, “The Lessons of Quantum Mechanics. Going toward a New Ontology,” in *Science and Orthodoxy*, ed. Basarab Nicolescu and Magda Stavinschi (Bucharest: Curtea Veche, 2006), 151–60.

⁸⁶ Jean Staune, “Apophatism in Modern Science and its Implications for Religion,” in *Science and Orthodoxy*, 197–202.

⁸⁷ Thierry Magnin, “Une reprise de questionnement de Blaise Pascal sur l’homme, entre physique moderne et Bible,” in *Science and Orthodoxy*, 43–52.

⁸⁸ *Dogm.* II, 1 PG 94:861B-C.

which were mainly left unscrutinized. Modern science and culture owe their existence to Christian theology. Even the most secular or anti-metaphysical philosophers (to which “philosophy” can never be reduced) drive the same tradition forth, against their will. They *speak the same inherited language*, to use a well-known token of Gadamer. Engaging in philosophy means fighting on the side of the best argument, no matter with whom and no matter what views happen to be fashionable at a certain point in time. In such an endeavor, Orthodox theologians should take courage, for they know Who The Way, The Truth and The Life is.

Nothing should be taken for granted – neither predigested conclusions about the demise of metaphysics, nor popularizing renderings of scientific advances. What if, originally, classical philosophy did *not* erroneously treat οὐσία as if it were one among all other beings? It cannot be easy for contemporary theologians to reach the age of discretion in dealing with philosophy and with science, but it never has been. May the above-named Saints – who, like Christ, have overcome the world – pray for them, so the Church may find the right answers to all challenges of this entropic environment, while remaining true to the Revelation.

A leap beyond the apotheosis of a hollow heart

Because synodal Orthodox theology has never embraced extremism, extremism cannot be the right answer to “scholastic” exaggerations *grown altogether innocuous today*. Can we name one theologian of this new millennium who still indulges in the western intellectualization of the Supra-intelligible, and who would thus be “dangerous” for the Orthodox Church? If not, does it still make sense to *avoid reason* out of fear to become such a theologian⁸⁹? Except when it actually means rational love for God, fear is always the mark of self-imposed immaturity.

For many who consider themselves Orthodox, “rational” has now become an expletive. This should scandalize the whole Church. For the Saints, “reason” was still λόγος, the “word” (cf. *Dogmatics*, II,21). Written with a capital letter it still named the Person of God the Son, “*through Whom all things were made.*” It was “reasonable” to understand e.g. “that all that [God] wills He can do, even though He does not will all the things that He can do – for He can destroy the world, but He does not will to do so”⁹⁰. Actually, relating to God *rationally yet open* to His Super-rational and Infinite Holiness, to His overflowing Mercy which stands beyond any mercy, etc. was certainly the only possible way even for allowing that grip of compas-

⁸⁹ The only noticeable “rationalizing” tendency within theology is that aberrant and non-orthodox kind of Biblical Studies which chooses to be primarily “scientific” instead of being contemplative.

⁹⁰ *Dogm.* I,14 PG 49:860D-861A.

sion, which St. Isaac of Nineveh famously described in his candid, explicit, abrasively ascetic, yet “humanist” manner.

Reason⁹¹ is the *bond* between mankind and the Super-rational God; the ladder of the Law and the Covenant which turned man towards God; the hypostatic Word of God, Who incarnated beyond all our non-subsistent words; the Teacher Who brought us true wisdom in the *words* of the εὐαγγέλιον. What is reason, *practically*? What else than the single bond which can have effect on humans, the one which we freely choose – love⁹². Only the mind can open itself to the *right* choice. We should be absolutely bound only by God, the Λόγος, through love of true wisdom. And because *true wisdom is God*, as St. John reminded us, contemplative φιλοσοφία is *theology*. As opposed to other sorts of apophatism, Christian apophatism is super-cataphatical: it is antinomical, it transcends any symbolism (for it could bear idolatry), it transcends any concepts and categories, it negatively consolidates Gods Attributes as Super-categories which super-affirm God, beyond any negation. The contemplative mind does not “surround” God, but lets itself be moved by Him. Its intent is not “to measure,” but to conform to the orbit assigned to it by God. And still, after all that has been surpassed, the liturgical, participative and antinomical analogy is even more profoundly reinstated, in virtue of Christ’s infinitely mysterious kenotic Incarnation – in virtue of God’s Love and His Sacrifice for our Redemption. This is the *reason* of Christian cataphatism, the reason⁹³ why St. Paul could begin his Areopagus testimony with the phrase “He Whom you do not know and you worship, Him I proclaim to you” (Acts 17,23).

Human love is finite – limited and relative. If we infinitely love our neighbor, God loves a human through us. If God loves a human, He infinitely loves a (finite) creature. If a saint infinitely loves The Infinite, he does so synergistically, partaking to the Love of the Holy Trinity. As St. Silouan the Athonite used to explain, “he who loves God is included in the Life of the

⁹¹ Like in philosophy, in cataphatic theology those seemingly subtle, fine terminological nuances often make an extraordinary difference. In such a context, cognates like “reason” and “reasoning” (λογισμός) can suddenly become opposites. Discursive reasoning e.g. has nothing to do with the manner in which God the Logos assigned to all things their right times and places of coming into being and their proper λόγοι, the “reasons” of their own development. Furthermore, it has nothing to do with identifying such principles. Even a plural like (human) “words” placed aside the Labors of the incarnated Word can only be overshadowed, like in the famous case of 1 Cor 1, 17.

⁹² “O Lord, surely I am Your servant [...] You tore up [διέρρηξας] my bonds” (Ps 116,16/ Ps 115,7). The love for God should always be held for what it is – the *commitment* of anyone’s whole being to God, to the highest possible personal degree. This is the self-sacrificial hope, with which we prepare to stand before God. This love should never be seen as an arational, hollow affection or as the evanescent passion associated with “falling in love.” Taking it to mean this would equal an illicit apotheosis of blind “love,” something that would stand on the brink of sacrilege.

⁹³ Cf. Remete, *Being and Faith*, 104-106; On the “rationality of faith,” see also 110-118.

Divinity; he who loves his brother, includes in his own personal existence the life of his brother; he who loves the whole world, embraces with his mind the whole universe”⁹⁴. This is what St. Paul means in the First Epistle to the Corinthians (2, 16) when he emboldens us to have the (theandric) *voūc* of Christ. The Providence allowed for the Saints who reached this sublime state of the *voūc* with their whole being (biological-sensitive-intellectual), to contemplate the apophatic Union between the Father and the Son. Despite the transcendence, God revealed to them hints suitable for human understanding:

In the way [οὕτως] [in which] our λόγος, in proceeding from our *voūc* [...] is, in so far as it expresses [ἐμφανές] the *voūc* itself [...], identical with it in nature, while distinct from it in its subject [...] the Word of God, in so far as He subsists in Himself, distinguishes Himself from Him from Whom He has His subsistence, but, since He shows [δευκνύειν] in Himself those which are surveyed [καθορᾶται] in God [the Father], in His nature He is identical with Him⁹⁵.

Occasionally, however, Messalian and Gnosimach accents can still be perceived inside the Church, in the name of defending a nebulous concept of “heart,” one relying on the tradition of an one-sided emphasis. All its murky waters derive from the clear and inspired source of the Christian understanding of “heart” and “intellect,” an understanding which has been inherited in the writings of the Holy Fathers from a biblical Hebrew homonymy: The two variants transliterable as “leb” and “lebab” represent the Hebrew term inherited in Aramaic, which, starting from the Old Testament, always stood for “inner man,” *mind, will and heart*⁹⁶. It denotes the highest soul-chamber of personally important *words*, as it is abundantly proven by Scripture⁹⁷, especially in the notorious Marianic contexts. Actually, it is the *center of the soul*, the throne which can be assumed by joy or by trouble, by courage or by appetite, by knowledge or by pride⁹⁸.

Shema Yisrael, the essential prayer inherited by Christianity from Judaism, insists precisely on its role: “Hear, O Israel! YHWH is our God,

⁹⁴ Sophrony Sakharov, *Life and Teaching of Staretz Silouan* (Romanian title given to the translation of *The Undistorted Image: Staretz Silouan*, 1866-1938, 1948, 1952. Faith Press, 1958), trans. Ioan Ică (Sibiu: Deisis, 2004), 136.

⁹⁵ *Dogm. I*, 6 PG 94:804A-B.

⁹⁶ Francis Brown et al., *The Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon: With an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic: Coded with the Numbering System from Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, Bible Hub, Courtesy of Biblesoft, Inc. (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2015), <http://biblehub.com/bdb/1.htm>, Word number 3820, cf. 3824.

⁹⁷ E.g. Ps 119,11/ Ps 118,11: “In my heart I hid Your sayings [λόγιά, LXX], so that I should not sin against You.”

⁹⁸ See note 92 above.

YHWH is one! You shall love YHWH your God with all your *heart* and with all your soul and with all your strength. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be in your *heart*" (Dt 6, 4-6⁹⁹). Christ's paraphrase, as accounted by St. Matthew, was "to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your *διάνοια*" (Mt 22,37). The latter Greek term denotes thought – in the sense of an intention and in the sense of the *process* of (computational) thinking and understanding. St. Mark's rendering confirms Christ's reported enumeration but also supplements it by adding "[...] and with all your strength" (Mk 12,30), thus shifting it back to the original phrasing.

On the one side, it can be considered that it was necessary for the translator to add all the nominal specifications about *διάνοια* in the Greek rendering of the Shema because of the fact that an intellectual valence was all too secondary for its heart-correspondent "*καρδιά*"¹⁰⁰. It would certainly be a mistake to suppose that an equivalent of the distinction between the contemplative *νοῦς*, dedicated to the *λόγοι*, and the discursive *διάνοια*, which reasons using concepts, was foreign to Hebrew thought – even if it may have been raw. To affirm otherwise would run against textual evidence. E.g. the occurrence of Shema Yisrael in Proverbs 3, 5 urges to "trust in YHWH with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding." The Septuagint translation of the latter term was *σοφία* in that place, but meaning human conclusions acquired through experience or inferences.

On the other side, it is to be considered that the Savior wanted to extend the deification of the soul beyond the *νοῦς*, to also include the process of understanding – with *διάνοια* (cf. Lk 10,27) rephrased by His interlocutor as "*σύνεσις*" (Mk 12,33), in a manner endorsed by Christ Himself. There are two further reasons for this. First, God calls upon our *whole being* to allow to be permeated by Him. Second, and most importantly in this context, Christ is the *Λόγος*. The Trinity is "dialogical" and human reason/love is dia-logical. In the face of the first, we are dealing with an Attribute and cannot but marvel at its awe-inspiring threefold Perfection. But what human dialogue concerns, we do know what it means, at least in good part. It is based on *discursivity* – be it internal, or external (orally verbalized). The humanly necessary condition of dialogue is the discursive character of our understanding. The necessary condition of this discursivity is the activity of the *διάνοια*. In turn, the necessary condition for "all" of your *διάνοια* to be an instrument of the love for God, as Christ demands, is for it to be directed by your *νοῦς*. The reason for this is that, as St. Gregory Palamas will also show, "the intellect is the faculty which first receives the divine goods"¹⁰¹.

⁹⁹ Emphasis: PM.

¹⁰⁰ The valence of "mens," resp. of "ratio" is being stronger felt in the Latin "animus."

¹⁰¹ Alexandros Chouliaras, "The Anthropology of St. Gregory Palamas: The Image of God, the Spiritual Senses, and the Human Body" (PhD Dissertation, Amsterdam, Vrije

There is no contradiction between *Dogmatics* I, 13 and II, 21 – between the λόγος of the internal ordering (ἐνδιάθετος) either being “spoken in the heart,” or belonging to the discursive faculty – because διάνοια and (therefore) discursivity stand “under” the rule of the νοῦς. Like the scriptural one, the patristic “heart” is discursive, just like it is appetitive, courageous (from the Latin *cor*) and so on.. The heart is unified in the modus of the νοῦς when it participates to God’s spontaneity. This is why that which “the letter kills” (2 Cor 3,6) is, above all, the participative νοῦς – by non-contemplatively reading the Scripture¹⁰². But because of the unity, the letter also kills the understanding – for understanding means a true reckoning (λογίζομαι), and a true reckoning is a concluded reckoning, thus a *sufficient* reckoning. However, sufficiency (ικανότης) comes only from God. We cannot “[sufficiently] reckon anything from ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God” (2 Cor 3,5).

All of the above are some of the intelligible background considerations of one of the most remarkable achievements of orthodox theology – the sublation of the two main extremist historical approaches to God (the Evagrian “pure” γνῶσις of the intellect and the Messalian “pure” αἴσθησις of the heart). In order to explain this sublation, St. Maximus insisted upon the unity of the world. The world is *one*, the world is *not divided* by its two parts – the sensible and the intelligible:

On the contrary, it encloses the differences of the[se] parts [...] it shows that both are the same [...] in an unconfused way [...] For the whole intelligible world seems mystically imprinted on the whole sensible world in symbolic forms [εἶδεσι], for those who are capable of seeing this, and the whole sensible world, through its λόγοι, is intelligibly rendered [and therefore exists] in a simple manner in the intellect. Into that [first, sensible] one [the intelligible exists] in λόγοι, into this [second, intelligible] one [the sensible exists] in τύποις. And their operation is like a wheel within a wheel...

The expression which has been coined by this sublation to describe the mystical access to the fine structure of God’s creation was νοερά αἴσθησις, the “intellectual perception.” Its long reception extends into modernity. Among the patristic authors which first helped understand it were St. Gregory of Nyssa (cf. *Homilies on the Song of Songs*)¹⁰³, the anti-Messalian St. Diadochos of Photiki (*On Spiritual Knowledge and Discrimination*, 100

Universiteit, 2019), 192, available at <https://research.vu.nl/ws/portalfiles/portal/77026079/complete+dissertation.pdf>.

¹⁰² God’s Covenant is Christ, and He is not of the letter, but of the Life-giving Spirit. Cf. *Prol.* PG 94:531A.

¹⁰³ Chouliaras, “The Anthropology of St. Gregory Palamas...,” 191.

*chapters on spiritual perfection*¹⁰⁴), St. John the Sinaite (*The Ladder*¹⁰⁵) and, most famously, St. Gregory Palamas, as shall be mentioned now.

According to St. Gregory, the human intellect “is elevated towards the First Intellect”¹⁰⁶ and its ultimate purpose of is to unite with The First Intellect. St. Gregory presents the νοερά αἴσθησις as a clear, inerrant apprehension, standing beyond any virtue and (discursive) knowledge; intellectually experienced with the aid of divine Grace, the νοερά αἴσθησις enlightens towards truth and helps discriminate the power of the intellect from the transcending one of super-intellectual union¹⁰⁷.

Conclusion

Taking this patristic solution of the *intellectual perception* into consideration, the point made in the first part of this paper about the intellect’s awe when standing before God can be rephrased in the following way: when the heart/mind has an intellectual perception, thought cannot but prostrate itself. The Saints are those heroes of the Church, to which God gave the opportunity and the courage to contemplate the antinomical, Super-Intelligible First Intellect. Our legitimacy and even possibility of theologically approaching such an intellectual perception (or an intuitive intellect, for that matter) will certainly need more careful future examinations. For now, the results of Gavriilyuk’s team need to be assessed. But in Orthodoxy, “heart” and “intellect” remain two names of the same (non-sentimentalist¹⁰⁸, non-mentalist) *core of the human person*, the “house of the soul.”

The only acceptable dissociations of “heart” and “intellect” are past historical ones, grown out of linguistic differences and out of rhetorical emphases of apophatism, which were directed against real or imagined foes. Therefore, in what concerns faith and reason, behind all appearances the fact has to be seen that actually, “even though it always advocated the

¹⁰⁴ Cf. St. Diadochus Photicensis, “One Hundred Chapters About Spiritual Perfection,” [in Romanian], trans. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Philokalia or Collection From the Writings of the Holy Fathers, Which Shows How to Cleanse, Enlighten and Perfect Oneself*, vol. 1 (Sibiu: Dacia Traiana, 1947), 345 (§30).

¹⁰⁵ St. Ioannes Climacus, “The Ladder of Heavenly Ascent,” trans. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Philokalia or Collection From the Writings of the Holy Fathers, Which Shows How to Cleanse, Enlighten and Perfect Oneself*, vol. 9 (București: Ed. Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 2013), 367 (§26).

¹⁰⁶ Chouliaras, “The Anthropology of St. Gregory Palamas...,” 192.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. St. Gregory Palamas, *Triads in Defence of the Holy Hesychasts* 1,3,20.21-4, 430 (153.4-7), apud Chouliaras, “The Anthropology of St. Gregory Palamas...,” 190. Cf. *Ibid.*, 190-195; cf. Remete, *Faith*, 56.

¹⁰⁸ This core is not sentimentalist in exactly the same way as it is not mentalistic: Not even the existence of the most basic realities which it contemplates – numbers – *depends* on mental states. Speaking with God is not a soap opera.

superiority of faith, theology was not preoccupied with their separation, but with their bond"¹⁰⁹. It can only be hoped that this endeavor will continue. The *regina scientiarum* is the best *ancilla theologiae*. As for the fear about the demise of metaphysics, the message of the Holy Tradition seems to be the one that such a demise will only come when the last true φιλό-σοφος will disappear – for “if you will not believe, you will not understand [συνήτε]” (Is 7,9).

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¹⁰⁹ Remete, *Faith*, 45. Cf. *ibid.*, 54-55; 67; 69-70; 71-74; 81-86; 93-118; 119-123; 126-127; 130-131; 133-146 et al. Cf. *ibid.*, 87: The history of philosophy manifests the recursive “idea that even rationality itself is a mark of the Absolute, that being rational means to allow for and to endorse the Absolute, [...] absolute Reason.”

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