

Did Saint Gregory Palamas Teach The Development Of The Doctrine?*

Andrej JEFTIĆ

Faculty of Orthodox Theology, University of Belgrade, Republic of Serbia

Abstract. *The paper examines whether St Gregory Palamas could be attributed with teaching some sort of the doctrinal development. That this is the case has been argued in various forms by theologians and scholars of the 20th century, both those who have criticized Palamas and those who have often been regarded as representatives of what is called the Neo-Palamite theology of the Orthodox Church. Such thesis has relied heavily on his use of the term anaptyxis in the Tomos of the 1351. Synod. In the paper it is argued that such self-understanding of his relation to the patristic tradition cannot be justified by textual evidence. Through the analysis of the Tomos of 1341, his polemical writings against Gregory Akindynos and the Tomos of 1351 it is shown that Palamas consistently presented his own teaching as a faithful exposition of the words of the Holy Fathers rather than their development.*

Keywords: *explication of faith, anaptyxis, Neo-Palamism, John Henry Newman, doctrinal development.*

Introduction

Robert Sienkiewicz has quite rightfully noted that the larger portion of modern research of St Gregory Palamas' theology is focused on two opposing images of the Saint that were already created during his lifetime. On the one hand, we have a portrait of a theologian holding firmly to the patristic tradition, and an image of him as this 'new theologian' whose theological 'innovations' are transgressing the boundaries set by the Holy Fathers on the other.¹ While the Roman Catholic neo-Thomists of the 20th century argued for the latter, the neo-Palamite orthodox in response took a stance defending the former image of the Saint.

However, it did not go unnoted by the Orthodox theologians that there was a certain degree of innovation in Palama's theology and that these elements of his teaching as such could not be found in the writings of his predecessors. In an attempt to provide an explanation for this doctrinal ingenuity they have pointed out that he did not embrace the relationship towards Church tradition which is "repetitional, dead and closed in itself", but rather pursued to 'explain', 'shed light on' and in 'a crystalized form' offer a synthesis of the patristic tradition.² How can one explain that, on the one, hand Palamas remained

* This paper was produced as a part of the research project *Serbian theology in the 20th century*, evidential no. 179078 of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology (University of Belgrade, Serbia). The project is financed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia.

¹ Robert Sienkiewicz, "Gregory Palamas" in *La théologie Byzantine et sa tradition, II (XIIIe-IXIe s.)*, Brepols, Centre d'études des religions du livre, 2002, pp. 131-137, pp. 155-173.

² Such a position is held and in similar words expressed by Jean-Claude Larcher, "Ο ἅγιος Γρηγόριος Παλαμᾶς καὶ ἡ πατερική παράδοση", in *Ὁ ἅγιος Γρηγόριος Παλαμᾶς στὴν ἱστορία καὶ τὸ*

faithful to the tradition, while, on the other, he introduced certain elements in the Church theology which might be regarded as new? One way to do so would be to argue that he himself maintained such an approach to the Holy Tradition. An approach that acknowledges that the continuation and following of the patristic tradition entails its *development*.

Therefore, certain scholars have pointed out that the Saint himself labeled his teaching as a development of the patristic tradition, using the term *ἀνάπτυξις* in the Tomos of 1351. M. Jugie was, to my knowledge, the first who pointed to the use of this term in the mentioned document and translated it quite significantly into French as *développement*.³ The term was picked up by Orthodox theologians who would write on Palamas in opposition to the view of the hesychastic controversy promoted by Jugie. Basil Krivoshein embraced the term and made a case for the Orthodox understanding of the doctrinal development.⁴ Meyendorff later on stated that the Saint’s theology is nothing but ‘a development’ of the theology of the Sixth ecumenical council regarding two energies and wills in Christ.⁵ The lead was also followed by Alexander Schmemmann who characterized the Palamite theology as ‘an organic development’ of the Eastern Orthodox theology.⁶

However, besides Krivoshein, the Orthodox theologians were hesitant to admit that this sort of development had anything to do with the concept of the doctrinal development, as advocated by John Henry Newman in his classical *Essay on the Development of the Christian Doctrine*.⁷ Most recently, Norman Russel has pointed out that such a notion, which can be traced back only to the 19th century, cannot be attributed to Palamas.⁸ Newman’s ‘evolutionary model’ simply does not fit that of Palamas. However, that does not mean Palamas did

παρόν. Παροκτικά Διεθνῶν Ἐπιστημονικῶν Συνεδρίων Ἀθηνῶν (13-15 Νοεμβρίου 1998) καὶ Λεμεσοῦ (5-7 Νοεμβρίου 1999), ἔποπτεία Γ. Ἰ. Μαντζαρίδη, Ἅγιον Ὄρος, Ἱερά Μεγίστη Μονή Βατοπαιδίου, 2000, pp. 331-46; Theodor Damian, “A Few Considerations on the Uncreated Energies in St. Gregory Palamas’ Theology and His Continuity with the Patristic Tradition”, *The Patristic and Byzantine Review* vol. 15 (1996-7), pp. 101-12; Σταῦρος Γιαγκάζογλου, “Ἡ ἀποδεικτικὴ μέθοδος στὴ θεολογία τοῦ Γρηγορίου Παλαμᾶ”, in *Φιλοσοφία καὶ Ὁρθοδοξία*, Ἀθήνα, Διεθνὲς Κέντρον Ἑλληνικῆς Φιλοσοφίας καὶ Πολιτισμοῦ καὶ Κ. Β., 1994, pp. 45-66; Georgi Kapriev, *Philosophie in Byzanz*, Würzburg, Königshausen & Neumann, 2005, p. 249.

³ Martin Jugie, “Palamite (Controverse)” in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, M. Vacant et al, eds., tome XI/2, Paris 1932, cols. 1777-818.

⁴ Basil Krivoshein, “The Ascetic and Theological Teaching of Gregory Palamas,” *The Eastern Churches Quarterly* vol. 3, no. 1-4 (1938) pp. 26-214.

⁵ John Meyendorff, *A study of Gregory Palamas*, trans. by George Lawrence, The Faith Press, 1972, p. 95.

⁶ Alexander Schmemmann, “St Mark of Ephesus and the Theological Conflicts in Byzantium”, *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* vol. 1 (1957), pp. 11-24, p. 18.

⁷ John Henry Newman, *An essay on the development of Christian doctrine*, Piccadilly, James Toovey, 1846.

⁸ Norman Russell, *Gregory Palamas and the Making of Palamism in the Modern Age*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2019, p. 134.

not have any in mind. According to Russell, “he was well aware” that he was developing what the Fathers had said, but his understanding of this is more in line with what Maurice Wiles has called ‘the logical model’, in which the development is understood as the drawing out of conclusions implicit in premises, than with that of J. H. Newman.⁹ If one takes into account that the orthodox theologians of the 20th century by default rejected Newman’s idea of the doctrinal development,¹⁰ it does not come as a surprise that those who recognized something resembling it in the work of the Holy Father rushed to distinguish it from the ideas of the famous Cardinal.

When reading these Orthodox accounts of Palamite theology one gets the following impression: St Gregory was well aware that in theological terms he was stating something new. However, he would not have wanted it to be regarded as such, nor did he want to betray the patristic tradition. His primary goal was, by all means, to preserve it, but to do so he also had to develop it. This is why he labeled his own theology as a ‘development’ of that very tradition. However, we must be careful not to believe that his understanding of the term had anything to do with what would be centuries later conceptualized as a doctrinal development by J. H. Newman.

What did Palamas actually understand this development to mean? Did he develop a teaching on the nature of the theological tradition that would justify it? I will attempt to show that St Gregory argued persistently for the faithfulness to the patristic tradition and did not teach the development of doctrine. While he argued that the revelation had always been one and the same, he did make a distinction in its reception among the faithful. On the other hand, he used the specific term in case (*anaptixis*) only once and I claim, therefore, it does not seem plausible that it played a significant role in his understanding of his own teaching as it was related to the patristic tradition. In conclusion, I argue that the whole discussion regarding the term and its meaning is more linked to the 20th century theology than it is to the given Byzantine era. I will pay special attention not so much to the *content* of Palamas’ teaching and its relation to patristic tradition, but rather to the *form* in which he presented this relation.

Progressive revelation?

⁹ Norman Russell, “Theosis and Gregory Palamas: Continuity or Doctrinal Change?”, *St Vladimir’s Quarterly* vol. 50, no. 4 (2006) pp. 357-79, p. 379.

¹⁰ Daniel Lattier, “The Orthodox Rejection of Doctrinal Development”, *Pro Ecclesia* vol. 20, no. 4 (2011) pp. 389-410. The author argues quite significantly and persuasively that the rejection of the Newman’s idea was founded on its ill understanding and scarce reading of Newman among the Orthodox theologians. In addition to that, he claims that George Florovsky’s and Dimitry Staniloae’s understanding of the history and the nature of the doctrine is not that dissimilar from Newman’s.

St Gregory is attributed with writing the Prologue to the *Tomos* of the monks of the Holy Mount Athos, issued in 1341. In it we are facing what, at first impression, might seem to be a concept of gradual and progressive revelation. The analogy is established between the prophets of the Old Testament and the Holy Fathers, as well as between those who are prepared and willing to hear the former and the hesychasts who are in the same way paying attention and being faithful to the testimony of the latter. The Old Testament prophets, it is said, were given honor to confess the Divine Logos and the Holy Spirit as co-eternal with God the Father. However, to their contemporaries, who were not friendly listeners, this confession sounded as a distortion of the monotheistic faith. The faith that later became revealed and known to everyone had been already known to these divinely inspired prophets.¹¹

In a similar way, the Prologue continues, there are people today who ‘thanks to their evangelical life’ are devoted to the ‘contemplation of everything that is beyond mind’ and are therefore capable of discerning the difference between the substance (*ousia*) and the energy in God. There is yet another group of people, that is, those who are given access to this mystery through respect, faith, and love which they have towards the holy men of the first group. In such a manner an analogy is established between the Holy Fathers such as Denys the Areopagite, St Maximus and St Macarius, and the Old Testament prophets who were introduced by the divine grace to the divine mysteries unknown to most people. In the same manner those who respected and listened to their prophecies regarding the triune God are compared to those who honor and follow in the steps of the Holy Fathers. In both cases, the revelation is primarily given to a certain group of people and through them to anyone willing to hear their testimony and have faith in it. As much as Trinity was not unknown to everyone in the Old Testament period, the difference between God’s substance and energy also did not represent anything new, neither for the Holy Fathers nor for those who venerated and followed them.

It is possible that St Gregory relied at least to some extent on the argument made by St Gregory the Theologian regarding the progressive revelation of God’s triunity.¹² In his *Or.* 31 the Cappadocian quite famously stated that in the Old Testament Father was preached openly and Son less clearly. The New Testament revealed the Son clearly and pointed to the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Nowadays, when we have the Holy Spirit indwelling in us,

¹¹ *Αγιορείτικος τόμος υπέρ των ιερώς ησυχάζοντων* in Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμά, *Ἀπαντα τὰ ἔργα*, εισαγωγή, κείμενο, μετάφρασις, σχόλια ἀπὸ τοῦ Παναγιώτη Κ. Χρῆστου, τ. 3, ΕΠΕ, Πατερικαὶ ἐκδόσεις «Γρηγόριος ὁ Παλαμάς», Θεσσαλονίκη 1983, pp. 496-515.

¹² As is indicated by T. A. Pino, St Mark of Ephesus most probably did. Tikhon Alexander Pino, “Beyond Neo-Palamism: Interpreting the Legacy of St Gregory Palamas”, *Analogia: The Pemptousia Journal for Theological Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1 (2017) pp. 53-73, p. 68. Pino delivers a very nuanced and comprehensive account of the issues pertaining to the topic of this paper.

He thereby offers proof of His own divinity.¹³ This gradual revelation was needed, explains St Gregory, because it would be dangerous to openly preach Son's divinity in times when even faith in God the Father had not yet been well established. And the same goes for the divinity of the Spirit in the times when the Son revealed to us.

Although there are some similarities between these two accounts, there are some substantial differences as well. In the *Tomos* of 1341, it is recognized that there is a certain progress in regards of revelation. However, it has to do with the *acceptance of revelation* which had already been given to a group of people by divine grace and not so much with the *revelation itself*. This is quite understandable since the aim of this Prologue is precisely to offer an apology for the hesychastic differentiation between essence and energy in God. This teaching is therefore presented as the revelation given to the Holy Fathers but not accepted by everyone as their opponents demonstrate. To whom we may attribute faithfulness to the testimonies of the Fathers is, therefore, obvious. It seems plausible to conclude, therefore, that from the very start of what would become known as the 'hesychast controversy' Palamas insisted on the continuity rather than on the development of the patristic tradition.

Let us now examine whether through the course of his polemics with Gregory Akindynos, later on, he made any 'progress' in regards to his position.

'A New Theology'

From the beginning of St Gregory's dispute with Barlaam, Gregory Akindynos, being on friendly terms with both, tried to balance his relationship towards them and not choose sides.¹⁴ He would defend one when attacked by the other, but also, at times, he would criticize both. He argued against Barlaam's teaching on created grace and his attack on the hesychasts, but also attacked St Gregory's positioning of another 'lower' deity which might be visible. Akindynos would state that both these teachings present a 'new theology' (*ἡ καινή θεολογία*).

To accuse an opponent that what he is arguing for represents 'a new theology' is not a new form of accusation. This sort of rhetorical defamation has been an important part of the polemics since the early Christianity. Moreover, it was part of the pagan attack on Christianity, in response to which Christians themselves referred to the continuity with the Jewish Scripture, as well as with the pagan philosophers who allegedly adopted some truths which

¹³ *Or.* 31.26 (SC 250: 326).

¹⁴ For a recent overview of St Palama's defense of the hesychastic experience of the divine light in his polemics with Barlaam cf. Ioan Chirilă, Stelian Pașca-Tușa, Adrian Mărincean, Bogdan Șoptorean, "The Divine Light: The Sight and Experience of it in Gregory Palamas' Theology", *Astra Slavensis* vol. 7, no. 3 (2019) pp. 221-230.

were contained in it.¹⁵ This sort of reversed form of the argument from tradition was adopted by Christians from their pagan critics and interiorized so that, since the time of Tertullian, they would accuse each other of introducing ‘novelties’ and changing the ancient faith.¹⁶

Akindynos used this very argument against Palamas and it played a central role in his polemical strategy. In his letters, *Dialogue of the godless Palamas with the Orthodox, Refutation of Palamas’ Third Letter*, we find various forms in which this same accusation of introducing novelty in the Christian teaching is repeated. He calls Palamas ‘a new theologian’ (καινὸς θεολόγος); states that what he teaches is ‘an innovation’ (καινοτομία); that he expresses his doctrine ‘in new terms’ (ἐν ὀνομάτων καινότησι). The most common form of accusation that he brings up is that St Gregory’s teaching represents a ‘new-fangled talk’ (καινοφωνία).¹⁷ This is precisely what St Paul teaches Timothy to stay away from¹⁸, but also what we are warned against in Acts 20: 28-30, Matthew 24:23-5 and Luke 17: 21. Akindynos was, of course, aware of the fact that his opponent did not represent his teaching as a disruption in the transmission of the patristic tradition. On the contrary, St Gregory relied heavily on the patristic authors in all his works, quoting predominantly Denys the Areopagite in his polemical works against Barlaam and the Cappadocian fathers and St Maximus in his dispute with Akindynos. What he criticized though was his *approach* to the patristic authors and texts. He claimed that Palamas always quoted partially; that the lines cited were taken out of their context; that he misinterpreted and even falsified the words of the fathers and so on. It is in these terms that Akindynos argues that Palamas can be compared to the heretics of the ancient times who

¹⁵ Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine, Volume 1: The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2018, p. 34. Cf. Iuliu-Marius Morariu, "Aspects of political theology in the spiritual autobiographies of the Orthodox space? New potential keys of lecture," in *Astra Salvensis*, V (2017), no. 10, p. 130.

¹⁶ Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, p. 34.

¹⁷ All these arguments are deployed in his *Letters*. See Angela Constantinides Hero, *Letters of Gregory Akindynos*, Washington, Dumbarton Oaks, 1983: 31.30; 32.70; 33.44; 33.51; 34.3; 34.9; 34.19; 34.20; 36.2; 36.15; 37.49-50; 37.59-60; 37.91; 37.95; 40.4; 40.42; 40.137; 40.205; 40.209-212; 40.217; 41.17.

¹⁸ Akindynos refers to 1Timothy 6:20 and 2Timothy 2:1. It is worth noting that he uses the wording which in NA28 is described to be of later date. While the older versions of the manuscripts contained τὰς βεβήλους κενοφωνίας in some later manuscripts the spelling is different and instead of κενοφωνίας it is spelled καινοφωνίας. It might be possible that this spelling is not a result of a mere error made through manual copying but represents an intentional change aimed to justify that very sort of argument that Akindynos is also using against Palamas: it is the ‘new-fangled talk’ and not just ‘empty chatter’ that is prohibited by the Apostle.

used the passages from the Holy Scripture in a similar manner and with the same intent: to deceive the faithful.¹⁹

What is St Gregory Palamas response to these accusations? Does he argue in favor of the doctrinal development? Quite the contrary. In his *Polemical chapters against Akindynos* he attempts to turn Akidnyos' argument against him. Palamas claims that he is the one introducing novelties in the teaching of the Church and thereby distorting the tradition of the Holy Fathers. And he uses the exact same arguments that Akidnyos made against him, claiming that he falsified the words of the Fathers; quoted partially and out of context. Furthermore, he accuses Akindynos of putting patristic quotes in opposition to one another as well as of promoting those teachings which were explicitly rejected by Fathers as heretical.²⁰

Now let us turn to the Synod of 1351. and the meaning of the term *anaphyxis*.

'But an explication'

The Tomos of 1351 acquaints us with the credo professed by the Fathers who were gathered at the Synod held in Constantinople, but also with an account of the discussions that took place. At the very beginning Barlaam and Akindynos are compared to the heretics of the ancient times while some of the hierarchs who were present are accused of being their followers. When these bishops were asked why they took sides with those who preached against the true faith, they responded with two objections to the hesychastic party. They argued that Gregory Palamas was scandalizing the faithful and that an addition to the well-established episcopal credo had been introduced.²¹

At some point between the two Synods, in years 1341-1351, an article was added to the episcopal credo, the one proclaimed by a candidate at the occasion of his episcopal ordination. It is not sure what the addition itself contained, but it is certain that it was part of, at least, some of 15th century euchologies. Jugie argues that it probably entailed something similar to what may be found in a Sinai manuscript containing the credo of the newly ordained bishops of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.²² In a single sentence, contained in this credo, the synods of 1341 and 1351 were accepted as those who offered

¹⁹ *Letters*, 30.103-111. Akindynos' critique of Palamas' patristic hermeneutics is analyzed in a well-known article by J.-S. Nadal, "La critique par Akindynos de l'herméneutique patristique de Palamas", *Istina* vol. 19 (1974) 297-328.

²⁰ See Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμά, *Προς Ακίνδονον – Λόγοι αντιρρητικοί*, in: Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμά, *Ἀπάντα τὰ Ἔργα*, εισαγωγή, κείμενο, μετάφρασις, σχόλια ἀπὸ τον Παναγιώτη Κ. Χρήστου, τ. 5-6, ΕΠΕ, Πατερικαὶ ἐκδόσεις «Γρηγόριος ο Παλαμάς», Θεσσαλονίκη, 1987: 1.6; 2.1; 2.10; 2.11; 2.12; 2.14; 2.17; 2.19; 3.1; 3.3; 3.4; 3.11; 3.15; 3.17; 3.18; 3.21; 3.22; 4.4; 4.10; 4.11; 4.12; 4.17; 5.3; 5.8; 5.12; 5.13; 5.17; 5.18; 5.19; 5.26; 6.6; 6.7; 6.11; 6.12; (6.16); 6.18; 6.20; 7.10; 7.14; 7.15; 7.16.

²¹ Οἱ δὲ ἡτιάσαντο προσθήκην τινὰ ἐν τῇ χειροτονίᾳ τῶν χειροτονουμένων ἀρχιερέων γεγεννημένην (PG 151: 721C).

²² Jugie "Palamite (Controverse)", refers to manuscript Sinaiticus 1006, fol. 42v0.

testimony “against Barlaam of Calabria and the one who later taught the same things, Akindynos”.²³ It is plausible to assume that the addition against which the bishops associated with Akindynos and Barlaam protested at the Synod contained something similar to these lines. In response to the accusation of inserting an addition to the traditional episcopal credo, Palama stated:

This addition of the holy Synod which you say you do not like and which, if we are to name it rightfully is not even an addition but *an explication (anaptyxis)* of the sixth ecumenical council, is nothing more than the renunciation of Barlaam and Akindynos.²⁴

Here the term *anaptyxis* is not used by Palamas to denote his own entire teaching, which he would never differentiate from that of the Orthodox Church, but to denote the given addition to the episcopal creed. It is used in opposition to the word ‘addition’ (ἡ προσθήκη), while in the backdrop of the discussion one may recognize the prohibition of composing new decrees of faith as set by the 7th canon of the Third ecumenical council. This is the reason why Palamas responds that the alleged addition is *not an addition* but rather ‘an explication’ of what was already said at the Sixth ecumenical council.

The discussions that followed offer the context in which the meaning of this term could be grasped. Major part of the discussions consisted of the readings of the patristic quotations. Several dozens of these are cited in the *Tomos*, but we learn from it that this is but a fraction of the quotes that were read at the gathering. Palamas’ opponents were accused of declaring “what the Holy Fathers never said and neither indecent heretics never dared to think”.²⁵ When they replied by quoting St Maximus the Confessor and St Theodore Graptos they were faced with the charge of twisting their words and ill interpretation. Patriarch Callistus I himself demonstrated the difference between God’s essence and energy by referring to patristic texts. After several days, following the end of the third session, the emperor John Cantacuzene asked that the Synod consider six theological questions “using as ineffable guides the honorable theologians”, by which he meant the Holy Fathers. After these were resolved in a convenient manner everyone agreed that they had no further doubts regarding these issues and thanked St Gregory “for speaking and writing in accordance with all saints and defending the orthodox truth so eagerly” from those who attempted to lead it astray from the path set by the fathers.²⁶ They concluded that he was “in harmony with the sacred theologians”

²³ Cited according to Jugie, “Palamite (Controverse)” col. 1793-4.

²⁴ Ἐπὶ τούτοις ἡ θεία σύνοδος, Πρὸς ἣν φατὲ δυσχεραίνειν, φησὶ, προσθήκην, ἣτις οὐδὲ προσθήκη ἂν καλοῖτο δικαίως, ὡς ἀνάπτυξις οὐσα τῆς οἰκουμενικῆς ἕκτης συνόδου, οὐδεν ἕτερόν ἐστιν ἢ ἀποκήρυξις Βαρολάμ τε καὶ Ἀκινδύνου (PG 151: 721C). English translation by Jaroslav Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss (eds.), *Creed and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition, Part Two: Eastern Orthodox Affirmations of Faith*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2003.

²⁵ Pelikan and Hotchkiss, *Creed and Confessions*, 12.

²⁶ Pelikan and Hotchkiss, *Creed and Confessions*, 49.

and the defenders of orthodoxy while his opponents were declared to be opposing those things which the Fathers had ‘explicitly’ stated.²⁷

From the discussions that took place at the Synod we learn that the primary concern for both parties was to establish firmly their position in relation to the patristic authorities. Faithfulness not just to the faith of the Fathers but also to their exact words, things which they ‘explicitly’ stated was of crucial importance. This was the primary if not the sole criterium of orthodoxy. And this is why these synodal discussions might seem like an open competition in who is being more faithful to the sacred theologians. Therefore, it seems entirely unreasonable to assume that in the midst of such polemics St Gregory would argue not only for the preservation of the teaching of the Fathers, but for its *development* as well. Such an argument which would introduce an idea that one’s teaching entails a new element, even as a form of development of the old faith, would not represent a wise polemical strategy, to say the least.

Conclusion

How come, then, that so many theologians have stuck to this idea that St Gregory argued for the development of the doctrine and emphasized the importance of his use of the word *anaptyxis*? I will point to several possible causes. First of all, the French translation of the word *anaptyxis* as *développement* made by Jugie and adopted later on by the English-speaking theologians, although not entirely wrong might be regarded as somewhat misleading. Liddell-Scott’s dictionary states that the primary meaning of the term was ‘opening’, ‘gaping’ of mouth.²⁸ The 10th century Byzantine Encyclopedia Suda defines the term as synonymous with ‘interpretation’ (ἐρμηνεία) and ‘explanation’ or ‘explication’ (διασάφησης). In Modern Greek, however, the word *anaptyxis* has indeed assumed the meaning of the development. But, Babiniotis states that this happened precisely under the influence of the French *développement*.²⁹ This is why translating the term as *explication* rather than *development* seems like a better alternative.³⁰

The second reason why this term was given this meaning and particular significance, I believe, may be found in the 20th century polemics over theology of Gregory Palamas. Since many of these discussions on the palamite theology revolved around the issue of its fidelity to the patristic tradition, as Sienkiewicz pointed out, it does not surprise that the Saint’s alleged understanding of his own teaching as a form of ‘development’ of the patristic faith caught everyone’s attention. Therefore, it seems justified to conclude that the specific context of

²⁷ Pelikan and Hotchkiss, *Creed and Confessions*, 52.

²⁸ *The Online Liddell-Scott-Jones Greek-English Lexicon*. IntRes: <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/lsg/#eid=7642> [27.12.2021.].

²⁹ Γεώργιος Μπαμπινιώτης, *Λεξικό της νέας ελληνικής γλώσσας*, Αθήνα, Κέντρο Λεξικολογίας, 1998, p. 166.

³⁰ Pino, “Beyond Neo-Palamism”, 66.

„Did Saint Gregory Palamas Teach The Development Of The Doctrine?,” *Astra Salvensis*, IX (2021), no. 17, p. 115-124.

the 20th century polemics regarding palamite theology is the reason why the meaning and importance of this term in the 14th century hesychastic theology has been overexaggerated.

Finally, it is no wonder that the 20th century theologians amplified the theological importance of the term since it seemed to be an early foreshadowing of Newman’s concept of the doctrinal development. We may conclude, therefore, along with Tikhon Pino that the desire of the modern theologians ‘to extrapolate larger interpretative structures from the original theological disagreements has resulted in a distorted and often anachronistic portrait of the debates’, and that, therefore, what the studies of St Gregory Palamas in the 21st century require is moving beyond the neo-palamism of the previous century to make room for new and more authentic readings of his theology.