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The Hesychast Controversy: with special reference to the
Nestorians Gregorius and the historians of
Constantinople.

Synopsis of Thesis

The Hesychast controversy originated with the attacks of
a Greek-Italian monk from Calabria on the traditional monastic
way of life which he found at Byzantium and other. Out of
this quarrel with this man, Gregory Palamas began to develop
his famous theological system, and have ever since the course
of further debate with other opponents. The struggle some-
times took the form of a quarrel between mystical and
dialectical, at others of an historical character. Palamas
was influenced by the Nestorians and the revival of
Christianity in the East. The Hesychast controversy was
the Imperial controversy in the East, and the theological
discussions, and since the fall of the empire during which
the Hesychast disputes were at their height, the state was divided into
factions, and given over to the hands of the emperor of Palamas
or his opponents depended on the triumph of one or other party.

**THE HESYCHAST CONTROVERSY WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO THE BYZANTINA HISTORIA OF
NICEPHORUS GREGORAS AND THE HISTORIA
OF JOHN CANTACUZENUS**

The death of the Emperor John V Palaeologus, and the
rise of his son John was a crisis. The former grand domestic John
Cantacuzenus stood out among the rival of intrigues that sur-
rounded the regent, the Latin ruler of Andronicus, King of Sicily
declaring himself emperor in October 1341, Cantacuzenus took
up arms in support of his claims to the tutorship of the young
prince, and was finally successful in 1347. In 1344 he was
forced to abdicate in favour of his ward, John V Palaeologus,
but by that time hesychism was securely established in its
central position in orthodox belief. For Cantacuzenus was
closely associated with Palamas, and in the August of 1341,
even before his coronation, he had held a council to pronounce
in favour of the Palamites. In 1347, the year of his triumph,
the trend of political events restored Palamas to the place he
had lost since his excommunication by the patriarch, Cantacuzenus
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Nestorians Gregorius led the opposition to the acceptance of Palamas's doctrine, the
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decisions even by a sovereign of Latin sympathies. In 1358
Palamas and Gregorius decided before a papal legate, and in 1363

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The Hesychast Controversy: with special reference to the works of Nicephorus Gregoras and the historians of John Cantacuzenus.

Synopsis of Thesis

The Hesychast Controversy originated with the attacks of a Greco-Italian monk from Calabria on the traditional monastic way of life which he found at Byzantium and Athos. Out of his quarrel with this man, Gregory Palamas began to produce his famous theological system, and developed it in the course of further debate with other opponents. The struggle sometimes took the form of a quarrel between Aristotelianism and Platonism, at others of one between conservatism and progress. Palamas was resisted by those like Barlaam and Cydones who had been influenced by scholasticism, and also by men like Gregoras and Acindynus who were critical of his terminology. The revival of interest in theology, producing a synthesis almost comparable in importance to the great developments of the early Christian centuries, is typical of this last renaissance of Byzantine thought. It is also closely connected with politics. The imperial government took a decisive part in these theological discussions, and since for fifteen of the years during which the Hesychast disputes went on, the state was divided into factions, and often even at open war, the success of Palamas or his opponents depended on the triumph of one or other party.

The death of Andronicus III in 1341 made a regency necessary, for his son John was a minor. The former grand domestic John Cantacuzenus stood out among the ravel of intrigues that surrounded the regent, the Latin widow of Andronicus, Anne of Savoy. Declaring himself emperor in October 1341, Cantacuzenus took up arms in support of his claims to the tutorship of the young princes, and was finally successful in 1347. In 1354 he was forced to abdicate in favour of his ward, John V Palaeologus, but by that time hesychasm was securely established in its central position in orthodox belief. For Cantacuzenus was closely associated with Palamas, and in the August of 1341, even before his coronation, he had held a council to pronounce in favour of the Palamites. In 1347, the year of his triumph, the trend of political events restored Palamas to the place he had lost since his excommunication by the patriarch, Cantacuzenus' enemy, in 1344. After the great council of 1351, in which Nicephorus Gregoras led the opposition to the Hesychasts, the acceptance of Palamas's doctrines was assured, and the overthrow of Cantacuzenus in 1354 did not lead to any reversal of former decisions even by a sovereign of Latin sympathies. In 1355 Palamas and Gregoras debated before a papal legate, and in 1368

Cydones, who was influenced by scholasticism and was responsible with his brother for translations into Greek of the works of Aquinas, was condemned by the patriarch Philotheus for his opposition to the teachings of Palamas. The interesting later developments only confirmed existing conditions, and show the resistance of the now further-articulated eastern tradition to the impact of western ideas.

The fifteenth century Byzantine empire was an anachronism. By a fortunate combination of circumstances the Byzantines of 1453 succeeded in 1204 in recovering the lost territories of the empire of the East, the result of the struggle between the empire of the East and the empire of the West. In 1204 the empire of the East had been divided into a number of states, and after 1204 a national movement had arisen in Byzantium. The empire of the East was no longer what it was in 1453, but it was still a kingdom, and it had the right of sovereignty. In comparison with the great tenth century empire of the Byzantines, the Byzantine empire of 1453 had lost much of its territory. Most of the Asiatic provinces were lost, along with control of the Aegean Islands, only a few of which remained in Byzantine possession; elsewhere the Byzantines held only a few islands, the straits, a few forts, and a few fortresses in Europe. Yet the people of Byzantium continued to think of themselves as Romans. Constantine, who had summoned the leading officials to a conference on the

state finances, ruined by civil war, did not think it worth
grace to INTRODUCTION: THE BACKGROUND OF THE HESYCHAST
Αὐτοκρατορίας CONTROVERSY, AND THE SOURCES FOR ITS HISTORY.

The XIVth century Byzantine empire was an anachronism. By a fortunate combination of circumstances the Byzantines of Nicaea succeeded in 1261 in recovering from the enfeebled Latin usurpers the remains of the old empire, in the teeth of the rivalry of Balkan states and Turkish powers, both newly flourishing and after 1261 constituting a continual threat to the existence of Byzantium. But so little territory was regained with the Queen of cities that her position was virtually no longer that of capital of an empire but of a small mediaeval kingdom, forced to fight for its life with other principalities. In comparison with the great tenth-century Empire of the Macedonians, the Byzantium of the Palaeologi had indeed few resources. Most of the Asiatic provinces were lost, along with control of the Aegean Islands, only a few of which remained in Byzantine possession; otherwise the Byzantines held most of Thrace, the straits, Epirus and a few fortresses in Achaia. Yet the people of Byzantium continued to think of themselves as Romans. Cantacuzenus, when he summoned the leading citizens to a conference on the

state finances, ruined by civil war, did not think it incongruous to address them in these terms: "Men of Rome,

Ἄνδρες Ῥωμαῖοι you all know very well that the ancient prosperity of the Roman empire was an amazing thing and that her barbarian neighbours were either conquered or enslaved or made to pay tribute, but that her leaders were most happy if they lived all united under a common law together. And even to-day, this glory of hers is to be celebrated and wondered at, even as when it was kept up beyond Ultima Thule, just as long as the common glory is placed before private interests, and the public good had at heart by emperors as much as private individuals." (1)

And apart from such conscious literary archaism, the new life which revived literature, art and theology, took on instinctively traditional forms. The outlook of Nicephorus Gregoras explaining the imperial tradition or that of Cantacuzenus paying tribute to the Holy Mountain, differs not at all from a Byzantine's of earlier centuries. The figure of the Grand Logothete Theodore Metochites in a mosaic of Chora (Kahrie-Djami) shows that 14th century court officials preserved the ancient dress and ceremonial, and the face of the hesychast

(1) Cant. Hist. IV. 5 (vol. III, p. 34)

and indeed Byzantine civilization was still very much alive. The husband and contemporary of the emperor himself presents a picture

Nicholas Cabasilas gazes out from an Athos fresco with the same absorption in eternity which remained the hall-mark of Byzantine iconography. Byzantine culture was still that of a theocratic society, and the rule of the Christ loving Basileus, the mystical symbol of the rule of Christ Pantocrator over heaven and earth.

This was not to last. The future lay with the rising national states of western Europe. But even in the west, the mind of Dante could still range itself on the side of the divine autocracy of the Holy Roman Empire, and desiderate the return of the Roman eagle from Byzantium to Italy. In the near and middle east the tradition was stronger. At one time the greatest threat to XIVth century Byzantine power came from the grand *zupan* of Serbia, Stephen Duchan, whose ambition it was, like the Bulgar Khans' before him, to make himself basileus -- master of Constantinople and autocrat of the Romans. And when the city finally fell, although it was not to Serbia, it was not to the commercial power of the Italian cities either, but to Mohammedan fanaticism, which fully recognized in destroying it the cosmological significance which the Byzantines still attached to their shadow of an empire.

And indeed Byzantine civilisation was still very much alive. The hesychast controversy itself presents a paradox

of vigorous intellectual activity, usually a sign of the healthy state of a society, existing in the heart of a people whose material life was impoverished and whose political existence doomed. There is something almost miraculous about this latest flowering of Byzantine thought, art and letters, a kind of midwinter spring. And if the destruction of Byzantium brought most of this to an untimely end, the teaching of Gregory Palamas at least was able to "fructify in the minds of others," as the variety of sources concerned with hesychasm shows.

The evidence for the history of the hesychast controversy is manifold. One vast category is the theological writings put forth by either party (which have fortunately survived in great quantities), and of these the essentials have been nailed down by official expression in patriarchal decrees and conciliar acts.

The controversy gave rise to several councils, and their official Acts or Tomes are an important source of information. In 1341, 1347, 1351 and 1368, synods were held at which a verdict was given in favour of Gregory Palamas and against his successive opponents, Barlaam, Calocas, Gregoras and Cydonius. At the last of these, in 1368, Palamas had been dead for some years and the conciliar Tome ends with the decree of his canonisation. From the years 1341-1347 when

hesychasm was persecuted by the Byzantine hierarchy date other official documents sent out from the patriarchal chancery, including encyclical letters of the patriarch to the faithful or to the monks of Athos denouncing Palamas, and a curious official Explanation by the Patriarch of his motives in giving momentary support to the hesychasts in 1341. Akyndinus was appointed to investigate the origins of the hesychast movement, and produced his Report to the Patriarch. The actual excommunication of Palamas has not survived, but the "Anathemas" launched by Galecas against him are incorporated in the Tomes of the hesychast councils.

Much of the work of XIVth century theologians still awaits publication, and of what has been published more careful editing has in recent times shown grave errors, such as the false attribution of the work on "The Essence and Energies" of Prochorus Cydones to the authorship of Manuel Galecas. A revival of interest in hesychasm among Catholic as well as Orthodox theologians has made it possible for such corrections to be made, and for fresh evidence to be continually being brought to light. Although this thesis is not primarily concerned with Palamas's theology, it must be recognized that this remains the crux of the matter, and let it be said at least that the hesychast writings far surpass those of their opponents in both

bulk and importance. It is however unfortunate that some works of these, for instance Barlaam's Against the Maggaliars should have been lost to us. But the hesychast writers produced more than works of polemic. "Out of the quarrel with others we make rhetoric; out of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry." This aphorism of W. B. Yeats may be allowed to suggest that perhaps more essential to the understanding of hesychasm are the abundant works of theology or spirituality which drew their inspiration simply from the hesychast tradition itself, as it was learnt and practised in the solitary's cell. Such are for example the numerous non-polemical writings of Palamas, consisting largely of sermons and the Lives of saints, or the De vita in Christo of Nicholas Cabasilas. Sources of this kind are legion, since hesychasm has remained a vigorous force in the orthodox church, and continues to produce theologians. On the opposing side, distinction is to be made between the writings of Akyndinus Gregoras and others of their party, and the work of later opponents of Palamas, such as Manuel Calocas and the two Cydones who were influenced by the western scholastic movement.

There are certain western sources which have a bearing on hesychasm, including the correspondence of the papal legate, Archbishop Paul of Smyrna, later made Latin patriarch of Constantinople.

Constantinople, who was present at a disputation in the presence of the emperor between Palamas and Gregoras, discussed the doctrines of Palamas with the ex-emperor Cantacuzenus, and wrote a brief account of his encounter with hesychasm to the Pope. Less directly relevant, but interesting, is the figure of the monk Bernard Barlaam as it emerges from western literature. This first opponent of Palamas, who considered hesychasm fit subject for ridicule, was given a reverent ovation by Italian scholars, especially Petrarch, whose enthusiasm for the classics of pagan Greece (though he never learnt Greek) did not mitigate his ignorance and hatred of Greek Christian civilisation.

The function of all these sources however, is to fill out the framework given by Byzantine historians themselves. Byzantium had a tradition of historical writing of a very high order, which makes it less surprising but no less fortunate to have two contemporary Histories by mid-XIVth century writers. From this point of view, it is, too, fortunate that their theological outlook differed. Nicephorus Gregoras and John Cantacuzenus became bitter enemies in the course of the hesychast controversy, in which they both played leading parts. Each, in his history, was writing an *Apologia pro vita sua*, but Gregoras with less of deliberate design than Cantacuzenus. As the monk Joasaph, the ex-emperor set out

in his brilliantly-written memoirs to justify his own actions in seizing the power and the means he used to that end. This makes of his History a coherent and balanced whole; its four evenly-weighted books deal with the four phases of his public career up to the time when he abdicated and became a monk. At the same time, hesychasm does not figure largely in his work, which is taken up with politics. Yet he does give valuable evidence, since, as Palamas's patron, and one who had strong personal ties with the monks of Athos and a strong attachment to hesychasm, Cantacuzenus while emperor had much to do with the official establishment of the hesychast doctrine.

The work of Nicephorus Gregoras on the other hand is by comparison undisciplined and incoherent, but fortunately for our purpose it is made so by reason of its author's absorption in the hesychast controversy, in which, after 1347, he was the leading opponent of Palamas. Although he had begun his work as a record of public affairs as much as anything else, he was deflected by this circumstance into concentrating on ecclesiastical events from a strongly prejudiced point of view. After opposing Palamas in debate at the council of 1351 at which he was condemned, Gregoras was imprisoned in the monastery of Chora until the revolution which brought Palaeologus to the throne brought also his release. He remained an implacable enemy of Cantacuzenus, whose close friend

he had been, and this personal bitterness colours the later books of his History. Like Cantacuzenus, Gregoras wrote for propaganda purposes; added to this his personal vanity caused him to represent the course of discussion as invariably in his favour, and Palamas's triumph as merely due to secular support; also he gives his own speeches and opinions at wearisome length but hardly allows any space to the arguments of his opponents. But fortunately his evidence can be checked by reference to other sources, and with these reserves he remains a most important witness.

Using this evidence, it is possible to isolate the hesychast controversy and study it as one manifestation of the whole culture of XIVth century Byzantium. But by way of apology to the Hesychasts, it must be said that from their point of view only the irrelevant is matter for history. Their concern was with

the point of intersection

Of the timeless with time (1)

but the historians, only with what can be "caught in the aspect of time," which is not the "ecstasy of thought and prayer" that made their vision.

(1) Eliot, T. S. Four Quartets. p. 32.

is an indispensable and vital witness to the vigorous flowering
of thought in the entire East of his day. The hesychast
CHAPTER I.
THE ORIGINS OF THE HESYCHAST CONTROVERSY.

The pre-occupation of XIV c. Byzantine governments with the obscure theological issues raised by the hesychast controversy has sometimes been blamed by historians as criminally impractical and even been held responsible in great part for the final decay leading to the downfall of the East Roman Empire. Yet to see things in true proportion it must be recognised that the hesychast tradition survived the empire and has remained ever since a vital force in the Greek and Russian orthodox church. On the other hand, if we look backwards instead of forwards certain underlying assumptions of hesychasm can be traced back, through the monastic spirituality of Athos, based on the mystical writings of Maximus the Confessor and the Areopagite through the writings of the Cappadocian Fathers to their first philosophical statement in Plotinus and Plato. The fourteenth century movement was an important phase in a long and venerable development. It should also be seen as one aspect of the revival of thought and letters with which Byzantium was then giving a last demonstration of her powers of renewal. The significance of this controversy is summed up by the latest commentator on Palamas, the Archimandrite Cyprian Kern, as follows: "Gregory Palamas

is an indubitable and vital witness to the vigorous flowering of thought in the orthodox church of his day. The hesychast movement, which in essence and scope is no innovation, marks a renewal of interest in theology in the Byzantine people. The latest important theological happenings prior to this movement -- the triumph of orthodoxy over iconoclasm -- had not been the epilogue which had set a limit to the development of the Church's theological thinking. The conscience of the Church went on with her way and her work. It is however noteworthy that this movement came, not from the theological schools of Byzantium, nor from the ecclesiastical dignitaries, but from the silence and solitude of Athos." (1)

It was because hesychasm was forced by its critics, however, to come out of its monastic retreat and defend itself in the open, that Palamas was led to develop his famous doctrine of the distinction between the essence of God and His operation; and the consequent surge of discussion rose and fell with the tide of political affairs. But originally, before the political complications entered, it was a simple case of a clash between traditional eastern theology and spirituality, and modernizing tendencies of western origin. Many documents relating to this first phase of the controversy

(1) "Les éléments de la Théologie de G. Palamas," Irénikon, XX. 1947, p. 186.

still await publication. A full account of them has however been given by Père Jugie in his important work on Palamas. (1) The first rumours of the storm are to be found in an early correspondence between Gregory Palamas and Bernard Barlaam. Here Palamas is seen as coming to the fore for the first time as the spokesman for the monks of Athos, and Barlaam appears in the disastrous role of reformer which was to bring him nothing but defeat and disillusionment. In order to appreciate the part played by either in this controversy, it is then necessary to consider his origins and background.

The principal source for the life of Palamas is the "Encomium" written by his friend and disciple, Philotheus Coccineus, patriarch of Cple (1354-1355 and 1364-1376). (2) Gregory was the eldest, born in 1296 or 1297, of a family of five -- three sons and two daughters. His father, Constantine, was the intimate counsellor of Andronicus II. He died before Gregory was seven and the education of the children was undertaken by the emperor. Gregory's secular studies were crowned with success -- they included philosophy, and Philotheus claims that he read "all Aristotle." (3)

(1) "Palamas" "La controverse palamite" in Dict. de théol. cath. t. IX. col. 1735-1818

(2) PG and CLI col. 551-656

(3) *ibid.* col. 559 D.

and the Emperor wished him to continue them and be a courtier, but Gregory showed a determined taste for the monastic life, strengthened by his contacts with monks from Athos. Among these was Theolept of Philadelphia, who was responsible for his initiation into hesychast methods of prayer. (1) We know from Theolept's own writings (2) that he thought the solitary life to be more spiritually profitable to his contemporaries than the conventual life, which was then decadent, even though he thought that ideally the cenobitic was the better of the two. At the age of about twenty-two, therefore, Palamas set out for Mt. Athos. He took with him his two brothers, for the whole family showed a vocation to the religious life, and his mother and sisters were established in a convent in Ople. On the way, Palamas had his first experience of theological debate, with a colony of Bogomiles (3) settled on the borders of Thrace and Macedonia, when he was staying at the monastery of Mount Papikion. Reaching Athos, in about the spring of 1318, the three brothers first placed themselves under the guidance of an aged solitary called Nicodemus, near the monastery of *Ōtopedi*. After three

(1) *ib.* col. 561 A.

(2) Saloville, s. "Formeset méthodes de prière d'après
Theologie de Philadelphie." (Ed.) 1940, p. 1

(3) On the Bogomiles, see below, c. V

years of rigorous asceticism and rapid spiritual progress, Nicodemus died, and Palamas moved to the Great Lavra^f founded by St. Athanasius in the 10th cent. where he spent 3 years of community life. Then, haunted by the desire for solitude, he was given permission to settle in the hermitage of Glossia, where several solitaries were gathered under the direction of Gregory the Sinaite, who was responsible for a recent renewal of the hesychast way of life. (1) At this time, the peace of Athos was constantly being broken by the incursions of Turkish pirates -- to avoid them a XIVth century St. Athanasius went to Thessaly and founded the Meteora monasteries. Similarly, Palamas decided to leave after two years, and set off in a band of twelve to Thessalonica. The others wished at first to push their way into the Holy Land, but were persuaded by Palamas that it was the will of God that they should stay and settle at the shrine of St. Demetrius. About this time he was ordained a priest, being about the canonical age of thirty, and had become the acknowledged leader of the group, whom he soon moved to a *skete* in Berrhcea, outside Thessalonica, where they could have more peace and quiet. Here they began to practise the life of perfect hesychasm, five days of the week being spent in complete solitude and Saturday and

(1) v. Bois, J. "Grégoire le Sinaite," EO 1901, V. pp. 90-97, 150-157. l'hésychisme à l'Athos au XI^e siècle.

Sunday in pious conferences and the celebration of the Liturgy. For five years, the only interruption of this life was the death of Palamas's mother, which brought him to Ople where his sisters, after trying in vain to persuade him to stay, insisted on returning with him to Berrhoea, where they were settled in a neighbouring convent. It is interesting to note that the only opposition Palamas encountered from his flock came from one Job, an old monk, who was perhaps of a generation that did not find hesychasm sympathetic, before its revival under men like Gregory and Nicephorus had once more made it generally practised.

But yet again the perilous position of the empire interfered with monastic individualism. This time it was a Serbian invasion which drove Palamas and his followers back to Athos. This time he chose to live, not in the ~~Lava~~ itself, but in the neighbouring hesychasterion founded by St. Sabbas. Now an acknowledged master of hesychasm, he began to teach others by speaking and writing. The monks made him abbot of the ~~Lava~~, but administration was not to his taste, and he soon resigned the post in order to return to the solitary life he preferred. New and greater demands, however, were soon to be made on him. The whole community of Athos was roused at the news of a treacherous attack from within the monastic body by one who professed to make horrifying disclosures of the heretical nature, akin to Bogomilism, of the hesychast's

way of life.

Barlaam's motives are obscure. His enemies asserted that he was inspired by personal jealousy of Palamas, and pique at the latter's rebuke of his theological methods. Certainly, his was a character, with a very different background from Palamas's, and which one would hardly expect to be attracted by hesychasm, unless it was really his insatiable curiosity that led him to attach himself in the role of disciple to one of those remote solitaries whose customs were strange to western eyes.

Barlaam's (1) chequered career has sometimes led to confusion about his identity, people doubting whether so many changes of allegiance should be attributed to one person. Yet his activity is explicable in the light of his position, as an Italian Greek, on the frontiers of catholicism and orthodoxy. He was a monk at Seminaria, at a Basilian house which followed the Byzantine rite, but recognised the authority of the Pope. (2) He went for part of his education to Rome,

(1) The latest study of Barlaam, from a new and sympathetic point of view is by G. Schiro "I Rapporti di Barlaamo calabro con le due chiese St. Roma e Bizantia." Archivio storico per la Calabria e la Lucania. I, p.325-357.

(2) v. Jugie, M: "Barlaam est-il né catholique?" EO. 1940, p. 100.

and received a training in scholasticism which he was never to forget. Ambition, as much as desire to perfect his knowledge of Greek and Aristotle, drove him to leave his monastery for the East about 1325. The part he played in the intellectual history of both East and West is explained by the double renaissance which made men of letters welcome in the great cities of Italy and the Eastern Empire. His attempt to make capital of his Latin training at Byzantium having gone too far, he succeeded better in Italy with his Greek learning and upbringing since these were equally rare in the west. However, before his encounter with Gregory Palamas, Barlaam's success had even been striking.

He was a little man, physically slight, (1) impetuous and excitable. With his knowledge of Aristotle, Plato and Euclid, (2) he was at once made welcome at Thessalonica, where he first stayed, and his lectures on these subjects were popular, so that his reputation spread. At this time Thessalonica rivalled the capital as a centre of learning and the arts. (3) Scholars were encouraged to come and teach,

(1) Boccaccio. "Genealogy of the Gods." XV. 6.

(2) Cant. Hist. II. 39 (vol. I, p. 543.)

(3) v. Tafreli, O: "Thessalonica au XIVe siècle."

whether Greek or alien, and anyone with ability could open a school. The revolution of 1328 which overthrew Andronicus II in favour of his grandson, brought Barlaam to the capital, for he saw an opportunity in the downfall of many of the leading scholars who had been attached to the old emperor's court. He was shrewd enough to gain the patronage of John Cantacuzenus, who was the closest friend of the new Emperor, ruled his counsels, had been the leading influence on him in the recent revolution, and was now Grand Domestic, with almost a free hand in the government, since his sovereign was idle and given to pleasure. With Cantacuzenus's favour, Barlaam was sure of success. He had so convinced the Byzantines of his freedom from all taint of Latin heresy (1) that he was appointed, though a foreigner, to important official posts -- that of Abbot of St. Sabas and lecturer at the university on Dionysius and the "secret theology of the orthodox church." (2) His western origin was in any case a good reason for entrusting him with diplomatic missions to the Papacy at Avignon. He was sent there in 1334 and again in 1339, (3) when Andronicus still continued to favour him. While debating, during these

(1) Cant. Hist. II. 39 (vol. I, p. 543)

(2) Greg. Hist. XIX. I (vol. II, p. 923)

(3) ~~But on an informal basis he had no official mandate.~~
of. O. Halseki. " de travail, etc."

negotiations, the questions of the papal primacy and the procession of the Holy Spirit, Barlaam also urged the expediency of showing active goodwill towards the Eastern Christians by sending out the reinforcements desired by the Emperor to drive back the Ottomans.

Yet soon an incident occurred which brought him further notoriety, whether good or bad. Although it was a secular dispute, both parties were later involved in the theological contest, and its connection with the hesychast controversy in the minds of contemporaries is shown by its inclusion in a very curious document, the "Dialogue upon Theological Doctrines" by Philotheus, metropolitan of Selivria, contained in the Patmiacus 366, fol. 369-411, and described by Père Jusie. (1) This is no less than a drama on the Palamite controversy, with twelve characters and a chorus of sophists, whose role is that of umpire and counsel and who utter picturesque exclamations at intervals. On the model of the choruses of Sophocles, Euripedes and Aristophanes. After an introductory scene between Mercurius, Philotheus and Sophocimus, Barlaam enters, with the philosopher Nicephorus^u Gregoras, and the disputation is enacted, which other sources tell us actually took place.

Nicephorus^u Gregoras was the disciple of the Grand
Copiate of Andronicus II, Theodore Metochites, and both

(1) loc. cit.

had fallen from grace in the revolution of 1320. It cannot have been pleasant for Gregoras to watch the rapid success, under the new regime, of this stranger, whose triumphs seemed to justify even a claim to pre-eminence in the world of letters, such as had belonged by right to Metochites, and perhaps to his mental heir, Gregoras. Certainly Gregoras was human enough to enjoy success and popularity, and it may be true, as G. Schiro suggests, (1) that his own pupils were deserting him, lured by the novelty of the foreigner's lectures. Gregoras himself tells us that Barlaam had caught the popular ear and hence was orled up by men without learning or position, (2) which suggests the possibility that Barlaam was trying to "popularize" those studies which to Gregoras, with his hieratic views, were sacred to the initiate. Such activity in his view merited contempt, and to show up the emptiness of Barlaam's claims, and of his reported insults to Byzantine scholars (whom he said were non-existent), Gregoras challenged him to a public debate.

The chief source of information about this incident is Gregoras himself. In his History, he makes only a brief mention of it, but refers the reader to his Dialogue, the

(1) I. Rapposti ed. p. 328.

(2) Hist. XI. 10 (col. I. p. 555)

"Florentius" or "Concerning Wisdom," (1) for a full account. Although this is obviously not an unbiased report, and further is written in an artificial form, modelled on the Platonic Dialogues, it ought not therefore to be rejected as unreliable. Gregoras was writing of a much-discussed event, and moreover he can be checked by reference to other contemporary sources. His own personal feelings emerge most clearly -- here is his explicit resentment of the serpentine manner in which Barlaam had taken advantage of the silence imposed by political circumstances on Gregoras and Metochites to put himself forward as the leading philosopher and scholar. The figure of Barlaam emerges more hazily -- he is represented in caricature as an empty-headed and conceited ignoramus. The participants are given fictitious names, elucidated in part in Gregoras's History (2) and fully in a note to the Dialogue. Byzantium is called Athens, and the Cociopides and Heraclides represent the followers of Andronicus II the Elder and Andronicus III the Young, respectively. The circumstances leading to the disputation are described in detail: it was the scandal caused to Byzantines by the sight of a foreigner pouring ridicule on their own scholars which caused Cantacuzenus (Demarates) to

(1) Published by Jahn, Jahrb. Supplement. Bd. 10, pp. 485-535.

(2) XI. 10. vol. 1. p. 556.

(3) Jahn, A. loc. cit. vol. 1.

intervene and to call upon Gregoras to take up the challenge on pain of exile. Gregoras was therefore forced to come forward, although he had taken a decision, on the death of his teacher Metochites, to give up public speaking. The initiative was evidently left to him, and he began by interrogating Barlaam on Astronomy. An elementary question on the horoscope put him to confusion. In grammar and rhetoric he showed a similar lack of knowledge of the first principles. Demanding that the discussion should take place on his own ground, philosophy, Barlaam protested that he had not studied these other subjects. Up to this point, the play of Philotheus of Selivria confirms Gregoras's evidence, but after this they diverge, for Philotheus represents Barlaam as the victor in philosophy and dialectic. (1) Gregoras affirms that he took the position that syllogism was an inferior kind of intellectual activity, more suitable to the Latin than the Greek mind -- so it is possible that he refused to meet Barlaam's arguments.

The last part of the disputation turned upon Aristotle. Gregoras sets out, with great erudition, to criticize Aristotle's theories of natural history and to show that he frequently contradicts himself.

It is clear from his multifarious works that the Calabrian was not the ignorant buffoon he is portrayed in this pamphlet.

(1) Jugie, *l. c.* cit. *eei.*

But from the point of view of his later activity, the interesting point that emerges is his Aristotelianism. Whatever the verdict given on the debate, Barlaam could have had no clearer demonstration that his Roman training in Aristotelian dialectic was not appreciated in Byzantium. Yet his sanguine temperament would not so easily accept defeat.

Since he could make no headway against Byzantine conservatism in philosophical method, he turned his attention to theology. Knowing little of the Greek Fathers, (1) his idea was to use the methods of scholasticism in defence of orthodox dogma where it differed from Latin. His opportunity came in 1335, with the arrival in Cple of a papal embassy to discuss the question of reunion. (2) Pope John XXII had chosen for this task two Dominicans, Francis of Caserioⁱ Bishop of Cherson, and an Englishman, Richard, bishop of the Bosphorus. Barlaam felt himself peculiarly fitted to debate with Thomists and their advent had put the patriarch in an awkward position. None of his clergy had the requisite training and his application to the lay scholar Gregoras was met with a blank refusal. (3) The long discourse in which

(1) Cant. contra Barlaamum PG. CLIV. col. 695.

(2) Raynaldus: Annales, 1333: 17, 18, 19

(3) Greg. Hist. X. 8. (vol. 1. p. 501)

Gregoras expounded the reasons for his attitude was no more helpful. (1) It was Barlaam's opportunity to fill the breach, and he took it, debating with the legates, and publishing two pamphlets setting out the Greek view of the papal primacy and the procession of the Holy Spirit. (2) To this phase, mentioned by Cantacuzenus (3) belong numerous works against the Latins, mostly unpublished, e.g. 20 orations contained in the cod. Reg. 2950, (4) written in the vein of rationalist criticism (5) and using the method of logical demonstration. Two of the letters published by G. Schiro throw light on Barlaam's attitude, and bring us to the correspondence already mentioned. One of the letters is addressed to Nilus Triolinus, but the other to "his wise and learned spiritual father and brother in Christ, Gregory Palamas." (6)

Barlaam maintained the attitude that there was no reason why the works of the pagan philosophers should not be used in

- (1) *ibid.*
- (2) One is contained in an Oxford MS. cod. Selden, 47. f.n. 3577.
- (3) *Cont. Hist.* II. 39. (vol. I, p. 543)
- (4) Jugie, *N.*, *loc. cit.*
- (5) *Cant. loc. cit.*
- (6) *Archivio Storico* etc. vol. VIII, pp. 47 and 155. (Letter to Triolinus) vol. V, pp. 63-77 and vol. VI. pp. 80-90 and 302-325 (Letter to Palamas).

(7) *op. cit.*, G. *op. cit.*

contemplative theology. Palamas politely deplored this break with orthodox tradition, which took account of only one mode of knowledge of God, the mystical way of asceticism and purification of the heart, by which the divine light, the principle and source of all truth, presents itself to the soul.

Barlaam reacted by resentment and resistance. He began to attack the monastic discipline which lay behind these obscurantist theories. In order to discover its secrets he went so far as himself to join the hesychasts, but the cynicism of his motives is shown in his choice of an illiterate block-head as his teacher in this art of prayer. (1) Taught by this person that by mechanical methods of breathing and ejaculation a sort of physical ecstasy could be arrived at, in which it was possible to see the Godhead with the eyes of the body, Barlaam set out to expose the ridiculous heresies of the monks who had dared to criticize him. In the years 1335-1339 he was alternately in Constantinople, where he had found his bogus hesychast, and Thessalonica, where he retired when the authorities of the capital reprimanded him. (2) At Thessalonica, secular feeling ran high, and he could be sure of a certain measure of support from the anti-clerical elements. (3)

(1) Cant. loc. cit. p. 544.

(2) Greg. Hist. XIX. I. (vol. II, p. 919)

(3) cf. Tafreli, O. op. cit.

At the same time, it was full of monks, including Gregory Palamas, who at this time was often in Thessalonica on account of ill-health. Philotheus asserts that a meeting was arranged between Barlaam and Palamas, when the monks called upon to defend them in this crisis. For it was more serious than may at first have appeared. The patriarch and his synod, while appearing to refuse to countenance Barlaam's criticisms, seem to have connived at his journey to Thessalonica, where he could pick up evidence about the monks of Athos, if indeed Palamas's words, "We rejoiced to see that you were sent to the monks" do not refer to an official secret mission to Athos itself. (1)

Philotheus asserts that on meeting Palamas, Barlaam was persuaded to promise to cease his attacks on the monks. Only after he had broken his promise did Palamas undertake to refute him. (2) Then a pamphlet war was continued on both sides until the affair had reached such proportions that the authorities had openly to interfere. Palamas wrote three series of discourses (1) defending the distinction between sacred and profane learning, the hesychast method of prayer, and the Doctrine of the Divine Light. Barlaam brought out a

(1) Palamas. 2nd series. pt. I. v. J. Bois. "Les débuts etc." *EO.* 1901 pp. 353-362.

(2) *ibid.* XI. 12 (vol. I, p. 597) cf. *Cent. Hist.* II. 33 (vol. I, p. 245)

second edition of his indictment, in which, to meet the new circumstances of Palamas's leadership of the monks, he made several alterations, dropping his more scurrilous abuse of methods and including instead serious criticism of doctrine. The work was now given a new title, "Against the Masselians," to indicate the charge of Bogomilism, or materialistic dualism he now wished to lodge. (1) When Barlaam had in his hands the last triad of Palamas, in which he had sketched the development of his theory of higher and lower divinities, he felt himself to be supplied with sufficient incriminating evidence to lodge a charge of heresy, and with this intention went to Constantinople at the beginning of 1341. It was in part a measure of self-defence. Gregoras (2) thus describes his predicament:

"When the disturbance had gone on for another year and a third, the trouble suddenly boiled up. For, terrified of being torn to pieces by the monks, who were gathering from all sides, not only from Athes but from monasteries at Thessalonica and Constantinople (for they felt that such slander touched all alike), Barlaam sought out the Patriarch and the assembled bishops in Cple, and laid accusations against Palamas, not only of "omphalopsychism" and perverted forms of prayer, but of blasphemous theology as well."

(1) This work has unfortunately not come down to us.

(2) Hist. XI. 10 (vol. I, p. 557) cf. Cant. Hist. II. 39 (vol. I, p. 545)

This was a far more serious matter than a simple question of monastic discipline and there was general reluctance to "disturb the peace of the Church." Barlaam discovered this at once, on going to the Patriarch's syncellus, Acyndinus. Acyndinus had attended his lectures in Thessalonica, (1) but he had also been Palamas's pupil, (2) and his early support of Palamas is shown by a letter to Gregoras. (3) He was later to range himself against Palamas, but he gave him his support in the Barlaam affair. His attitude is explained fully in a document which dates from after 1341 and before the excommunication of Palamas in 1344. Commissioned by the Patriarch, John Calecas, to enquire into the origins of the dispute, he drew up his "Report to the Patriarch John and his synod on the outbreak of the quarrel between Barlaam and Palamas." (4)

The Patriarch, after discussing the matter with Acyndinus, ordered the latter to investigate Barlaam's own writings,

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- (1) Cant. II. 40. (vol. 1, p. 554)
- (2) Greg. Hist. (vol. I, p. CXX, n. 3)
- (3) *ibid.*
- (4) Cod. Monacensis graec. 223. fol. 51v c (XVth century)
This has first been extensively used by Jugie *loc. cit.*
cf. Krumbacher, GBL. p. 100

which it was suggested gave grounds for suspicion. Acyndinus, who had rebuked Barlaam for interfering in what was not his affair, considered that the Calabrian's writings were gravely offensive in their criticisms of the monks, whatever opinion he might reserve on the theological points raised. He therefore set out to oppose Barlaam, in his report to the Patriarch and in writings which he published, criticizing Barlaam's views on the Light of Thabor and his baseless slanders of Athos.

Not to be outdone, Barlaam brought forward a different charge against Palamas, that of holding uncanonical councils of monks on Athos. The suggestion of such an insult to the patriarchal dignity, which might constitute a serious threat to his power, was sufficient to force Calocas to take action.⁽¹⁾ He decided to summon both parties before a tribunal, and the ecclesiastical authorities in Thessalonica were required to arrest Palamas and despatch him to Cple. The harshness of the proceeding and the fact that the letter was actually entrusted to Barlaam for expedition, indicate the latter's success in insinuating himself into the patriarchal favour, "like

(1) Calocas's career shows an inordinate ambition. His rivalry with Palamas was soon to be emphasized by a rumour that Cantacuzenus as regent thought of making him patriarch instead. *Cont. Hist.* II, 17 (vol. II, p. 107). On the Athonite Assemblies, cf. *Greg. Hist.* XXIX 25 (III, p. 259)

the serpent of Eden" in the words of Philotheus. Acyndinus was too late in persuading the patriarch at least to write a preliminary meeting attended by the patriarch and emperor to Palamas personally. Barlaam had lost no time in despatching the letter. The most that could be done was to send a copy to Palamas. At this point Acyndinus received a letter from his old teacher, in which he expounded his doctrine of theotetes in terms which scandalised the recipient. However, on his arrival in the capital, Acyndinus brought Palamas to stay with him, and they were able to discuss their differences. Acyndinus was naturally anxious to help as much as he could and promised his support at the enquiry, which would be restricted to a few questions, if Palamas would undertake to modify his doctrine at certain points. This was agreed upon according to Acyndinus. (1)

A last attempt to settle the dispute without resort to a council was made by the emperor, after his return from the patriarch bishops and general public in the cathedral on the Acarnania in June 1341. (2) His appeal to both parties to come to an agreement was a failure, as, summoned to his presence for this purpose, the two only began attacking each other. He therefore committed the decision to the council

(1) Loc. cit.

(2) Cant. Hist. II, 39 (vol. I, p. 550)

which was thereupon, June, 1341, convened in St. Sophia. At a preliminary meeting attended by the Patriarch the Emperor and a few leading senators, it was agreed that the case should be treated as a purely disciplinary affair. (1) There seemed to be two distinct issues involved, moral and theological. A westerner who did not understand Greek ways (for it was in this light that Barlaam had by now come to be generally regarded) had launched a libellous attack on the holy men of Athos, and all were agreed that an example should be made of him. About the disturbing points of dogma that the distasteful affair had unfortunately raised, there was a difference of opinion. It would be better to defer discussion on these lines until a later date, when they were safely rid of the objectionable "Latin." In this spirit, therefore, Barlaam was called in before the assembly of Emperor, senators, Patriarch bishops and general public in the cathedral on the 10th June and required to develop the accusation which he had made in writing to the Patriarch against Gregory Palamas and the hesychasts. (2) Instead of coming to the point asked for

(1) Greg. Hist. XI. 10. (vol. I, p. 100)

(2) cf. Tomus synodicus of 1341. P.G. GLL ed. 679-692.

(1) Greg. Hist. XI. 10 (vol. I, p. 100)

(2) cf. John Galesus Enchiridion PG 130 col. 971.

(3) Greg. Hist. XI. 10

Barlaam began by bringing up the question of the Light of Thabor. He was stopped, and canon 64 of the council in Trullo and 18 of the council of Chalcedon were read out, forbidding private persons to teach religious truths. Palamas replied briefly to the accusations which had been brought against the monks. Passages from Barlaam's works were read out which proved him to have erroneous views on the Light of Thabor, and then a selection of patristic ~~texts~~^{texts} was read to refute him. Barlaam, seeing that he had no chance of prevailing, sought out his patron Cantacuzenus (1) to whom he confided his fears that if he threw himself on their mercy, the monks would indeed tear him to pieces. Cantacuzenus reassured him and advised him to apologise and retract, which he accordingly did, being embraced by the monks in token of forgiveness. His work "against the Massolians" was forthwith burnt, and he had to promise to silence his criticisms for ever of the hesychasts. But on Palamas also silence was imposed, and no one was to presume to treat of developments of sacred dogma. (2) Nicophorus Gregoras was not present to witness the discomfiture of his former rival; he had been obliged by an attack of neuralgia to refuse the imperial invitation. (3)

(1) Cent. Hist. II. 40 (vol. 1, p. 553)

(2) cf. John Calecas Explanation PG 150 col. 901.

(3) Greg. Hist. XI. 10

However, Barlaam was thoroughly disgruntled. It seems that he stayed on in Constantinople for a short time, protesting to any who would listen the injustice of his condemnation. But Andronicus III died almost immediately after the Council insane, and the removal of his patron was the final blow which sent Barlaam back to Italy. (1)

Here he passes out of Byzantine history, to make his experiences in Constantinople a legend in the west, where he received the full benefit of the favour accorded to Greek scholars by the men of the Italian renaissance. "Indeed," they said, "he was so good a Hellenist that he enjoyed privileges at the hands of emperors and Greek princes and scholars, which show that neither in our time nor for many a century have the Greeks produced a man endowed with such vast and peculiar erudition." (2) Another influential Greek, Leontius Pilatus, the "man of uncouth appearance, ugly features, long beard and black hair, forever lost in thought, rough in manners and behaviour" (3) who was so highly valued for his services as a translator, professed to be a pupil of Barlaam. Francis Petrarch often referred to Barlaam as

(1) *Cont. Hist.* II. 40. (vol. I, p. 356)

(2) Boccaccio. *De Genealogia Deorum Gentilium*. Bk. XV. c.6

(3) *ibid.*

his teacher in Greek, as part of the sentimental legend with which he came to surround his encounters with a language which fascinated him but which in fact he never learned. In the "Secret" he says, with reference to his reading of Plato, "the novelty of a strange language and the sudden departure of my teacher out short my purpose." (1) In his letters he explains this departure as occasioned by Barlaam's elevation to the bishopric of Geracle, through his, Petrarch's, influence. (2) Elsewhere he speaks of Barlaam's death, "Barlaamus nostrum mihi mors abstulit." A letter to Sigerus of 1354 mentions this event. (3) It seems that Barlaam died about 1350. He visited Byzantium in 1347, on a diplomatic mission to Anne of Savoy from Avignon, but the approach of Cantacuzenus's victorious army drove him hastily away. (4) of Barlaam, after his diplomatic attack on the pope, as a Latin, and to attach to his name all the odium implied by that nationality. Although he had been regarded as a Latin

(1) Petrarch. Secretum. Dialogue II. and revealed his to

(2) Letter to Homer. *ibid.*, for more than ever in the

(3) Lettere Famille XVIII. 2. cf. De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia ed. Capelli, p. 76.

(4) see below, Chapter II. p. 109

(1) High. iv. 24. (vol. III, p. 176)

CHAPTER II.

THE PERSECUTION OF HESYCHASM (1342-1347) ANDITS RE-INSTALEMENT UNDER CANTACUZENUS.

The decision of 10th June 1341 was only intended to be a temporary settlement. The most urgent necessity had been generally recognised to be the silencing of Barlaam, whom Akyndinus called "the common enemy of the whole monastic body." In many ways the Barlaam incident has a different colour from the rest of the controversy. Although he was really a Calabrian Greek, and it was as a Greek that he was accepted among Italian scholars, the Byzantines chose to think of Barlaam, after his disgraceful attack on the monks, as a Latin, and to attach to his name all the odium implied by that nationality. Although he had been accepted as a bona-fide scholar, Barlaam's attack on Athos had revealed him to Byzantine's eyes as an alien, for more than ever in the present perilous position of the Empire was Athos regarded as a sort of spiritual power-house and the prayers of the monks as a weapon of defence against the enemies of the state. Like an atlas they upheld the whole globe, wrote Cantacuzenus, (1) interceding for it with God; and he reflects the prevailing

(1) Hist. iv. 24. (vol. III, p. 176)

reverence among an imaginative and intelligent people for this citadel of contemplation, whose usual qualification is "The Holy Mountain," "The Celestial City" or "The Earthly Paradise." To attack Athos therefore was to outrage public opinion. What possibly encouraged the opposition of the authorities to Barlaam however, was the actual spread of Bogomile or Massalian heresy in certain monasteries, and even on Athos itself, which might appear to confirm the Calabrian's charges of "Massalianism" against the Hesychasts, although their tenets were in fact diametrically opposed to those of Manichaeon dualism. (1) Nicephorus Gregoras's remarks suggest that the desire to avert a scandal lay behind the hurried proceedings of June 1341, "that the sacred mysteries should not be profaned in the eyes of the populace for thence would arise not peace and good order but confusion and uninformed hysteria." (2) For such reasons all parties closed their ranks against Barlaam and when the debate broke out afresh, it was from among the Byzantines themselves that Palamas encountered opposition -- from men of conservative temper whose antipathy was aroused by his startlingly expressed point of view, but whose dislike of Latins, and Latinising tendencies in theology was equally deep rooted. Only in the latest stages of the controversy,

(1) see below Chapter V.

(2) Hist. XI. 1. (Vol. I, p. 558)

(1) The biased view of Gregoras. loc. cit.

over twenty years later, was there a movement to revive the ideas of Barlaam, and this was unhesitatingly suppressed. After 1341, the opponents of Palamas show great anxiety to dissociate themselves from Barlaam, while the hesychasts claim legal vindication from the decision of that year in their favour.

The discussion of the deeper issues was only postponed by the June Council. Popular curiosity being assuaged by Barlaam's condemnation, it was intended that the ecclesiastical authorities should look at their leisure into the question of hesychasm and the orthodoxy of Palamas, but the death of Andronicus III, following closely upon the Council, prevented any immediate public action. "Those things which concerned the Massalian heresy and other crimes charged to Palamas were postponed for a few days, and if the Emperor had not shortly died, the movement against the Palamite heresy would have come to a head, and it would have been nipped in the bud and not allowed to come to maturity." (1) The consequent delay led inevitably to the breaking by both sides of the prohibition of further discussion. Palamas continued to preach in spite of Akyndinus's protests that he was breaking his promise to modify his doctrine. Palamas's followers retaliated by calling Akyndinus a disciple of Barlaam, (whose lectures,

(1) The biased view of Gregoras, loc. cit.

it was well-known, he had indeed attended at Thessalonica), and demanding a fresh investigation to be made of his charges.

"Not long after, another monk named Gregory Akyndinus, who had been Barlaam's pupil in secular studies over a long period of time, took up the latter's quarrel, as his successor, with Palamas it is true that he professed his to repudiate Barlaam and accused him of holding opinions contrary to the Holy Fathers, but the fact is that he really followed Barlaam's example and differed from him not at all." (1)

Another Synod was convened in August 1341, by John Cantacuzenus, (2) then Regent, but the Patriarch Calocas refused to attend. He was a supporter of Akyndinus, his protosyncellus and close associate, but apart from this, the explanation of this incident is primarily to be sought in the trend of political affairs, which henceforward had an important bearing on the controversy.

The death of Andronicus left the question of the Government unsettled. The heir to the throne was the eldest son John, then only nine years old. His mother Anne of Savoy was left Regent by Andronicus's will, but although she was to hold the supreme authority, it was left uncertain who was to control the administration. Ten years earlier, Andronicus

(1) Cant. Hist. II, 40 (Vol. I, p. 556)

(2) Cant. Hist. II, 15. (Vol. II, p. 396)

cf. Tomus synodicus, 1357. Mansi xxvi. col. 127.

had fallen dangerously ill, and then it had been arranged for the customary oath to be taken by the Senators and great officers of state to John Cantocuzenus, the grand domestic, jointly with the Empress. (1) In fact during Andronicus III's lifetime, this favourite Minister was all-powerful. His influence had begun in the days when Andronicus, as a rash and irresponsible youth, had chafed under the restrictions imposed on him by his grandfather, who to check his wildness, kept him short of money, and imprudently tried to exclude him from the succession. Cantocuzenus had put the resources of his vast estates at the prince's disposal, and his support was largely responsible for the revolution which overthrew Andronicus II. Once he had reached the throne, Andronicus III divided his time between soldiering and pleasure, his indolent nature causing him to leave the business of government to Cantocuzenus who organised it so efficiently as to make himself indispensable. He declares that it was only his reluctance for the honour which prevented Andronicus from making him co-Emperor. (2) On the latter's death, Cantocuzenus made a great show of protecting the two young princes by precautionary measures, such as surrounding the Palace with a guard, but by

(1) Cant. Hist. II, 15. (vol. IX, p. 396)

(2) ibid. II, 14. (Vol. IX, p. 391) of Letters, II, 17.

this very action making it clear that he took his own position at the head of the government for granted. He left out of account one circumstance -- the hostility of Anne of Savoy. Her dislike of her husband's powerful friend became the focus point of a mass of intrigue, concentrating all the elements of disaffection.

The ringleaders were Apocaucus and Calecas, both creatures of Cantocuzenus, who had tricked the bishops into making Calecas Patriarch, (1) and had appointed Apocaucus Admiral of the Fleet.

Apocaucus was an adventurer of obscure origin. Both Cantocuzenus, who frequently forgave his intrigues against him, and Gregoras, (2) testify to his extraordinary ability, which he preferred to use for his personal advancement rather than in the service of the state. His cold and calculating nature made him peculiarly well-fitted to organise an underground opposition to the Regent. He dominated both Patriarch and Empress by playing on their weaknesses, turning to account the resentment and jealousy of Anne whose stupidity made her an easy prey, and the ambition of Calecas, whose love of power made blind. By ceaseless intrigue he gathered a party

(1) Cent. Hist. II, 21 (Vol. I, pp. 431-435) cf. Greg. Hist. XV. 3 (Vol. II, p. 755)

(2) Hist. XII. 2 (vol. II, p. 577) cf. Letters, 11, 17. Correspondence.

together, for Cantacuzenus had many enemies, including Latins, merchants for instance, who disliked his reforming fiscal and sea policy, and members of Anne's suite who were afraid of banishment. (1) At last they were powerful enough openly to insult Cantacuzenus in the assembly, (2) and although the army demonstration in his favour which followed caused them to dissemble for a while and make further preparations; they waited only until the Autumn to denounce the Regent and take such measures against him as provoked him to declare himself Emperor at Didymoticha, (October 1341), and take up arms.

It seems likely, in these circumstances, that the Patriarch's action in refusing to participate in the Synod of August, is to be understood as the action of a partisan, in line with Chumnos's insult, and intended to show Cantacuzenus that he lacked the imperial confidence. Moreover, the personal claims of Galecas clashed with those of Cantacuzenus.

Gregoras's and Cantacuzenus's evidence shows that the Patriarch's real aim was to unite in his own person both the ecclesiastical and secular power. His high opinion of the priestly office was shown in his retort to Andronicus II when the Emperor was

(1) *Cant. Hist.* III, 19. (Vol. II, p. 124)

(2) *ibid.*, III, 2. (Vol. II, pp. 20-25)

rejecting his advice, "I am surprised at your commanding me to mind the business of the Church and leave you to rule the Empire at your will. For it is as if the body were to say to the soul, I do not need your companionship and will not bear your judgment and order of my actions. I will go my own way, you go yours." (1)

This remark suggests a revolutionary attitude to the traditional Byzantine complex balance and tension between the relative spheres of Church and State. In that tradition it was the imperial and not the patriarchal right to cross from one sphere to the other, for the Emperor's was not an entirely secular office as his liturgical functions show. Occasionally there were individual attempts to reverse this order. Such had been the Michael Cerularius episode in the XIth century. Cerularius had almost brought it off. "In his hands he held the cross but from his mouth proceeded the imperial decree" wrote Psellus. Given more favourable political circumstances than Cerularius, Calocas hoped for an even greater success. Apocaucus, who knew this weakness, encouraged it to further his own ends. The political theory behind this plot is unusual in a Byzantine milieu, and similar to western theories of papal sovereignty. There is even reference to the western myth of the Donation of Constantine, in Gregoras's

(1) Cent. Hist. I, 50. (Vol. I, p. 249)

that this document had only a limited reference to the particular version of Apocatastasis's address to the Patriarch.

the situation in the past and was no longer valid. But

"When this City was founded by the Emperor Constantine and the honours belonging to Rome itself were transferred to it with the Empire, those privileges which he conceded to the Roman Church were also, as is just, transferred hither. And what if these have been neglected by succeeding bishops of this See? -- what is that to us to-day? For an unjust law ought not to be retained by posterity if a wrong has been rashly committed by their ancestors -- rather the earlier (rulings) should be reformed by later, going back like a river to its source for the public good. It is clear to whoever will look that the present time is most propitious for us, and circumstances are playing into our hands. For can it be said that at any other time these two, the Church and the Empire, have been seen united, and the patriarchal and imperial functions to be wedded and to bear up together the cares of the state and to dwell together under one and the same roof, so that either house is at the same time as the other the imperial palace?" (1)

The situation herein indicated is fully described by both Gregoras and Cantacuzenus. Calocas claimed the right to the tutorship of the young princes on the grounds that Andronicus had once placed them under his protection while he was away on campaign. In confirmation he produced a chrysobull of Andronicus III recommending his wife and children to the care of the Patriarch and bishops. (2) Cantacuzenus maintained

(1) Greg. Hist. XIV, 3. (Vol. II, pp. 697-698)

(2) Ibid., XII, 2. (Vol. II, p. 578)

that this document had only a limited reference to the particular situation in the past and was no longer valid. But Calcas, led on by Apocaurus, put himself forward as the leader of the party opposed to Cantacuzenus. He worked diligently among the members of the Senate, letting it be suggested that if he were at the head of affairs the state would benefit by better government. (1) The conspirators held their meetings at the Patriarch's house, (2) and otherwise Calcas spent his whole time at the imperial palace, (3) as the above passage suggests.

Calcas was thus unlikely to co-operate as Patriarch in his rival Cantacuzenus's ecclesiastical policy. It was he who, after 1341, inaugurated a policy of persecuting the hezychasts. Cantacuzenus asserts that he was moved by the fear, insinuated by Apocaurus, that he would even lose his See, as Cantacuzenus was awaiting his opportunity to instal Gregory Palamas as Patriarch instead. (4) The personal rivalry between these two men is a principal factor in the embittered struggles of 1341-1347, both secular and

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- (1) *Cant. Hist.* III, 2. (Vol. II, p. 19)
- (2) *ibid.* III, 20. (Vol. II, p. 125)
- (3) *ibid.* III, 2. (Vol. II, p. 19) "He spent every day until midnight at the palace."
- (4) *Cant. Hist.* III, 17. (Vol. II, p. 107)

ecclesiastical. Cantacuzenus's motives in supporting the hesychasts were no doubt mixed, like Calecas's but originally they sprang from a sincere conviction. Unlike Calecas, who was no theologian, Cantacuzenus was ever interested in theological questions, as his writings in defence of the Christian Faith against Jews and Mohammedans show -- or his concern with the question of Christian re-union. With Anne of Savoy a mere tool in the hands of others, the fortunes of hesychasm were united with those of Cantacuzenus, and while Calecas was in power at Constantinople, they were in reverse.

Between August and October 1341, however, things had not yet come to an open breach. In August Cantacuzenus, possibly with a view to making a display of his power, called a Synod to investigate the question of Akyndinus, who was condemned as a disciple of Barlaam, a slanderer of the monks, and as holding erroneous views on the light of Theodor. (1) A Synodal Tome (2) was drawn up on the basis of both the 1341 councils which sets out the doctrine of Palamas on the distinction between the essence and energies of God and the Light of the Transfiguration, supported by numerous patristic

(1) cf. Tomus Synodicus 1351, Mansi XXVI. Col. 127

(2) PG. CLI col. 679-692.

(3) Cont. Hist. III, 2. (Vol. I, p. 330); Cont. Hist. III, 2.

(3) Cont. Hist. XII, 6, 2. (1351 I. p. 590 of seq.)

texts, and the condemnation of Barlaam and all who followed him. The Patriarch had not been present at the proceedings, but the hezychasts, who wished for a public vindication, did succeed in obtaining Calecas's signature to the Tome, presumably during the temporary reconciliation which he made with Cantacuzenus,⁽³⁾ whose policy during these months was to try to keep the peace between the different factions in Constantinople; who by no means always agreed among themselves.

Finally Apocaucus made a sworn agreement with the Patriarch by which they were to overthrow Cantacuzenus and divide the power between them. Apocaucus was to have the control of the army, and Calecas the administration. (1) A purge of the Senate and City followed, some were imprisoned and those of Cantacuzenus's followers who fled in time had their goods confiscated, and arrived at their leader's headquarters at Didymoticha in a pitiable state. Already his associates had begun to pay Cantacuzenus imperial honours, making the customary adoration at his approach. Cantacuzenus declares that this was without his consent, but the action of his enemies brought his so-far suppressed ambitions into the open -- he was crowned Emperor at Didymoticha, 8th October 1341, (2) and

(1) *ibid.* XII. 10.

(2) *Greg. Hist.* XII, 12. (Vol. I, p. 610); *Cont. Hist.* III, 2.

(3) *Ques. Hist.* XII. 6, 7. (1057. I. p. 590 et seq.)

The year was thus intended as Calocas' response to the civil war followed for six years. However it was Calocas now repudiated his temporary support of hesychasm. He published an official Explanation of the Synodal Tome (of 1341), (1) which he professes to have signed in the belief that it simply referred to the condemnation of Barlaam on the two questions of the Light of the Transfiguration and of methods of prayer, for the protection of the monks. He maintains that only the proceedings of the first Council in June were valid, since he had never countenanced the second Synod in August.

"Puffed up by secular support, they (the hesychasts) tried to force a second synod about Akyndinus, and to obtain a decision in their favour, and the nobles and Senate came to the Church of God the Word of Wisdom, but against our will and without our permission, since we have never agreed to the moving of questions of dogma in the Church, which leads to dissension."

However, he goes on to explain that he yielded to Palamas's importunity in demanding an official document. "Indeed he insisted and demanded that we should concede to the monks a document concerning those things that had first been said."

(1) PG. CL. Col. 900-903.

(2) See Patriarchal Letters PG. CL. col. 891-894.

(3) PG. CL. II. Col. 1200-1203.

The Tome was thus intended as Galecas represents it, to deal only with the proceedings of the June Synod. However it was published as emanating from both assemblies, and Galecas declares that the number of patristic questions it contains is misleading, since at the condemnation of Barlaam only the orations of St. Andrew of Crete and St. John Damascene on the Light of Theodor were read. But now the design of the Tomus is to support the full hesychast doctrine, and this he in no way intended.

The Explanation is one of a series of documents which mark a persistent campaign against hesychasm, launched by the Patriarch aided by the intellect of Akyndinus, who had the necessary training in theology. He was commissioned to enquire into the history and theology of the dispute from its origin and produced his Report to the Patriarch John and his Synod, which was considered at a Council held in Constantinople in 1342, which resulted in the imprisonment of Palamas. In 1344 more extreme measures were taken. Palamas was excommunicated, (1) and a patriarchal letter was sent to the monks of Athos, calling upon them to use their influence to bring Palamas to obedience. (2) In reply, the monks sent a

(1) See Patriarchal letters PG. CL. col. 891-894.

(2) PG. CL. 11. Col. 1269-1273.

(3) PG. CL. 11. Col. 1273-1274.

remarks Gregoras "he held the keys of heaven." (1) Letters anathematizing all Cantacuzenus's supporters were sent to the provinces, with the intention, according to Gregoras, (2) of inciting the poor against the powerful, the great landed proprietors in which Cantacuzenus and the monks themselves, as landowners, were included. Cantacuzenus was actually in close touch with Athos, sending the monks as ambassadors in his frequent attempts to negotiate with the party in the capital. (3) It was Galecas himself who at last suggested entering into negotiations with her enemy to Anne of Savoy. The war had brought unprecedented evils, and by 1346 both sides were thoroughly weary of it, but the Palaeologian party was in the worse position. Short of both money and manpower, Anne adopted measures which horrified the Byzantines in the lack of patriotism they showed, such as pledging the Crown-Jewels to raise money from the Italians, (4) and purchasing the alliance of the emir of Saroukhan whose parade of Christian captives before the walls of Constantinople aroused no compassion in the foreign Empress. (5) Indeed, the treaty by

(1) ibid., XII, 10. (Vol. II, p. 608)

(2) ibid., XII, 12. (Vol. II, p. 614)

(3) ibid., XII, 14. (11, p. 620)

(4) ibid., XV.11 (Vol. II, p. 789)

(5) ibid., XV. 5 (Vol. II, p. 763)

which Anne purchased the Turkish alliance contained a clause authorising the Ottomans to make slaves of the Christian subjects of the rebel, and to transport them by way of Soutari to the slave markets in Asia, thus rendering the Asiatic suburb of Constantinople the principal depot of the trade in Greek slaves. (1) However, realising that Anne's was the losing side, Orkhan transferred his doubtful services to Cantacuzenus, who already had Turkish allies himself.

After the assassination of Apocaucus in the early stages of the war, Calocas was the leading element of Constantinople, and Anne of Savoy was completely under his influence. (2) It was to him therefore, that Cantacuzenus addressed his embassies. Gregoras gives excerpts from his latest letter, in which he reproached Calocas with ingratitude and disloyalty to his friend and benefactor, and lays at his door the blame for the manifold disaster of the war, but expresses a desire for peace and reconciliation. (3) The Patriarch, recognising the inevitable, replied in a more friendly spirit, admitting that he had often been in the wrong, and his guilt in provoking

(1) Ducas. Hist. XV. cited by Finlay, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 443.

(2) Cant. Hist. III, 98. (Vol. II, p. 602)

(3) Greg. Hist. XI, 3. (Vol. II, pp. 755-758)

(4) Greg. Hist. XV, 7. (Vol. II, pp. 767-768)

Cantacuzenus to war. His advice to the Empress was to make peace at once before the position deteriorated still further and lessened her chance of favourable terms. But Anne's hatred and fear of Cantacuzenus made such a course abhorrent to her; she lost confidence in the Patriarch. At the same time, dread of Cantacuzenus's reprisals growing more vivid with his success, she cast about for support. It seemed prudent to conciliate Palamas, as the friend of Cantacuzenus, and her new aversion from Calocas encouraged her in taking a step which would injure him.

"And the Empress's anger never rested, nor was ever extinguished or in the least mollified that flame which the advice given by the Patriarch had roused in her soul, who had, let us explain, counselled and tried to persuade her that she should be reconciled with Cantacuzenus, and make a lasting peace, before the safety of the Roman State was reduced to extremities, for things were going from bad to worse and she began to consider how she might most easily depose the Patriarch from the pontifical See. No more effective way occurred to her than to join herself to the Palamite sect, and deliberately to give them more support against the Patriarch, to whom they were hostile because of his Tome condemning them she therefore made a public change of allegiance to the doctrine (of Palamas) and used him as a weapon against the Patriarch, and showed him all favour, so that his theological opinions were established, and he publicly ruled her counsels." (1)

Anne evidently wished her change of policy to be attended with the circumstances of free debate and arbitration; for

(1) Greg. Hist. XV. 7. (Vol. II, pp. 767-768)

the first time in five years the hesychast doctrines were again open to free discussion. Palamas was invited to state his point of view, which he did in a letter written from prison, (1) exhorting the Empress to cease from persecuting the hesychasts, who were the true orthodox. Other hesychasts including Maxymatus, wrote in justification of their views. (2) The Patriarchal party replied by addressing to the Empress a collection of writings by Skyndinus and others specially appointed by the Patriarch. (3) But they had no success, for the official acceptance of Palamism was now assured, foreshadowing the imminent triumph of Cantacuzenus. Nicophorus Gregoras saw this with gloom. "Now, as if the city gates had been opened to the enemy, the dire flood of doctrines and systems poured in freely, and the new opinions flourished undeterred." (4) It was to Gregoras that Anne of Savoy applied to arbitrate between the Patriarch and Palamas,

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- (1) See ibid. note by Boivin (p. 1281)
- (2) See M. Gandal, "origen ideologico del Palamismo en un documento de David Disipato" Miscelanea de la Pontificia universidad de Camillas (Santander) I, pp. 489-525. Also PG GLI. col. 767-770 -- a joint address dated Sept. 1346.
- (3) Probably including 2 anonymous works published PG GL I col. 864-872. cf. Jugie, M. op. cit.
- (4) Hist. XV. 7. (Vol. II, p. 768)

(5) op. cit. Hist. XV 7. (Vol. II, pp. 761-764)

perhaps expecting that as a layman of secular education who had so far held aloof from the controversy, he held no very strong convictions on the matter, and would fulfil her wishes by giving a decision in favour of the hezychasts. In this she was mistaken. Gregoras held firmly conservative views, and considered that Palamas was departing from tradition; in fact he was not very familiar with either hezychasm or theological terminology, but he disapproved of their ascendancy at the Court. Although the Empress made it clear that this was an opportunity for him to regain her favour, lost sometime previously by his refutation of a Latin astrologer, Gregoras refused to placate her by modifying his opinion, "for we thought it is not men who are to be pleased, but God, who perceives what is hidden." Gregoras left the Palace in disgrace, and hourly awaiting a sentence of exile, believed that he was only spared by the entry into the City of Cantacuzenus. (1)

Cantacuzenus was in close touch with events in the Capital. It seems likely that he insisted on the deposition of Calocas as a condition of peace. He had already caused him to be deposed by Lazarus patriarch of Jerusalem. For some days Anne's whole attention was fixed on convening a Council for this purpose. (2) She chafed under the delay imposed by

(1) *ibid.* p. 773. (Vol. III, p. 37)

(2) Greg. Hist. XV 9. (Vol. II, pp. 781-784)

a few days illness, and then the bishops being summoned, Calecas who was confined to his house and not allowed to appear at the Synod, was condemned. (1) The Empress's irritation and distracted state of mind reflect her growing panic, but having paid tribute to Palamas by deposing his enemy, she evidently felt more secure, for the evening of the Council, the eve of Cantacuzenus's entry, was given up to a banquet of rejoicing to celebrate Palamas's restoration. It is possible that an agreement was being negotiated between Anne and Cantacuzenus relative both to his possession of the power and to the reinstatement of hesychasm. The news that reached Cyprus was that Cantacuzenus had triumphed through the support of the hesychasts with whom he was linked by terrible oaths. (2) Gregoras asserts that the hesychasts were responsible for Cantacuzenus's actual entry, (3) and that while they appeared to Anne to be devoted to her cause, and propitiated her with friendly speeches, they were secretly working for Cantacuzenus. Whether or not the hesychasts had a hand in it, the entry of Cantacuzenus came as a sudden surprise, interrupting the imperial banquet and throwing the Palace into confusion. Gregoras takes a sour pleasure in narrating how at this party,

(1) loc. cit.

(2) Greg. Hist. XXV. 14. (Vol. III, p. 37)

(3) ibid XV. 10 (Vol. II, p. 785)

"adorned with jokes and unrestrained laughter," all their joy was turned into mourning, on that very night, or about cock-crow. "For exultation is kept for the evening and weeping for the morning."

However, the treachery of a Genoese with a private grudge was immediately responsible for the revolution of February 3rd, 1347. As a whole, the Genoese element in the capital had judged it more profitable to assist Anne of Savoy, but private individuals were liable to act independently, and one Facciolati, who smarted under a wrong done him by the party of the Empress and her compatriots, saw an opportunity of revenge and gain in transferring his services to Cantacuzenus, whom he agreed to let into the City by the Golden Gate. (1) There was no bloodshed, for the city put up no resistance, as everyone wished the war to end. Palamas acted as intermediary in the negotiations between Anne and Cantacuzenus which occupied the next few days. (2) Cantacuzenus was to be Co-Emperor and his daughter Helen was to be married to John Palaeologus. One of the Emperor's first acts was to confirm the deposition of the Patriarch John, who was temporarily imprisoned in the monastery of St. Basil before being exiled to Didymoticha. (3)

(1) Greg. Hist. XV. 8. (Vol. II, p. 774)

(2) Cant. Hist. III, 100 (Vol. II, p. 613)

(3) Ibid., IV. 3 (Vol. III, p. 24); cf. Greg. Hist. XVI, 4. (Vol. II, p. 813)

On his immediately starting to intrigue there against Cantacuzenus, he was later brought back to Constantinople, where he died shortly after.

The fall of Calocas meant that the back of the opposition to hesychasm was broken. The new Patriarch was Isidore of Monemvasia whose name had been linked with that of Palamas in the anathemas launched by Calocas. By him other hesychasts were appointed to bishoprics from which they had been excluded during the past few years. Philotheus Goccincus became metropolitan of Heraclia, and Palamas himself Archbishop of Thessalonica, (1) in which he showed courage, for the city was in the throes of an autonomous tyranny and a centre of disturbances. Now it continued to pursue its independent policy, and refused to receive the new Archbishop, locking its gates against him and not hearing his appeal for peace and religious unity. However, that the main current of public ecclesiastical policy would be pro-hesychast was guaranteed by the coronation of John Cantacuzenus. The ceremony itself seems to symbolise the spirit of the XIVth century Byzantines.

Cantacuzenus tells us that it had to take place in the Church of Blachernae, as St. Sophia had been allowed to fall into disrepair, (2) and Gregoras gives more sorry details,

(1) ibid., XV. 12 (Vol. II, p. 795)

(2) Cant. Hist. IV. 4 (Vol. III, p. 29)

"To such straits was the Palace reduced that the vessels were not of gold and silver but lead or earthenware. (The jewels were mainly paste and glass) but there was here and there, though sparsely scattered, a genuine sparkle of precious stones and a refulgence of pearls which did not deceive the eye." (1)

To Gregoras whose outlook ever remained predominantly secular, such a sight was painful, "so far fallen, so deeply deteriorated, was that ancient prosperity and magnificence of the Roman Empire -- none can relate such things without shame." But the essential was the liturgy itself, and the importance of ritual in general and the coronation ceremony in particular, in Byzantine tradition, is sufficient to explain this event without accusing Cantacuzenus of weak vanity and empty display. (2) The Byzantine people were given to symbolism, for instance in dress. In the 10th century Liutprand of Cremona was caught trying to smuggle out lengths of the fine cloth dyed in the distinctive Byzantine purple which he was told was proper to Roman citizens alone. (3) In the war of 1341-1347 Nicephorus Gregoras relates that the inhabitants of the imperial city doffed their distinctive dress to put on mourning, and hesychasm itself is perhaps another sign of the

(1) Greg. Hist. XV. 11 (Vol. II, p. 787)

(2) as e.g. Finlay, op. cit. III, p. 446.

(3) Liutprand, Antapodosis.

to his clerical supporters caused him some embarrassment as contrast in general currents of thought. The miseries of the civil war and the threat of imminent destruction from Latins, Serbs or Ottomans, explain perhaps an eagerness to turn away altogether from the things of this world, and embrace the negative theology of Athos, which, rejecting the method of analogy and all images drawn from earthly experience, claimed for the perfect hesychast alone the inward revelation of a truth beyond these uncertainties. Even so, Palamas's position was not unchallenged, and hesychasm had still to meet with opposition from various quarters.

The first threat came almost immediately in July 1347, from a group of anti-Palamite bishops afraid of losing their sees, and led by a few ambitious prelates who had been disappointed in their hopes of the patriarchate. This party held a synod at which the three leaders were Neophyte of Philippi, Joseph of Ganos and Mathew of Ephesus. Composed of very mixed elements the assembly was agreed in its refusal to countenance the election of Isidore as Patriarch, and an official tome (1) was drawn up, setting out a confused profession of faith, comprising the condemnation of Barlaam and Akyndinus as well as Palamas, and anathematizing Isidore. From Cantacuzenus's account, it is clear that his obligations

(1) P.O. cl. Col. 877-885.

to his clerical supporters caused him some embarrassment on reaching the throne; he did his best for them, but he could not give them all the patriarchate. The secession of this party distressed him;

"The Emperor knowing by what compact they had cut themselves off from the body of the Church, took it very badly and sorrowed, not so much on account of the dissension by which they differed from others on the primal doctrines of faith, as because they had been his friends during the war and endured hardships in his cause -- so that, although they had been disappointed of the patriarchate, the highest dignity, he had at least aimed at recompensing them as much as he could, with gifts and benefices. But having made up their minds to regard it as an insult that they were not worthy of the patriarchal throne, they considered that their efforts and zeal on the Emperor's behalf could be compensated by no other reward, and at one and the same time cutting themselves off from the Emperor and from the truth, they slandered him with insults and curses, and they corrupted patristic teaching with lies, following false doctrine in the footsteps of Barlaam and Akyndinus." (1)

The new Emperor had shown generosity to his enemies in his victory, from his natural magnanimity, in the view of his friend Gregoras, and not, as some believed, from weakness. But his was a delicate position, and the deliberate defiance of these partisans, who, in opposing Isidore were putting pressure on himself, demanded prompt suppression from the Emperor.

(1) Cant. Hist. IV, 3. (Vol. III, p. 27)
(2) Cant. Hist. IV, 20. (Vol. III, p. 766) *ibid.*

They had sent a copy of the Tome with the decree anathematizing Isidore, to the authorities at Constantinople. (1) Isidore convened a Synod which pronounced the deposition of ex-communication of the various rebels while Cantacuzenus caused some to be exiled and others to be deprived of their property. (2) This incident has a clearly political bearing. Personal ambition is a recurrent element in the history of the Hesychast movement. It is for the theologian to abstract the essential issues behind the conflict, but from a historical point of view, the windings of the controversy are like a thread of light that serves to throw into momentary illumination the faces on either side. Nicephorus Gregoras, who rose to the leadership of the opposition of the hesychasm after 1347, acted from a mixture of motives, although they were quite different from those of the clergy implicated in the incident of 1347. He did come to be associated with some of these, and was named in the same condemnation with them by the Council of 1351, but he represents another tradition and a more detached policy.

His theological position was similar to that of his friend Akyndinus, conservative and suspicious of "Palamas's

(1) Greg. Hist. XV. 10 (Vol. II, p. 786)

(2) Greg. Hist. XV. 10. (Vol. II, p. 786) ibid.

innovations." Throughout his history he makes constant use of the phrase "to remain within the boundaries set by the Fathers" -- his attitude was that Christian dogma had ceased developing since the oecumenical Councils and the Patristic age. Thus he objected equally to the methods of scholasticism and the use of syllogisms in theology, as his relations with Barlaam show. But he was intimately linked with Akyndinus, and felt bound to respond to the other's appeal to keep up the struggle against hesychasm in Constantinople, now that he, Akyndinus, had retired to Thessalonica where he was meeting with opposition, for instance from the growth of a moderate party which disliked his fanaticism as much as the Palamites. Gregoras however was not primarily a theologian. (1) His hatred of hesychasm suggests that it was sweeping aside, besides the hopes of advancement of secular clerics, the learning and talents at the same time of lay scholars. Gregoras had first become prominent under Andronicus II, whose interests were more predominantly secular than those of Cantacuzenus; the latter was a theologian rather than a philosophically minded Emperor, and it was the distinction in the godhead and the mystical illumination of Thabor which were now in vogue at Court, rather than astronomy and the pagan classes. It

(1) See below, Chapter VI.

seems too that, although "Apophatic theology does not rule out cataphatic theology," the claims of Palamas were then being pressed so as to exclude other interpretations. Probably, had there been no quarrel between Palamas and Barlaam, the two traditions of Christian thinking would have continued to live quietly side by side in the orthodox Church. But the triumph of Palamas was so complete as to thrust aside ways of thought which until then had been valued at Byzantium. Gregoras, disliking the new monastic atmosphere of the Court, set out to win Cantacuzenus away from Palamas.

Cantacuzenus valued Gregoras, both for his learning and for his personal attachment, which, although he held aloof from politics, had never wavered during the civil war. (1) Gregoras had been familiar with the Emperor in his days as grand domestic; he now renewed these ties and became a frequent visitor at the Cantacuzenus's Palace. He found Cantacuzenus not averse to discussing theology, although he refused to modify his views or abate his support of Palamas. Gregoras's was no detached approach -- he coveted the other's soul, which he was convinced would be damned by adhesion to Palamism. He declared these views quite frankly and used all his resources,

(1) Cant. Hist. IV. 24 (Vol. III, p. 183)

those of a fertile brain and a training in rhetoric, for the Emperor's conversion. "Sometimes I used flattery, at others erudition, calling on the Fathers of the Church, and at others prophesied the evils that would come upon the Romans in the case of the shipwreck by him of the Church." (1) Cantacuzenus, who was of a courteous and reasonable disposition, not easily moved to anger, treated Gregoras's attacks with perfect good humour, hoping apparently that his more emotional friend would soon tire of his enthusiasm and accept the existing state of affairs. Finding the Emperor adamant, Gregoras tried to influence his wife Irene. The great plague then raging in Byzantium carried off her younger son Andronicus. Her elder son Mathew, was threatening to revolt against his father. War with the Genoese and Serbia was exhausting the resources of the Empire. In her trouble Irene was rendered susceptible to the arguments of Gregoras, who told her that these calamities were a warning from God, who was displeased by her husband's ecclesiastical policy.

"Saying such things, and illustrating them with quotations from the sacred scriptures, I succeeded in shaking her more easily than I had expected and I was not without good hope that after this it would not be difficult to persuade the Emperor as well to fight with us for one union along with the Empress. But this was not

(1) Greg. Hist. XVI, 5. (Vol. II, p. 821)

Isidore was due to a fear of disturbances, "less than real to suffered to be by the devil and his angels. A conspiracy was joined by those of the heretic flock from the Byzantine monasteries, and above all by him who held the patriarchate, Isidore, and going to the Empress, they began to attack her bitterly and tried to persuade her to avoid my company. But when they failed in this they sent letters to the Emperor, informing him of what was going on, and asked him to return at once to Byzantium, leaving the State affairs with which his hands were then full, in order to defend their reputation which was falling rapidly."

Cantacuzenus was not a fanatic. He was a follower of Palamas both by conviction and by policy, for not only were the hesychasts dominant in the Church but according to Gregoras himself, "Palamas had a great following among the people;" but he wished as far as possible to conciliate all parties and to strike a balance. His settlement of the Patriarchate in 1347 illustrates this -- he had not given it to Palamas as he would have liked, but had allowed the bishops to choose their own candidate. (1) His policy towards Gregoras remained similarly one of conciliation; not only was he motivated by friendship, but to win over its leader would be to shatter the opposition, many of whom would follow him. (2) Peace in the Church was a political necessity, and Gregoras declared that the Emperor's return to the capital at the summons of

(1) Cant. Hist. IV. 3 (Vol. III, p. 25)

(2) Greg. Hist. XVIII, 1. (Vol. II, p. 872)

Isidore was due to a fear of disturbances, "less from zeal to defend the innovating doctrines than desire to prevent riots breaking out in the first city of the Empire." (1) However, on investigation, Isidore himself was found to be heretical on certain points, and some canons of his which he had independently presumed to insert in the liturgy in place of the traditional ones, were burned. After this tribute to Gregoras, Cantacuzenus sent for Palamas to continue the discussion, no doubt hoping to bring about a reconciliation between the two. At their meeting, two mutually exclusive views appeared of the legal position of Palamian, which were to be brought forward continually in the debates which followed, especially at the Council of 1351.

Gregoras chose to consider that things remained as they were before Cantacuzenus took Constantinople, i.e. that Palamas remained ex-communicated under the decrees of the Patriarch Calcas. The hesychasts had, in 1347, had these decrees annulled, but maintained the validity of this patriarch's acts in 1341, i.e. the Tomus Synodicus signed by Calcas and anathematising Barlaam and all who followed his example in attacking the hesychasts. The case of Isidore had brought up afresh the question of the distinctions in the divinity.

(1) Ibid., XVI, 5. (Vol. II, p. 827.)

(2) Ibid., XVIII, 1. (Vol. II, pp. 870-872)

(3) Ibid., XIV, 3. (Vol. II, pp. 673-701.)

The Emperor's interest in a system of co-operation, when the Palamas declared, from Gregoras's account, that his position was already exposed and confirmed. "I see no need for further discussions, since for whatever things I uttered on the subject I sought and obtained confirmation and approval from the then Patriarch John and his bishops." (1) Gregoras declared his opinion that these decrees were invalid, since Calocas had repudiated his action in favour of the hesychasm, but at this point the Emperor interrupted vehemently, "Then it seems to me that the earlier decrees have a stronger claim than the later." (2) Thus a deadlock was reached, and nothing came of this discussion.

In 1349 the Patriarch Isidore died. The Emperor's growing concern about the division in the Church illustrated by the incident of 1348 just described, serves to explain the offer of the patriarchate to Nicephorus Gregoras. (3) He was to exchange his loyalty in return for this supreme dignity. Elsewhere in his history Gregoras explains his theory of the patriarchal office. In his comments on Calocas's ambition towards secular power, he shows the traditional Byzantine dislike of this form of theocracy; (4) but he was aware of

(1) *Greg. Hist.* XV. 5 (Vol. II, p. 830).

(2) *Ibid.* loc. cit.

(3) *Ibid.* XVIII, 1. (Vol. II, pp. 870-872)

(4) *Ibid.* XIV, 3. (Vol. II, pp. 699-701.)

the dangers inherent in a system of co-operation, when the patriarch was too compliant -- in speaking of Gerasimus he points out that "the kind of patriarchs that please Emperors" are illiterate and unwise men, who can be easily dominated. (1) He therefore very high-mindedly rejected the offer, in spite of the persuasions of both Emperor and Empress, and a hesychast monk from Athos named Callistus was chosen as Isidore's successor. Callistus, who was not the illiterate boor that Gregoras represents him to be (he wrote saints' lives, for instance), was however zealous and intolerant, and inaugurated a policy of persecution of anti-Palamites. They were to be penalised in their lifetime and on their death denied burial. Cantacuzenus who was not of a persecuting temper, rather dissociated himself from this policy and encouraged appeals against it from individuals to himself, but Gregoras explains this as a device to emphasise his imperial power. (2) The persecuting measures must have still further reduced the ranks of the anti-Palamites, yet there remained a vocal minority which resolutely opposed the claims of the hesychast theologians.

Alydinus was dead, but Gregoras proved a competent leader of the opposition, writing indefatigably in the cause, both letters to his innumerable correspondents and bringing his History up to date with an account of the rise of hesychasm.

(1) Ibid., VIII, 2. (Vol. I, p. 292)

(2) Ibid., XVIII, 1 (Vol. II, p. 875)

gains great glory for themselves. It thus fell
 He had not been openly associated with the bishops who had
 demonstrated against Isidore after Calecas's deposition in 1347,
 but he was certainly in relation with them now, and the
 bishops of Ephesus and Ganos were his close friends. Argyrus
 and Dexius were other prominent names. Dexius represented
 an attitude which went even further than Gregoras's in its
 conservatism and extreme agnosticism. He was uncertain about
 the Light of Thabor, but preferred not to know or decide
 whether or not it was uncreated. Over this he was involved
 in an argument with Argyrus. The comedy of Philotheus of
 Selyvria represents Dexius in this role, protesting the in-
 comprehensibility of the godhead before Palmas, to the ironic
 accompaniment of encouragements from the chorus. The per-
 sistence of this small but influential party in questioning
 the hesychast triumph at last caused the Emperor to arrange
 another public discussion. The hesychast Tome of the Council
 expressed it as follows:-

"However, he who rejoices at our ills was not thereby
 (the condemnation of Calecas) taught to desist,
 but since he had others besides Barlaam and
 Akydinus who followed his promptings and were in-
 fected with the same evil disease, he acted through
 them: Ephesus, Ganos, Gregoras and Dexius. Band-
 ing together and followed by other wretches who
 lacked all sound knowledge, these roused up a storm
 against the Church of God, falling upon one man
 that they might deceive many, and cruelly wrest
 them away from the Church, thinking by this to

gain great glory for themselves. It thus fell to our serene Emperor, having pity on perishable souls, to call together a numerous Synod (at which) those agitators who were creating a schism in the Church, were asked how, under the orthodox rule of the Emperor, they dared to commit such acts against piety. " (1)

The full accounts of this council of 1351 have come down to us, written fortunately from opposite points of view. Hieronymus Gregorius devotes the XIX-XXII of his history to a report of the proceedings, though he himself is largely concerned with his own speeches. It must be remembered that he regarded his history partly as propaganda for the anti-Melchite cause and also that he feared the distortion of his views agreed by his enemies and wished to counteract it. Moreover Gregorius was a true representative of the ancient tradition of Byzantine secular learning, which stressed the need for the artistic perfection of our work, whether of history or philosophy, (2) and even when it came to theological debate Gregorius considered the claims of order and symmetry as if elegance and harmony were in themselves a kind of truth. Thus, in his opening speech he begged to be allowed to be heard to the end without interruption for "a speech is like a statue and the effect is ruined if any part is destroyed or

(1) Mansi, XXVI, Col. 131, 134.
(2) cf. Nathan Greville, "Byzantine to Oxford." Essays presented to H. Baskin, p. 10.
(3) XIX. 1. (Vol. II, p. 512)

Justice before posterity by recording his words in full. In all this there was present a desire to outshine Palamas, for
CHAPTER III.
 Gregoras had a high opinion of his powers of oratory and was anxious to display THE COUNCIL OF 1351 training in rhetoric and letters such as the Byzantines affected to despise. His repre-

sent. Two full accounts of this council of 1351 have come down to us, written fortunately from opposite points of view. Nicephorus Gregoras devotes Bks XIX-XXII of his History to a report of the proceedings, though he himself is largely concerned with his own speeches. It must be remembered that he regarded his History partly as propaganda for the anti-Palamate cause and also that he feared the distortion of his views spread by his enemies and wished to counteract it. Moreover Gregoras was a true representative of the ancient tradition of Byzantine secular learning, which stressed the need for the artistic perfection of any work, whether of history or philosophy, (1) and even when it came to theological debate Gregoras considered the claims of order and symmetry as if elegance and harmony were in themselves a kind of truth. Thus, in his opening speech he begged to be allowed to be heard to the end without interruption for "a speech is like a statue and the effect is ruined if any part is destroyed or marred." (2) In this belief he was careful to do himself

(1) cf. Mathew Gervase. "Byzantium to Oxford." Essays presented to H. Bellock, p. 10.

(2) XIX. 1. (Vol. II, p. 912)

justice before posterity by recording his words in full. In all this there was present a desire to outshine Palamas, for Gregoras had a high opinion of his powers of oratory and was anxious to display the advantages of a training in rhetoric and letters such as the Hesychasts affected to despise. His representation of Palamas is marred by the same distortion which is present in the "Florentius" and chiefly characterized by a biting sarcasm. A contemptible opponent, Palamas had had no practise in arguing, since his associates have all been either ignoramuses or sycophants, wishing to flatter Palamas or to avoid offending the emperor. (1) Gregoras therefore does not trouble to give his childish attempts in full, merely summarising them as the worthless provocations of his own oratory. However it is to Gregoras that we owe the local colour which helps to define this council and fortunately the inaccuracies of his account are offset by the official tone which was then promulgated, and is characterized by lucidity and calmness. (2)

From all sources it is clear that the question at stake was the orthodoxy of Palamas, who was required in the course of the proceedings to make a profession of faith and was

(1) Hist. XX. 2. (Vol. II, p. 965.

(2) Mansi, t. XXVI. col. 127-198. cf. PG. CL1.

(3) Mansi loc. cit. col. 135.

respectable to all the hierarchs (his more daring expressions finally vindicated. But by this time, 1351, the controversy was not dead in his successors. (1) The "controversy" of had given rise to various public discussions and judicial decisions, and the theological issues were overlaid by legal considerations. Councils had already been held in 1341 and 1347 which condemned Barlaam, Akyndinus and the attackers of Palamas. Cantacuzenus took his stand on these: the attitude reflected in the Synodal Tome was that Gregoras and his party were inadmissibly questioning a decision which had been made and confirmed for eternity. Thus the Tome begins with a list of the previous councils in favour of Palamas, (1) and ends by declaring that the opinion of the synod is found to be in harmony with these. (2) Gregoras's view was that the council of 1341 was rendered invalid by the fact that Calcas had later rescinded it.

This deadlock necessitated a re-opening of discussion of the real issues -- that is, the theological question of the distinctions in the Divinity and the Light of Thabor. Here again, approaches differed; Gregoras wishing to undertake an examination of the writings of Palamas, and Cantacuzenus demanding the discussion not of the text but of the things spoken in it. (3) He was aware that Palamas's terminology was not

(1) ibid. col. 127-131.

(2) ib. col. 191. A.

(3) Mansi loc. cit. col. 136.

acceptable to all the hesychasts (his more daring expressions were not used by his successors). (1) The "Profession of Faith" (2) read by Palamas at the third session does not include his detailed development of the division of "divinities" into "higher" and "lower." It consists of a simple statement of the doctrine of the Trinity and the Incarnation (3) in the light of the distinction between the essence of God, impalpable and unknowable, and his operations or energies which include the grace whereby God is united to the angels and men. (4) After an affirmation of orthodox belief on various other points, and acceptance of the oecumenical councils, the statement ends with the rejection of the teaching of Barlaam and Akyndinus who had asserted the Light of Thabor to be a created thing, and the assurance that due recognition of the status of the Light and of other modes of operation does not by any means detract from the unity and simplicity of the triune godhead, any more than the doctrine of hypostases. (5) For

(1) cf. Jugie, H. loc. cit.
 (2) Manusl., t. XXVI, col. 199-206.
 (3) ib. col. 202 D.
 (4) ibid.
 (5) ibid. Col. 206 D.
 (6) Palamas, loc. cit., col. 206 B.
 (7) St. Theophanes

hesychasts, the Light of Thabor was indeed the crux of the matter, but Gregoras could not, or would not, see its relevance. He jeers at Palamas for harping monotonously on the one theme, and declares it was the only topic he was capable of speaking about. (1) The hesychasts considered his attitude lacking in due reverence, and indeed he cannot resist indulging in sarcasm about what seemed to him all moonshine. (2) Yet here he was on very unsure ground, for the mystery of the Transfiguration was not a theme to be treated lightly; it had become the centre of the traditional way of life on Athos and did not lack the authority of the Fathers to support implications of depth and significance. To call "created" what was "the common grace of the Father, Son and Spirit, the light of the life to come by which the just shall shine like the sun" (3) was to undermine the whole hesychast system, whereby the purified ascetics participated in this Light, since they already lived "less in this world than in the next." (4) But in Gregoras's view the Light was no more than a symbolic enigmatic manifestation of the uncreated light, analogous to the light

(1) XIX, 4. (II, p. 953), ib. 2 (p. 938) etc.

(2) of. XX. 4 (II, p. 97) "By now it was growing dusk, so the lamps were lit (with, incidentally, created light).

(3) Palamas, loc. cit, col. 206 B.

(4) of. The Hesychastic Tome.

mentioned in other theophanies. On Thabor, that is to say, the Apostles contemplated not the uncreated divinity, not God, but a knowable reality -- a created thing. (1) He would not admit that such a light could be the object of heavenly beatitude. His aim at the council was to prove that Palamas could be linked up with heretics of the past. His efforts suggest that there was a third issue involved which only served to confuse the serious theological and legal issues, and may be called the sentimental or vote-catching issue, for on it depended the popularity of either cause.

Gregoras was in a difficult position as being associated with the Italian Barlaam, whom everyone had combined to suppress when he attacked the monks, however enthusiastic his previous welcome, and had suddenly discovered to be a Latin, alien in his thought and incapable of understanding Byzantine institutions. Anyone who was connected with Barlaam would incur popular odium as a "Latinophrone" and a bad patriot. Gregoras had a double defence against this slander. In the first place, it was Gencousenus himself who had taken up Barlaam on his first arrival. Gregoras had never been taken in by his superficial brilliance, and had done the state some service in showing up the westerner as a fraud and a cheat, unable to

(1) cf. Hist. XXXIII, 13. (Vol. III, p.)

compete with Byzantine talents. Cantacuzenus on the other hand had only encouraged his empty pride by heaping honours upon him, the extent of his folly being to entrust such a man with the interpretation of Dionysius's writings. (1) In the second place, the fact that Barlaam is a Latin does not mean that everything he utters must be false. (2)

Gregoras's career affords ample evidence that he understood the art of publicity. His methods of casting the best light on his dubious position included throwing doubt on Palamas's by fastening on him and his followers the label of "iconoclast," thus associating them in the vulgar mind with the ninth-century persecutors of the monks, and himself no doubt with Theodore the Studite, whose memory was enshrined in popular veneration. His continual comparisons of Palamas's writings with those of iconoclast heretics (3) and his obscure charge of literal iconoclasm, (4) are echoed in Palamas's "Profession" where he affirms his veneration for the holy images. Also, some stories allegedly referring to Palamas's casual attitude towards the sacred liturgy and the

(1) Hist. XIX, 1. (Vol. II, p. 923)

(2) ibid.

(3) e.g. XIX. 3 (II, p. 940)

(4) ibid. (p. 943)

(5) ibid., loc. cit., vol. 135.

Eucharist would seem to have been brought up. (1) (The "Profession" also includes homage to the Liturgy). Another instance of Gregoras's "indirect method" seems to be his insinuation that in overthrowing ecclesiastical decrees (those of Calcas) Cantacuzenus is encouraging anarchy, and if such action comes to be taken as an example, "Those will suffer who were the prime instigators." (2) Here he seems to be hinting at the threat of revolution to which Cantacuzenus in his doubtful position was sensitive. On the whole, Gregoras, in spite of his rhetorical training and although he often seems to make a point effectively, is confused and rambling. The course of events is more easily perceived in the straightforward account of the Tome.

At the first session of the *hiketonium* of Alexius by the Blachernae church, Gregoras and his associates were formally called upon to answer the charge of sharing in the heresy of Barlaam, which they denied; and then the question of procedure was settled. (3)

At the next session which took place on the following day, the anti-Palamites were asked to speak first, with full freedom. When Palamas began to reply point for point to their

(1) ibid.

(2) ib. XIX 1 (II. p. 927)

(3) Tome synodicum, loc. cit., col. 135.

on the letter or the mode of expression. Palamas took up attacks, they were thrown into a panic and would have taken to flight immediately but they were required first to give an assurance of their attendance at the next session and then to state his views on the Trinity, clearing himself, if allowed to go. Palamas then continued to speak, discoursing to the synod on the Sacred Doctrines and reading out a Profession of faith. (1)

The third session opened with a confession of faith by the synod, ending with the words, "whatever is the opinion of Holy Church concerning Barlaam and Akyndinus, that is our opinion also." However, the anti-palamites pressed their view that the present charge was dissociated from those earlier decisions, and that it was Palamas's works which should be examined. They proceeded to lay a charge of polytheism, quoting Palamas as speaking of two and more divinities, divided into "superior" and "inferior." At this point Cantacuzenus, who was himself uneasy about some of Palamas's terms, intervened to turn the discussion. He suggested that this might be a case of misinterpretation; perhaps they were quarrelling about shadows. "Let the things themselves be discussed and not the mere words." (2) If the dispute was over a real issue, discussion ought to centre on that and not

(1) *ib.* Col. 135.

(2) *ibid.* col. 138.

on the letter or the mode of expression. Palamas took up the challenge, and, protesting that for his part, his concern was with the truth itself and not verbal quibbles, he proceeded to state his views on the Trinity, clearing himself, in the synod's opinion, from the charge of polytheism.

At the fourth session, discussion turned on the Light of Tabor. First Palamas and then his opponents were asked to state their views. Palamas began by reading extracts from the works of his accusers, in which they denounced him for affirming the Light to be uncreated. He went on to read passages from the Fathers which proved that he was in the patristic tradition, and that their condemnation of him would apply with equal force to St. Basil the Great, St. John Damascene and Maximus the Confessor. "The heretical chorus then broke forth," also citing the Fathers, but they were again confuted, and shown to be twisting the meaning of their texts. Then the Emperor delivered an oration, calling upon the recalcitrants to repent, (1) and a few days were allowed to lapse before the fifth and last session, in order to give time to decide. At this it was decided, in order to hasten a settlement, to propose five headings for discussion. These were:

(1) *ibid.* col. 147.

their opinions. Great Athos had sent representatives to the

1. whether, as is fit, there is a distinction between the essence and the energies of God.

2. whether the energy is created or not.

3. If uncreated, if God is therefore multiple

4. If the name of the Godhead is predicated by theologians not only concerning the essence

but also the divine energy

5. whether the theologians declare essence superior to energy, and whether, when we participate in God we do so by essence or the energy. (2)

After deliberation, the synod declared sentence. Various readings from the Fathers were followed by extracts from heretics, including Akyndinus, to show that the opinion was favourable to Palamas. By the Emperor's command, all were then questioned in turn by the Great Chartophylax on the findings of the synod, which resulted in a unanimous approval and a vote of confidence in Palamas. (2) The final result was the degradation of the metropolitans of Ephesus and Canus and the condemnation and excommunication of all who shared

(1) Ibid., Col. 150.

(2) Ibid., Col. 187.

(3) Ibid., Col. 151.

their opinions. Mount Athos had sent representatives to the council who added the testimony of the Holy Mountain.

"We declare Palamas to have been found to have written nothing contradictory to Scripture, and we not only hold him superior to all his opponents, as is shown in the earlier Synodal Tome, but we declare him to be the champion and defender and auxiliary of the Faith." (1)

The Little echo is to be found in this smooth document of the stern and clamorous dissension revealed by the pages of Gregoras. There is no suggestion of any schism within the Palamite party, yet the point at which Cantacuzenus deflected the discussion from the terms used by Palamas was presumably the climax of an episode described with Gregoras's best irony: on the reading of extracts from their leader's works, several bishops protested against his phrasology and a noisy and acrimonious debate ensued, while Gregoras and his disciples sat quietly looking on, finding peculiar satisfaction in this break in the Palamite ranks.

The personalities taking part also emerge from the personal, prejudiced report of Gregoras. Cantacuzenus fidgeting in his chair during Gregoras's lengthy oration, yet begging him with perfect politeness to continue, is more realistic than the puppet figure of Palamas who everywhere comes in as

(1) Ibid. Col. 191.

The contrary is a time for fasting, and he passes gravely for vitriolic abuse. He is merely a doll dangled by the emperor with no power of its own; a wretched recluse, unused to public speaking who stammered and lost his place; like a vulture who prefers rotten to wholesome meat he invariably turns to heresy, so that although only a little of his works could be read (it was so wearisome) it was of no consequence -- the taint of heresy was to be found in every part as surely as all the sea is salt. As for his patristic references, Gregoras only allows that they were vague and unspecified. "But to my mind, the only Father he had in mind was himself, for no one else has ever professed such opinions." (1)

But it is Gregoras himself whose attitude emerges most clearly. It is characterised chiefly by chagrin at the place Palamas, and the hesychast doctrines, now held at the imperial court, and by an exalted sense of martyrdom and the suffering of persecution for justice sake. Thus, the bearing of Gregoras's supporters is described with dignity and pathos. On the morning of the opening session, the whole crowd gathers at Gregoras's house, comprising young students and venerable greybeards. Going in procession to the palace, this touching assembly is kept waiting in the courtyard while Palamas is feasting with the emperor indoors. To Gregoras on

(1) Greg. Hist.

the contrary it is a time for fasting, and he paces gravely to and fro with his companions quietly talking, "like Socrates and the Academicians."

But his report, though vivid, is inexact. Not only does he misrepresent arguments, but he mentions only three sessions instead of five and twenty-two bishops instead of over thirty. Yet for the events immediately following the council he is the chief source of information, for it was he who continued to lead the opposition to Palamas. He refused to accept the rulings of the council, and was active in spreading reports of what he considered its injustice. It was thus that he forced Cantacuzenus into taking more drastic action against him than forbidding him to leave his own house. He allowed his animosity to Palamas to get the better even of his typical Byzantine patriotism, and wrote to the Churches of Thessalonica and Cyprus, independently urging them to cut themselves off from the participation of Constantinople, which was tainted with the disease of heresy. (1) He wrote similar letters to his nephew and correspondent George Legistes, and to Theodoros. It seems that Gregory was bent on ruining himself in the cause he had at heart. He was imprisoned in the monastery of Chios, and forbidden to write or receive letters, and here he had to stay for the next four

(1) Greg. Hist. II, 23, 33. (Vol. II, p. 1013)

(2) Cont. Hist. IV, 23. (Vol. III, p. 171)

years or so, occupying himself with writing the later part of his "History," against Cantacuzenus, and taking a righteously malevolent pleasure in the news that reached him, through his private channels of NEBYGHASH AFTER 1351 dealing forams of his enemy. (1)

As the humiliations of the Genoese war, and his unconventional foreign alliances gradually lost Cantacuzenus his supporters from 1351-1355, he needed the support of the monks more than ever. His action after the Council of 1351 was restricted to the degradation of the metropolitans of Ephesus and Canos and the imprisonment of others of their party, (1) but Nicephorus Gregoras was allowed to go free. However, his arrest became an act of political necessity when he allowed his antipathy to Palamism to get the better even of his typical Byzantine patriotism, and wrote to the Churches of Trebizond and Cyprus, intemperately urging them to cut themselves off from the patriarchate at Constantinople, which was tainted with the disease of heresy. (2) He wrote similar letters to his admirer and correspondent George Lapithus, and to Thessalonica. It seems that Gregoras was bent on ruining himself in the cause he had so much at heart. He was imprisoned in the monastery of Chora, and forbidden to write or receive letters, and here he had to stay for the next four

(1) Greg. Hist. 1b. XXI, 13. (Vol. II, p. 1013)
(2) Cant. Hist. IV, 23. (Vol. III, p. 171)

years or so, occupying himself with writing the later part of his "History," against Cantacuzenus, and taking a righteously malevolent pleasure in the news that reached him, through his private channels of information, of the declining fortunes of his enemy. (1)

For various factors were preparing in these years which gave hope to the anti-Palamites that their cause might still prevail. John Palaeologus was known to resent Cantacuzenus's tutorship and it was expected that he would free himself from it as soon as possible, but John was by birth and upbringing unsympathetic to Palamas, whose doctrine was so remote from western thought, with which he was familiar through his mother, Anne of Savoy and her entourage. Cantacuzenus on the other hand, began to push his claims further, and although his early policy had been to occupy the throne himself but not to interfere with the succession, and he had been careful to see that the names of the Palaeologi had been read out with his own on the acclamations, it now became clear that his intention was to found an Imperial House. His son Matthew put forward a demand for a share in the Government; he took up arms and captured several fortresses, probably with his father's connivance. (2) The patriarch Callistus who refused

(1) Greg. Hist. Bks. XXIII-XXIX.

(2) ibid. XXVII (Vol. III, p. 166)

to consecrate Matthew as Emperor was deposed, and Philotheus appointed in his place, who accomplished the ceremony in the spring of 1354. (1) Matthew's name was now included with Cantacuzenus's and Palaeologus's was left out, and the despotate of Mistra was created as an appanage for Matthew. (2) This decision seems to have been forced on Cantacuzenus by his growing unpopularity which seriously threatened the security of his position.

What most incurred popular odium was his alliance with the infidel Turks. (3) He was not in this respect the first to introduce them into Europe. They had penetrated fifty years before and had become quite common, sometimes featuring as allies of the Byzantines, more often united with Catalans or Serbs against them. But Cantacuzenus went to unheard of lengths in his connection with these handy mercenaries, marrying his daughter Theodora to the Emir Orkhan; (4) while Constantinople was further scandalised by the popular report that a considerable offering sent by the Metropolitan of Russia for the restoration of St. Sophia, which had fallen into disrepair, was deflected into the pocket of Cantacuzenus's

(1) Cant. Hist. IV, 37. (Vol. III, pp. 270-272; p. 275)

(2) Cant. Hist. IV, 37. (II, p. 270).

(3) Greg. Hist. XXIX, 11. (Vol. III, p. 243).

(4) Cant. Hist. III. (Vol. II, pp. 684-685)

rapacious son-in-law. (1) Gregoras's black picture of the Emperor's insensibility to the sufferings of the Christian victims of Turkish cruelty, (2) probably represents the popular view. That Cantacuzenus was conscience-stricken about allowing Christians to be taken into slavery by the Turks he himself tells us, saying that he heard the Patriarch's rebuke of his conduct and received it as the voice of God. (3) In the long speech of protest and self-justification which Gregoras represents Palaeologus as making to the Basiliessa Irene Cantacuzenus, and which expresses Gregoras's own feelings about Cantacuzenus, the young man, while making this point about the Turks, is obviously embarrassed by the fact that his own mother had used them as mercenaries in the 1341-47 war. This however he blames on Cantacuzenus whose action provoked the war. Palaeologus also raises a personal grievance -- the refusal of Cantacuzenus to allow him to share in the government and his continuing to treat him as a child despite his majority. (4)

(1) Greg. ibid. XXVIII (III, pp. 199-201) Palaeologus entered

(2) ibid., XXVII, 20. (Vol. III, p. 160) 1341. Cantacuzenus

(3) Cant. ibid. the situation; as usual, his own version

(4) Greg. Hist. XXVII (Vol. III, pp. 160-168)

(1) ibid. (p. 168)

(2) ibid. XXVII.

note on the Basiliessa.

In spite of Gregoras, it does not seem that Palaeologus cherished a deep hatred of his father-in-law, but his resentment of this treatment and of his exclusion in favour of Matthew drove him to open opposition as soon as support could be found. The opportunity was taken by the closely-observant rival of Byzantium, Serbia, whose Kral made an alliance with John Palaeologus, who was to divorce Helen Cantacuzenus in order to marry Stephen Duchan's sister. (1) Then, going to Tenedos, Palaeologus contacted the Genoese Gattilusto, who was ready to help with ships and men, in return for the hand of Palaeologus's sister with Lesbos for dowry. (2) There seems to have been a more regular alliance with Genoa proper -- as they had already shown in the earlier civil wars of the century. The Latins no less than the Serbs were alive to any such occasion of preying upon the weakened Empire. Moreover they would be glad to be rid of Cantacuzenus whose sea and trade policy was too enlightened to please them and was aimed at damaging their interests.

With the help of the Genoese galleys, Palaeologus entered Constantinople one night in the winter of 1354. Cantacuzenus decided to accept the situation; at least, his own version

(1) ibid (p. 168)

(2) ibid. XXXVII.

~~note on the Genoese.~~

is that he abdicated of his own free will and entered the monastery of the Saviour where he became the monk Joasaph, his wife Irene also taking the veil. (1)

At this point, Hesychasm seemed to be out of the picture. The new Emperor was uninterested in theology, Cantacuzenus and Gregoras were secluded in convents and Palamas was a captive of the Turks. Yet in 1355 another full dress debate took place along the familiar lines, which brought all these persons on the scene with the addition of the Papal Legate, Archbishop Paul of Smyrna, later named Latin Patriarch of Constantinople. Several factors combined to keep the controversy alive in spite of the finality of the decisions of 1351.

The first was the persistence of the anti-Palamites, whose fortunes had taken a turn for the better with the abdication of Cantacuzenus. Nicephorus Gregoras was released immediately from prison, and his first thought was the possibility of influencing the new Emperor to reverse the ecclesiastical rulings of his predecessor. Once more he is found at the Court, denouncing the presumption of the Hesychasts with more vehemence than ever and the use of his favourite argumentum

(1) Cant. IV. 52. (Vol. III, pp. 878-880)

(2) Cant. Hist. III (Vol. III, p. 250)

(3) Cant. Hist. III

ad hominem: (1) "I put it to him how the anger of God had been moved against Cantacuzenus, how he had been ignominiously deposed and held in contempt by even the vilest of men. I encouraged him by this to restore the patristic authority, now broken down, of the Church of God, if he desired to avoid falling into the same predicament." (2)

According to Gregoras it was fear of his influence at the Court which alarmed Cantacuzenus into raising the money to ransom Palamas from the Turks, to return to defend the Hesychast doctrine. (3) Gregoras's execrations of his personal enemy Palamas leap into the realm of the fantastic. He pretends that none of his friends would have thought it worth while to ransom Palamas except if it furthered their own ends. The sufferings and maltreatment he received at the hands of the Turks Gregoras chooses to interpret as a punishment from Heaven, (to be distinguished presumably, from his own "suffering of persecution for justice' sake," which is how he represents his trials). He holds up his hands in horror that Palamas should boast about such shameful experiences,

(1) of. Hist. XXVI (Vol. III, p. 106) Cantacuzenus's failures are due to his unorthodoxy: "If a man has heresy in his heart he is thereby cut off from God who cannot guide him, so that he is liable to act foolishly and consequently his affairs will not prosper."

(2) Greg. Hist. XXIX (Vol. III, p. 252)

(3) ibid. loc. cit.

which should rather debar him from the priesthood and from
 those great which both sides grew fanatically hot and personal
 respectable society. Beneath this abuse however there emerge
 certain definite facts. (1) Palamas was on his way to Byzan-
 tium from Thessalonica when the ship on which he was travelling
 was captured by Turkish pirates, who were subjects of the
 Ottoman emir Orkhan, the son-in-law of Cantacuzenus. He was
 at first brought before Orkhan's eldest son, and held there as
 a slave. His books, some of which were of his own writing
 were thrown into the sea. However, being sent on to Orkhan
 himself he received better treatment. Orkhan chose to play
 the role of a courteous host, delighted by the presence of so
 distinguished a theologian; he arranged discussions between
 Palamas and Mohammedan theologians, to which he listened with
 great interest. Palamas in his own works refers to his preach-
 ing and disputation among the Turks, seeing his captivity as
 an opportunity of such missionary activity. However, his
 return to Constantinople was arranged by Cantacuzenus, and he
 was once more able to join in the discussions at the Palace.
 Gregoras's desire for another disputation was thwarted by Helen
 Palaeologus. Gregoras thought she wished to avert a defeat
 for her father's cause; (2) if she feared the re-opening of a

(1) *Ibid.*, pp. 227-235.

(2) *Greg. Hist.* XXIX. (Vol. III, p. 253)

taken from the throne by an expedition sponsored by the Papacy
 theme over which both sides grew fanatically hot and personal
 enmities were strong, one can see her point of view. She
 herself was both loyal to her father and friendly to Nicephorus
 Gregoras, with whom she enjoyed discussing philosophy.

There was however another factor, represented by the
 Latin bishop Paul of Smyrna. He claimed a mandate from Rome
 to enquire into the hesychast doctrine, and it is the intro-
 duction of the name of Rome, which gives the last phase of the
 controversy its rather different, wider setting. Paul of
 Smyrna in 1355 and Prochorus Cydones thirteen years later are
 names which represent different aspects of the challenge of
 western ways of thinking to the Hesychast tradition.

Gregoras gives some account of the circumstances which
 led up to the incident of 1355. (1) He says that

"a Latin Bishop came to visit Palaeologus as a
 friend of his. He was a cultivated man, well-
 versed in the scriptures and theology, and during
 his visit he let it be generally known that he
 was curious about what he had heard of Palamism,
 for among the Latins much talk and speculation
 went on about the Queen of Cities."

This indication of such friendly relations between a
 Byzantine Emperor and a western ecclesiastic is at first sight
 surprising. But Paul's was an eastern see -- Smyrna had been

(1) ibid., XXIX. (Vol. III, pp. 263-264)

(2) Villem M. Let. III, p. 41. Constantinople (Hist. III, 52,
Vol. II, pp. 33-34) contains Anna's close links with the
 Palace School.

taken from the Turks by an expedition sponsored by the Papacy in 1344, an event which had much impressed the Byzantines, and although he was an Italian, papal policy is indicated in the fact that he understood Greek perfectly, and that his successor, Simon, in the see of Thebes, was a Greek named Atoumanos, a native of Constantinople. (1) John Paleologus on the other hand was by birth and upbringing sympathetic to the Latins. Anne of Savoy his mother, although she had formally to renounce Catholicism on her marriage with Andronicus had remained secretly loyal to her former faith. She brought with her to Constantinople a numerous train of Latins, and kept up a correspondence with the Papacy, so that her devotion continued to be fed and caused her to end her days clothed in the habit of the Third Order of St. Francis. (2) John's own attitude is apparent from his career, although, less brilliant and less articulate than either his predecessor or his son and successor Manuel, John did not leave writings as they did clarifying his position. Finlay's comment on this Emperor's western leanings reaches the high water mark of disdain in a scornful narrative:

"He commenced a hypocritical endeavour to delude the Latins into fighting for his cause by pretending that the Greeks were ready to sacrifice

(1) Mercati. Studi e Testi. Vol. 30, p. 26.

(2) Viller, N. loc. cit. p. 41. Cantacuzenus (Hist. III, 82, Vol. II, pp. 634-635) mentions Anne's close links with the Friars Minor.

the only thing for which they had, during the preceding century, displayed any attachment -- namely, their superstitions." (1)

In his work on John V. O. Halecki (2) has built up an impressive and fascinating narrative out of what seemed capable to the Victorians of being dismissed in a sentence. His researches led him to decide that John's friendly attitude to the Church of Rome was sincere if his plans impracticable. (3) Thus with his personal leanings backed by his political links with the Latins, it is not so surprising to find John V. inviting a representative of the Pope to look into the question of Hesychasm.

But there was a good deal more than the accident of a sovereign of Latin sympathies to draw Papacy and Empire together. The presence of Paul of Smyrna at the discussion of 1355 is not hazardous, and its significance can only be realised if it is seen in its context. (4) Relations between Rome and Constantinople had been broken off for some forty years after

(1) History of Greece, Vol. III, p. 463.

(2) Un Empereur de Byzance à Rome: vingt ans de travail pour l'union des églises et pour la défense de l'empire d'orient. (1355-1375)

(3) op. cit. pp. 39-44, etc.

(4) This account is based on those of Halecki (op. cit.) and M. Viller: "La question de l'union des églises entre grecs et latins depuis le Concile de Lyons jusqu'à celui de Florence, Rev. d'hist. eccles. 1921, pp. 260-306, 515-533; 1922, pp. 20-61.

the failure of Michael VIII to impose the union of Lyons. But from the end of Andronicus II's reign a continual stream of ambassadors passed to and fro. The anathema launched against Michael VIII and the proclamation of a crusade against him had seemed to commit the Papacy to a recognition of the Latin claimants to the Empire and an approval of the expedition of 1204 (in spite of Innocent III's excommunication of the participants), and it was thereby linked in the popular mind with the searing memory of that humiliation. Yet in the fourteenth century a different world situation had arisen, and under the threat of the Turks, the powers of Christendom once more drew together. In reading the chronicle of these unfruitful advances it is impossible not to regret that the sense of emergency was not however strong enough to overcome the rigid principles which, since discarded as inessential, were then the chief cause for the continuing separation of the Churches. Successive Popes insisted that the Greeks give up their liturgical rite and include the Filioque clause in the Symbol. The Dominican Humbert of Romans at the Council of Lyons was a voice crying in the wilderness when he advocated the "tolerance" of the eastern liturgy among the orthodox. (1) He also wanted the spread of knowledge of the eastern Church and its traditions. That Papal policy, if in some ways it showed an insensibility

(1) Mansi. Concilia. t. XXIV., Col. 129.

to orthodox feelings, was moving in the direction of these enlightened advocates of persuasion rather than force, is shown by the attempt, through Paul of Smyrna, to understand the Hesychast movement. The schools of oriental languages founded at Paris by the initiative of Raymond Lull, were not in a very flourishing condition; the need of a different psychological approach was realised but never effectually acted upon. Yet if the schemes suggested by Pierre Dubois for the conversion of the Greeks struck contemporaries as wildly impracticable, his was no isolated view of the urgency of preserving the Byzantine Empire as a Christian bulwark against the Turks. His remedy was a repetition of 1204 for the benefit of his master Charles of Valois, in whose favour the "usurper," "Peryalogus" is to be deposed. (1)

But the descendants of Charles were too preoccupied with the war with England to have time for pursuing their ancestor's eastern schemes, while the Popes had enough to do with defending the remains of the Latin States like Cilicia. In these circumstances a more friendly attitude is discernible, and the hysterical outbursts of irresponsible individuals like Petrarch, for whom "the existence of Constantinople is as

(1) v. De Recuperatione Terrae Sanctae.

(2) see Recherches sur l'histoire de Cilicie, 7, 35.

(3) Revue de l'histoire de Cilicie.

great an evil as the loss of Jerusalem," (1) or like the old-fashioned author of the "Directorium" who advocated extermination or persecution, were disregarded by the Papacy. That the Turks threatened West as well as East was realized at the Curia long before Bagazet's boast, that he would stable his horses on the altars of St. Peter's, had made this explicit. Already Benedict XI wrote, "What grave peril, what immense disaster -- which God forbid -- would result (from the fall of Constantinople) to our Mother the Roman Church and to the Christian Church as a whole." (2) This attitude percolated to individuals, and led to the expeditions of Bouccicault in Manuel II's reign, who considered that defence of the Eastern Empire was a work of merit. (3) It was, however, the Pope who remained the head of the crusade. When the Emperors required assistance it was there that they turned. The great Latin trading interests whose representatives thronged Constantinople not only Venetians and Genoese but Spaniards from Barcelona, Majorca, Valencia and Tortosa, Italians from Pisa and Ancona, Frenchmen from Narbonne and Marseilles -- these pursued their own interests. (4) The merchants were "business men first

(1) Petrarch. *Rerum seniliun* I, ii. ep. 1.

(2) Raynaldus. *Annals*, 1304, n. 25.

(3) see Bouccicault's *Livre des Falets*. I, 35.

(4) Heyd. *Hist. du commerce du levant*.

and Christians after" who had to be threatened by Pope Martin V. with the severest spiritual penalties for participating in the Turkish trade in slaves of the Greek Christian rite. (1) Yet the idea of the Crusade was not yet anachronistic, and Western Europe recognised in theory the right of the Pope to call its princes to the defence of Christendom. It was the Pope who named the leader of the expedition, banded the nations together, fixed the numbers of ships and men to be furnished, levied tithes to cover expenses, and conferred indulgences and privileges on those who took the Cross. The idea of an alliance with the Eastern Empire against the common Turkish enemy appealed to most of the Popes as furthering the great cause they had at heart of the re-union of the Churches.

The Byzantines on the other hand were forced by circumstances to consider the overtures of the Latin Church, or indeed to make overtures themselves, for in the Papacy lay their chief hope of the military assistance, that as time went on was more greatly needed. In 1310 Ramon Muntaner of the Catalan Grand Company wrote:

(1) "In truth the Turks have conquered so much that their armies have come almost before Constantinople and there is no more between them than an arm of the sea not more than two miles across. They

(1) Raynaldus. Ann. 1425. N. 20. 791) who says that after the

(5) PG. CL IV. Col. 961.

drew their swords and threatened the Emperor
 Judge in what desperate plight he is." (1)

The Catalan Grand Company had helped to introduce the Turks into Europe by making alliances with them, and in 1313 after a defeat on which his diadem and sceptre had been left in the Catalan hands, the Emperor had been glad to purchase their withdrawal to the West. (2) After 1333 there remained in Asia Minor only a few Greek cities; in 1336 Gallipoli was occupied by Orkhan, and in 1365 the fall of Adrinople laid open the road to Constantinople. After the crusade of Nicopolis the rest of the imperial possessions were lost. "Of the vast Empire of the Romans there remained only two cities of Thrace, a part of the Peloponnese and a few islands." (3) The dire poverty to which the State was reduced (4) made it no longer possible for the Emperors to rely on mercenary service on a large scale; they could see their territory wasting away under these fearful ravages as if in the grip of a chronic fever — it is Demetrius Cydones' expression. ὡςτις κρυπτοῦ πυρίδος (5) and they negotiated for a crusade as a desperate remedy.

(1) Chronique de R. B. ed. Buchon, III, c. 202, p. 140.

(2) Greg. Hist. VII, 8. (Vol. I, p. 259)

(3) Geostus Pletko. P.G. CLx.c.860 A.

(4) Greg. Hist. XV. 2. (Vol. II, p. 791) who says that after the civil war of 1341-7, the treasury held only dust.

(5) PG. CL IV. Col. 961.

Yet the memory of 1204 made such assistance feared as much as hoped for, and one of the recurrent motives behind Byzantine appeals to the Papacy is anxiety at the news of a new crusade and desire to avert a possible deflection of it against the Empire. The series of negotiations really began with Pope Gregory IX who inaugurated the new papal policy by his relations with the Greeks of Nicaea, and Michael VIII's intention then was to forestall a western campaign in the east. Similarly in 1337 the envoys of Andronicus arrived just as Aimuri of Harbonne, the lieutenant of Charles IV of France was about to set sail. The same tactics were even more cleverly used by Cantacuzenus who in 1344 frustrated an expedition under Theodore of Montferrat by Latin intercession with the Pope; while in 1350 the same Emperor sent an Embassy to Avignon on the news of a great expedition preparing under Charles IV. It is thus that we find John V. beseeching the Pope in 1364 to warn the Latins not to molest his subjects during the Crusade, and Demetrius Cydones labouring against a great scepticism to persuade his compatriots of the good intentions of the leader of the latest expedition, Amadeus of Savoy, the cousin of the Emperor.

It is in the light of this situation that John Palaeologus's relations with Paul of Smyrna are to be understood. The

Archbishop disliked what he heard of Hesychasm; and it seems quite possible that in order to gain his good offices and papal support, the Emperor would have liked to take action against Palamas. So Gregoras asserts. The speech with which Palaeologus opened the proceedings at the debate is in Gregoras's account a conciliatory one. Explaining that the discussion has been called for the immediate purpose of enlightening their foreign guest, (1) the Emperor declares his previous intention of looking into this very question of Hesychasm:

"I meant to call a Council and correct the evil. But as circumstances made this impossible, now you are here, I wish to get at the truth of the matter, for it did so happen that when I first came across the book about which all this controversy rages, in Thessalonica, I did not understand its import. But I fear the Divine punishment for having, at a Council a short time later, unwillingly given my signature under coercion." (2)

The silence of Palaeologus after the debate, on which he refused to arbitrate, Gregoras explains by his consideration for the feelings of Cantacuzenus. Possibly he really would have liked to condemn Palamas if it had meant placating Paul

(1) *Greg. Hist.* XXX (Vol. III, p. 269). From this speech it is clear that the bishop's presence was not clandestine, as Viller asserts (*Rev. d'hist. eccles.* 1921, p. 304) but openly proclaimed.

(2) Palaeologus's name follows that of Cantacuzenus appended to the Tome of 1351. *Nansi.* 26. Col. 196.

and unscrupulous. Writing to Pope and Cardinals in 1370 (1) of Smyrna, for he was completely dominated by this vigorous and purposeful personality.

Paul of Smyrna devoted his life to working for the re-union of the Churches. The Treaty of 1355 by which John V. promised the conversion of the Greek Church to Rome in return for military help, is made with the Archbishop as representing the Pope, at the Palace of Blachernae. It is drawn up in both Latin and Greek. The transference of Paul to the See of Thebes in 1357 removed him temporarily from the scene of his most active operations but ten years later he returned as Latin patriarch of Constantinople. Even if the Treaty of 1355 shows a naive credulity in the case of Latinising the orthodox, its specific mention of military assistance shows a realisation of what Barlaam had stressed in 1339 -- the necessity of gaining the goodwill of Eastern Christians by co-operation against the Turk. He himself has left an account of his researches into Hesychasm, which were not confined to the discussion of 1355, and show the beginnings of a more subtle psychological approach. However, he found himself completely at sea, and although he took up his discussions again on his return to the Capital in 1366, this time entering into correspondence with Cantacuzenus himself, he found the doctrine of the distinction in the Godhead and the uncreated light of Thabor unintelligible

(1) *ibid.*, vol. 537, a, b.

(2) *ibid.*, 537, b.

and unsympathetic. Writing to Pope and Cardinals in 1370 (1) he says:

"since there is nothing better than to know the truth and lest the truth of the matter be lost to posterity we considered it our duty to commit to writing the discussions which took place between the Emperor Cantacuzenus and myself Since, ourselves living at Constantinople we desired to know the truth about this doctrine, when we were sent as ambassadors to the Emperor Palaeologus by the late supreme pontiff, we attempted to find out, but we could understand nothing of the terms of the things talked about thence were impelled to provoke them by hard words and stimulate them to argument. At last the Emperor Cantacuzenus himself described their point of view for me." (2)

However, these conversations only confirmed him in his suspicions — Palamas's was an "impious doctrine." (3)

It is not to the Latins that we must look for understanding of the other half of Christendom. There was, however, an important minority in Constantinople in the 14th century who represented a Latinising movement within the orthodox Church itself. It was not only John Palaeologus who among the Emperors was sincerely desirous of an approach between the two Churches. Cantacuzenus, a subtle theologian, shows no bitterness against the Church of the West in his writings. In

(1) Epistola Pauli patriarchae Constantinopolitani ad beatissimum papam et eius cardinales PG CLIV. Col. 835-838.

(2) ibid., Col. 837 a. b.

(3) ibid., 837, b.

spite of his adherence to Palamas, his correspondence with the Papacy is characterised by his usual courtesy, but his expressions are rare among Byzantines when he addresses the Pope as "Your Holiness" or "Holy Father" (1) and his extravagant professions of concern for the re-union of the Churches seem to have had a sincere basis. He desired a General Council: (2) it is this suggestion, a recurrent feature in Greek embassies, which above all indicates their sincerity, for no doubt Cantacuzenus's own attitude was the same as that of the patriarch appointed by him, Philotheus Cozzinus, who in a letter to the metropolitan of Ochrida in 1367, expressed his conviction that, in such a discussion, it would be the Greek party which would certainly triumph. (3) The theological significance of these embassies was summed up by Gregory the Protosyncellus, in a reply to Mark of Ephesus:

"We do not diverge from the Latins because they teach absurdities and blasphemies. If they were outrageous and blasphemous in their teaching, our Church and our Emperors would not have sent so many embassies to ask for a Council. With heretics, once they have left the Church, the orthodox have no concern." (4)

(1) see Bolvin. Notes to Cant.'s History, PG. CL1 Col. 27-28.

(2) Cant. Hist. IV. 9.

(3) see Halecki, O., op. cit. p. 141.

(4) PG. CLX c. 160.

But powerful causes made the support of Emperors incalculable: the memory of Michael VIII, who had to be buried under cover of darkness for fear of the hatred of the populace, (1) remained a warning to westernisers, "latinophrones." In 1339 Parliament declared at Avignon,

"the Emperor dare not show publicly his desire to be united with you: if he declared it a great number of princes and people, in the fear that he would only repeat Michael VIII's experience, would seek an opportunity to put him to death." (2)

That popular feeling could be roused by any suggestion of Latin sympathies is indicated in Cantacuzenus's account of Apocaucus's scheme to destroy his former patron Anne of Savoy by intercepting her correspondence with Pope Clement VI and reading it out in a public assembly. (3)

The letter of Paul of Smyrna points to the existence of another less official element at Byzantium, which was in sympathy with the Latins:

"For certain Greeks, (nonnulli graeci), had made known to the Lord Pope Urban V and his Cardinals that the late Emperor Cantacuzenus and the Greek Church had introduced into its teaching a theory of higher and lower divinities by which they asserted that the qualities of the Godhead were distinct from each other" (4)

(1) Greg. Hist. VIII.

(2) Discourse before Benedict XII. PG. CLI.

(3) Cant. Hist. III, 57 (p. 656)

(4) PG. CLIV, col. 835.

These cannot have been members of Gregoras's circle, which was narrowly opposed to Latins as much as Palamites. Indeed, it is clear from the list of writers against Palamas that these are of two clearly distinct kinds. The conservative party, led by Gregoras, Akyndinus and others, took its stand on the maintenance of tradition.

There was however a minority among intellectuals in Constantinople which favoured the idea of a re-union with Rome, and showed a most unusual interest and understanding of contemporary western theology. Demetrius Cydones, who actually became a convert to Latin Catholicism was the leader of this movement, but its roots went deeper into Byzantine life than this would suggest, and were originally even connected with Hesychasm, in the person of individuals. Such was the Emperor Cantacuzenus, who took such delight in Demetrius's Greek versions of the works of Aquinas that he wished to transcribe them with his own hand, and encouraged this friend of his, whose father had done him such service, to go on with his labours, providing the necessary funds himself for the employment of copyists. There were moreover many private individuals whom the desperate plight of the Empire and the approaches thereby made necessary to western Christendom, had caused to consider in a more detached and curious spirit the development

of thought in the Latin Church. These are found addressed by their names in the letters of Popes of the fourteenth century (1) -- the Asanes, the Metochites, the Lascarids, are known at Avignon as examples of an enlightenment and open-mindedness which possibly the Latins had little right to expect since the episode of 1204 had set the seal on their reputation for barbarism.

Yet when set up against the Hesychast tradition, this Latinising tendency was found to be utterly opposed to it. Of the work of the notable scholastic anti-Palamite Manuel Calecas, Père Jugie says that faced with it the elusive insubstantial theories of Palamas disappear like dew before the sun. (2) It would seem that one system killed the other and they ought not to be opposed but considered as alternatives and each taken on its merits. However an attempt was made in the fourteenth century to submit Hesychasm to the fire of dialectic and its failure marks the end of controversy.

The first to oppose Western to Eastern methods in this matter had been Barlaam but the proceedings of the Council of 1341 had shown a unanimous refusal on the part of the Byzantines to countenance his methods for a moment: he was not allowed to develop his charges and condemned simply on his attacks

(1) Malecki, O., op. cit.

(2) Jugie, M., op. cit.

translations and revisions of foreign works he was hampered by on the monks. But Barlaam had left disciples, of whom Demetrius Cydones is the best known. (1) When he heard of Barlaam's visit to Constantinople in 1346 as the emissary of Pope Clement VI, to negotiate with the Empress Anne of Savoy over the question of re-union, Cydones at once set out with other friends of the Calabrian, for the Capital, but was stopped by hearing that Barlaam had left hastily on the approach of Cantacuzenus. Presumably he had some mandate to discuss military assistance for Anne of Savoy -- Clement VI was ever suspicious of Cantacuzenus' usurper -- or possibly was sent to report on the situation. At any rate he was in no position to be favourably received by Cantacuzenus. Demetrius had been anxious to see him to discuss his recent conversion to Roman Catholicism, for he himself was in the throes of a similar crisis. Disappointed in his best hope, he entered into correspondence with Barlaam, and it was at this point that he wrote his letter setting out the Greek and Latin reasons for their respective opinions on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. It was not long before he did become a Catholic but this happened through his activities as a translator. He acted as Secretary to the Emperor Cantacuzenus and having to deal with many

(1) On Cydones, v. Jugie, H. "Des, Cyd. et la theologie latine d' Byzance." *RO.* 1928. pp. 385-407; his Correspondence, ed. G. Comelli; R. Guilland, art. on D.C. in the Correspondence of N. Gregoras, pp. 325-332.

S.M.A. 1927, pp. 49-50.

transactions and petitions of foreigners he was hampered by the low standard of the interpreters he had to rely on. He therefore set himself to learn Latin which he did under the direction of a Friar from the Dominican colony of Pera. One day his teacher gave him a work of Aquinas as exercise in translation. Demetrius says that he became fascinated by the content beyond its language, and set himself to translate the whole of the Summa Contra Gentiles. It was this work which so pleased Cantacuzenus. But Cydones, continuing his researches into Latin Theology, embarked on translations of Augustine and the Summa Theologica, and himself became a fervent Thomist. He was not the first in such enterprise -- Maximus Planudes had preceded him with Greek versions of Augustine's De Trinitate and the De Consolatione Philosophiae of Boethius. But after Cydones came several who were influenced by him -- Nilus Cabasilas, Joseph Byemius and George Scholarias. (1)

This movement spread to Athos itself, for Demetrius's brother Prochorus was living there as a monk. (2) He entered with enthusiasm into his brother's work and himself learnt Latin and also undertook translations -- of Aquinas, Augustine, Boethius and Peter Lombard. The work De Essentia et operatione, which is drawn from the Summa of Aquinas, was falsely

(1) See Salaville, S. "Un Thomiste a' Byzance au XIXe. G. Scholarios" EO. 1924, p. 135.

(2) v. Mercati, G. "Notizie di Procolo e Demetrio Cydono" Studi e testi, 56; Camelli. Dem. Cyd. al Fratello Prochoro, S.B.Z. 1927, pp. 49-55.

the essence and energies of God was found to be as variously attributed to Akyndinus. It also is Prochorus Cydones' work. (1)

This work shows Prochorus a true disciple of Aquinas. He begins by remarking that those who before him at Byzantium have treated of the question of the essence and operation of God have neglected to distinguish the different senses of the word "operation," *ἐνέργεια*. This uncertainty at the outset explains their lack of assurance in the thick of the battle. (2)

The profession of such sentiments alarmed the Patriarch Philotheus Coccinus who saw in it a resurgence of the spirit of Barlaam. In fact he was astounded at such audacity. The devil spoke through the mouth of Prochorus, and indeed Barlaam had never gone so far: Philotheus who had been deposed by John Palaeologus in 1355 and replaced by his predecessor Callistus (deposed by Cantacuzenus), had been reconciled to Palaeologus on Callistus's death, through the good offices of Demetrius Cydones. But his zeal for the cause of Hesychasm was not to be deflected by any consideration of personal obligation. He began to take action against Prochorus. In April 1368 a synod met to enquire into his case. His teaching on

(1) PG. CII.

(2) PG CII. Col. 1192-1193.

the essence and energies of God was found to be at variance with that of Palamas and heretical. He was excommunicated, and the long tome which was drawn up from the proceedings of this Council ends with the decree of the canonisation of Palamas. (1) After his canonisation the cult of "Saint Gregory of Thessalonica" came to hold an important place in eastern Christian life, and at the same time the hesychast doctrines were finally established as an integral part of the official teaching of the orthodox church. It is instructive in this connection to read the reports of XVIIth century Jesuit missionaries in the Levant (1) to whom hesychasm was unfamiliar and abhorrent; almost the chief difficulty which these priests encountered was the popular loyalty to Palamas.

"They (the Jesuits) declared that Gregory Palamas did not deserve the honours which the Greeks paid him on the second Sunday of Lent that he was not the Eagle of Theology but the trumpet of the Gospel but a great blasphemer, as Nicephorus Gregoras tells us in his History; that he ought not to be called the joy of the world and the glory of Paradise as they consider him, but a monster of heresies, as Arcadius asserts and as Demetrius Cydonius declares him to be. In a word, that this Palamas was not the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost, but an atheist, who, maintaining that there were many divinities, recognised none. For this

(1) cited by Hausherr, I. La Méthode d'oraison hésychaste, Introduction, p. 105.

the Greeks fulminated anathemas against our Fathers, saying that we wanted to overturn their faith, and abolish their rite, and although they could not deny what was written in their own books, they would honour Palamas in spite of us"

Not only in this way did hesychasm continue to find expression in the general life of the church. The central part of the hesychast way of life (the stress on contemplation through the constant repetition of the Jesus prayer, the doctrine of the Divine Light, and the insistence that the vision of God is to be attained by every Christian), was not confined to an esoteric band of monks but was adopted even by lay people. Some light is thrown on this movement by a XIXth century Russian source, The Way of a Pilgrim, which is the ingenuous autobiography of a barely literate peasant who went on pilgrimage from monastery to monastery, praying the hesychast prayer, and on his way meeting with countless others who did so, lay persons of high and low degree as well as monks. The Pilgrim's constant and treasured companion was the Philocalia, an anthology of hesychast writings, chosen especially from Symeon the Young and from Palamas by Nicodemus the Hagiorite in the XVIIth century. This peasant was quite aware of the significance of the XIVth century movement, and aware too that that movement had its roots in a past more distant still.

by the cross sight of Islam. Men of action were distracted by projects as vast as CHAPTER V. of world markets or the subjugation of continents, heedless to heed the warning, THE HESYCHAST TRADITION.

"What does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?" The Hesychast, on the other hand, "God is called Light." "To participate in the majestic Divine Energy is to become, in a way, light.... the self for the pure of heart see God, who, Light knows itself, dwells within, and reveals Himself to His lovers."

through silence and prayer, and leading to the vision of God. Crescary Palamas.

But the writings of Gregory Palamas and another element to this movement of revival. Going beyond a simple justification of

"The inner freedom from the practical desire, the release from action and suffering, release from the inner system. And the outer compulsion, yet surrounded By a grace of sense, a white light still and moving" Y. S. Eliot.

of the orthodox tradition of spirituality. It is for this achievement that "St. Gregory of Thessalonica" is considered one of the doctors of the orthodox church, which "Be shelled, eyes with double dark, has seen and find the uncreated light."

In orthodox spirituality, G. H. Hopkins.

Originally, it simply referred to those monks who chose to live a life of solitude, isolated

from the Hesychast movement has a twofold aspect -- spiritual and theological. As a great monastic revival, it pointed to the absolute value of contemplation, at a time when nationalism was beginning to destroy the spiritual unity of western

Christendom, and eastern Christendom was being swallowed up

by the armed might of Islam. Men of action were distracted by projects as vast as the capture of world markets or the subjugation of continents, choosing to forget the warning, "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?" The Hesychast, on the other hand, rejected outward-looking activity as a delusion; for his self knowledge was the end of earthly existence, to be reached through silence and prayer, and leading to the vision of God. But the writings of Gregory Palamas add another element to this movement of revival. Going beyond a simple justification of the Hesychast way of life, they elaborate a whole doctrinal system, drawing out for the first time the theological implications of the orthodox tradition of spirituality. It is for this achievement that "St. Gregory of Thessalonica" is considered one of the doctors of the orthodox church, which has remained strongly attached to his teaching.

In orthodox monasticism, the term "hesychast" has a venerable history. (1) Originally, it simply referred to those monks who chose to live a life of solitude, isolated from a community, or belonging to no community: but from the eleventh century onwards it took on a more specialised

(1) See Bois, J. "Les Hétychastes avant le XIVE siècle." *ibid.* 1901, pp. 1-11.

meaning. However, the method of contemplation inaugurated by Simeon the New Theologian was inherent in orthodox monasticism from its earliest days.

In the Latin west, St. Benedict called the cenobites "the best kind of monks," mentioning the solitaries, but not advising their way of life for most people. In this he was following St. Basil, his frequent source, who in his *Rules* (which it must be remembered were for the most part laid down to meet particular situations, and were therefore not statements of general principles), allows for those with a special vocation to lead the solitary life, but gives his favour to the conventual. (1) He thus came down on the side of *Pachomius* as opposed to Antony, and set the direction of orthodox monasticism for the centuries to come. Yet the continuing attraction for some souls of the eremitic existence is shown by the fifth-century Life of John the Hesychast by St. Cyril of Scythopolis. (2) In this work, the term hesychast is synonymous with contemplative. The hesychast is the solitary monk. John was ordained a bishop, but episcopal publicity was distasteful to him and he retired to the anonymous obscurity of a private cell within the enclosure of the monastery of St. Sabbas in Palestine, leaving it only for

(1) St. Gregory of Nazianzus, Oratio on S. Basil.

(2) Acta SS. t. III. May.

the greater solitude of the desert of Neuka.

The popularity of "hesychasm" was actually threatening the success of conventual life, so that Justinian is found ruling that each monastery is to have not more than a limited number of solitaries. Canon XLI of the Council in Trullo, 692, laid down that those only could become hesychasts who had spent three years in community previously. This was a precaution which had been taken in the case of "John the Hesychast" who had been tried in humility as a servant in the monastery before being allowed to retire to his solitary cell. Thus, hesychasm was considered as a higher degree of the monastic life, reserved to those who had reached an advanced stage of Christian perfection.

This idea is very well illustrated by the *typicon* (1) of St. Athanasius who founded the ^{Lava} on Mt. Athos in the tenth century. He made careful provisions for a limited number of hesychasts -- only five were to be allowed, out of 120 monks. If one died, his place was not to be filled in a hurry but care was to be taken to find a suitable person. They were to be chosen by the hegumen and to remain under

(1) Meyer. Die Haupterkunden für die Geschichte der Athos Klooster.

his authority but to be exempt from the life of the community and its different obligations. They were to live near the convent, and it was to provide them with the necessities of life, and its monks were to show charity to these brethren and look to their needs. A special sanatorium, pleasantly situated near the sea, was set aside for those whose health gave way under the rigours of such a life. Those chosen for it must have proved themselves to have the habit of recollection and prayer, for some aspirants might merely be seeking greater freedom for self-indulgence. Consideration for the welfare of the hesychasts is indeed a prudent policy, for their holy way of life is not only meritorious for themselves, but a source of graces and blessings for the whole community.

The hesychasts were thus from early times an important element in the life of Athos, and frequent mention is made of them in official documents of emperors and patriarchs. One of their patrons was St. Sabbas the son of the Grand Zupan of Serbia, Nemanja, who in 1176 settled at Athos, and after living for a time in successive monasteries, himself built that known as Chilandari, to which he attached several hermitages. Special rulings were laid down concerning these, about their government (by their own epitropos), and their daily life, with its fasting and abstinence and recitation of the Divine Office. (It was at a hesychasteron of this

which controls sensory activity and *ἡσυχία* *ἡσυχία*.
 St. Sabbas that Palamas settled, after retiring from the
 which imposes calm and passivity on the intellect, in order
 Grand Lama). The hesychasts' contribution to the community
 to attain to a state of *ἡσυχία*, the contemplation of
 was not confined to their influence in heaven. St. Basil's
 main objection to the solitary life was that it gave no scope
 the soul must be absorbed in God, *ἡσυχία* *ἡσυχία* and
 for the practical exercise of the virtue of charity, but that
 there were ways of overcoming this obstacle is proved by the
 way in which the hesychasts were frequently called upon to
 use their influence for good. For instance, in the tenth
 century, John Tzimisces wished to put an end to the dissensions
 which constantly marred the annual re-unions of the Athos
 monks. These were suppressed, and in their place there was
 instituted gatherings of (heads of houses) only,
 and solitaries. Thus these hesychasts, although they were
 simple monks, took rank next to the abbots. But among
 the solitaries, those who were further advanced in the special
 practices of "hesychasm" took first place. They formed an
 elite among the monks and were regarded as masters of the
 spiritual life.

What these practices were we find indicated already by
 St. John Climacus in his "Scala Paradisi," where he devotes a
 long chapter to *ἡσυχία* (1) The aim of the contemplative is
 calm of spirit, and he distinguishes between *ἡσυχία* *σώματος*

(1) PG. Vol. 88. Scala Paradisi, gradus XXVII Col. 1096.

which controls sensory activity and ἡσυχία ψυχῆς, which imposes calm and passivity on the intellect, in order to attain to a state of θεωρία, the contemplation of God. He stresses, among the necessary dispositions, that the soul must be absorbed in God, ἐρπύγη πρὸς Κύριον, and must have the gift of tears. These two characteristics are equally stressed by the eleventh century Symeon, but before considering his development of the theory of hesychasm the history of its practice on Athos may be brought up to the advent of Palamas.

It seems that in the XIIIth century, monasticism was almost entirely concentrated on the practical virtues. The object of the Byzantine who became a monk, worldly motives apart, was not as in the west, to join a particular order devoted to some special kind of activity, but to live more perfectly the life of the Gospels by renouncing property and his own will. (1) Within the monasteries, the day was largely divided between recitation of the Divine Office in choir, and manual work. It thus happened that the hesychast principle of contemplation and mental prayer was falling into oblivion. The man responsible for its revival in the fourteenth century

(1) See Hussey, J. M. "Byzantine monasticism." E.H.R. 1938

was Gregory of Sinai. (1) We learn from his biography written by Callistus (for some years patriarch, a hesychast and enemy of Nicephorus Gregoras) that Gregory was born in 1255. A natural contemplative, he was at first distressed to find, after practising the monastic life for some years, that no one seemed competent to advise him beyond the field of the practical virtues. At last he discovered a saintly anchorite named Arsinius, who accepted Gregory as his disciple in the art of contemplation, in which he at least was as well-versed as in asceticism: ἑσπολισμένοι καὶ πρῶτον καὶ δευτέρῳ.

When Gregory himself was experienced enough to teach others, he attracted so many disciples from all over Athos who built cells near him, and visitors who returned to their monasteries to spread his teaching, that conservative opposition was aroused. However, the intervention of the Athos authorities was on the side of Gregory, whose influence only increased. There was nothing original in his teaching -- he simply stressed the importance of inward prayer and recollection, νοεῖν προσευχή, φυλάξιν νοῦς. However the whole movement which culminated in the work of Palamas and counted such men as the saintly Nicholas Cabasilas, seems to have derived its original impetus from Gregory of Sinai. There is little

(1) see Bois, J. "Grégoire le Sinaïte et l'hésychasme à l'Athos au XI^e s." EO. 1901, pp. 65-73.

direct reference to Gregory in the Palamist writings, but there is an interesting passage in Palamas's own work, (1) (his second trilogy against Barlaam "in defence of the hesychasts") describing a representative of this earlier movement, Nicephorus, the author of the "Discourse on the watch and guard of the heart" (2) which shows the influence of Gregory.

"It is especially against the writings on prayer of the holy man Nicephorus that he (Barlaam) unrestrainedly turns his pen, -- of that Nicephorus who bore witness to the truth and was for that condemned to exile in the reign of the first of the Palaeologi, infected with Latin doctrine, of that Nicephorus who, though he came from Italy, (3) rejected the error of the inhabitants of that country and attached himself to our orthodox church, renouncing at once his country and his people, and preferring our country to his own, because it is among us that the truth is to be found. On arrival among us he chose the most austere kind of life, i.e. the solitary and for dwelling the place called the Holy Mountain, situated on the frontiers of earth and heaven. It was in this Athos, nurse of virtue, that he decided to pass his days. It was there that he showed himself a wise novice in submitting to the chosen fathers, and it was not until after he had given them proof for a long time of his humility that he in his turn received from them the secret of the art of arts, i.e. the experience of the life of hesychasm, and became the leader of those who carried on the

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- (1) Text given by Jugie, M. "Note sur le moine hésychaste Nicephore et sa méthode d'oraison." EO 1936, p. 409. Extract from cod. coisal. 100, fol. 157 r-v. Biblioth. nat.
- (2) inserted by Nicodemus the Hagiorite in the Philocalia.
- (3) He was evidently a Calabrian, and Palamas must have an ironical purpose in describing the career of this com-patriot of Barlaam, who turned out very differently.

spiritual combat against the wicked spirits. It was at their request that he made a collection of the counsels of the fathers in order to prepare them for the struggle, to show them the tactics to follow, to warn them of the contest and describe the crown of ^{vic} ~~er~~atery; then, seeing that many of the novices were incapable of mastering their instability of mind, he added to these counsels a method thanks to which it would be possible for them to control without difficulty the vagaries of their imagination."

This passage confirms the usual characteristics of hesychasm -- its rank as an advanced stage of the monastic life, entered into only after a period of testing, the importance of the guidance of experienced elders, and the preliminary fight against the demons, who worked through man's own nature (1) and whose favourite temptation was *accidie*. ἡκγδία (2)

But hesychasm before the XIVth century found its most vital exposition in the writings of Simeon the Young. That there was a conscious tradition deriving from him is shown by a saying recorded of Gregory the Sinaite: "Read constantly the treatises on prayer and hesychasm such as those of Climacus, St. Isaac, St. Maximus, the New Theologian (Symeon) and his disciple ^{ic} ~~X~~ *Nectas Stenatos*." (3) Simeon had read St. John Climacus (4) and he follows in outline the same scheme as

(1) See J. Pésou. *Introd. to the "Centuries" of Maximus the Confessor.* *Sources Chrétiennes* 9, p. 37.

(2) St. John Climacus, *loc. cit.*

(3) PG. t. CL. Col. 1324.

(4) See Hausherr, *Introd. to the "Life of Simeon."* *Oc. XII*, pp. 30 etc.

Climacus and Maximus, but what in them was theoretical and lifeless he transformed into empirical reality. Following Maximus, the different stages in spiritual progress were the *practica*, *theoretica* or *physica*, and *theologia*:

The first stage represented the attainment of "apathy," *ἀπάθεια*, through rigorous asceticism, the aim of which was to subdue the passions and restore the natural order in the soul -- which the eastern tradition unlike Augustine, saw as good in itself, only destroyed by sin. The state of "theoria" marked the beginning of contemplation, which was perfected by "theologia" which brought direct intuitive knowledge of God. The "theologians" were the perfect, who had surpassed the earlier stages: in them the real efficacy of the sacrament of Baptism was felt, and human nature was restored to its primal state of goodness. Simeon himself was less concerned with theoretical distinctions than emphasizing the essential unity of the whole process. (1)

"In proportion as we daily fulfil the commandments of God, shall we be purified, grow radiant, become illumined, be counted worthy of the revelations of the great mysteries." (2) Simeon wrote chiefly sermons, usually addressed to his monks (he was

(1) Russey, J. H. "Church and Learning in the Byzantine Empire," pp. 215-217.

(2) PG.t.CXX. Col. 449.

abbot of St. Thomas of Cp) in a bare and straightforward style, but his Hymns of the Divine Love in which he attempted to translate his mystical experiences use a language of metaphor and simile, charged with emotive significance. In these he sets out to describe the illumination which came to him and which played a predominant part in the biography written by his disciple Nicetas Stematos, (1) who himself claimed to have had similar experiences and wrote spiritual treatises which show him to be the first in time of Simeon's school. (2) It is this doctrine of the Divine Light which above all links Simeon with the XIVth century hesychasts. His connection with them was perceived by the learned Combescius who advised the Bollandists Henschenius and Pabebrochius against including the Life of Simeon by Nicetas in the Acta Sanctorum "qua suspicione laborat, et tanquam os fuerit fons omnis Palamari erroris." (3)

Yet it seems that Simeon's was a simple and orthodox faith (4) and equally, that the source of the Palamist doctrines

(1) cf. Life of Simeon, chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 12.

(2) see sources chrétiennes, 8. Nicetas Stematos "Le Paradis spirituel."

(3) Hausherr, I. "La Méthode d'oraison hésychaste" OC. 1927, p. 112.

(4) Hussey, J. H. op. cit. pp. 202, 212.

is to be referred to him, and to the tradition he represented, and not in the least to Bogomile and Massalian influences as some have believed, following the assertions of their enemies. (1) There were certain similarities of practice which might lead to confusion between two systems which were in reality diametrically opposed, since the Bogomils were dualists while Palamas, with Simeon the Young, believed that the body was not evil and that flesh and spirit could and ought to be re-integrated through Divine grace even while on earth. (2) The similarities are thus summed up by Dmitri Obolensky. (3)

"The great importance attributed to inner prayer by the Hesychasts could easily be taken by their enemies to correspond to the Massalian view of prayer as alone capable of driving out the demon living in man. The distinction made by St. Gregory of Sinai between ^{theurgy} the supreme aim of the contemplative life, and ^{theurgy} or preparation, whose value is only relative, could be falsely taken to imply a rejection of the discipline of the church, and particularly of the sacraments, as cramping and unnecessary. The Hesychasts also taught that the most efficacious means of spiritual advancement was the constant repetition of the 'Jesus prayer;' the Bogomils held that all prayers except the Lord's Prayer were 'babblings.' The

(1) e.g. Bois, J. op. cit. of. chapter above.

(2) see Obolensky, D. The Bogomils pp. 252-257.

(3) loc. cit. p. 254.

essentially contemplative nature of Hesychasm could be compared by the anti-Hesychasts with the total rejection of manual labour preached by the Massalians and Bogomils. Finally these sects shared the monastic character of Hesychasm: both Massalianism and Bogomilism recruited many adherents in the monasteries, which were also the centres of Hesychasm, and in the XIVth century the Bogomil heresy spread to Mt. Athos."

But, although they hint at other reasons, the enemies of hesychasm base their charge of Massalianism chiefly on the hesychasts' claim to see the uncreated light. The hesychasts were maligned as "omphalopsychoi" because of their supposed belief that by taking up a fakir-like posture and gazing at his navel, the solitary would come to experience an ecstasy in which he perceived as a physical phenomenon the Light of the Transfiguration. The mud flung by their opponents has clung and it is under this disguise that the Hesychasts have been generally known in the west. Yet with the entry of Palamas into the arena, the first scurrilous attacks of Barlaam, in which he held up these theories to ridicule, were soon left behind. When, in answer to Palamas's first series of discourses against him, Barlaam re-issued his aggressive pamphlet, he dropped the charge of "omphalopsychism" but tried even harder to fasten the label of Bogomils on the monks, now entitling his work "Against the Massalians." Palamas's attitude was that although crude and ignorant minds might misinterpret

hesychast works on the method of prayer, (1) the real hesychasts held a doctrine which had patristic and even apostolic authorization, and he set out to elaborate this theme. What was perceived in the mystical vision was the same Light which had been seen by the Apostles on Thabor, and a similar transformation of senses occurred.

"The light of the Transfiguration of Our Lord neither began nor finished; it remained un-circumscribed (in space) and imperceptible to the senses, although it was contemplated by the eyes of the body But by a transmutation of their senses the disciples passed from the flesh to spirit." (2)

This spiritualization of flesh is already found in Simeon the Young, (3) together with the representation of the Divine Vision as light -- "The light which was shown to Stephen the Deacon and Saul the Persecutor, fortifying the one and transforming the other." (4) The moment of deification or *θεωσις* (5) is described in such terms by Simeon:

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- (1) e.g. pseudo Simeon.
ed. Hausherr, I. OO 1927 pp. 148-172.
- (2) PG.t.CLI. Col. 433.
- (3) cf. N. Stathatos "Life" chap. IX.
- (4) Liber Divinorum Amorum. CAP. XI.
- (5) see Hussey, J. N. op. cit. p. 223 on the difference of approach to the vision of God in the Greek and Latin churches.

"The virtue of the Holy Spirit shall suddenly come upon you, appearing not in the likeness of fire which can be perceived by the sense, but in the likeness of light, which shall open the mind that which is the beginning of that eternal first light, and the splendour and glory of everlasting happiness -- and, while this light is shining, all restless and unquiet thoughts shall disappear, and every movement that might disturb the soul vanish, every evil of the body be healed." (1)

The Hymns of the Divine Love are full of references to this light and contain a moving description of the solitary, the true monk, really cut off from the world, surrounded by this divine light which flows in upon his solitude, transforming his poor cell into veritable Paradise. (2) In the next chapter, he goes on to seek how God, the inaccessible Light which fills the whole universe, can be encompassed within a human heart. Yet those who have had the experience know that this happens. It was left to Palamas to work out how it happened.

(1) PG. 8. GXK, Co. 432.

(2) Liber D.A. c. XIX.

"God is called Light, not according to His essence but according to His energy." (1) Palamas's explanation was that the hesychast did indeed see God but that there was a distinction in the godhead between unknowable essence and the energies or manifestations of divinity. The presence of God was a fact of experience. For Simeon the Young the Divine vision was not confined to the hesychast but should be realised by all Christians worthy of the name, even in this life. To begin with, the human soul was made in the image of God. Thus the western Scotus Erigena had said "As many as are the children of men, so many are the theophanies." He was one of the first of the line of western mystical writers to be influenced by Dionysius the Areopagite; but the other great principle of the Dionysian writings is the impossibility of knowing God. On this paradox -- God as direct experience and God as incommunicable essence, the eastern church built up her spiritual tradition.

(1) Palamas, G. PG.t.CL. Col. 823. On Palamas's theology see Jugie, M., op. cit (from a Latin and biased point of view); Lossky, V. "La théologie de la lumière chez St. Grégoire de Thessalonique," Dieu Vivant, Vol. I, 1945, pp. 95-118 (orthodox); the equally sympathetic and rather more lucid account of the Archimandrite Cyprian Kern, "Les éléments de la théologie de Grégoire Palamas," Irenikon 1947, pp. 6-34, 164-194 also the study of Father Basil Krivosain, "The Theological and ascetic teaching of Saint Gregory Palamas." Seminarium Koneckovianum t. VII. English translation ECC. 1938.

For the intuitive genius of Simeon the central point was the experience itself -- it is this which he endeavours to communicate. The philosopher would stop at what is ineffable -- "whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent" (1) and Simeon's use of emotive impassioned language is not essentially different from the poet's use of words to administer the direct shock of poetic experience. Palamas set himself a different task from Simeon's in the "Hymns of Divine Love"; starting from the mystical experience, he was articulate about it in analysing the grounds for its happening. Yet what he could say about it was still not to be understood on a purely human level but only from the standpoint of revealed truth.

"We had the experience but missed the meaning,
And approach to the meaning restores the experience
In a different form, beyond any meaning
We can assign to happiness." (2)

Yet Palamas, like Simeon the Young, drew upon the orthodox tradition for his thinking, which remains a development within that tradition, and completely in harmony with it. For instance, the Eastern church had always stressed the aspect

(1) Wittgenstein. Treatise on Logical-Philosophical, p. 108.

(2) Eliot, T. S., Four Quartets, p. 28.

of Christ as the logos, the Incarnate Word which was the underlying meaning of the universe, rather than His human personality, and Palamas's theory of divinities, θεωτήτης only emphasized this. For Nicephorus Gregoras and Dexius, the Light of the Transfiguration was simply the splendour of the glorified body of Our Lord, but in Palamas, the Apostles perceived in the Light God Himself -- were united by it with the Energy of God, for His super-essential essence remained hidden, as it must always be, and what they saw was indeed the vision of the blest.

Moreover, the Transfiguration itself had always held an important place in orthodox belief. The attention paid to it by the Greek Fathers was reflected in iconography, (1) but both theory and artistic representation show a marked development from patristic times even before Palamas placed it at the centre of his system. The gospel text as interpreted by St. John Chrysostom gave room for great reverence to be paid to the Light as a super-human phenomenon. "Then to show he was held with great fear, both he and the rest, he saith "They were heavy with sleep and when they were awake they saw his glory" meaning by deep sleep the stupor engendered in them

(1) Millet, G. Recherches sur l'iconographie de l'évangile aux XI^e, XII^e et XIII^e siècles, d'après les monuments de Mistra, de la Macédoine et du Mt. Athos. II, chap. 4.

by that vision. For as eyes are darkened with excess of light, so at that time also did they feel." (1) "How then did they fall down on the mount? Because there was solitude, and height, and great quietness, and a transfiguration full of awe and a pure light and a cloud stretched out; all which things terrified them greatly. And then amazement came thick on every side and they fell down both in fear at once and adoration." (προσκυψόντες) (2)

Thus, although Chrysostom represents the Apostles as overcome with awe, they remain in possession of themselves. His use of the word 'prokynesitis' indicates that their attitude was the ceremonial one of reverence made not only in the Divine liturgy but in the imperial ritual as well. This is born out by early pictorial representations in which the Apostles are seated in sleep or bowing down in ritual action, and the atmosphere is calm. If one turns to a XIVth century picture, the difference is striking -- all is movement, suggesting deep disturbance. The Apostles, far from deliberate reverence, are shown being cast bodily down the mountain-side, usually head foremost. This is due to the influence

(1) In Mat. Homil. 56, 4.

(2) loc. cit. 5.

of Palamas who wrote that they fell "because of the light, which none could encompass." Yet this development was begun much earlier. Thus we find the XIIth century theologian, Mesarites, (1) describing the mosaics of the Holy Apostles.

"Unable to bear the light, they are flung to the ground head foremost, covering their faces with their hands, blinded by the light, and taken by surprise at the strangeness of the miracle after a time, the most energetic, Peter, getting up as best he could suggested establishing tabernacles. James and John seem not to have had the strength to rise. The oldest, James, is hardly risen on one knee, most of his body lying heavily on the earth, while his right hand is raised continually to his eyes to protect them with its shade, as if he had suddenly woken up on a summer morning out of doors and at once tried to look at the sun. John looks at nothing -- carefree, simple and virginal like Jacob, he dwells on Mt. Thabor in a deep sleep, wishing nothing else than to love Jesus and be loved by Him."

This suggests human weakness overwhelmed by supernatural force, and foreshadows the final formula of attitudes of violent abandonment. Similarly, it is interesting that the Glory, which in early ikons envelops the Prophets too, is in the XIVth century reserved to Christ alone, as its Divine and uncreated character was defined, and within it the three

(1) cited by Millet, G. loc. cit.

inter-crossed geometrical figures (1) indicate that it emanates from the Trinity, in accordance with the definition of Palamas, who speaks of "the common grace of the Father, Son and Spirit, the light of the life to come, by which the just shall shine like the sun -- the whole virtue and energy of the triple subsisting God." (2) Creative genius in the fourteenth century we must look primarily to Italy, as in the various products of Michelangelo, whose genius reached such brilliancy under the influence and by the aid of the works of Gregory Palamas. But Hieronymus Gregorius is particularly interesting as a man of letters whose writings show the high standard of literary which the age demanded. "Byzantine produced no one who can compare with the best writers modern literature but the people were, on the other hand, better educated." (3) This was still true in the fourteenth century if we regard Gregorius as a typical man with his contemporaries from the ultimate west of Europe, which might be said to be the product of his age rather than the highly cultivated and polished of the east. This is not surprising if we con-

(1) see for example the Manuscript of John Cantacuzenus. Bibliothèque nationale. Paris. "The Transfiguration," reproduced in D. Talbot Rice, Byzantine Painting, p. 122.

(2) "Profession of Faith." 1251. Mansi. Conc. t. 26, Col. 206 B

(3) History, p. 24.

(4) History, p. 24. -- Byzantine Painting, History of Art.

CHAPTER VI.

NICEPHORUS GREGORAS, SCHOLAR AND THEOLOGIAN.

For the flowering of original creative genius in the fourteenth century we must look primarily to Art, as in the mosaics produced at Kistra, whose court reached such brilliance under the Cantacuzeni and to Theology, especially the works of Gregory Palamas. But Nicephorus Gregoras is particularly interesting as a man of letters whose writings show the high standard of literacy which the age demanded. "Byzantium produced no one who can compare with the best western mediaeval thinkers but its people were, on the other hand, better educated." (1) This was still true in the fourteenth century if we compare Gregoras as a historian with his contemporary from the ultimate west of Europe, Ralph Higden, a more typical product of his own public than the highly sophisticated poetic genius of Chaucer. This is not surprising if we consider Gregoras's early training.

Gregoras as a man of letters has been thoroughly studied by Professor Guillard (2) who portrays a scholar of encyclopaedic knowledge, devoutly orthodox yet consciously devoted to

(1) Hussey, J. M.

(2) Guillard, R. — Nicephore Gregoras, l'homme et l'oeuvre.

upholding in his turn a pre-Christian literary tradition. Gregoras has left an account of his own early education from the age of ten. (1) It was evidently conventional, judged by Byzantine standards, with the usual marked literary bias -- a grounding in grammar, then a detailed study of the Greek classics and a training in rhetoric which went along with a study of ancient philosophy before Christian theology could be thought of. The penultimate rank in the hierarchy was taken by Astronomy, and this Gregoras learnt after he had gone to Constantinople at the age of twenty. His uncle wrote to congratulate him for "the study of Astronomy, so magestical and awful in its nature, by accustoming one to contemplate the heavens, withdraws the heart from earthly passions and so facilitates the study of theology." (2) Gregoras himself writes in his history (3) with extravagant enthusiasm of this science; for him it is that which co-ordinates all the others, and redoubles understanding of them. Such secular studies needed to be pursued with discretion or they might endanger a man's career by calling his orthodoxy into question. On no such grounds as these, however, was any slur

(1) "The Life of John of Heraclea," cited R. Guilland.
op. cit. p. 14.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Hist. VIII, 7. 364.

ever cast on Gregoras's reputation, although his interest in Astrology led him into the realms of necromancy and spiritualism, as he shows in his "Commentary" on the Dream Book of Synesius, (1) and the hints he lets fall in his History of what seems to have been a sort of Hellfire Club on Mount Athos, indicate the pitfalls awaiting youthful curiosity in the very citadels of orthodoxy. Avoiding these, as far as we know, and other distractions, Gregoras followed his uncle's advice to "give himself to study in his youth if he wished to avoid an empty and discontented old age," and his diligence was crowned with success. His ability or his persistence secured him the best teachers available, who completed his initiation into an ancient but still energetic civilisation.

The finished product, a rather egotistical scholar, was nevertheless not only a man of letters, and perhaps it is possible to reconstruct some of the factors that contributed to mould his character.

Nicephorus was born in Heraclea in 1295, and this was his home until he was twenty. He was thus early familiar with the sea, and this can explain his love in later life of nautical metaphors, and his free literary use of floods, waves, tempests and shipwrecks. Does this hint at an early frustrated ambition? For if Nicephorus hoped to go to sea

(1) PG. CXLIX.

he was doomed to disappointment, for the first real formative influence on his life of which we have any evidence is that of his uncle, John Metropolitan of Heraclea, who took charge of his nephew's education from the age of ten and destined him, in his own mind, for the Church. Of Nicephorus's birth and ancestry we know very little. Of his parents, who both died before he was ten, we only know that his father was an unlearned man, and that they cannot have been rich since the upbringing and education of the son had to be provided out of the uncle's modest means. We are better informed about John of Heraclea, since Nicephorus wrote his biography, which has the sincerity of affection, even if it is over-formalized by modern standards.

One of the objects with which the Byzantine kept up their traditional secular education was the training of government servants, and this had been John's first choice of career. He entered the service of the Basilissa Theodora Duca, wife of Michael VIII, and no doubt his stories of the rich life of the Byzantine court helped to fire his young nephew with the ambition which led him to the capital to seek his fortune. Under Michael VIII, the recently re-established court was doing its best to restore the ancient legendary splendour but his subjects thought him less patriotic when, with his statesman's eye on the need for a western alliance,

Michael tried to force them into re-union with the hated Latin church. John of Heraclea had been one of many who preferred persecution. It was probably this crisis in the church -- one that would instantly affect him as a member of the Imperial circle -- which caused him to decide he had a religious vocation. At any rate we know that he left the court and became an outlawed priest until the accession of Andronicus II "Emperor of the Schism" brought him to the see of Nicomedia, and later in 1301 to that of Heraclea of Pontus.

This incident in his uncle's career helps to throw light on Gregoras's constantly manifested devotion to orthodoxy, and the Byzantine tradition, and his corresponding hatred and mistrust of the Latins. He was acting as he had been taught when in 1334, on the arrival of emissaries from the Pope to discuss the question of re-union, he bitterly opposed any attempt to meet the foreigners' advances half way. (1) And where else did he get his ideas, so often to be reiterated in a polemical career, of the nobleness of resistance to state absolutism, and the individual's rights to freedom of speech and belief? (2)

A boy was more likely to take notice of such principles when their professor was not a mere fanatic but a generally

(1) Greg. Hist. X. 8

(2) Hist. XX. 2, 924; X, 6.

impressive person. The picture given in Gregoras's life is of someone authoritative, yet gentle, an unworldly philosopher who taught him to admire Socrates and to grasp the Platonic theory of knowledge. How sympathetic it must have seemed to the XIVth Byzantines. The flux and threatening chaos of the changing world they saw was only a distorted shadow of the ideal world, this temporal discord only a part of transcendent harmony. (1) John of Heraclea, it appears, would have liked his young nephew to become a true "philosopher" in the sense in which the Byzantines came to use the word -- one who turned from material things, on the Platonic model, if in a different spirit, to become a monk. But Nicephorus had secular ambitions. Life in a bishop's household must have brought him into some contact with the world around him. Bishops had always been expected to play a leading part even in secular affairs, and this must have been more than ever the case in the XIVc. when the Latin conquest had disrupted the whole machinery of the secular administration.

Yet if he did not discover a monastic vocation, Gregoras had certainly not escaped the other great influence of his life, the religion which was the spiritual atmosphere breathed

(1) Although Adam is reported to have remarked to Eve as they left Paradise, "We are living in an age of transition," it seems more than fanciful to attribute a prevailing mood of pessimism as to human affairs to the XIVc. V. R. Guillard. Rev. des Et. Gr. 1922, pp. 89-95.

by the Byzantines. The orthodox church and its liturgy must have been a dominating factor in Nicephorus's youth. Heraclea of Pontus was one of the oldest centres of Christianity, and could look back to the days when it had claimed jurisdiction over Constantinople. Nicephorus's was no revolutionary character. He accepted all this weight of tradition as stoically as Byzantine emperors their stiff gold robes of ceremony. To choose the simple monastic life would have been a solution yet life at Byzantium still seemed attractive enough in other ways to make its complexity supportable. Worldly ambition won the day, as he seems to have implied in writing years later to an old friend that he regretted his decision and looked back with longing to their schooldays together, and the simple quiet of the life they led. This particular friend had continued on the same path of spiritual progress while he, Gregoras, had "put on the dress of human passions and, so to speak, sentenced his soul to death." Though perhaps the decision was not his alone, for John of Heraclea, perceiving his nephew's inclinations, has sent him to Constantinople in 1315.

It is not easy to conjure up a picture of him as he was then, arriving in the Queen of Cities for the first time. His History, a very self-revealing document, he wrote years later, when he was middle-aged and embittered by defeat.

And his career, to those who ever trouble to look back over it, seems conventional enough. We see him climbing nimbly to a position of eminence by means of influential friends, and the publication, at the right intervals, of small but useful works -- a treatise on Grammar, or exercises in Rhetoric, things calculated to establish a solid reputation among the conservative Byzantines, whom the firework novelties of Barlaamus, a few years later, served only to irritate. But if at the end of his days Gregoras had still an intense patriotism for the Queen of Cities, his greater youthful enthusiasm can have known no bounds. The learning of Byzantium, after which he thirsted, was only a part, if the most exalted and conscious part, of a whole culture. No doubt the Byzantines prized it more than ever now that their political life was threatened and their economic life impoverished. Yet this learning could certainly not be aloof and remote from politics any more than in fifteenth century Italy. One reason which prevented this was the traditional dependence of letters on the throne. At this time, Andronicus II was proving an enlightened patron, if a mediocre sovereign, recalling in this his famous prototype Constantine Porphyrrogenetus, although the times no longer allowed an emperor to keep up golden and silver smithies, to entice the most skilled craftsmen there, and to fill the city with priceless

works of art by the indulgence of his extravagant whims. (1) On the contrary, there was little margin for luxury and the ruinous series of civil wars was soon to begin the spoliation of the city's treasures by the wealthy Latins of Galata, to be seen and lamented by Gregoras as a punishment for the sins of the Romans. (2) Yet the wealth of individuals was encouraging all kinds of intellectual activity and the making of beautiful things. Foremost among them was the Grand Logothete, Theodore Metochites, who impressed contemporaries with his many-sided ability. Cantacuzenus (3) commented: "He ruled the whole court, being very practical and shrewd, and also he was deeply versed in both sacred and profane knowledge."

Gregoras is more explicit.

"This you may most marvel at in this man, that when so many cares weighed upon him and such pressure of public affairs nothing was allowed to interfere with his study and his writing He lived a double life, for from morning till evening he was at the palace, administering state business and wholly intent on this one thing, leaving his study with alacrity as if it was abhorrent to him. Then, coming away late, he plunged into his books as if he was altogether a scholar and had nothing to do with public affairs." (4)

(1) Theophanes Cont. I, 22.

(2) Hist. XXXVIII, 2. The destruction of 1204 had left little Philotheus of Belymbria accuses the Latins of taking away all that was precious in Cp. Pg. t. CLIV. C. 1237.

(3) Hist. I, 11.

(4) Hist. VII, 11. (vol. I, p. 272)

It is in Theodore Metochites that we may find exemplified the essence of Nicephorus Gregoras's experience during the years of his youth, for this man, whom Diehl describes as a typical Byzantine, became his teacher and close friend. That in spite of his wide range of intellectual pursuits, Metochites was closely concerned with the court and politics, is a sign that the unity of Byzantine culture, centred in the many-sided figure of the basilius, was closer knit than ever under the threat of destruction. Metochites, like his fellows, representatives of an ancient and self-conscious civilization, was grimly aware of the shadow that lay over it; unlike the scarcely challenged domination of the old empire over neighbouring peoples, dazzled by its splendour, the last Byzantines had to face a deliberate fight for the preservation of their heritage which seemed to become only the more precious and desired in consequence. Observing the anarchy which reigned among the Genoese, given over to popular rule, Theodore Metochites was led to confirm his view that autocracy was preferable to democracy. (1) He saw in the traditional political system which he served the ideal framework for the pursuit of the way of life he valued. Humanism was everywhere resurgent, and Metochites was one of the leaders of the movement

(1) "Commentaria" C. 98

towards a re-affirmation of their Hellenic heritage in the teeth of the temporary Latin conquerors and the threatening alien cultures to east and west of them that gathered in most of the scholars and philosophers of the 14c. Thessalonica, calling itself a second Athens, became the centre for the more fanatical spirits such as the professed pagan Gemistus Pletho (1) Metochites showed a more moderate enthusiasm, but his zest for the ancient classics is shown, for instance, in his encyclopaedic Commentaries in which he quotes from seventy Greek authors. He was a neo-Platonist, and states that he prefers Plato to Aristotle, but he had a considerable knowledge of Aristotle and wrote commentaries on various of the works. (2) But Melochites' interests have an amazing range. He seems to have had time for theology, philosophy, history, astronomy, the natural sciences, literary criticisms and poetry, besides the care of his vast estates, his great building projects and his preoccupation with his family. He has left a poem (3) "To himself after his reverse of fortune" describing his great palace with its elaborate furnishings, the details of which were carefully arranged, down to the jewellery of great cost and fine workmanship worn by his wife. In appearance (4) he was handsome, tall and well-formed, with laughing

(1) See Tafrahi, O. op. cit.

(2) cf. De somnolentisilio

(3) Edited with a translation by R. Guillard; Rev. des et. gr. 1922.

(4) Greg. Hist. VII, 11 (Vol. I, p. 271)

eyes and a liveliness of manner which it cost him an effort to superimpose with gravity. Born in Nicasa, he had come to Constantinople at the age of twenty after years of want and difficulty. Theodore's youth had been overcast, for his father, George Metochites, (archdeacon of St. Sophia) who was related to the Lascarids and other imperial houses, including the Palaeologi, was persecuted under Andronicus II for adherence to the union of Lyons, and died in prison in 1308. In spite of his relationship, and although he shared his father's desire for the re-union of the Churches, shown by the part he played in the negotiations between the emperor and Charles the Fair in 1327, (1) Theodore attracted Andronicus's notice by his powers as an orator, and by his personal gifts soon gained the emperor's lifelong friendship. Andronicus was said to do nothing without consulting his favourite minister, and to have no secret from him. After being entrusted with various diplomatic missions, he was made Grand Logothete in 1321.

Nicephorus Gregoras was introduced to Metochites by the Patriarch John Glycys whom he knew through his uncle and who, on his arrival in Constantinople had treated him like his own son, completing his education in Rhetoric and Logic along with

(1) see Halecki, O., op. cit., p. 48.

his own children -- George and Basil. (1) That such men as Glycys and Metochites liked him is perhaps our best indication of Gregoras's qualities at this stage. It is true that brilliant minds sometimes prefer the neighbourhood of mediocrity, but both Patriarch and Minister were in public positions which did not encourage such eccentricities. Glycys thought highly of Gregoras, and entrusted him with the drawing up of his will, (2) and Metochites (perhaps the most profound thinker of his day, acc. to R. Guillard) thought so highly of this student that he made him his favourite disciple and companion.

"He scarcely made any distinction in his affection and kindness between myself and his own sons; so much so that it was to me that he taught the science of astronomy which he alone at that time knew perfectly, nor grudged such labour; and often to the emperor and the lords he would delight in saying that he had set me up as his inheritor in this teaching." (3)

Astronomy, with its suggestions of the power of science, and more obviously perhaps of magic, was much in vogue at that time at Byzantium, and Metochites was universally acknowledged as its greatest exponent, as we see from the incident described

(1) Greg. Hist. VII, 2. (I, p. 270)

(2) ibid. VIII, 2. (I, pp. 289-290)

(3) ibid. VIII, 7 (I, p. 327)

by Cantacuzenus (1) who, after telling us that Metochites "learnt from Bryennius nothing but the first elements," goes on to say: "One day the emperor expressed astonishment at Metochites' learning to a disciple of his, Gregoras, and wondered how he had come by it, since his early formation (in astronomy) had been slight." Gregoras replied to the effect that an inflammable torch was easily lit by a small taper. Gregoras himself became a reputed astronomer, producing a Treatise on the Construction of the Astrolabe (2) and a Commentary on the Dream Book of Synesius (3) which were widely read. His greatest moment in this connection came in 1324, when he put forward a proposal for the reform of the calendar in a speech delivered before the Emperor Andronicus II.

It was, however, a bitter disappointment to him that Andronicus, although fully sympathetic to Gregoras's views, declined the task of putting them into practice, pleading the inconvenience which would attend such a move. (4) But Gregoras owed more to Metochites than his proficiency in such studies; however advanced in his day, history has left him far behind, stranded in libraries where they afford a peaceful

(1) Hist. I, 11 (I, p. 55)

(2) Cod. reg. 2737 (dedicated to Metochites)

(3) PG. CXLIX. Vol. 521-643.

(4) Greg. Hist. VIII, 13. (Vol. I, p. 372)

pasturage for the labours of scholarship. Yet the mosaics of Kahrie-Djami (1) still contain the potential disturbance of intellectual discovery. Here, at the Monastery of Chora, whose reconstruction under Metochites he probably closely observed, and in Metochites' own home, the wonderful palace, where he became one of the household, Gregoras was brought in close touch with the contemporary vision of his day. He was fully appreciative of this gracious background to his studies; as he had seen it, the "Queen of Cities" *τῆς βασιλίδος τούτης τοῦ πόλεως* was still the wonder of the world, (2) and in his acceptance of human values his temperament was perfectly attuned to Metochites' own, who stated explicitly his deliberate preference for the secular life. (3)

This XIVc. poetic vision, a fresh realisation of the significance of traditional forms, had its obverse side -- the apprehension, less of individual or class misery than of the sadness inherent in the human situation. (4) In the medium of Byzantine mannered prose it sometimes becomes a collection of commonplaces and clichés expressing the instability of

(1) See Diehl, Etudes byzantines, pp. 392-433.

(2) Hiet. V, 5. (Vol. I, p. 88) The author of the Directorium who visited Cp. in 1320 described it as beautifully laid out, with parks and avenues.

(3) Commentaries, e. 73.

(4) Hussey, V. M. Lectures on the later Byzantine Empire. (unpublished)

fortune and the transience of happiness. The more stoical attitude of world-weariness is in Cantacuzenus's epigrammatic "Why should it trouble me to give up this crown -- am I not accustomed to take it off every evening?" But it is also into Cantacuzenus's mouth that Gregoras puts the words

"Good fortune rarely smiles on us, and when it comes it withers as quickly as a flower. This by the will of God is no doubt a most salutary discipline for us, to prevent us from getting above ourselves, and forgetting that we are only mortal. And this was why the Phrygian Aesop once said that the clay out of which God formed man was moistened not with water but with tears." (1)

Metochites in these years of success had written "Threnodies" in which he lamented the evils of the present time, the glory of the empire faded and its prosperity destroyed. "Is it better," he could debate with himself, "for a man never to have been born?" (2) But his Christian faith led him to reject the pessimism of the preacher, and it was his refuge when ruin and disgrace fell upon his house.

In 1328 the political revolution which dethroned Andronicus II brought about a complete change of ministers and court personnel. (3) Metochites had at first tried to bring about

(1) Hist. XVI, 4. (Vol. II, p. 819)

(2) Commentaries, c. 41.

(3) Gregoras's and Cantacuzenus's accounts of these events differ in details: Oz. suppresses all evidence unfavourable to Andronicus the younger whose partisan he was.

a reconciliation between the emperor and his grandson, but the elder man was adamant. His revulsion of feeling for this grandchild whom he had adored began when the latter's irresponsible behaviour brought about the deaths of both his brother and his father. His elder brother Manuel was killed by accident by the assassins posted to murder Andronicus's rival in his mistress's affections, and the blow was too much for his father Michael, who died shortly after. The new régime of strict control, imposed by Andronicus the elder after this, was intolerable to the young prince. Accorded a day-to-day allowance for expenses by his grandfather he turned to the Genoese to borrow the money for his pleasures and his wild schemes of conquest in the Aegean. Andronicus II at last took steps to exclude the prince from the succession, and took up the young Michael Catharus son of Constantine, the despot, instead. Notochites, as first minister, was closely implicated on these acts, and when, after a series of quarrels and fighting, with temporary lulls, the young Andronicus finally defeated the grandfather in 1328, the Grand Logothete was made to pay the penalty. He had deliberately chosen to stand by the old emperor, his master, although the opposition would have welcomed his support and tried to gain his advocacy. (1)

(1) *Cent. Hist.* I, 16. (Vol. I, p. 81)

Their advances were indignantly rejected and when Constantinople was taken by the young Andronicus, Metochites' goods were confiscated, his palace despoiled by the populace, (1) and he himself exiled to Didymotycha, whence he only returned after a short stay to his monastery of Chora to die. (2)

Gregoras was implicated in his master's disgrace for not only was he a disciple of the minister, but also a courtier of the elder Andronicus. He himself tells us in his History that he asked Metochites to introduce him to the court for, no doubt, influenced by the other's example, he felt a wish to enter practical life; after all, it was a blessed necessity for a Byzantine scholar. "It seemed to me advisable to leave my books of rhetoric and philosophy and to frequent the company of the elder emperor, and to establish myself in his intimacy." (3) Gregoras knew the art of making himself agreeable; he became a favourite of Andronicus, and was entrusted in 1326 with an important diplomatic mission to bring back Simona, daughter of Metochites & the widow of John the Panhypersebaste, Andronicus II's nephew, who had been intriguing with Stephen Douchan of Serbia. (4) Andronicus wished

(1) Metochites' "Poem" to himself after his reverse of fortune.

(2) Greg. Hist. X. 2 (Vol. I, p. 474)

(3) Ibid., VIII, 8 (Vol. I, p. 327)

(4) Ibid., VIII, 3 (Vol. I, p. 293). of. Cant. I, 1 (Vol. I, p. 14)

to make his Grand Chartophylax, but Gregoras felt that such a part would encroach too much on his studies, and pleaded his inexperience in refusing, although he details the incident with his usual vanity, explaining that it was an unprecedented honour for one so young, with no ecclesiastical title, and that the jealousy of other courtiers was aroused. (1) For Gregoras, too, therefore, the overthrow of Andronicus II meant an interruption of his successful career. The blow was far more serious for his two patrons, however, and since he could do nothing to help their fate Gregoras at least gave them what moral support he could, continuing to associate closely with both of them in their imprisonment. For Metochites the blow had been preceded by omens and astrological forecast. Gregoras describes the scene when the Logothete returned home after his discovery:

"For the Logothete, on coming home from the Palace, sat for a long time silent, wrapped in thought and speaking not a word to anyone. He sat calculating the future as if turned deaf and dumb, quite unlike his usual mood, while his children, his sons and his daughter, the wife of the Panhypersebaste sat round about him as usual, expecting some joke or pleasantry."

At last his wife delegated her daughter, who was Metochites' favourite among his children, and compared by contemporaries

(1) Greg. Hist. VIII, 9. (Vol. I, pp. 339-348)

with Plato and Pythagoras for her learning and eagerness, to approach her father and persuade him to open his heart to them. Metochites' sadness was only deepened by the thought of his family, to be implicated in the ruin he had foreseen. His words were Job's: "Cursed be the day of my marriage and the day when I begot children." (1)

In 1332, Andronicus the Elder died, after a literary party at which Nicephorus Gregoras was present, for the old emperor (2) still kept up his intellectual interests in his semi-captivity. Metochites, whose health was already failing, only survived the death of his friend and sovereign a month. It fell to Gregoras to pronounce the funeral orations on both. Unfortunately Gregoras was too aware of his reputation as a rhetorician to allow of a spontaneous expression of what one nevertheless feels was a very real grief. (3)

But his own fortunes were already recovering. Andronicus III, though he never accepted Gregoras as fully as his father had done, did not keep up his hostility, and soon Gregoras was once more to be seen at court. He was fortunate in that Andronicus's favourite and all-powerful minister, the Grand Domestic John Cantacuzenus, was himself a lover of

(1) *ibid.*, VIII, 5. (Vol. I, pp. 306-308)

(2) *ibid.*, IX, 14. (pp. 461-462)

(3) *ibid.*, X, 2 (Vol. I, p. 474) cf. Mercati, G. Nota all'epigramma di Nicephoro Gregora in morte del Metochite, *Bessarione*, 1916, p. 237.

learning. "He was given to tireless study from his early years, had mastered all kinds of books and was always seeking to know more." (1) United in their common interests, Cantacuzenus and Gregoras became close friends. It was Cantacuzenus who organized the discussion between Gregoras and Barlaam reported in the Florentius which, whatever the outcome, showed Gregoras once more in a leading position. Freedom of speech, which seems to have been restricted in 1328, was fully restored; he was able to take up his lecturing again, possibly at the University, which had been re-established by Michael VIII. (2) Even the civil war, which broke out in 1341, when Cantacuzenus declared himself emperor, did not seriously interrupt the even tenour of Gregoras's career. He had presumably learned to keep aloof from politics for, although remaining personally loyal to Cantacuzenus, he went on living in Constantinople. However, he left the court to stay in his own house and concentrate on his books. He was, however, less able to control his actions when self-esteem and national prejudices were touched. He was rash enough to refute some western astrologers who were visiting the Empress's court, and pleasing her by the predictions of the success of her cause. Cantacuzenus, she was assured, was bound to die within a year.

(1) ibid., XIX, 1. (Vol. II, p. 919)

(2) Pachymeris, Historia ierum N. Palaeologi, IV. (CB pp. 282-284)

Anne's enmity was incurred by Gregoras's opposition to such sympathetic views expressed by a compatriot. She never assimilated Byzantine ways, and remained glad to welcome Latins to her court. Gregoras returned to his house in disfavour. (1)

In 1347 the triumph of Cantacuzenus brought renewed hope. Remembering the friendship that the other had had for him before he became emperor (2) and his intellectual endowment, (3) Gregoras felt that a new régime had begun in which, although in his History he makes his hope refer exclusively to religious matters, he no doubt expected that his old pre-eminence would be restored and secular studies flourish as under the elder Andronicus. He was soon disenchanted. "I saw those bright hopes, which had sprung up like flowers, withering away." (4) Palamas, the representative of a quite alien view, was the ascendant influence over Cantacuzenus. Gregoras's only hope was to detach Cantacuzenus's mind from the Palamite doctrine, and for this he trusted in his powers of oratory. (5) Theology

(1) Greg. Hist. XIV, 8. (Vol. II, pp. 721 et seq.)

(2) Ibid., XVI, 8. (Vol. II, p. 821)

(3) Ibid. (p. 822)

(4) Ibid.

(5) Ibid. See above, Chap. II.

was the topic of the day; recognising this, he devoted his attention to it, but whether he realised it at the beginning or not it was a decision which marked the end of Gregoras's secular career.

This raises the question of the basis of Gregoras's interest in theology. No Byzantine could avoid theological ideas. That "theology and horses" were equally a part of the life of even the unlettered is a commonplace of modern contemporary literature. (1) But from the eleventh century onwards there is a division of spirit among those who study theology seriously. For the educated individual in the world it was possible to become absorbed in Platonism or Astronomy without letting them encroach on his religious beliefs; yet the isolated exceptions of a John Italus in the eleventh century (2) or a Gemistus Pletho in the fourteenth century suggest hidden reefs in the calm sea of orthodoxy that seemed Byzantine scholarship. Pletho's avowal of paganism may perhaps indicate that for more than one classical scholar Christian theology was becoming a more remote branch of his studies. On the other hand, the eleventh century mystic, Simeon the Young, had inaugurated a school of theologians for whom theology was alone significant, but it was a theology of practical experience.

(1) cf. Auden, The Age of Anxiety, p. 41.

(2) see Anna Comnena, Alexiad. V. 9.

In his day it was possible for the secular party to dismiss such claims with a sceptical shrug. This ironical attitude was expressed by Michael Psellus: (1)

"I have heard tell by more accomplished philosophers that there is a knowledge superior to all demonstration and only accessible to a disciplined enthusiasm. Far from neglecting to occupy myself with this also, I read various mystical treatise, and soaked myself in that study as far as my capacities would permit. For, as for wholly and satisfactorily grasping such matters, I could not boast that I ever got there and I do not believe any one else who says he has."

The method which he goes on to describe as his own was identical with that of Nicephorus Gregoras; to specialise in one branch of knowledge at a time and so to proceed from it to others until things are connected on a coherent whole. "There is a method which does not particularly strain our natural faculties." (2) But in the fourteenth century, Hesychasm then only present in the background, had come to be a predominant topic of public discussion. The work of Palamas, analysing and then completing in a system the hints dropped by his predecessor, the earlier intuitive genius, Symeon, and the fact that Palamas, unlike Symeon, was forced by circumstances to live in the public eye and take part in nation-wide

(1) Psellus, Chronographia, VI, 40. (Bude's collection byzantine, p. 136)

(2) Psellus. loc. cit.

controversy, made the situation very different for fourteenth century scholars. The challenge that Hesychasm presented to their whole outlook, always implicit, was now open. Nicephorus took it up by setting out to demonstrate that Palamas was heretical.

The story of Gregoras's part in the Hesychast controversy has been told elsewhere. (1) Briefly, he was warned by Theodore Metochites, equally unsympathetic to hesychasm, to have nothing to do with Palamas's doctrine. (2) Gregoras seems to have followed this advice and tried to avoid being involved in all discussions. He was not present at the proceedings of 1341, (3) and only when directly summoned by Anne of Savoy in 1347 to act as arbiter between Palamas and Galecas, did he reluctantly come forward, and state his antipathy to the views of Palamas. (4) But the encouragement of friends, especially Akyndinus, and finally the latter's death, led Gregoras to take up the leadership of the anti-Palamite cause. After this, it is he who leads the opposition to Palamas at the Council of 1351; he who continues to champion the cause afterwards, even from the enforced seclusion of a monastery

(1) See Chapters I - IV.

(2) Greg. Hist. XIX, 1. (Vol. II, p. 919)

(3) ibid., X. 10.

(4) ibid., XV. 7

cell, and he who debates with Palamas in 1355 before the emissary of the Pope.

Certain characteristics of his line of approach may be noticed. The Tome of the synod of 1351 condemns him along with his supporters as a follower of Barlaam and Akyndinus. Yet it is clear from his own writings that Gregoras took a line of his own. In theology he was first and foremost a conservative, insistent on the necessity of "remaining within the limits set by the Fathers -- or rather, the Holy Spirit who spoke through them," and opposed to Palamas as an innovator. (1) His attitude to the Light of Thabor has been briefly explained. (2) He disliked the novelties of Barlaam as much as those of Palamas, yet both seemed to be more abreast of contemporary currents of thought than Gregoras, who stands for men like Metochites of an older generation, more interested in secular studies than speculative theology, and simply suspicious and incomprehending when it came to developments in empirical theology. Thus, although he spoke as a theologian, Gregoras's attitude varied; he was always conscious of the rule of rhetoric, and when he judged it effective, he took up the position of the plain man, mistrustful

(1) ibid., XIX, 1. (Vol. II, p. 915); XX, 3. (p. 970)

(2) See above, Chapter III

of complication but secure in his confidence in the simple statements of the Creed.

His speeches at the Council of 1351 as reported in his History read more like formal orations than forthright polemics, and nothing like spontaneous argument. Yet, though he is often rambling and diffuse, he can make a point effectively and drive it home. The force of his retort on Cantacuzenus, who is now judging him for being a follower of the very man, Barlaam, whom he himself had raised up, is a case in point. (1) But Gregoras becomes most eloquent when he discourses on the evil complexity of the new doctrines, so far removed from the simplicity of the early Church, which he appeals to Cantacuzenus to restore. Let Palamas's writings be burnt. They are written in obscure and difficult language, calculated to confuse and ensnare the simple soul; they are like mountains covered in thick forest where robbers hide, who leap out as if from the darkness to attack simplicity and truth. Piety is ornamented with simplicity, impiety is multiple and various. (2)

In fact he would prefer to see the end of all further discussion; "superfluous and subtle questions" lead to

(1) Greg. Hist. XIX, 1. (Vol. II, p. 922)

(2) ibid (pp. 928-932)

disaster. As the necessities of physical life have been rendered by Providence free and accessible to all, like the light and the air, so the faith belongs equally to all without distinction of wealth or position. There may be subtleties reserved to the wise but the fundamental truths are common to all. Let no one be proud of his knowledge in such matters. (1) What evidently rankled deeply with their opponents was the claim of the Hesychasts to a fuller revelation than the ordinary Christian.

Gregoras would never have denied the importance of the monastic body to the whole Empire. He was as patriotically indignant as any at the aggressive Barlaam, and his appreciation of Athos is expressed, if with rhetorical floweriness, yet with something of a lyrical and individual note -- and rather unexpected. Here, where thick woods give shade from the heat of summer, making the climate pleasant at all seasons, and the air is filled with the murmur of bees and the song of all kinds of birds "a heavenly life is lived on earth." (2)

Yet in spite of his appreciation of monasticism, Gregoras did not regard his detention in the monastery of Chora, where

(1) *Ibid* (p. 932)

(2) *Ibid* XIV, 7. (Vol. II, p. 715)

his anti-Palamite activities led him, in the light of a blessing. He did, however, make emotional capital out of it by considering it as a martyrdom and by building the central books of his History round it so that the cell of Nisepherous Gregoras appears as the focus point of great events, and each piece of narrative is linked up by a moving description of the writer's sufferings, usually declared by him to the devoted disciple who comes at regular intervals with news and supplies. (1) This was the best he could do in the way of asceticism and he makes the most of it. It was as idle for him as for Michael Psellus to hope for the mystical illumination of the Hesychasts, and he was bitterly conscious that this was now in fashion at court. So much depended on the personal tastes of the emperor, and nothing could alter the fact that Cantacuzenus's interests were predominantly theological. So Gregoras was forced to become a theologian, but the little success that attended his excursions into this field showed that contemporary trends of thought had passed him by. Not only was he by training and temperament antipathetic to the new development in the negative theology of Athos. But he could take no part in Cantacuzenus's lively interest in St. Thomas Aquinas and the scholastic movement among a Greek minority at Byzantium. (2)

(1) Hist. XXI-XXIX.

(2) See Jugie, M., EO 1928; cf. above, Chap. III.

It is thus in an aggrieved and envious spirit that he went on with his History after 1351. Although he felt called on to apologise for the lack of balance shown in the disproportionate amount of space given to ecclesiastical affairs (1) (Gregoras's remains an incorrigibly secular attitude to life) the most striking inconsistency about this work is the change in the position of Cantacuzenus between the earlier and later part. Gregoras wrote the first fifteen books of his History before 1351 and during the years of the civil war. Of these books John Cantacuzenus is the hero. In the events leading to the outbreak of war, Gregoras portrayed the actions of Cantacuzenus as noble and disinterested made "more fiery by night's blackness" by setting them against the ceaseless intrigue and combination entered into by the proud or selfish or stupid characters who batted at the court of Constantinople while Cantacuzenus shouldered the burden of defence and led his armies against the enemies of the empire. (2) It was the unprovoked savagery of Apocaucus and Calecas which drove Cantacuzenus to assume the imperial insignia. (3) Even during the war he continued to behave with moderation, constantly

(1) Hist. XXXVII, 1.

(2) Greg. Hist. XII-XIV.

(3) ibid., XII, 12. (Vol. I, p. 610)

making application to the party in the capital, often through the mediations of the monks of Athos, to make a settlement. (1) Finally, Gregoras reports a reply of the Patriarch which he at last made to Cantacuzenus's overtures, and in which he admits his guilt in the quarrel. To begin with, Cantacuzenus's presumption in taking over the imperial power had justified his opposition, but not to the point of violence, yet, "we went on to exhaust the forces of the state; if there was any hope of peace left we ruthlessly smothered it. (2) Once the capital was won, Cantacuzenus's behaviour to Anne of Savoy and her sons was restrained and was in Gregoras's view, generous. (3) Anne's blind terror of Cantacuzenus was due to the assurances of her ministers that he would take her life; (4) on the contrary, the victor showed her every consideration, allowing her to remain in residence at the Sacred Palace, while he himself moved to more cramped and uncomfortable quarters at the trielinium of Alexius, which was then in great need of

(1) ibid., XV, 3 (Vol. II, p. 753)

(2) ibid., XV, 4. (Vol. II, p. 759)

(3) ibid., XV, 11 (Vol. II, p. 790)

(4) Cant. Hist. III, 20 (Vol. II, p. 129)

restoration, "ruins rather than buildings." (1)

This model portrait would hardly be disowned by the writer of Cantacuzenus's memoirs himself, whose main object is to show his own actions in a favourable light. Yet in what he later wrote of Cantacuzenus, especially after he was imprisoned, Gregoras shows a change of attitude. He evidently felt some qualms in the representation of a solitary and sinister figure, marked by cruelty, which was in such contrast to the debonaire hero of his earlier story, for his blackest charges are put into the mouth of another. He makes the young John Palaeologus his mouthpiece, in a conversation with Irene Cantacuzenus, in accusing John of ulterior motives from the beginning:

"Then by a public oath he affirmed that he was willing to stand as my guardian and the governor of the realm until I had reached my twentieth year, and that none of his sons should succeed to the empire. But really it was all the time his intention that they should, and Matthew's revolt was a feigned pretext for accomplishing this purpose." (2)

Stories of atrocities committed by the Turks with Cantacuzenus's connivance are mentioned and Palaeologus asserts that there was talk of his own murder. The Palamites counselled this as

(1) Greg. Hist. XV, 9. (Vol. II, p. 784)

(2) Ibid., XXVII (Vol. III, p.)

a political move, promising that their prayers would expiate the crime in heaven. (1)

It is not, however, true, as Cantacuzenus asserts, (2) that Gregoras ever blackened the early picture given by him of his hero. Whether Cantacuzenus came into possession of a mutilated copy of the History is not clear -- Gregoras asserts that his enemies played such tricks on him. (3) At any rate, there is no mention in the History of Gregoras as it survives of a Macbeth-like visit to the soothsayers of Athos to find out if he would become emperor. (4)

There is, however, a sort of unity about Gregoras's treatment of the figure of Cantacuzenus, if we consider it as the tragedy that he himself occasionally suggests it may be. In his view Cantacuzenus took a false step in his protection of Palamas; the anger of the heavens was incurred and nemesis overtook him. Expressing it in Christian terms Gregoras explains to his disciple Agathangelos that a heretic emperor

(1) Ibid.

(2) Cant. Hist. IV, 24. (Vol. III, p. 173)

(3) Greg. Hist. XXXVII, 36.

(4) Cant. Hist. loc. cit.

must expect disaster to attend his policy, since he is cut off from the divine counsel. (1)

Cantacuzenus's was a more complicated view. As he points out in refuting Gregoras, his attachment to Palamas had begun long before he became emperor. (2) According to Gregoras he pleaded destiny as his excuse for his actions. (3) Both were Christians, only while Gregoras chose to emphasise the idea of free will, Cantacuzenus stressed the corresponding idea of providence. Necessity, was a concept familiar to the latter-day Byzantines. (4) Certainly Cantacuzenus's was the view more justifiable in the light of history. The personal issue might remain open, and Gregoras might, if he dared, judge of Cantacuzenus's soul, but to apply the judgment to the state of the empire is a naive over-simplification which an emperor himself was too well-informed to make. Not Cantacuzenus but a whole medley of economic and social causes were responsible for the introduction of the Turks into

(1) Greg. Hist. XXVI (Vol. III, p. 106)

(2) Cant. loc. cit (p. 183)

(3) Greg. Hist. XXVIII, 16 (Vol. III, p. 205)

(4) See Pears, The Destruction of the Greek Empire, p. 182.

Europe. But he did co-operate with those causes instead of fighting them, and there is something to justify Gregoras in letting the figure of Cantacuzenus cast a sombre shadow over the history of the years of his own imprisonment, during which internal dissension came to add to the trouble caused by Genoese and Serbs and the earthquake of 1354 felt by Gregoras in his cell, was taken advantage of by the Turks to establish themselves in the key position of Gallipoli. (1) Naturally Gregoras links the condition of the state with the establishment of heresy in the Church, and he believed that the old prophecy "By the Double Kappa the City and shall be destroyed" was fulfilled in (2)

After the council of 1351 and his arrest, Gregoras steadily refused to have anything to do with his former friend. The extreme personal bitterness which he shows suggests that not only his vanity but his affection had been gravely wounded by Cantacuzenus's desertion. The latest interview between these two of which we have any record only showed that the rift was too wide to heal. Cantacuzenus, now the monk Joseph in Constantinople sent to ask Gregoras to visit him, hoping that they might renew their early friendship. (3) Gregoras this

(1) Greg. Hist. XXVIII, 67. (Vol. III, p. 221); XXIX (pp. 223-225); cf. Cant. Hist. IV. 38

(2) Greg. Hist. XXVII (III, p. 161)

(3) ibid. XXII, 4. (III, p. 377)

time responded and went to Cantacuzenus's monastery with one of his closest friends. At first there was a joyous reunion, and the two fell to talking as familiarly as they had so often done in the past. (1) But the introduction of Palamas's name and theories had the effect of silencing Gregoras. At last the mention of the Light of Thabor, ever a sore point, roused Gregoras to a fierce expression of indignation that Cantacuzenus should wish to trouble his old age with heretical disputes. (2) An acrimonious discussion followed, and Gregoras took a hasty departure, meeting on his way friends of Palamas who were going to join in the discussion, and were surprised that he had left so early. Some insisted on accompanying him, arguing passionately, as far as his own door. (3)

This episode which he narrates towards the end of his long History is one more example of Gregoras's pre-occupation in this work with the ecclesiastical affairs in which he played a leading part. He has had to endure a good deal of criticism for this lack of balance, (4) yet he was able to justify it by his own philosophy of history. He makes his disciple

(1) ibid.

(2) ibid (p. 382)

(3) ibid (p. 390)

(4) e.g. Guillard, R. op. cit., p. 240.

Agathangelos say to him:

"I remember your often saying that writing history is like building; there should be a harmonious conjunction of different things, and concord established between discordant elements, for as the builder brings to the work stone and wood and bricks and mortar and dust, history too needs variety." (1)

This theory, that history should be like life itself, expressing life's complexity and confusion, would be a possible answer for Gregoras to those critics who compare his unwieldy work with the perfectly designed work of Cantacuzenus to the former's disadvantage. Moreover, Gregoras's outlook was Christian; in narrating human affairs, the soul must take precedence of the body, and ecclesiastical affairs must receive their due share of attention, (2) so that when, as in his time, they are unusually prominent, the historian is forced to give up more space to them. Yet, as Parisot comments, these are lame excuses for a direct contravention of an avowed aim at the beginning.

"When I embarked on this history it was above all political events which I had in view to write down and leave as a legacy to generations to come. But a violent storm blew up and before we had been able to take warning and prepare for it, a sudden disturbance broke the calm and equilibrium which were natural and habitual to us, in adding a new factor to the already crowded array of

(1) Greg. Hist. XXVI, 26. (Vol. III, p. 116)

(2) Greg. Hist. XXXVII, 1.

events, the Church tossed in tempest and waves. We have, there is no doubt, built up a complex structure, a double history, where political and ecclesiastical affairs are mingled, contrary to all expectations and contrary to our original design." (1)

Yet although he would naturally have been led to deal more purely with secular affairs if, as one feels, he had not come to take so large a personal share in theological disputes, Gregoras was not disposed to concern himself exclusively with politics. History was a much larger thing -- a record of men's intellectual pilgrimage, a chronicle of the activities of the human spirit.

"History shows past and present the actions of the men of a generation, the theories of the learned on the nature of things, the errors and wisdom of such theories." (2)

The historian therefore is no mere chronicler; he must be able not only to record contemporary movements in philosophy, the arts and science, but to judge them from an olympic detachment and assess their value. Gregoras does not explain how this is to be achieved -- how the historian finds it possible to adopt another outlook from that of his generation, or why he considers this desirable. What is clear from

(1) ibid.

(2) ibid., I, 1. (Vol. I, p. 4)

Gregoras' work is that it expresses the views and makes the assumptions of an authentic representative of fourteenth century Byzantium. His frequent digressions on astronomy are typical, for instance, and are in accord with his theory of the subject of history.

In extenuation of his style and method of presentation it must be remembered that much of Gregoras' History was written under difficulties. During the years of his imprisonment he was forced to write in secret, and from the reports supplied by Agathangelos on his rapid biennial visits only -- once at Agathangelos' dictation when, on his arrival for the last time, Gregoras felt able to persuade his friend to stay for a few days, although he could only entertain him with bread and water. (1) It seems likely that, had he had time to revise his work, Gregoras would have made it a much more elaborate affair. As it is, a tendency born towards artistry and towards persuasion is visible in places, as for instance in the way he chooses to narrate the triumph of Paleologus who entered Constantinople in 1355. When, eight years previously a similar coup d'etat had brought about the triumph of Cantacuzenus, Gregoras was fully aware of the irony of history in the premature rejoicing of Anne of Savoy when on that very night she was giving a banquet to celebrate

(1) ibid., XXVIII.

her reinstatement of Palamas. (1) The similarity of the occasion politically encouraged Gregoras to look for a similar moral. He diligently discovered a similar "Palamite triumph" which was changed to mourning. This time it is much more far-fetched -- a discovery of some relics in a church which rouses popular interest to such a degree that the Patriarch has to preside at their solemn translations and preaches in favour of the Hesychast doctrines, for which he represents this revelation as a confirmation. Gregoras narrates this local event immediately before the entry of Paleologus into the capital, and points out that the Hesychast patriarch, now deposed, had spoken too soon.

There is thus some reason to be glad that Gregoras's History, as he left it, is not what he would have considered a finished work. As it is he gives us a lively account of contemporary affairs from a strongly personal angle which is easier to discount for being so unconcealed.

(1) ibid. XV, 9.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- AB Analecta Bellandiana, Brussels, 1882.
- ABB Acta Sanctorum, Antwerp, 1643.
- BZ Byzantinische Zeitschrift, Leipzig, 1892
- CB Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae, Bonn, 1828-1897
- EHR English Historical Review
- EGQ Eastern Churches Quarterly
- EO Echos d'orient, Paris, 1901-1942
- EB Etudes byzantines, Paris 1942.
- OC Orientalis Christiana, Rome.
- OCF Orientalis Christiana Periodica
- PG J. B. Nisne, Patrologia cursus completus, series graeco-latina, Paris, 1857-66.

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PG, CLIV. Address to his own countrymen in support of
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