

The Philosophy of *Philokalia*: The Culture and Life of
Beauty in the East

Constantinos Athanasopoulos

**ANNALS of the University of Bucharest
Philosophy Series**

Vol. LXX, no. 1, 2021
pp. 13 – 74.

**ANALELE
UNIVERSITATII
BUCURESTII**

THE PHILOSOPHY OF *PHILOKALIA*: THE CULTURE AND LIFE OF BEAUTY IN THE EAST

CONSTANTINOS ATHANASOPOULOS

Abstract

In what follows, I will explore the philosophical foundations of the patristic writings contained in the collection of texts with the name "*Philokalia*". I will link this collection to the cultural and philosophical-theological context of the Kollyvades Fathers (two of whom were the editors of the collection) and St Gregory Palamas. My main claim is that this collection of texts represents a distinct and unique episode in the history of philosophy, as distinct as the publication of major collections and editions like the *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* (1751-1772) or other such works. In terms of interpreting this collection, my main approach is that one cannot approach the *Philokalia* texts without first understanding the motivation and aims of Kollyvades in compiling this compendium of patristic texts and that this motivation can be understood only through the connection of this collection to the philosophy and theology of St Gregory Palamas. My approach is not only philosophical and theological, but I have a wider cultural focus. My project is within the specific philosophical field of what is called "Philosophy of Culture and Civilisation". However, I will not follow other modern and contemporary attempts in this field in my approach to the Philosophy of *Philokalia*. I will propose my own interpretation and cultural analysis, which is based on Orthodox approaches to culture and civilisation. My efforts here can only be rather schematic. I will elaborate further on various aspects of my arguments presented here in future work.

Keywords: *Philokalia, Culture, Kollyvades, Palamas, nepsis, hesychia.*

1. Introductory remarks about *Philokalia*

Before we begin discussing this collection of texts, perhaps it would be useful (primarily for all those with little experience with this collection

of texts) to discuss a bit the origin of the title. The term “Philokalia” was a term favoured by St Basil the Great and St Gregory the Theologian (of Nazianzus) to entitle their collections of notable mystical theological texts of Origen (c. 184-c.253). St Nikodemos of Mt Athos (1749-1809) and St Makarios (Notaras), Bishop of Corinth (1739-1805) published their new *Philokalia* in Venice in 1782 with a generous donation from the Prince of Moldavia Mavrokordatos. St Nikodemos tried to publish in Vienna a collection similar to this earlier, together with a critical edition of key works of St Gregory Palamas, but the manuscripts were destroyed by Austrian police that caused a fire at the Publisher’s premises, in their effort to confiscate and destroy the writings of the Greek revolutionary Rigas Feraios (1757-1798). St Makarios gave his own manuscript with a similar collection of texts to St Nikodemos to correct and edit, shortly before 1780, during a visit to Mt Athos. It is these texts that we see in the first edition of 1782 (of 5 volumes). St Makarios’ texts are based primarily on these codices: codex 472 (12th century), codex 605 (13th century), codex 476 (14th century), codex 628 (14th century) and codex 629 (15th century) that were discovered at the Holy Monastery of Vatopedi, not long before 1780, and contained key texts from notable Neptic and Hesychastic Fathers. As St Nikodemos notes, in his Introduction to the 1782 edition (omitted in the English translation), these writings (that represent Patristic thinking of more than a thousand years) describe, in a practical way, the ascetic method of purifying the mind and the heart through the “treasury of watchfulness” (*νήψεως ταμείον*), so that it can attract the grace of God through the ceaseless prayer of the heart, a familiar practice of the Athonite hesychasts. Before discussing the key content and interpretations of *Philokalia*, I will turn my attention to the Kollyvades movement and their impact.

2. What is the Philosophy of *Philokalia*? Definitions, Differences and Distinctions

If one is to describe what is meant by this term (*Philokalia*), one is faced with great difficulty. It is not only the issue of unpacking and generalising over what is contained in 5 volumes of collected sayings of the Fathers (in its original Venice edition or the more widely known

modern Greek version). It is also the serious problem of approaching a quite foreign to the West compendium of texts that highlight habits of life and thought quite strange and unattractive to the norms of Western culture and civilisation. Self-humiliation, self-chastisement, complete and intentional obedience to a spiritual father (who may be less educated than the disciple), avoidance of fame, shunning of the company of others and material goods, may have been chosen, in isolation or in combination, for sects and orders of Western monks and nuns in the past (especially in Medieval Europe), but in the aftermath of Modernity and the Enlightenment and their embrace by most of the widely known Christian denominations in the West, these are frowned upon with distaste and even repugnance by most Westerners (including monastics). It is not only that modernity has created a rapid growth of atheism and secularisation (Meyer 1988). It is as if Christianity in the West has completely succumbed to modernity's ideals of learning, happiness and standards of taste and quality of life (Ester 1933; Inglehart *et al.* 1988). To show just a few examples of the foreign nature (to most of our Western contemporaries) of some of the dictates contained in these texts studied here, consider the following: frequently, these texts portray the life of the blessed and filled with grace created beings, the Saints, as a life of a solitary being living in squalid conditions, sometimes in self-imprisonment, sometimes in painful restraints, sometimes in extreme forms of hunger and thirst, sometimes in holes of the earth, sometimes in small and remote, damp and cold caves, and all these are intentionally chosen, and often with the guidance of an experienced spiritual father, who is going through even more extreme forms of *ascesis*.

It seems that the dominating cultural ideology of "liquid modernity" and its impact on Western social mores has created the ideal conditions for bringing about an absolute consumerist culture and civilisation, which has not only engulfed most of Western societies' structures and institutions, but Western Christian denominations in their totality as well. Bauman, among others, has accurately pinpointed this new model of an "art of life" in the Western contemporary culture and civilisation attracting people from all walks of life, even from more traditional Western Christian denominations: in this new model, one's choice of life becomes a choice among consumerist facilitated brands,

social networks, reality shows and internet enhanced and re-purposed image/video channels, that emphasise self-improvement through self-help, minimal effort techniques or hacks and psycho-social jibber jabber (see Bauman 2000; 2007; 2008). In all this, gradually we produce a quite different world, a contemporary reality that is quite alien to other epochs (especially the epoch that produced *Philokalia*): today, a life-hack is preferable to salvation; a magic pill is preferable to self-sacrifice; a virtual world preferable to reality.

Of course the “Enlightened Modernist” may regard the interpretation I am building in relation to *Philokalia* as the portrayal of some kind of cultural “arrested development”: within the perspective of “Enlightened Modernity” that was prevalent at the time of the publication of *Philokalia* (and still is the predominant cultural model, even with the appearance of post-modernity), the *Philokalia* Fathers and all who follow them are regarded as traditionalists and ceremonialists “beyond redemption and with no optimistic soteriology”; or they are regarded as “backward looking pessimists who avoid looking forward out of fear for the change and the new”; or they are “religious fanatics and zealots that stick to the letter of the law and lose the meaning and the content of the law”; or (even worse) they are “medieval witch-hunters who live in caves, because they are scared of modern day amenities and educational progress”; they are “anti-scientific scare-mongers who base their support on the corrupted political and cultural institutions that allow them to exist”. These are some of the characterisations that “honour” the Orthodox monks who are *Philokalia* enthusiasts, in the same way that they “honoured” the creators of *Philokalia* and the Kollyvades Fathers overall a few centuries ago.

I need to stress that (as any well-intentioned reader will see) all these characterisations are far from the ideals of culture and civilisation that one can find in the *Philokalia* and the cultural climate of the Kollyvades Fathers, within which the editors of this work acted. It is sad that scholars both within Greece and outside Greece have claimed such gross cultural inaccuracies and misinterpretations, and it is even sadder that recently these misguided interpretations acquire popular support (no doubt via the embrace of these misinterpretations via pop culture media and news channels that look to sensationalism and scandals

everywhere to make profit). In what follows, I will examine some of these misinterpretations, and I will argue against them.

But for now, suffice it to say that the Kollyvades Fathers promoted a peculiar ideal of culture and civilisation that is unique and quite distinct in comparison to any of the ones offered before and any of the ones that will come after. They offered to the world and Greek speaking Orthodox in particular (because Greek was the original language of the *Philokalia* texts) something quite unique and revolutionary for their time; something that perhaps can only have a parallel in the publication of *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* (1751-1772) and its impact on modernity.

The theological roots of this peculiar ideal can be found in the idiosyncratic cultural climate that was created in the aftermath of the Hesychastic Controversy and the victory of the followers of Palamas over the followers of Varlaam of Calavria, Akindynos and Gregoras. As many serious scholars of the period note, the Kollyvades' work can only be understood within, and as a result, of the Hesychastic cultural and theological climate (see Cavarnos 2003, 128; Bebis 1989, 12). The philosophical roots of this ideal however, are much deeper and span many hundreds of years. The most direct cultural and philosophical influence was of course the Palaiologan Renaissance (1261-1453), which preceded and influenced the Italian one (1300-1600). Key characteristics of the Palaiologan Renaissance were: a) the parallel tendencies of humanism and hesychasm in all their cultural forms (expressed primarily in philosophy, theology, education and art); b) the private and de-centralised ownership of schools of scribes or "scholar-scribes" (see for example the schools of Maximus Planudes, c. 1255-c. 1305, and Demetrius Triclinius, c. 1280-c. 1340), who interpreted and copied texts according to their interests (and not upon central administrative direction); c) a peculiar style of iconography (created in the Chora Monastery and renovations of St Sophia and other holy places of worship at Constantinople and Holy Mt Athos around the 13th c.) that brought together, in the same holy places, a pluralistic sense of humanistic naturalism, caring expressions, ascetic austerity and meditative calmness (expressed later in the form of hesychastic approaches to iconography); d) the rapid growth of learning and

scholarship during the 13th and 14th c. primarily focused around the University of Constantinople, which not only intensified the production of compendia of learning, dictionaries and collections of texts, but also provided a treasure of original, syncretic and patristic, synthetic approaches to a series of problems in philosophy, theology and other areas of cultural life (see Runciman 1970; Strezova 2014; Constantinides 1982; Fryde 2000; Constantelos 1998).

Perhaps one of the key texts guiding the Palaiologan Renaissance and indeed most of the cultural outputs of the late Byzantium was the magnificent text: Longinus *On the Sublime* (Λογγίνου *Περί ύψους*). This text has an esoteric, almost mystical, existence: its author is unknown and presumed to be Longinus or Pseudo-Longinus; its year of publication is also unknown, but it is widely accepted that it was published around the 1st century AD. For the West, it was widely unknown till around the 10th c., while for the East, undoubtedly was widely used and copied and commented upon by most scholars, even though this issue is still waiting for further research by Byzantinists (Grube 1957). One only has to think about the richness of the libraries of Constantinople (chiefly among them the Imperial and the Patriarchal), and other great centres of learning in the East (which included the Monasteries of Mt Athos, Patmos, Mt Sinai, and many other smaller Monasteries in Constantinople and other places: Monastery of Saint John the Forerunner “at Stoudios”, Church of the Holy Saviour in Chora, Monastery of Christ Panoiktirmon etc.) and before the coming of fires (which only in Constantinople destroyed 110,000 manuscripts in 5th c.), and the numerous sackings by barbarians and the Crusaders (who destroyed the reborn after the fires Libraries of Constantinople, because they could not read Greek!). For some scholars, one of the cultural drives for the Palaiologan Renaissance is the result of the Palaiologan Emperors’ desire to make the Libraries of Constantinople great again. For the same scholars, there would be no Italian Renaissance, if it were not for the few books that survived from the libraries that the Ottoman Turks destroyed in their sacking of Constantinople and the other Byzantine centres of learning (like Mystras, the home of the great philosopher Georgios Gemistos Plython with his many manuscripts and commentaries on Plato, Aristotle and other ancient works, and most

probably owner of copies of the notable work of Longinus *On the Sublime*) (see Runciman 1970; Irigoin 1971; Mango 1971; Dahl 1968; Marshall 1983; Nedelcu 2016).

I can only engage with very few of the great ideas contained in this magnificent work (Longinus' *On the Sublime*): in this work, there is a detailed discussion about some of the cultural prerequisites for great works of poetry, art and literature in general (including theology and philosophy). Two key cultural pre-requisites that are cited are: a) a democratic form of government, which provides an arena for excellence and a pluralistic approach to the ideal, and b) a sense of freedom in the creator of the cultural form (*e.g.*, a poem), which allows him/her to excel and create greatness. Longinus provides a list of a few other pre-requisites. He finds that a desire to gain material goods and temporal pleasures enslave the mind and go against greatness. According to Longinus, there is an implicit form of *ascesis* that is required in the creation of greatness, a thirst for knowledge and also retaining and advancing the characteristics that made older cultural forms great. No doubt this work inspired both Byzantine learned scholars and monastics with some learning and background in the arts. I am certain that this work was studied carefully by the young Gregory Palamas, while being a student at the University of Constantinople, where he had full access to the many manuscripts available in Constantinople, through the guidance of his teacher Theodoros Metochites. I am also certain that key ideas from this work had a tremendous impact on St Gregory's philosophical and theological development.

Perhaps an example of how this great work of Longinus influenced both the West and the East (by enhancing and developing their peculiar cultural characteristics) could be found in a comparative cultural analysis of some great works of art: Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* (for the West) and St Athanasius and St John the Baptist icons found at the Holy Monastery of Pantokratoros in Holy Mt Athos (for the East)¹. Using Longinus' work

¹ I am grateful to the monks of the Holy Monastery of Pantokratoros in Holy Mt Athos for allowing me to see these icons, which are kept in the Treasury of the Monastery, during a recent visit with a small number of pilgrims from the Palamas Seminar Conference on *Philokalia* and St Gregory Palamas (Veroia and Mt Athos, July 2021).

as basis for evaluating a great work of art and using the aesthetic categories and tools proposed there, one can find in Da Vinci's Mona Lisa (which was neither signed nor dated) the greatness of a naturalistic symbolism that makes sublime the ideal in visual portrait art. What one sees in the Mona Lisa has nothing to do with the model Lisa Gherardini (the Italian noblewoman who posed for years). It is an ideal version of the model that goes beyond it in ways that remain perennially esoteric and symbolic. Observe the use of colour pigmentations that fade through time (presumably he was working on this painting for over 20 years) and which make the now seen Mona Lisa, with her enigmatic smile, totally different from the one that was originally created (for example, the eyebrows and eyelashes gradually disappearing). Da Vinci's masterly use of *sfumato* and other Renaissance techniques, which built upon and developed earlier techniques, show his deep knowledge and appreciation of the past but also his freedom to engage with techniques and materials of the future (Bohm-Duchen 2001; Kemp 2006). On the other hand, the great works of Byzantine Art under examination are found at the Holy Monastery of Pantokratoros in Holy Mt Athos. This historic Holy Monastery, which was founded in 1360 by the great military rulers of Byzantine Empire, Alexios and John (who became a monk there), stands alone in true late Byzantine architectural and topographical beauty: having dedicated its Katholikon to the Holy Transfiguration of Christ the Pantokrator, masters the minimal in making it both functional and symbolic, and combines *ascesis* in form with colour in greatness and freedom. This Holy Monastery has in its Treasury two great icons of Macedonian hesychastic style: St Athanasios and St John the Baptist. Both of these icons are unique in their greatness: the viewer not only appreciates the level of *ascesis* that the faces of these holy men portray, but the viewer is also inspired by these icons in achieving the greatness that they represent. The masterly techniques of shadowing the eyes and the contours and colours of the face, exhibited in a familiar way in the icons of great ascetics, showing their life habit of extreme fasting and penance, together with the astonishingly fiery staring eyes that follow you in perspective wherever you go provide examples of a live embodiment of hesychastic theology and philosophy that not only seeks, but also demands with austerity, a certain greatness

by the viewer. There is no compromise to materiality and pleasure; there is no way of escaping the thirst for all that is divine and the intense *eros* for the Triune God that facilitates the reception of divine grace and energy. These icons not only inspire the viewer to great levels of *ascesis* and holiness, but also become the conduit of soteriological and eschatological divine energy and grace, a topic much researched and discussed by the hesychast St Gregory Palamas and his followers (Panagopoulos 2020; Strezova 2014; Tachiaos 1987; Patterson 1978; Ouspensky 1992).

3. What is the Philosophy and Theology of *Philokalia*? Content and its symmetrical and symbiotic relationship to the Philosophy and Theology of St Gregory Palamas

Philokalia is a collection of texts of the Holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church (4th-15th c.), published for the first time in Venice in 1782 (in the original Greek) and which are mostly concerned with the spiritual life, thinking and sayings of monks living in the desert and in monasteries. The title and the subtitle of the collection of these texts are indicative of their meaning and purpose: *Φιλοκαλία τῶν Ἱερῶν Νηπτικῶν συννερανισθειῖσα παρά τῶν ἁγίων και θεοφόρων Πατέρων ἡμῶν. Ἐν ἧ δια τῆς κατά τήν πράξιν και θεωρίαν ἠθικῆς φιλοσοφίας ὁ νοῦς καθαίρεται, φωτίζεται και τελειοῦται* (*Philokalia of the Holy Neptics, compiled by our Holy and God-bearing Fathers; in this, the mind (nous) is purified, enlightened and perfected, through moral (ethical) philosophy, in both its practical (praxis) and theoretical (theoria) aspects [my translation]*).

Four things are worthy of mention regarding this title and subtitle:

a) the choice of the word *Philokalia* (*Φιλοκαλία*) denotes not only an association with the previous collection of mystical texts (for example Origen's *Philokalia* which was an anthology of Origen's texts, probably compiled by St Basil the Great and St Gregory the Theologian), but also an emphasis on the love for what is good and beautiful; see here the use of the word in Ancient Greek literature and more particularly in the *Funeral Oration* of Pericles delivered at Kerameikos at the end of the first year of the Peloponnesian War (431–404 BC) as a part of the annual

public funeral services for the Athenian citizens killed during the war. This word (verb derivative) as preserved by Thucydides (2, 40, 1) – in a most cited sentence – has this form: *Φιλοκαλοῦμέν τε γὰρ μετ' εὐτελείας καὶ φιλοσοφοῦμεν ἄνευ μαλακίας* (“we love the beautiful and good in simplicity and we do philosophy without weakening our bodily and mental strength and virtue” [my translation]).

b) The choice of the word *nepsis* (*Νηπτικῶν* is a derivative from *νήψις*, *νήφω*, *i.e.*, not drinking of wine, I am sober) denotes the sober, prudent and reserved state of mind of the Hesychasts during their hard efforts to purify their mind and heart. *Neptikoi* (as characterising those who exercise *nepsis*) was a more generic term covering not only Hesychasts but also Fathers who exercised in the Desert even before the Hesychasts. Note also that St Makarios and St Nikodemos, the editors of the *Philokalia* texts we examine here, do not claim that it is *their own* words nor that they compiled these sayings themselves (in a familiar to them way, they see their work as one of editors and publishers and not as writing or collecting in an original way sayings of the Fathers). Also note that St Nikodemos of Mt Athos in his Introduction to the Venice edition of the *Philokalia*, elaborates on what is *nepsis* in this way: he names *Philokalia* “a treasure of *nepsis*”, and connects it to *hesychia*, both *nepsis* and *hesychia* referring to the state of the heart of the Hesychasts. For St Nikodemos, *nepsis* is full attentiveness and guard of the mind in its hesychastic state. St Nikodemos has here in mind (among others) the writings of Evagrius of Pontos and his emphasis on the meaning of pure prayer as devoid of all images and earthly pursuits and desires (see first book of *Philokalia*), and St Gregory of Sinai’s depiction of hesychasm as devoid of all earthly meaning and thoughts (see here the relevant section of the fourth book of *Philokalia*, where St Gregory of Sinai follows St John Climacus’ (or St John of Sinai, also known as “of the Ladder”) dicta in his 27th step, and admits that Evagrius’ views on prayer are a good description of *hesychia* as a step towards perfection; see *Ἰωάννη Κλίμακος*, *Κλίμαξ* 27; PG 88:1112A). St Nikodemos finds that the two (*nepsis* and *hesychia*) are united in *Philokalia* and provide the meaning and significance of hesychasm that is most important for both lay people and monastics in their pursuit of the treasure of the heart that is Jesus Christ (Luke 17, 21; Matthew 13, 44); through Him and in Him they will

find freedom from the bonds of this world and the wandering of the mind.

c) The choice of the word “philosophy” is important. The use of the word “philosophy” is by no accident here. This is frequently disregarded and has led many scholars and other commentators to serious misinterpretations of the collected texts we examine here (for example, claiming that this is primarily or exclusively a collection of theological texts, suited and appropriate only to a theological examination and discussion). The Saints, who edited this collection and used this wording in its subtitle, are one with the Patristic Tradition in taking “philosophy” as “true philosophy”, which is in essence what we today consider as “theology”, but with more *apodeictic* and critical thinking elements (see for example the works of early Christian apologists: Aristides’ *Apology for the Christian Faith* and Justin Martyr’s similar in nature *First and Second Apologies*). St Nikodemos of Mt Athos, in his Introduction to the Venice edition is frequently using philosophy with this meaning (as “true philosophy”, leading and becoming one with theology, but having a more *apodeictic* direction and sense)².

d) The emphasis on the unity and intrinsic relation of *praxis* and *theoria*. *Praxis* here is not considered as different than *theoria*, but *praxis* and *theoria* are considered as one and the same (this brings the *Philokalia* Fathers against the Ancient Greek tradition of subjugating *praxis* to *theoria*: in this tradition – *i.e.*, Ancient Greek tradition- *theoria* is considered as more important than *praxis* and any success in *theoria* is considered as independent from a specific *praxis*). *Theoria* [from *thea* (θέα) “a view” + *horan* (ὁρᾶν) “to see”] in *Philokalia* has a more theological content (note that some of the works of the Fathers of *Philokalia* have *theoria* in their title). It is not only speculation and theorising (its usual meaning in Ancient Greek philosophy), but also now it gains the meaning of a vision of God, mystical illumination enacted by divine grace (see Louth 2003, 66-7; Johnson 1997). In both Plato and Aristotle, *theoria* is what we should aim for: knowledge having a profound value and leading us to truth

² See on this my discussion on the origins of *apodeixis* and misinterpretations of its use in St Gregory Palamas in: Athanasopoulos 2015, 361-374.

(see Nightingale 2004; Kraut 1991). It is by no accident that Plotinus, one of the key representatives of Neoplatonism (a very successful School of Ancient Greek Philosophy, with many followers in Medieval and Byzantine Philosophy), in his *Enneads*, claims that everything is *theoria* and everything is derived from *theoria* (Gerson 1996, 31). What the early Fathers (especially the Cappadocians) did with this prior understanding of *theoria* is remarkable. Jaeger notes on St Gregory of Nyssa's use of philosophy and *theoria*:

"The analogy between (Gregory's) terminology and thought and that of the ancient initiators of the philosophic ideal of life is a perfect one. The ascetics themselves are called by him 'philosophers' or 'the philosophic chorus'. Their activity is called 'contemplation' (*θεωρία*), and to the present day this word, even when we use it to designate the *θεωρητικός βίος* of the ancient Greek philosophers, has preserved the overtone which transformation into a technical term of Christian asceticism has added to it." (Jaeger 1954, 21-22)

Theoria is a term favoured by St Symeon the New Theologian and all the Hesychasts (with this new added meaning of uniting *praxis* and *theoria* and in the sense that the Cappadocian Fathers gave to the term). A follower of Palamas, Kallistos Katafygiotes (whose text can be found in the 5th Volume of *Philokalia*) has the term *Theoria* in the title of one of his works. Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos (Vlachos) notes on the use of this term by the Hesychasts:

"*Theoria* is the vision of the glory of God. *Theoria* is identified with the vision of the uncreated Light, the uncreated energy of God, with the union of man with God, with man's *theosis*. Thus, *theoria*, vision and *theosis* are closely connected. *Theoria* has various degrees. There is illumination, vision of God, and constant vision (for hours, days, weeks, even months). Noetic prayer is the first stage of *theoria*. Theoretical man is one who is at this stage. In Patristic theology, the theoretical man is characterised as the shepherd of the sheep."

Metropolitan Hierotheos proceeds to make a special mention of St Symeon the New Theologian (we find his texts in the fourth volume of *Philokalia*; he had a major impact on St Gregory Palamas, who cites him in his work):

"This is what Saint Symeon the New Theologian teaches. In his poems, proclaims over and over that, while beholding the uncreated Light, the deified man acquires

the Revelation of God the Trinity. Being in '*theoria*' (vision of God), the saints do not confuse the hypostatic attributes. The fact that the Latin tradition came to the point of confusing these hypostatic attributes and teaching that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son also, shows the non-existence of empirical theology for them. Latin tradition speaks also of created grace, a fact which suggests that there is no experience of the grace of God. For, when man obtains the experience of God, then he comes to understand well that this grace is uncreated. Without this experience there can be no genuine 'therapeutic tradition'.³

Note, in relation to this, St Gregory Palamas' own words on how *hesychia* relates to *theoria* and *praxis*. *Hesychia* for St Gregory Palamas is related to: "the overthrow of the mind and the world, the forgetfulness of all that is earthly, the mystical experience of what is heavenly, the throwing of meanings for what is better and above meanings, the going towards the true *theoria* or *theopectia* (vision of God), to say something that is more proper" (the above is my translation of this text: *τὴν νοῦ καὶ κόσμου στάσιν, τὴν λήθην τῶν κάτω, τὴν μύστην τῶν ἄνω, τὴν τῶν νοημάτων ἐπὶ τῶν κρείττον ἀπόθεσιν, αὐτὴ πράξις ὡς ἀληθῶς, ἐπίβασις τῆς ὡς ἀληθῶς θεωρίας ἢ θεοπτίας, εἰπεῖν οἰκειότερον*) (Γρηγορίου Παλαμᾶ, *Ὁμιλία 53, 33*) (Μαντζαρίδη 1998, 80). Note that here St Gregory Palamas refers directly to the famous *πράξις, θεωρίας ἐπίβασις* (*praxis* is expression, coming into fruition, of *theoria* [my translation]) that St Gregory the Theologian stressed: «*Βούλει Θεολόγος γενέσθαι ποτέ και της Θεότητος άξιος; Τας εντολάς φύλασσε, διά των προσταγμάτων οδευσον. Πράξις γαρ θεωρίας ἐπίβασις...*» (E.P.E. 4, 274). According to St Gregory the Theologian, this *theoria* can have only one end and final destination: God. In his words: *Theoria* is the arrival into the apex of all thought, God, in Whom all inclination to thinking stops and all theory rests [my translation] ([*Θεωρία*] *Εἶναι ἡ ἀφιξις εἰς το ακρότατον των νοουμένων, τον Θεόν, εἰς τον οποίον σταματά πάσα ἐφεσις και αναπαύεται πάσα θεωρία*) (PG 35, 1084). Note how this is transformed by Kallistos Aggelikoudes (a follower of St Gregory Palamas) in the 5th Volume of *Philokalia*: *Κεφάλαια* (§19):

³ Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos, *Orthodox Spirituality: A brief introduction*, Chapter 2, 1994, as found in http://orthodoxinfo.com/inquirers/hierotheos_difference.aspx (accessed 14/06/2020).

“Η πράξη του νου βρίσκεται στη λεπτή εργασία και στη συνεχή θεία μελέτη και στην αδιάλειπτη προσευχή και στα όμοια· πραγματοποιείται δε στο επιθυμητικό μέρος και καλείται θεωρία” (*Praxis* of the mind is in the intellectual work and in continuous theological study and in the never ceasing prayer and the like; it is made complete in the appetitive part and it is called *theoria*).⁴

Here *praxis* is transformed into *theoria*, where *theoria* is the end result of a long process of *praxis*. Also, note that *theoria* is in the *appetitive* part (this needs further elaboration that belongs in another work).

Now, written collections of sayings of important people exist in many forms in Western Civilisation (following the ancient Greek tradition of *Apothegmata* – Αποφθέγματα). Just to give you some examples: *Apothegmata* of Delphi (147 Delphic Maxims, discussed by Diogenes Laertius in the 3rd century AD and later Stobaeus in the 5th c.), *Apothegmata Laconica* attributed to Plutarchus (AD46-119), *Apothegmata Patrum* (Sayings of the [Christian Desert] Fathers or otherwise known in Greek as *Γεροντικόν*, appearing in various versions from around 400), *Apothegmata Macarii Magni* etc. In the East, there were many similar collections, which even predated Greek collections: for example, Jewish, Ugaritic, Sumerian and Accadian collections of sayings existed in wide circulation in the Mediterranean and Middle East (Perdue 2008; Ehrlich 2009). Further East one could mention the sayings of Lao Tzu, Confucius and Buddha (among others). But this collection of texts (of the *Philokalia*) is the one that monasteries in all the Orthodox world favour for spiritual edification just before the Holy Pascha and other great feasts. This they do for many reasons: some of the Fathers mentioned in the *Philokalia* have their feasts before the Holy Pascha; monastics see in the texts of the *Philokalia* good food for thought and spiritual edification esp. before this major Feast; there is a unifying theme of compunction, repentance and humility that is emphasised in this period, and for a few other reasons (that perhaps may be the focus of a future study).

⁴ See *Φιλοκαλία των Ιερών Νηπτικών*, μτφρ. Αντώνιος Γαλίτης, (εκδ. Το περιβόλι της Παναγίας, 1986), ε' τόμος.

A relatively recent revival of interest among the lay Orthodox Christians took place with the publications of various versions of the *Philokalia* texts in Greece and abroad. In the Greek speaking world, one could mention the re-publication of the Venice editions of *Philokalia* by Tzelatis in 1893 (containing also some texts on prayer by Patriarch Kallistos, a follower of Palamas, not found in the 1782 edition), and later, at the end of the 1940s, by the Astir Publications (founded by the Papademetriou brothers), with continuous editions till now. In the English-speaking world, *Philokalia* became famous through the translation and edition of *Philokalia* by Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, G.E.H. Palmer and Philip Sherrard over 20 years (1979-99 in 4 Volumes; this was based on the Astir Publications version; a 5th Volume was published in English by St George Monastery and Ann Skoubourdes in 2020); note that the Introduction written by St Nicodemos and his notes are omitted in the English translation of Metropolitan Kallistos, Palmer and Sherrard; a few other texts are also omitted, so the English translation in circulation today is only a partial translation of the original text in Greek. In Slavonic language, there is a translation of selected texts from *Philokalia* by St Paisius Velichkovsky (Dobrotolublye, Добротолубіє) published in 1793 in St Petersburg; a Russian translation by St Ignatius Bryanchaninov, published in 1857; and a five-volume translation into Russian (Dobrotolyubie) by St Theophan the Recluse, published in 1877. Note that the edition prepared by St Theophane the Recluse has omitted some sections of the original 1782 *Philokalia* (primarily texts from St Peter of Damascus, Kallistos Katafygiotis, St Gregory Palamas, etc.) and added works from St Ephraim the Syrian, St Varsanouphius and St Theodoros the Studite, among others). In Romania, there is the 12th volume publication of Fr Dumitru Staniloae (published within the period of 1946-1991); in the West, in wide circulations there are also the Italian, Finnish, French, German and Arabic translations (which again are partial translations of the original text in Greek). So, one could ask, more persistently here, why is this collection so important for the Orthodox?

One can highlight here the continuous reading and inspiration of monastics from *Philokalia*'s first time of publication till now. Many of these texts, were collected, read and commented upon by monastics in a

disjointed form from their time of creation. But the *Philokalia*, as a bound collection of texts, created, soon after its first publication, a line of readers and major interpreters, both in terms of academics in theological Schools, and in a more practical way (*i.e.*, teacher to student, spiritual father to spiritual son within specific monastic communities), influencing Orthodox spirituality in many countries (see Palmer 1997-99; Kallistos 2004; Louth 2015). But why all these people read and got inspired by these texts? With my work here, I will try to throw some light on this aspect of *Philokalia*, by focusing on the people who made this collection of texts and the cultural, philosophical and theological, environment that produced it through its association to St Gregory Palamas' philosophy and theology. My aim is not only to elucidate the philosophical and theological intricacies of this cultural environment, but also connect it to the actual writings of St Gregory Palamas (note that the connection to St Gregory Palamas is supported by many notable Orthodox theologians; one could mention here Fr John Romanides, Fr George Florovsky, Fr Dumitru Stăniloae, Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos, and Metropolitan Kallistos) (see Kallistos 2004; 2005, 69-121).

It is my claim that only through this connection to Palamite corpus one can avoid the misinterpretations proposed by many (Orthodox and non-Orthodox). Further on, it is also my claim that one can be guided to the interpretation of some key Palamite writings only through a deep knowledge and engagement with the texts of *Philokalia* that predate him. In this way, I put forward the view that there is a symmetrical and two-way relationship in the research engagement with the Palamite corpus and the *Philokalia*. I will discuss some key points in these connections and my overall approach below.

Briefly summarised, the connections are: a) all Holy Fathers who predate Palamas and whose writings are compiled in the *Philokalia* are Fathers mentioned in the Palamite corpus in relation to compunction (*metanoia*), *nepsis* (purification of heart), ceaseless prayer of the heart, and the role divine *energeia* has in the perfection of these processes and in deification or glorification (some Fathers influencing Palamite thought on all of these issues more than others); b) the Saints responsible for the first publication of these texts were heavily influenced by St Gregory Palamas (they not only read, but tried to publish Palamite

texts and made Palamas' philosophy and theology known to others) and were the spiritual sons of the monastic and cultural environment of the Hesychastic Athos that produced the Kollyvades movement- they lived and breathed within this cultural environment and they expressed its perspective regarding the present and the future of Orthodoxy; and c) the collection ends with texts from direct students of St Gregory Palamas (note that this is for the original text of *Philokalia* in Greek); this only intensifies the urgency and necessity of the reading and understanding of the Palamite corpus prior to the reading of the *Philokalia*: one, for example, can only ask why these students were included in the 5th volume and not others?

Parallel to this, one can understand how the texts of *Philokalia* can guide one in finding a valid and accurate interpretation of the texts of Palamas and other hesychastic writings overall. There is a symmetrical and symbiotic relationship between them. If one is not careful about this relationship or totally ignores it, one can easily arrive at serious misinterpretations. For example, there has been some research published in Western journals of comparative religious studies and other places that makes the claim that St Gregory Palamas' and St Gregory of Sinai's texts and other important Hesychastic texts have been influenced and/or have incorporated the method of the *Yoga Sūtras*. Actually, some researchers find that this was due to contact of the early hesychasts with "Arab travellers and writers such as the scholar Al-Biruni, one of the major figures in medieval Islamic period, who in fact wrote about the *Yoga Sūtras* in the 10th CE." (Hisamatsu 2015). Paraphrasing this published research, one can see here an Arab-Muslim infiltration and virus-like impregnation of yogic practices within Orthodoxy! This amalgamation of Islamic and Hindu practices (which can be seen primarily in the Sufi School) has been studied and analysed extensively (Ernst 2005, 15-43), but when one tries to use this to interpret and analyse the writings and practices of the Hesychasts and indeed the writings of *Philokalia*, one seriously misinterprets not only the texts themselves but also the spirit with which they are written. One could mention here St Gregory Palamas' writings against Islamic dogma and practices like those of the Sufi Muslims (in his *Lectures to Chionas – Διάλεξις προς Χιόνας* – while his capture and imprisonment

by the Muslim Turks, in his *Triads* and other texts, where he refuted most eloquently Varlaam's claims that hesychasts are navel-gazers); also, in the *Philokalia* one can see a refutation of some key elements of Sufi and Yoga related ideas in various places (see for example, in the first Volume of *Philokalia*, St John of Karpathos' "For the Encouragement of the Monks in India who had Written to Him: 100 Texts" and "Ascetic Discourse Sent at the Request of the Same Monks in India", where there is an explicit advice for the Orthodox monk to avoid during prayer any kind of worldly and alien to Christ ideas or thoughts and specific bodily exercises; one can also see a refutation of such ideas in the fourth Volume of *Philokalia* in St Gregory of Sinai – see his *On the Signs of Grace and Delusion, Written for the Confessor Longinos: Ten Texts*).

My text here can only be introductory. I hope that in the future I will be able to go deeper into an analysis regarding all these interconnections and cross-influences between *Philokalia* and the texts of Palamas. However, I am also hopeful that by the end of this work one can understand why some famous (or not so famous) attempts to interpret *Philokalia* cannot be successful, if they try to remain alien to the climate and cultural environment that made this collection possible. In my wider cultural approach to *Philokalia* here I am not alone. Metropolitan Kallistos and Professor Christos Yannaras also have made similar claims⁵. I differ however, from Yannaras' approach on how we interpret the cultural value and contribution of the Kollyvades movement.

4. Philosophical significance of binding *praxis* and *theoria* and the significance of a philosophical understanding of the way these are connected in the *Philokalia*

The idea of binding *praxis* and *theoria* in the way envisaged by the Holy Fathers of the *Philokalia* (and St Gregory Palamas' understanding of this on the basis of St Gregory the Theologian's *Πράξις γὰρ θεωρίας επίβασις*, as discussed above) is of extreme importance not only for

⁵ See Metropolitan Kallistos 2004 and 2005; also Χ. Γιανναράς, *Ορθοδοξία και Δύση στη νεότερη Ελλάδα* (Αθήνα: εκδ. Δόμος, 1992).

researchers into the Theology of *Philokalia*, but also for the philosophical understanding of it.

In Philosophy, there is a long discussion about the relation of *praxis* to *theoria*. There is a long discussion in ancient times about this (originating primarily in the debates between Platonists and Aristotelians on the importance of *praxis* for *theoria*). One can see this discussion (for example) in both early and late works of Plato (see Vlastos 1988, 362-396; Robinson 1970; Klosko 1986) and in the *Nicomacheian Ethics*, *Rhetoric* and *Politics* of Aristotle (see Johnstone 1980; Eikeland 2008; Snell 1953). One can see a continuing thread of discussions on this through to the Byzantine times culminating in the formulations provided by St Gregory Palamas and his disciples (see Bénatouïl et al 2012).

This discussion in contemporary times was brought forward by the contributions of L. Wittgenstein (and a few others, like Bourdieu 1977, 1990). According to Wittgenstein, philosophy is “to show the fly out of the fly bottle” (*Philosophical Investigations* par. 309), meaning that the philosophical endeavour, as it was practised in his time became utterly pointless and only forced philosophers to be locked within a kind of solipsism⁶ from which they cannot escape (see Gottfried 2017; Johnston 2020; Techio 2021). Philosophers for Wittgenstein from the time of Plato tried to find some kind of a structured logical form that would be applicable to everything (from metaphysics to ethics, politics and aesthetics), but according to Wittgenstein were deluded and locked their minds in a bottle, much like a fly who constantly tries to escape a transparent bottle by banging its head against the sides. Wittgenstein thought that the task of philosophical discourse should be to try to find a way out of this bottle, by analysing the “messy” ordinary uses of language and avoiding philosophical endless debates regarding the meaning of words (Dilman 1998, 102-24). For Wittgenstein,

⁶ Wittgenstein discusses solipsism in many places throughout his works (see *Philosophical Investigations*, I. § 284, *The Blue and Brown Books*, *Remarks on the Foundation of Mathematics* and other parts of his Manuscripts).

“Philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language; it can in the end only describe it... It leaves everything as it is.” (*Philosophical Investigations*, par. 124)

So, in this way, philosophy should exclusively be concerned with the practice or use of ordinary language and try with it to guide philosophical thought (Hymers 2010; Bloor 2000). This action-oriented philosophical endeavour, or in other words, this *praxis*-centred philosophical investigation, brings the ideas of Wittgenstein very close to the ideas found in the *Philokalia* regarding the relation of “true philosophy” to *praxis* and *theoria*⁷. When seen in this perspective a Western Cultural Theorist approaching *Philokalia* is like Wittgenstein’s solipsist who is trapped in the fly bottle; there is no way to see the *Philokalia* perspective. In the interpretation of *Philokalia* proposed here, the philosophy of *Philokalia*, when read appropriately, liberates philosophers through the love for the beauty that unites theory and practice, in the sense envisaged by the Holy Fathers of *Philokalia* and St Gregory Palamas. In this sense Liberation Philosophy is the philosophy of *Philokalia* and the philosophy of *Philokalia* is Liberation Philosophy; beauty that liberates is also a familiar theme in Wittgenstein and many other philosophers (see Read 2020; Tilghman 1991; Schroeder 2020; Iaco 2013).

5. The Kollyvades movement and the two editors of *Philokalia*

The Kollyvades movement is a very significant movement of clerics and monastics that soon enough was joined by a parallel movement of lay Orthodox, striving to preserve the essence, meaning and practices of Orthodoxy as given by the Holy Fathers. For many commentators and scholars, they caused a *Philokalic Renaissance* of Orthodox Culture, Philosophy and Theology, which opposed Greek and other European

⁷ In this sense all the discussion of Wittgenstein’s fideism actually misses the point. I will elaborate on this in future work. For fideism in Wittgenstein see Nielsen 1967; Hudson 1968; Nielsen 1969.

Enlightenment writers⁸. The Kollyvades Fathers, were, in their majority, persecuted during their life, and only long after their death they were recognised collectively as Saints; their feast day is six days after the Holy Pascha (Orthodox Easter). Their name comes from *Kollyva* (κόλλυβα or the boiled grains that are offered during a memorial service) and it was given to them for their insistence that memorial services with *kollyva* should not take place on a Sunday (because on a Sunday we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus), but preferably on Saturday, in which we commemorate the souls of the departed. After a brief overview of the life and cultural environment of some of the key representatives of the Kollyvades, I will discuss the issue about the *Kollyva* in more detail and the various interpretations of the Kollyvades movement. Some of the key representatives of the Kollyvades movement are the following:

St Kosmas Aitolos (1714-1779), who travelled throughout Greece trying to return the Greek speaking peasants to their faith, and preached frequent communion. He studied at the Athoniada School of Mt Athos (where he was influenced by St Neophytos Kafsokalyvites) and became monk at Philotheou Monastery of Mt Athos in 1759. He was sent by the Ecumenical Patriarch Serapheim II in 1760 to Western Greece to preach and support the local inhabitants in their Orthodoxy (these areas were ruthlessly occupied by the Ottoman Turks, who were forcing the locals to become Muslims). He remained in Western mainland Greece till his murder in 1779 by the Turks, except for a short visit at the Ionian islands in 1777 (where he remained only for a few months, because the Venetians demanded him to depart from the Ionian islands, due to his criticism of their religious practices and beliefs). According to historical evidence, he helped build more than 1000 primary schools and 200 secondary schools, primarily in Epirus⁹. In his many sermons (some of distinct prophetic character), which were preserved due to the efforts

⁸ Μητροπολίτου Μαυροβουνίου Αμφιλοχίου Ράντοβιτς, *Η φιλοκαλική αναγέννησι του XVIII και XIX αι. και οι πνευματικοί καρποί της* (Αθήνα: Ίδρυμα Γουλανδρής - Χορν, 1984).

⁹ Στ. Παπαθεμελή, *Η κοινωνική διάσταση των διδαχών του Κοσμά Αιτωλού, Το άλας της γης, περί Ορθοδοξίας και Πολιτικής* (Αθήνα: έκδ. Παρουσία, 1999).

of his many followers, one can see his serious Orthodox theological education, but also his simplistic and realistic approach to daily social issues of the times. He preached for the equality of the genders and for the obligation of all to care for the poor, weak and the sick. He also attacked the powerful and the rich of his time asking them to repent and stop taxing the poor. In his sermons, one can see how the Orthodox message of the Kollyvades Fathers had a distinct social and cultural agenda¹⁰.

St Neophytos Kafsokalyvites (1689-1784) was a notable teacher and director of Athoniada School of Mt Athos, and a monk of Kafsokalyvia (Skete of Holy Trinity at Mt Athos). He went and taught at theological schools in Romania (Bucharest and Transylvania), after being persecuted at Mt Athos; this persecution was due to his leadership of the Kollyvades movement there. He wrote many theological and philosophical works. Some of his most representative works are: *Apodeictic Treatise on Frequent Communion* (1766; some researchers claim that this work was influenced by a similar work written by the Roman-Catholic monk named Michel de Molinos, published in Rome in 1675; however, there is no similarity in content nor any common spiritual orientation); *Commentaries on various Aristotle's works*; *Commentaries on Lucian's works on Friendship and on Tyranny* and *Commentaries on various Thucydides' and Plutarch's works*; he also wrote various treatises against Calvinism and notable Calvinists of his day¹¹.

St Paisius Velichkovsky (1722-1794), who published the Slavonic version of the *Philokalia*, having a significant impact on the Optina Elders (in Russia). St Paisius, after visiting various monastic communities in Russia and Romania, arrived at Mt Athos in 1746 and he soon led a

¹⁰ See G. Podskalsky, *Η Ελληνική Θεολογία επί Τουρκοκρατίας 1453-1821. Η Ορθοδοξία στη σφαίρα επιρροής των δυτικών δογμάτων μετά τη Μεταρρύθμιση, μετάφραση πρωτοπρ. Γ. Δ. Μεταλληνός* (Αθήνα: Μορφωτικό Ίδρυμα Εθνικής Τραπέζης, 2005) [Original in German: *Griechische Theologie in der Zeit der Türkenherrschaft (1453-1821): die Orthodoxie im Spannungsfeld der nachreformatorischen Konfessionen des Westens*, (München: C.H. Beck, 1988)].

¹¹ See Γεώργιος Θ. Γιαννόπουλος, *Νεόφυτος Κανσοκαλυβίτης ο εκ Πατρών διδάσκαλος του Γένους* (Πάτρα 1992).

community of monks at the Skete of Prophet Elias there. In 1763, he moved to Moldavia with sixty-four monks. Due to armed conflicts in this area, he moved to Neamț Monastery in 1779, where he established a community of more than 700 monks, establishing a Greek school, with the aim to complete his translation of *Philokalia* through the help of his students. His influence on Romanian and Russian hesychasm is extremely important. Many monasteries in the wider areas of Moldavia and Vlachia were founded by his followers. Till now the monastic community of Neamț has a strong hesychastic character with a number of sketes surviving till now and many monks from this area visiting Mt Athos frequently. Many of the famous Elders of Optina were his followers and indeed the revival of monasticism in Optina during the 19th c. has been attributed to his work. St Herman of Alaska brought with him St Paisius' translation of the *Philokalia* in Alaska introducing hesychasm in the Americas (see Metrophanes 1994).

St Makarios (Notaras) of Corinth (1731-1805), one of the two editors of *Philokalia*, was one of the leaders in the Kollyvades movement. His family (Notaras) was an old and prestigious family in Corinth (with family ties to the Byzantine Emperors and the Palaiologoi in particular). After his election at the Metropolis of Corinth in 1764, he supported the failed Orlov revolt against the Turks in the Peloponnese (1770), avoiding punishment from the Turks by escaping to Corfu; he soon started visiting a number of Ionian and Aegean islands (he met St Nikodimos in Hydra in 1773), gathering manuscripts and meeting monastics and higher clergy; in 1777, he visited Mt Athos, shortly after the Kollyvades movement started its very first steps. His refusal to do a Memorial Service at the Monastery of Koutloumousiou on a Sunday was the start of the Kollyvades discussions around the typicon and proper order of services in the Orthodox Church, seeking to purify the Orthodox services from Western and non-Orthodox influences. During this visit at Mt Athos, he gave his manuscript of the *Philokalia* collection of texts to St Nikodemos to correct and edit. Soon after this, St Makarios leaves Mt Athos at the request of the monastic community there and goes to Chios, where he received an official letter of rebuke from the Patriarch for the turmoil he caused at Mt Athos. He stays in Chios till his death, writing, editing and publishing works amongst which the most

representative are: *Treatise on frequent Communion* in 1777 (this work, according to Monk Theokletos Dionysiatis, belongs to St Neophytos Kafsokalyvites, who, by that time, had left Mt Athos and Greece seeking refuge in Romania – see above); the *Philokalia* together with St Nikodemos of Mt Athos, and *Evergetinos* (with St Nikodemos of Mt Athos) in 1783. One aspect of his life that is worthy of mention is his charitable work in Chios and other islands, donating money for scholarships and building schools. It is also important to note that he paid for the education of the famous Greek intellectual Adamantios Korais (1748-1833), who became a key representative of the Greek Enlightenment and who was to become a major adversary to another leader of the Kollyvades movement, St Athanasios Parios¹². A number of New Martyrs were the spiritual children of St Makarios (most famous among them St Dimitrios the New Martyr of Tripolis, who martyred in 1803, St Polydoros of Cyprus, who martyred in 1794, and St Theodoros of Byzantium, who martyred in 1795).

St Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain (1749-1809), a co-editor of *Philokalia*, and one of the three leading figures of the Kollyvades (together with St Makarios of Corinth and St Athanasios of Paros) was born in the island of Naxos, where he became a student of the brother of St Kosmas Aitolos, Archimandrite Chrysanthos, and later he went to the School of Smyrna, where he studied philosophy, medicine, finance and history and became fluent in Latin, Italian and French. In 1770, he returned to Naxos and soon after (some stipulate through the influence of his mother, who became a nun, and St Makarios of Corinth) left for Mt Athos, where he became a monk in Dionysiou Monastery. One of his key tasks at the Monastery was the copying of codices and correspondence. He wrote many letters to other notable representatives of the Kollyvades (primarily St Makarios and St Athanasios) and compiled and published many theological and hesychastic texts, with the purpose of guarding the true Orthodox faith and securing its future against attacks from the West and the East. He wrote many treatises to vindicate the movement's aims and he received the wrath of many

¹² See Podskalsky 2005; Αντ. Χαροκόπου, Αντ., *Άγιος Μακάριος Νοταράς, Μητροπολίτης Κορίνθου* (Αθήναι 2001); Στυλιανού Γ. Παπαδοπούλου, *Ο Άγιος Μακάριος Κορίνθου* (Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις «Ακρίτας», 2000); Cavarinos 1977.

at Mt Athos and the Ecumenical Patriarchate (receiving an official condemnation letter by Patriarch Sophronios in 1776). In all his treatises, letters and sermons, he maintains a strong stance protecting the Orthodox faith and practices from Roman Catholic and Protestant practices and beliefs. He also was against what he perceived as a materialistic attitude that he believed infiltrated the Church during his time and he strongly supported hesychastic practices and the ceaseless prayer of the heart. He was recognised as a Saint in 1955 by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, after a petition by the Monastic Community of Mt Athos, and his Church feast is on 14th of July. Amongst his key ascetical, hagiological, and exegetical works (which preach a spirit of penance, poverty, purity and obedience) are the following: *Philokalia* and *Evergetinos* (with St Makarios of Corinth), *Treatise on continuous Holy Communion* in 1778, *Unseen Warfare* in 1796 (some claim that it follows very closely the book *Spiritual Combat* of the Roman Catholic monks Lorenzo Scupoli or J. P. Pinnamonti, but the scholars who claim this do not recognise the significant differences both in content and spiritual perspective)¹³, *Spiritual Exercises* in 1785 (some claim that it is a translation of a book by the same title of the Roman Catholic monk Ignatius Loyola, again without recognising the significant differences in content and spiritual perspective)¹⁴, the *Rudder* in 1793 (which is a detailed account and interpretation of all canons of the Orthodox Church and is still in wide use among Orthodox monastics and clergy), *Confession of Faith* (offering a response to his critics and accusers and defending his brothers the Kollyvades, propounding the canonical order of the Church, and addressing such issues as the meaning of *kollyva*, the proper time for the celebration of Memorial Services, the special prerogatives due to Sunday, the theology of the divine Eucharist and the frequency of Holy Communion), and *Christoethia* (or in English, *The ethos of Christ*). Note that this work (together with other works of St Nikodemos) has been seriously misinterpreted by many Orthodox and non-Orthodox scholars; here *ethos* (ἦθος, ἔθος, plurals: ethe, ἦθη-ἦθεα) is a Greek word, originally

¹³ See π. Θεοδώρου Ζήση, *Κολλυβαδικά* (Θεσσαλονίκη: εκδ. Βρυέννιος, 2004).

¹⁴ See π. Θεοδώρου Ζήση 2004.

meaning “accustomed place” (see ἤθεα ἵππων “the habitat of horses” in the *Iliad* 6.511); *ethos* also has the meaning of “custom” or “habit”, and later took the meaning of moral habit or moral character; *Christoethia* however, is not a moral treatise, but has a wider philosophical, cultural and theological aim in a wholesome transformation of the life of the faithful. This work of St Nikodemos, according to Monk Theokletos Dionysiates, gives testimony to the sanctity, wisdom, and breadth of knowledge of St Nikodemos¹⁵.

St Athanasios Parios (1721-1813), one of the three leaders of the Kollyvades movement, received fierce criticisms and persecution not only from groups of monastics and clergy (who opposed the Kollyvades movement), but also from groups of Greek intellectuals, most characteristically Adamantios Korais (1748-1833), a key representative of the Greek Enlightenment. After he received his primary education in Paros, he left for Smyrna (1745) and later he studied at the Athoniada School of Mt Athos (1751) as a student of Evgenios Voulgaris (1716-1806) and St Neofytos Kafsokalyvites. Voulgaris taught him philosophy and rhetoric and St Neofytos Greek grammar and syntax. It is significant that he had Voulgaris as a teacher, because Voulgaris, even though a member of the clergy and a monastic (later on, he became a Bishop of Kherson in Ukraine) studied Philosophy and Natural Sciences at Padua and was a key representative of the Greek Enlightenment, trying to incorporate some of the European Enlightenment ideas in his teaching at Athoniada and later at the Great School of Constantinople. Actually, for his radical ideas regarding Orthodoxy he had to flee to Romania (Bucharest and Vlachia), Germany (where he published books and started writing against the Unites there, who persecuted him) and then to Russia in 1761-2, accepting a patronage by the Empress Catherine II, and dying in St Petersburg (Alexander Nevsky Lavra) in 1806 (after becoming for a few years Bishop of Kherson). For his work in Aristotelian Philosophy, Mathematics, Newtonian Physics and Astronomy, he was elected a Fellow of the Russian Academy of Sciences

¹⁵ See Μοναχού Θεοκλήτου Διονυσιάτου, *Ο Άγιος Νικόδημος ο Αγιορείτης και η Νεονικολαΐτικὴ Σχολή* (Γουμένισσα: έκδ. Ι. Κοινοβίου Οσίου Νικοδήμου, 2002).

in 1776, and a Fellow of the Royal Society (UK) in 1788. So, St Athanasios Parios had first-hand knowledge of the European Enlightenment ideas (through the teaching of Evgenios Voulgaris) and he formed his views against them very early. After a brief teaching career at the School of Thessaloniki (which had to close due to an epidemic), he moved to Corfu in 1760, where he studied physics with Nikephoros Theotokis (a graduate of the Universities of Padua and Bologna). Nikephoros Theotokis was another key proponent of the Greek Enlightenment. It is worthy of note that Theotokis, after his time in Corfu, had a distinguished career: he moved to Germany where he published a Physics book in Leipsig; soon after, he was invited to take over the School of Iasi in Moldavia by Gregorios Gikas, who was a prince of Moldavia, lecturing there on Physics and Mathematics for a few years. Next, he went to Russia (receiving patronage by the Empress Catherine II), becoming an Archbishop of Slaviansk and Kherson (after Voulgaris retired) and dying at the Monastery of St Daniil in Moscow in 1800.

From the above we can ascertain that St Athanasios Parios was taught about all the latest ideas of European Enlightenment (in Natural and Social Sciences and the Humanities) from two key Enlightenment intellectuals and scientists of his time: Voulgaris and Theotokis. They influenced him not only in the way he saw science and progress, but also in his strong aversion to Roman Catholicism (both Voulgaris and Theotokis wrote extensively on the incompatibility of Orthodox and Roman Catholic beliefs and practices). The fact that both Theotokis and Voulgaris chose to die in Russia shows their disappointment with the way things were developing in Greece and the Ecumenical Patriarchate. They saw in mainland Greece an intellectual and cultural subjugation to the Turks and in Europe a subjugation to materialistic attitudes and the Pope, forcing them to seek patronage in Russia. It also shows how complex was the intellectual and cultural scene in Greece and the Ecumenical Patriarchate at the time of the Kollyvades movement with proponents of both camps (the Kollyvades and the anti-Kollyvades) confronting each other openly in the corridors and the classrooms of

the Schools where they were both teaching¹⁶. Soon after his studies with Theotokis, St Athanasios Parios goes to Mesologgi around 1764, to teach at the Palamas School of Mesologgi (which was founded by Panayotis Palamas, St Athanasios' fellow student while at Athoniada and a prominent member of the Palamas family of Mesologgi – note that Palamas, as a surname in this family, comes from the habit of many Macedonian families to take over the name Palamas, to honour the great St Gregory Palamas). After a short time, he is invited by the Ecumenical Patriarchate to take over the Athoniada School, as its Director. It is there, at Mt Athos (shortly after 1770), that he meets the Kollyvades and in particular St Makarios of Corinth, who convinced him to become a priest. Due to the influence from the Kollyvades and St Makarios of Corinth, he soon becomes the strongest supporter of the Kollyvades movement at Mt Athos, and as a result, he is expelled from the Athoniada School, his clergy status was withdrawn and he was condemned as a heretic (together with St Nikodemos of Mt Athos and St Neophytos Kafsokalyvites – later these excommunications and condemnations were rescinded). Between 1780 and 1786, he lives in Thessaloniki and he co-operates closely with St Nikodemos of Mt Athos in the collection and preservation of codices and editing a collection of the works of St Gregory Palamas (this early collection of the works of St Gregory Palamas was destroyed in Vienna, where it was sent to be published). In 1786, he departs for Paros, but due to war at the Aegean Sea during this time, he takes refuge to Chios where he leads a School in co-operation with St Makarios of Corinth, producing many influential clerics and intellectuals. He dies there in 1813, at the Monastery of St George. He was recognised as a Saint by the Orthodox Church in 1995 and his feast day is on June 24. St Athanasios Parios wrote extensively and for many years supported the cultural rebirth of the Greek nation. His influence on St Nikodemos regarding the specifics of the collection of the texts in the *Philokalia* is extremely important.

¹⁶ Π. Μ. Κιτρομηλίδης, *Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός* (Αθήνα: Μορφωτικό Ίδρυμα Εθνικής Τραπέζης 1996); Ζ. Μουρούτη-Γκενάκου, *Ο Νικηφόρος Θεοτόκης (1731-1800) και η συμβολή αυτού εις την παιδείαν του γένους*, (Αθήνα: Βιβλιοθήκη Σοφίας Ν. Σαριπόλου, 1979).

St Athanasios Parios wrote on various topics (primarily on theology and philosophy; he also wrote educational textbooks and poems); his most prominent works are: *The Teachings of the Fathers* (where he attacks the ideas of European Enlightenment – especially Voltaire and atheism – and to which Korais critically responded with *The Teachings of the Brothers*); a *Treatise on St Gregory Palamas and St Marcos Eugenikos*; *Ethos and Tradition*; *Exposition of Orthodox Faith*; *Manual of Apologetics*; *Lives of Saints* (including the life of St Gregory Palamas). His biographers stress that even though he attacks in his works many of the ideas of European Enlightenment (and especially the ideas of Voltaire and other French, German and British Enlightenment thinkers focusing on their atheistic, materialistic and nationalist aims), he puts forward a more cultural vision of Orthodoxy, which tries to unite all Orthodox under the same cultural nexus of traditional approaches to social and political life and behaviour. His idea of tradition was not a negation of all that is new (as Korais accused him of doing), but a selection from the new ideas with strict cultural criteria, so that they can be compatible with the Orthodox Christian life and beliefs. In his works, he uses a few European ideas (often recognising them as such in his writings) and he does not hesitate to translate into Greek various European texts that he finds are relevant to his discussion; for St Athanasios Parios, the Orthodox can have both a secular and a religious philosophy, and through the Fathers they can find solutions for the serious problems of (secular) philosophy, whereas Enlightenment thinkers cannot, because they disregard the patristic tradition (and so they cannot be inspired to overcome the dead-ends of European Enlightenment philosophy)¹⁷.

¹⁷ See Διονύσιος Βαλαής, *Πτυχές από την πνευματική κίνηση στον υπόδουλο και τον παροικιακό Ελληνισμό κατά την περίοδο του 18ου-19ου αιώνα* (Θεσσαλονίκη: Πουρναράς, 2005); Μητροπολίτου Μαυροβουνίου Αμφιλοχίου Ράντοβιτς, *Η φιλοκαλική Αναγέννηση του XVIII και XIX αι. και οι πνευματικοί καρποί της* (Αθήνα: Ίδρυμα Γουλανδρή – Χορν 1984); π. Γεωργίου Μεταλληνού, “Παράδοση και Γένος στον Άγιο Αθανάσιο τον Πάριο”, in: *Ο Άγιος Αθανάσιος ο Πάριος, 1721-1813: Πρακτικά Πνευματικού Συμποσίου (Χίος, 6-7 Ιουλίου 2002)*, (Αθήνα: 2004), 33-43; , π. Γεωργίου Μεταλληνού, *Τουρκοκρατία- Οι Έλληνες στην οθωμανική αυτοκρατορία* (Αθήνα: εκδ. Ακρίτας, 2008); Κ. Παπουλίδη, “Περίπτωσης πνευματικής επιδράσεως του Αγίου Όρους εις τον βαλκανικόν χώρον κατά τον 18ον αιώνα”, *Μακεδονικά*, 9,

Notable other Kollyvades are St. Nicephoros of Chios (1750-1821), who was a student and biographer of St Athanasius of Paros, and he became teacher and spiritual father of many neo-martyrs in Chios and the Peloponnese, and St Arsenios of Paros (1800-1877), who was also a schoolteacher, and the spiritual father of St Nectarios of Aegina, (1846-1920), who was Bishop of Pentapolis and Head teacher at the Rizareion Ecclesiastical Academy (a theological academy producing many Bishops and Metropolitans in contemporary Greece and the Ecumenical Patriarchate).

Overall, the two groups (Kollyvades and anti-Kollyvades) had their own etiquette, their own way of doing things, their own method of thinking and acting towards each other and ways of understanding their role in the cultural environment of their time. The two main camps in the debates were soon incorporated into centuries long philosophical and cultural demarcations with the names of *Palaiofilosofoi* (old philosophers) and *Neofilosofoi* (new philosophers). Note the title they favoured in their exchanges (*i.e.*, related to Philosophy; this is how they saw themselves: as philosophers, new and old). The *Palaiofilosofoi* (old philosophers) were faithful to the Fathers and they were using primarily ancient Greek Philosophy texts (including commentaries created in Byzantine times). Their key representatives were St Nikephoros Kafsokalyvites and Patriarch Samouel Chatzeris (1700-1775). The *Neofilosofoi* (new philosophers) were post Byzantine intellectuals who went to Italy, France, Germany, and Britain and brought back new ideas (empiricism of Locke, atheism of Voltaire, Cartesian ideas, Kantian rigidity of moral law etc.). Their key representatives were Evgenios Voulgaris, Iosipos Moisioudax, Adamantios Koraes. Both groups (in their majority) tried to remain faithful to Christian dogma, with varied levels of success (with rather poor success rates in the case of *Neofilosofoi*). Both groups vowed to cause a rebirth of Orthodox spirituality under

1969, 278-294; Paschalis M. Kitromilides, *Enlightenment and Revolution: The Making of Modern Greece* (Harvard University Press, 2013); Paschalis M. Kitromilides, ed., *Adamantios Korais and the European Enlightenment* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2010); Γ.Β. Δερτιλής και Κ. Κωστής (επιμέλεια), *Θέματα νεοελληνικής ιστορίας (18ος-20ος αιώ στα Βαλκάνια τον 19ο αιώνα* (Αθήνα: Θεμέλιο 1980).

Turkish occupation through education (they saw this as the only way to get out of Turkish rule and the only way for Orthodox to survive in non-Orthodox Europe). Key protagonists from both groups had Evgenios Voulgaris as their teacher (e.g., St Athanasios Parios, Iosipos Moisioudax). Battlegrounds for their debates were the Schools of Constantinople, Patmos, Smyrna, Ioannina, Athens, Thessaloniki, Kozani, Holy Mt Athos (Athoniada School of Vatopaidi), some of these schools having the academic standing of today's Universities. A key milestone in the philosophical aspect of the debates took place in 1798, when St Athanasios Parios published *Pateriki Didaskalia* (attacking European Enlightenment, atheism, and liberalism) and Adamantios Koraes responding with *Adelfiki Didaskalia* (defending European Enlightenment ideas). Embracers of *Neofilosofoi* can be found primarily at the Univ. Schools of Smyrna, Bucharest, Ioannina, Milies of Thessaly. Overall, the Orthodox Church was hesitant to take sides in this demarcation of camps due to the embrace of French Revolutionary ideas by some key members of the *Neofilosofoi* movement). An example is the notable *Neofilosofos* writer, Regas Feraios 1757-1798, who is famous for his early Greek Revolution Constitutions. He taught in Thessaly, where he was born, but took refuge to Vatopaidi Monastery after being persecuted by Turks in the area where he was born. He later went to Bucharest, where he came into contact with the ideals of French Revolution, becoming a strong supporter of French Revolution and Vienna, where he published a newspaper and books of a revolutionary character. He tried to see Napoleon and ask him to personally intervene so that the Greeks will be liberated from the Turks, only to be betrayed by one of his companions and be delivered to the Turkish Ottoman Governor of Belgrade by the Austrian authorities, and eventually be murdered and thrown in the Danube River. Note that the Orthodox Church was also hesitant to support the *Palaiofilosofoi*, because of the fierce criticism of major Orthodox hierarchs by the Kollyvades (who most of them can be clearly demarcated as *Palaiofilosofoi*)¹⁸.

¹⁸ See π. Γεωργίου Μεταλληνού 2008.

6. Interpretations of the Kollyvades Movement

Most of the theologically oriented commentators would agree that: “No single debate, after the Hesychastic Controversy in the fourteenth century, had such an impact on the life of the Holy Mountain as the Kollyvades Controversy”¹⁹. But there are some Orthodox theology scholars who claim that Kollyvades were an ultra-conservative group of traditionalists that were only concerned with specific rituals and had no higher aims in theology (Τζώγας 1969, 141-3). These scholars downplay the relationship of Kollyvades to Hesychasts and claim that there is no direct connection nor a relationship of some kind to the Hesychasts (Τζώγας 1969, 142). On the other hand, Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos, Metropolitan Amfilohije Radović (of Montenegro), Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia, Fr Theodoros Zisis, Fr Georgios Metallinos, Professor Chrestos Yannaras (among others) seem to support the majority of the commentators on finding a strong connection between the Hesychasts and the Kollyvades (however, note my disagreement with Yannaras regarding St Nikodemos of Mt Athos later on in this work)²⁰. For some commentators, the Kollyvades movement is the expression par excellence of the Hesychastic spirit in the 18th and 19th c. According to Archimandrite Gabriel (1886–1983), Abbot of the Monastery of Dionysiou on Mount Athos, “the Kollyvades movement produced fruits which, both in quality and in quantity, surpassed all other periods of Hagiorite life”²¹.

I would like to stress that it is a mistake to think that the Kollyvades movement had limited influence and impact, which only exercised influence on certain monastic and clergy circles. Their impact engulfed all Orthodox oriented culture of the 18th, 19th and 20th c., throughout the Balkans and beyond, with traceable influences even today. It is characteristic that Count Ioannis Kapodistrias (1776-1831), a distinguished Greek diplomat, was a Kollyvades sympathiser and a *Palaiofilosofos* himself, and served for some time as the Foreign Minister

¹⁹ Hieromonk Patapios and Archbishop Chrysostomos 2006, Section 2 of Part I.

²⁰ See Metropolitan Kallistos 2004 and 2005; Bebis 1989.

²¹ Αρχιμανδρίτου Γαβριήλ, *Λαυσαϊκόν του Αγίου Όρους* (Βόλος, 1953), 10.

of the Russian Empire, helping the Greek Revolution against the Turks in 1821 (after resigning from his position in Russia) and being elected as the first head of state of independent Greece (1827-31). Adamantios Korais, a leader of the *Neofilosofoi* and a formidable opponent of the Kollyvades, wrote and published extensively against Kapodistrias and did not stop writing against Kapodistrias even after his murder at the steps of the Church of St Spyridon in Nafplion²². Also, Alexandros Papadiamantis (1851-1911), a notable literary figure of 19th c., who wrote beautiful stories and novels portraying the way of life and culture of the *Palaiofilosofoi*, is the fruit of the Kollyvades movement. He grew up in Skiathos, an island where some important Kollyvades monastics came after their persecution from Mt Athos (most famous among them, Monk Nephon, Abbot and Founder of the Monastery of Annunciation). One can see this Kollyvades spirit most clearly not only in his treatment of monastics and clergy in his novels and short stories, but also in his stern criticisms on Apostolos Makrakis' ideas; Makrakis was a Western minded religious writer of this time, who tried to introduce Western habits and customs in Orthodoxy (like Brotherhoods of non-clergy theologians etc.).²³ Papadiamantis, together with Alexandros Moraitidis (1850-1929), another famous Greek novelist and poet, a member of the Academy of Athens (who died as a monk in Mt Athos), they preserved the Kollyvades movement ideas in the wider Greek culture and passed it on to their literary descendants in the 20th c. In their efforts, they maintained strong ties with clergy and monastics of Kollyvades spirit: Moraitides had as his spiritual father St Daniel Katounakiotes, and Papadiamantis and Moraitides were cantors at the Church of Prophet Elisaios in Monastiraki, with St Nikolaos Planas (1851-1932), as their priest. It is worthy of note that a parallel attack on Makrakis was initiated by Fr Philotheos Zervakos (1884-1980), who was an Abbot in the Monastery of Zoodochos Pigis Longovardas at Paros, joining the monastic community

²² Δασκαλάκης Α., *Κοραΐς και Καποδίστριας: Οι Κατά του Κυβερνήτου Λίβελλοι*, Αθήνα 1958; Κ. Σαρδελή, *Η προδομένη Παράδοση*, εκδ. «Τήνος», 1991.

²³ Μ. Μπέγζος, "Αλέξανδρος Παπαδιαμάντης και Απόστολος Μακράκης: "Αειπλάνητος Διδάχος" ή "Κοσμοκαλόγερος", *Νέα Κοινωνιολογία*, τχ. 27, 1999, 32-42.

there through the guidance of St Nektarios of Aigina, soon becoming a key monastic representative of the Kollyvades movement in the 20th c., together with St Joseph the Hesychast of Mt Athos (1898-1959), and many others.

7. Contents of *Philokalia*: indication of texts with key relevance to St Gregory Palamas' texts

There are some texts from *Philokalia* that are either discussed in Palamas' works or have a direct key relevance to Palamite positions. So, of particular relevance to St Gregory Palamas are the following texts from *Philokalia* (I will follow for this the English translation edition of the *Philokalia*, where possible):

Volume 1

Introduction by St Nikodemos of Mt Athos (note that this does not exist in the English translation of the *Philokalia*), and the texts from St Anthony the Great (*On the Character of Men and on the Virtuous Life: 170 Texts*), St Isaiah the Anchorite (*On Guarding the Intellect: 27 Texts*), St Evagrius of Pontus (*Texts on Discrimination in respect of Passions and Thoughts; On Prayer: 153 Texts*), St Diadochos of Photiki (*On Spiritual Knowledge and Discrimination: 100 Texts*), St John of Karpathos (*For the Encouragement of the Monks in India who had Written to Him: 100 Texts; Ascetic Discourse Sent at the Request of the Same Monks in India*).

Volume 2

Texts from St Theodore of Edessa (*A Century of Spiritual Texts; Theoretikon*), St Maximus the Confessor (*Four Hundred Texts on Love, with a foreword to Elpidios the Presbyter; Two Hundred Texts on Theology and the Incarnate Dispensation of the Son of God, written for Thalassios; Various Texts on Theology, the Divine Economy, and Virtue and Vice; On the Lord's Prayer*), St Thalassios of Libya (*On Love, Self Control, and Life in accordance with the Intellect, written for Paul the Presbyter*)

Volume 3

Texts from St Philotheos of Sinai (*Forty Texts on Watchfulness*), St Ilias the Elder (*A Gnostic Anthology: Part I, Part II, Part III, Part IV*),

St Theophanis the Monk (*The Ladder of Divine Graces*), St Peter of Damascus (*Book I: A Treasury of Divine Knowledge, Book II: Twenty-Four Discourses*), St. Symeon the Metaphrastes (*Paraphrases of the Homilies of St Macarius of Egypt; Spiritual Perfection; Prayer; Patient Endurance and Discrimination; The Raising of the Intellect; Love; The Freedom of the Intellect*).

Volume 4

St Symeon the New Theologian (*On Faith, 153 Practical and Theological Texts; The Three Methods of Prayer [attributed to him]*), Nikitas Stithatos (*On the Practice of the Virtues: One Hundred Texts; On the Inner Nature of Things and on the Purification of the Intellect: One Hundred Texts; On Spiritual Knowledge, Love and the Perfection of Living: One Hundred Texts*), St Theoleptos, Metropolitan of Philadelphia (*On Inner Work in Christ and the Monastic Profession Texts*), St Nikiphoros the Monk (*On Watchfulness and the Guarding of the Heart*), St Gregory of Sinai (*On Commandments and Doctrines; Warnings and Promises; On Thoughts, Passions and Virtues, and also on Stillness and Prayer: 137 Texts; On the Signs of Grace and Delusion, written for the Confessor Longinos, Ten Texts; On Stillness: Fifteen Texts; On Prayer: Seven Texts*), St Gregory Palamas (*To the Most Reverend Nun Xenia, A New Testament Decalogue, In Defence of Those who Devoutly Practise a Life of Stillness, Three Texts on Prayer and Purity of Heart, Topics of Natural and Theological Science and on the Moral and Ascetic Life: 150 Texts*), and the famous Palamas' inspired text by the Holy Mt Athos Monks entitled *The Declaration of the Holy Mountain in Defence of Those who Devoutly Practice a Life of Stillness*.

In the Greek 5th Volume (not yet published into the English edition of the *Philokalia*) of interest are: Texts from Kallistos and Ignatios Xanthopouloi (*Method and precise canon for those who choose the hesychastic and monastic life: 100 chapters*), Kallistos Angelikoudis (*Kefalaia (Chapters): 81 chapters*), Kallistos Tilikoudis, presumed the same as Kallistos Angelikoudis (*On Hesychastic Practice*), Kallistos Katafygiotis, presumed the same as Kallistos Angelikoudis (*On union with God, and Life of Theoria*), Saint Simeon Archbishop of Thessaloniki (*Chapters on the Sacred and Deifying prayer*), Saint Mark Eugenikos (*On the Words that are Contained in the Sacred Prayer*), Anonymous (*Interpretation of "Kyrie Eleison" – Lord Have Mercy*), Saint Simeon the New Theologian (*Discourse on Faith and*

teaching for those who say that it is not possible for those who find themselves in the worries of the world to reach the perfection of the virtues, and narration that is beneficial at the beginning; On the Three Ways of Prayer), St Gregory of Sinai (Excerpts from the life of St Maximus Kafsokalivitis), All Christians Must Pray Uninterruptedly.

I note that I have selected the above texts because of their particular relevance to the Philosophy and Theology of St Gregory Palamas on the basis of two criteria: a) for works earlier than the Palamite corpus: frequency of citations and significance of key ideas from the selected Fathers to the work of Palamas and b) for works later than the Palamite corpus: the specific arguments of Palamas and their impact on his followers (for the majority of texts in the 5th Volume). Most, if not all, of the texts contained in the *Philokalia* are relevant to Palamas scholars in some way or another. But the ones selected above are more directly relevant than others.

8. The Importance of the texts of *Philokalia*

Overall, one could summarise the importance of the texts of *Philokalia* in this way:

a) All the texts in the *Philokalia* have either influenced the hesychasts or are hesychastic in nature and in purpose. In this way, they can be regarded as mini-hesychastic treatises on their own and are an excellent introduction and further elucidation of hesychastic texts (with proper guidance and with the right attitude of mind and heart). They can be used as educational tools: they show how Orthodox spirituality should accompany appropriate Orthodox Ecclesiology and how Orthodox Ecclesiology should support and guide Orthodox spirituality and faith.

b) The texts of *Philokalia* also provide further evidence for the patristic nature of the writings of Palamas and his followers, defending Palamas against his accusers. Some Philokalic texts (esp. the ones written after Palamas) develop further the thinking of Palamas in areas such as Dogmatics, Liturgical life and practice, Ecclesiology and Eschatology. Note that, during the 15th-17th c., there was a strong attack on Palamism and persecution by the Roman Catholic Church on all sympathisers of

Palamism, who wanted to publish or write in favour of Palamas. Protagonists in this persecution were the Roman Catholic monks and theologians François Richard and D. Petau, in the middle of 17th c., who tried to ridicule hesychasm and Palamas in particular, repeating the arguments of Varlaam and his followers and forcing Migne in the 19th c. to apologise to his readers for including Palamas' and his followers' works in *Patrologia Graeca* (151, 551-2). An attempt to defend Palamism by the Bishop Gerasimos Vlachos (1607-1685, Abbot of Theotokos Monastery in Corfu and later a Metropolitan of Philadelphieia in Venice) had very limited impact in the West and repeated attempts in the early 17th c. (by Nikodemos Metaxas, 1585-1646, later an Archbishop of Cephalonia, Zante and Ithaca) to publish texts of Palamas in London, Greece and Constantinople were either blocked or sabotaged by Roman Catholic agents (some scholars actually claiming that Roman Catholic agents destroyed the printing machines that Metaxas bought and tried to establish in Constantinople so that he can publish there Palamas' texts)²⁴.

c) Most of the texts in *Philokalia* are mystical texts: they provide the opportunity to all readers to get the meaning and significance they need to have in their lives, so that they can approach God mystically and deal with important spiritual problems they may be faced with. As such, there will always be a difficulty in determining the true meaning of each *Philokalia* text. There is a need of guidance and a need of full immersion into the cultural environment that produced them. Effort must be made to examine each text within its cultural and theological context and the cultural and theological context of the collection as a whole itself (more about this later on).

d) The following views of four key modern-day monastics who follow the Kollyvades spirit can summarise and elucidate all the above: For Monk Theokletos Dionysiatis (1916-2006), *Philokalia* is a codified teaching of the Holy Orthodox Fathers, creating a codified unanimity (even though examining topics with different backgrounds and in

²⁴ See for more details Σταύρου Γιαγκάζογλου, "Ο Άγιος Γρηγόριος Παλαμάς και η Νεώτερη Δυτική Θεολογία", *Θεολογία*, 83, 3 (2012), 23-53.

varied ways) in all aspects of spiritual life and Orthodox Theology. It protects the faithful from hypocrisy, false morality and pretence that fill the mind with pride: “*Philokalia* means the love of the beautiful. The beautiful is Christ. Connection with Christ makes beautiful our life. *Philokalia* shows how this can be achieved”²⁵. For Elder Efraim, Abbot of Vatopedi Monastery at Mt Athos, *Philokalia* is the *sine qua non* of Orthodox Theology and ecclesiastical life²⁶. For Elder Georgios Kapsanis, Abbot of Gregoriou Monastery at Mt Athos, the importance of *Philokalia* Fathers of the 18th c. is seven fold: i) The *Philokalia* Fathers renewed the authentic Orthodox spiritual life, giving the example of living what they preached; ii) they resisted the alienation of Orthodox from their heritage and tradition that European Enlightenment brought upon them; iii) they supported the faith of the Orthodox during difficult times (ruthless occupation by the Turks and Roman Catholic/Protestant propaganda and proselytism) through valid and detailed apologetic works; iv) they inspired the Orthodox cultivating the ethos of neomartyrs; v) they showed, through their honest and unequivocal persistence in the canons and the tradition of the Orthodox Church, that they were not bigots and sectarians (as they were accused), but that their only motivation was to hold themselves steadfast to their tradition; vi) they gave their own answer to important cultural and theological problems of their day: they showed a way to unite *lex orandi* with *lex credendi*; vii) they supported the development of many saints both from within their ranks and within the wider readership of their texts²⁷. For Metropolitan of Montenegro Amphilochios the significance of *Philokalia*

²⁵ Μοναχός Θεόκλητος Διονυσιάτης, “Εισαγωγή”, *Φιλοκαλία των Ιερών Νηπτικών*, μεταφρ. Αντώνιος Γαλίτης, (εκδ. Το περιβόλι της Παναγίας, 1986), α' τόμος, 11-16.

²⁶ Γέροντας Εφραίμ Βατοπαιδινός, *Διδαχές από τον Αθωνα – Η φιλοκαλία των Ιερών Νηπτικών ως προϋπόθεση της Ορθοδόξου θεολογίας και της εκκλησιαστικής ζωής*, 2020 (found in <https://www.pemptousia.gr/2020/03/didaches-apo-ton-athona-i-filokalia-ton-ieron-niptikon-os-proipothesi-tis-orthodoxou-theologias-ke-tis-ekklisiastikis-zois/> accessed 19/06/2020).

²⁷ Γέροντας Γεώργιος Καψάνης, *Φιλοκαλικοί Πατέρες του 18ου αιώνας*, 2013 (as found in <https://www.pemptousia.gr/2013/07/filokaliki-pateres-tou-18ou-eonos/> accessed 19/06/2020). Also found in: *Μηνιαίο περιοδικό Ιεράς Μητροπόλεως Πειραιώς, Πειραιϊκή Εκκλησία, έτος 18ο, αρ.φύλ. 205, Ιούνιος 2009*.

can be summarised in this: “What helps ‘liberals’ in their belief systems is the frequent lacking in eloquence on the part of traditionalists and their disability in justifying theoretically the traditional way of life. The *Philokalia* movement of the 18th c. is the potent weapon against the ruthless rationalism of the *Neofilosofoi*, because not only it is faithful to the typicon, but also explains and elaborates on the theory behind the rules and the significance of the symbols in ecclesiastical life. It is evident that behind the conflict between the two movements there is not just fiercely engaged rhetoric, but two different worldviews and historical and cosmological understandings of reality”²⁸.

In the next section, we will examine all this in more detail, focusing on some key interpretations of *Philokalia*.

9. Interpretations of *Philokalia*

Before I discuss some key Orthodox approaches to *Philokalia*, it would be interesting to see how some notable Roman Catholic and Anglican theologians interpreted the *Philokalia*. This will support further my claim that the *Philokalia* texts can only be properly understood within the cultural context and cultural environment that produced them and it will allow us to identify some key wrong approaches to it, helping in this way new researchers in their efforts to approach *Philokalia* with a balanced and appropriate methodology.

One of the key Roman Catholic approaches is the one produced by the Roman Catholic Jesuit monk I. Hausherr (1881-1978). He follows overall the approach to Hesychasm of the monk Barlaam of Calabria (one of the key opponents of Hesychasm and St Gregory Palamas in the 14th c. and later a Roman Catholic Bishop of Gerace). He also seems to agree overall with the criticism on Palamas by the Roman Catholic scholars M. Jugie and J. Pohle (who was a founding faculty member of the Catholic University of America and a contributor to the Catholic

²⁸ Μητροπολίτης Αμφιλόχιος Ράντοβιτς, *Η δυναμική του Φιλοκαλικού Κινήματος*, 2015 (as found in <https://www.pemptousia.gr/2015/07/i-dinamiki-tou-filokalikou-kinimatos/>; accessed 19/06/2020).

Encyclopedia)²⁹. Hausherr finds that hesychastic prayer has no distinct theological meaning and significance and it only distracts the monks from prayer, causing them to have peculiar psychosomatic and pathological experiences (Hausherr 1927). He has influenced many with his approach and in some way, he has influenced Gouillard, a French translator of *Philokalia*, who claimed that the Hesychastic prayer described in the texts of the *Philokalia* has attracted the attention of “psychologists, among other scientists” (Gouillard 1953). I would like to note in passing that there are discussions of how Orthodox theologians and philosophers can defend Palamism against these and other Roman Catholic arguments in a previous work (Athanasopoulos 2015)³⁰. In an interesting uptake of this interpretation, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Newton, in West Newton MA, produced a small book with the title “The Jesus Prayer” with the intention to guide the Roman Catholic youth on how to practice the hesychastic prayer on the basis of texts from the *Philokalia*. In the discussion of the theology behind the hesychastic prayer, the small book makes no mention of St Gregory Palamas and the great Hesychasts of 14th c.³¹. Actually the only instance throughout the book (38 pages in total), that Palamas is mentioned by name is in relation to *pan-en-theism*:

“To use the imagery of Gregory Palamas, God is like the sun. His rays permeate all of creation (pan-en-theism). He is a life-giving Spirit. When we move inside ourselves and remove the distractions of these false images and prophets who steal away our energy, we are filled with His life-giving rays.”³²

Note that *panentheism* is used in contemporary philosophy to denote a peculiar philosophical position about God and as a term was proposed by Karl Krause (1781-1832):

²⁹ See M. Jugie, “Palamite (Controverse),” in: M. Vacant et al. (eds.), *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, tome XI/2 (Paris: 1932), cols. 1777-1818.

³⁰ See my Introduction, and esp. the contributions of Prof. Mantzarides, Abbot Ephraim, Monk Adrianos, Prof. Tselengides, Dr G. Panagopoulos, Dr. S. Yangazoglou.

³¹ RC Diocese of Newton, *The Jesus Prayer* (Franciscan Communications, no date) (as found in: <https://melkite.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/The-Jesus-Prayer-Leaders-Guide.pdf>; accessed 17/06/2020), 4-7.

³² See RC Diocese of Newton, *The Jesus Prayer*, 23.

“Panentheism considers God and the world to be inter-related with the world being in God and God being in the world. It offers an increasingly popular alternative to both traditional theism and pantheism. Panentheism seeks to avoid either isolating God from the world as traditional theism often does or identifying God with the world as pantheism does.” (Culp 2017)

It would be an interesting project to refute the claims of Culp in his attempt to connect many Christian and non-Christian views with this term, and indeed to examine philosophically whether the application of this term on any Christian position is indeed plausible (philosophically and theologically). Suffice it to stress for now, that the understanding provided by the small Roman Catholic book is far from a correct understanding of *Philokalia*. Note that there is, in this little book of Roman Catholic catechesis no role for the humility of spirit, no discussion of compunction and no guidance from an experienced spiritual father (necessities that are the *sine qua non* according to all the Fathers of the *Philokalia* for allowing the *Jesus Prayer* to work). Note also that the whole process indicated by Krause and the Roman Catholic small book metaphysically resembles the Neo-Platonist process of emanation, where there is no absolute freedom for God to refuse giving the grace and energy that is necessary to bring peace, calmness and ultimately deification to fruition³³. The whole approach of the Roman Catholic small book is one of a self-help psychological manual for Roman Catholic religious young people, with no deeper understanding of *Philokalia* and its aims. In this way, it is just one example of how misinterpretation of key passages from *Philokalia* can lead people astray and likely cause more psychosomatic problems than solve any.

Another attempt at an interpretation of a key Father from the *Philokalia* was carried out by the Most Revd. Rowan Williams, previously an Archbishop of Canterbury and now Baron Williams of Oystermouth, Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, and Chancellor of the University of South Wales. I will examine some of his views on the *Philokalia* Fathers, as expressed in his small book *Silence and Honey Cakes – The*

³³ See my Introduction in Athanasopoulos 2020, where I discuss this issue in more detail.

*wisdom of the desert*³⁴. In this small booklet, which is based on a series of lectures he gave in 2001 at the John Main Seminary, an annual Conference organised by the World Community for Christian Meditation, in Sydney, he examines some key Desert Fathers (some of them included in the *Philokalia*, wishing to explore the spiritual dimension of their work. In discussing St Anthony the Great (1st vol. of *Philokalia*), he notes that our relationship with God is inherently connected to the way we handle those who are around us. He focuses his attention to the famous saying of St Anthony the Great:

“Life and death depend on our neighbour. If we gain our brother we gain God. But if we scandalise our brother we are sinning against God” (PG 65, 77; *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, Anthony, 9).

This is a much-quoted text of St Anthony, which taken in isolation, makes St Anthony a supporter of a Western-style Christian social ethical system that places the welfare and wellbeing of our neighbours at a pedestal, confirming in many ways the much quoted in the West Christian social and moral principle of *laborare est orare*, or *Labora est Ora*, *Ora est Labora* (mainly because it is through work that we can benefit others). This brings to mind the often discussed (esp. in the West) interpretation of the *Rule* of St Benedict, on exactly this point (Fahey 2013). However, in many of the sayings of St Anthony, preserved in the *Philokalia* (and the *Gerontikon*), we see St Anthony expressing ideas that go against the much-quoted text cited above by Williams. Examples are the following: in the first volume of the *Philokalia* (*On the Character of Men and on the Virtuous Life: 170 Texts*), we have St Anthony advising that for the people who are guided by their *logikon* “there is no need to disperse their attention to the company of men, but only choose and approach those people that are conducive to their progress and in particular those that are guided by the will of God. It is only in this way that people can progress in their spiritual life according to God and the eternal light” (text 24). St Anthony also (at the same collection of

³⁴ See Williams 2013, as found in: *Το μυστικό της ερήμου –Έχει να πει κάτι σήμερα το Γεροντικό; Μετάφραση: Χρήστος Μακρόπουλος, Αθήνα: εκδ. Εν Πλω, 2017.*

sayings) notes that we should not be concerned about whether people in this world like us, or appreciate what we do, or acknowledge and appreciate our work:

“Those who know God, are filled with all good thoughts, and, because they are after the heavenly things, they disregard the earthly ones. These people are not liked by many, nor they like the many. And for this not only they are hated, but they are also laughed at, by the many fools...” (text 53).

As one can understand, this (Palamite and Kollyvades inspired) *Philokalia* perspective on St Anthony’s dicta has nothing to do with many Christian social and ethical systems that we see in the West. Actually, what we can see in Williams’ work *Silence and Honey Cakes* is that Williams uses his interpretation of St Anthony to support his own Christian Social Ethical system (discussed by scholars as an Ethics of Recognition and Non-Competitiveness), and he does not seem to be interested in the *Philokalia* perspective at all. This appropriation of Desert Fathers’ texts is not without its critics in the West and Williams has received criticisms by both Anglican and non-Anglican Christians for decisions he has taken while an Archbishop of Canterbury, while following his own Christian social ethics³⁵. In any case, what I wish to stress here is the fact that, when one takes a *Philokalia* Father out of the context of *Philokalia*, they are open to challenges of serious misinterpretation.

So, with the interpretations put forward so far (from Christian perspectives which are manifestly non-Orthodox) one can see why, from the very early years of its publication, *Philokalia* has been criticised as a mishmash of Fathers with no coherent meaning as a whole nor any unified approach in bringing the various *Philokalia* Fathers together. Many scholars coming from the Roman Catholic and the Protestant perspectives find (for example) that there is serious conflict between Evagrius of Pontos and Symeon the New Theologian, or between Anthony the Great and Theodoros the Studite or Gregory of Sinai.

³⁵ See for his Christian Social Ethics view the works William 1999, 295-308; Moses 2015-147-165.

However, what these scholars tend to overlook is the common attitude of all *Philokalia* Fathers towards prayer and interior spiritual life, an insistence that monks are not going to the Desert or a monastery to be likeable and social, but to unite with God. What they forget is that these are the Fathers that inspired the Hesychasts in their humble greatness. Lossky (among other Orthodox Theologians) has highlighted this interior connection of the Fathers of *Philokalia*. According to his view, with works such as the *Philokalia* one can see very clearly why for the East Orthodox mysticism and Orthodox theology cannot be distinguished: mysticism here has to be theological and theology has to be mystical (Lossky 1957, 8-9; Kallistos 2006, 181-226). According to St Nikodemos of Mt Athos (as one can see in his Introduction at the original Venice edition): “What is being revealed to us through the texts of the *Philokalia* is the Kingdom of God that can be found within our hearts” (in his texts he cites here Luke 17:21; Matthew 13:44).

But it would be helpful to see whether the Greek scholarship on the *Philokalia* are united in their understanding of this important cultural achievement of modern Orthodoxy. I will investigate two examples of how interpretations of *Philokalia* have caused major controversy in recent scholarship and, ultimately, where, and why these interpretations were wrong.

I will begin with the relatively recent work of Stelios Ramfos (born in 1939). In his work *The unthinkable nothing. Philokalic roots of the neo-hellenic nihilism* (*Το αδιανόητο τίποτε. Φιλοκαλικά ριζώματα του νεοελληνικού μηδενισμού*, 2010), Ramfos attacks the *Philokalia* Fathers (as a whole and the editors of the original work in particular) as being responsible for all the problems that modern and contemporary Greece suffers from. For Ramfos, the inherent root of the problems started in the last phase of Byzantine Empire (having as a target here the hesychasts and in particular St Gregory Palamas) and the monastic and ecclesiastic tendency of the Orthodox Church throughout that period and under the Turkish Ottoman Rule, to remain enslaved to the concept of a symbolic communal person, and refrain from stepping out of the communal life and communal way of thinking. The previous 1000 years of Hellenic civilisation and its emphasis on the achievements of an educated individual was gradually forgotten and disregarded, and with the Hesychasts and

the *Philokalic* Fathers. For Ramfos, the insistence that the Saints are persons in the full meaning of this word and all others are approximations of personhood and never fully persons threw the discourse into a gradual smothering of individuality and respect for individual differences. Ramfos believes that what the *Philokalia* Fathers have shown with their impact on Hellenic culture and life in the last six-seven centuries is that when a symbolic person (such as the person of a Saint) has become a historical entity (as were all the Saints mentioned by the *Philokalia* and the Kollyvades Fathers), then all creative hermeneutic interpretations of this person cease and they become part of a codex of meaning that is a given once and for all. For Ramfos, in opposition to the person of a Saint, as a result of *Philokalia*, usual everyday people have simply become sinners, who have continuously in their mind their sins; all their creativity is engulfed and stifled in their repentance.

For Ramfos, this anthropology of a sinner promoted by the *Philokalia* and the Kollyvades Fathers, turned the East away from the egocentricity of the creative individual and poisoned Hellenic culture and life with a total pessimism about being a human. *Philokalia* as a corpus for Ramfos expresses our contemporary nihilistic attitudes towards humanity, a total lack of any anthropological dialogue, the distant way with which contemporary Greeks look upon historicity and historical issues and their fascination with the always distant heavenly rewards. According to Ramfos, the 1351 Synod and the publication of the Hagioreite Tomos, meant the expulsion from any kind of historical role for the Church in the East and its arrest within the neo-platonic stereotypes of the social group that was dominating its operations. It stifled the renaissance spirit that monk Barlaam of Calabria and his followers tried to bring in the East and forced them to run back to the West.

Due to the nature of this work, I will not go into a detailed refutation of some of Ramfos' key claims (perhaps I will do this in a future work). Suffice it to say here that most of his claims have been repeated again and again in various Western commentaries on the works of St Gregory Palamas and the Kollyvades (it actually provides support to my claim that Kollyvades and St Gregory Palamas belong in the same cultural context: Ramfos, among so many others, finds in both Kollyvades and St Gregory Palamas the same things to criticise). I will

just cite one instance of his text to show how wrong his interpretation is and how (again) a lack of understanding of the *Philokalia* corpus and its meaning feeds serious misinterpretation. Towards the end of his book, Ramfos summarises his approach with this:

“Orthodoxy is fed by the neo-platonic mysticism in many of its variants. As theology and ascetical life this mysticism starts with Gregory of Nyssa and Evagrius of Pontus.” (Στ. Ράμφος 2010, 451)³⁶

Note that both St Gregory of Nyssa and St Evagrius of Pontus would find Ramfos claims that their work provided the roots for a cultural arrest of the Greeks as bizarre to say the least. Both St Evagrius and St Gregorios were innovative in their own ways and both knew well and commented upon earlier philosophical and scientific accounts of the soul and body in a remarkable way. There were by no means against progress, as Corrigan (whom Ramfos cites frequently throughout his work) admits:

“[...] they came to represent major strands of the legacy of the 4th Century: the development of cognitive psychology, Christian anthropology, Trinitarian, mystical and sacramental theology, and biblical exegesis worthy of Origen. They mapped out the range of scientific insight from psychology and ethics (and their pathologies) through medicine and physics to theology, prayer, and the mystical life. Whether or not they themselves were mystics, they also charted the pathways and benchmarks of ascetic and mystical experience for future ages.” (Corrigan 2009, 197)

Ramfos’ interpretations are not only flawed regarding these two *Philokalia* Fathers, but also about all other Fathers of the *Philokalia*. Just to give you one more example: St Gregory Palamas was very knowledgeable about Aristoteleian philosophy and knew very well how to use Aristoteleian logic and the rest of the Aristoteleian corpus in his refutation of Barlaam and his followers (Athanasopoulos 2015, 361-374). Also, Ramfos’ interpretation of the collection of the *Philokalia* texts as a whole and its significance in Greek culture, would find the Kollyvades Fathers in serious disagreement. Let us not forget the education of some

³⁶ He cites Corrigan 2009 as his source here.

of the Kollyvades Fathers themselves (esp. St Nikodemos of Mt Athos, St Macarios of Corinth and St Athanasios Parios), who were equal in credentials and studies with most of the representatives of Greek Enlightenment. In many cases, both the Kollyvades and their adversaries had the same teachers and they were studying side by side in the same schools. So, it is evident from the arguments presented above that Ramfos' accusations and claims are seriously flawed and seriously distort any plausible interpretation of the texts of *Philokalia*. It is not that the Kollyvades tried to arrest the cultural development of Greek civilisation nor that they did not know what they were doing by promoting "ultra-conservativism" and traditionalism (as Ramfos claims). The Kollyvades Fathers were consciously opposing what they recognised as a conscious attempt to subjugate Greek culture to Western ideas by the proponents of European Enlightenment, and this is why they published this collection of texts: to save both Greek culture and Orthodoxy from the destructive forces of Enlightenment. Their view on Enlightenment surely differs from the view on Enlightenment that Ramfos has. But this is not a sign of backwardness. It is a sign of deep cultural knowledge and understanding that can parallel great works of cultural critique and Philosophy of Culture of our own time (I will discuss briefly about this below). So, in this way, one can only recognise them as cultural prophets and seers. It is by no accident that monk Moysis of Mt Athos in a highly critical book review of Ramfos' work (also criticising of the review of that work published by Professor Vassileiades) thinks that attempts at an interpretation of *Philokalia* such as these are not only twisting historical and cultural accuracy to suit personal needs for supporting the public image of an intellectual, but also rekindle arguments that led in the past to serious heresies. Ending his review, monk Moysis of Mt Athos reaffirms the Kollyvades spirit thus:

"Philokalia means the love of the beautiful. Beauty is Christ. The connection to Christ makes our life beautiful. *Philokalia* simply tells us how to do this. Dostoyevsky says that beauty will save the world. Beauty is Christ. Particularly today, in an age of worldly pursuits and apostasy, we are in great need of hesychasm, the study of *Philokalia* and the connection to Christ and His Church" (Μοναχός Μωϋσής Αγιορείτης 2010).

There are many others who have condemned Ramfos' work as a misinterpretation (Dr Stavros Yangazoglou, for example, has presented a well-documented critique, highlighting many historical inaccuracies in Ramfos' interpretation) (see Σταύρος Γιαγκάζογλου 2011, 131-160). But due to limitations of space, I will stop my examination of Ramfos here.

I will finish this section with the interpretation proposed by Yannaras. Professor Chrestos Yannaras, a formidable contemporary Greek scholar, academic teacher and philosopher, in his work *Orthodoxy and the West in Modern Greece* (Ορθοδοξία και Δύση στη Νεότερη Ελλάδα, 1992), after a relatively favourable presentation of the work of St Macarios of Corinth and the Kollyvades movement, he accuses St Nikodemos of Mt Athos for accepting Western (Roman Catholic and Protestant pietistic) influences in two of his works (*Unseen Warfare* and *Spiritual Warfare*) and juristic attitudes about the meaning of Divine Justice (prevalent in St Augustine and Anselm of Canterbury and incorporated in the official Roman Catholic dogma at the Council of Trent 1545-1563), in his works *The Rudder* and *Christoetheia* (*The ethos of Christ*). Note that for all these accusations, Professor Yannaras has received criticisms and replies by many Orthodox theologians in Greece³⁷. For Yannaras, St Nikodemos is turning Orthodoxy into an amalgamation of puritanism and judicious understandings of the Gospel without any ecclesiological content and connection. In a later work (*Against Religion – Ενάντια στη Θρησκεία* 2006), he not only repeats these criticisms against St Nikodemos of Mt Athos (Γιανναράς 2006, 200-9), but he also explains the relatively recent success of *Philokalia* in the West, on the basis of a serious lack of any ecclesiological dimension in the texts collected in this work. Yannaras thinks that this suits the egocentric culture and individualistic spirituality of Western Civilisation and the total lack of any ecclesiological commitment. For Yannaras, *Philokalia* is supporting an individualistic form of self-theosis that does away with communal ecclesiology. In his research into the way *ecclesia* is used in the texts of the *Philokalia* he finds that the word *ecclesia* is used only 36

³⁷ See for example π.Θεοδώρου Ζήση 2004 and the Letter from the Holy Community of Mt Athos published at the Holy Mountain in March 1993 (I discuss this in detail later on).

times and all of these times the word is related to the building and the gathering of the monks and does not have any wider ecclesiastical significance (Γιανναράς 2006, 202). I think the following words summarise his interpretation of *Philokalia* most clearly:

“In the pages of the *Philokalia* there is no mention of the conscious participation in the ecclesiastical aspect of the Holy Communion (in the eucharistic body that brings to reality in a dynamic way the Trinitarian mode of existence) – there is not even an indirect indication or suggestion that this participation is the salvation preached at the gospels. The aim and the way of the philokalic theory and practice is purely individualistic: If the mind comes to the heart, with the persistent individual (psychosomatic) exercise of ascesis, humans are saved- there is no need for anything else.” (Γιανναράς 2006, 203)

Without going into the details of the evidence that Yannaras accumulates to support these criticisms against St Nikodemos of Mt Athos and *Philokalia* as a whole (this might be perhaps a future project), a few thoughts in the form of possible replies will have to suffice here. Firstly, the fact that all the Kollyvades strove to bring about a return to a more ecclesiastical dimension for worship by itself is a refutation of Yannaras’ claims that the *Philokalia* texts have no ecclesiastical dimension. It is by no accident that St Macarios of Corinth (that Yannaras discusses in a more favourable way in his earlier work) gave his collection of writings to St Nikodemos of Mt Athos and no one else. One look at the works of the Kollyvades suffices to prove that Yannaras tries to see *Philokalia* in the way that the West tried to see it (esp. the Roman Catholic scholars mentioned above). Reading through the interpretation of Yannaras on the *Philokalia*, one cannot help but bring to memory the accusations Barlaam of Calabria made against the hesychasts as navel-gazers. Yannaras remains on the appearance. If one were to use Kantian terminology here, Yannaras is stuck on the *phenomenon* and does not even dare see through to the *noumenon* of the texts of *Philokalia*. He remains on the level of interpretation of isolated texts in *Philokalia* that are picked out without an understanding of the cultural background that produced them nor with any comprehension of an interpretational line that makes them united and coherent. I will just give one example of how Yannaras’ interpretation is completely wrong, when it comes to

Philokalia. In the fourth volume of the Venice edition of *Philokalia*, we have the work of St Gregory Palamas named (in the English translation) *A New Testament Decalogue* (Δεκάλογος της κατά Χριστόν νομοθεσίας). In this work, we see St Gregory Palamas revealing the ecclesiological dimension of his work in a separate long paragraph, where he discusses the importance of dedicating Sunday to the Lord. In it, he discusses not only the importance of communing with Christ and the other members of the Church in a Holy Eucharistic way every Sunday and other celebrations of a Church feast, but also, he goes deeper into the way that dedication of Sunday to the Lord in this ecclesiological way will mean an ecclesiological transformation of all of one's time in prayer. In this day (Sunday), we are called to cease from all work and gather with all others in the Church to glorify the Lord together. Once this is done in a meaningful and eschatological way, Sunday transforms all other time. All other days are directed to the ecclesiological and eschatological fact of the Sunday, the fact of dedication of Sunday, the ecclesiological dimension of Sunday for the transformation of one's being. According to St Gregory Palamas, the sincere and eschatologically meaningful participation in the Holy Eucharist with clean conscience (through repentance) and honest faith in the salvation that only the Triune God can offer, united with all others and glorifying with them our common Lord, will force upon one the transformation of all his life, turning his attention throughout all his time, all the other days of the week, away from the earthly goods and pursuits and into the domain of God that should fill his life with the grace of Holy Spirit.

So, we can clearly see, in these few words of St Gregory Palamas that are included in the *Philokalia* volumes, how wrong is Yannaras' interpretation. Attempts at grasping the meaning of *Philokalia* such as the one proposed by Yannaras only show how wrong it is to divest the cultural background from one's focus and isolate passages only to identify weaknesses. I am not the only one who sees problematic the interpretation proposed by Yannaras. The Holy Community of monks of Mt Athos in a letter that they published in the Holy Mountain in March 1993, they stress that according to a unanimous decision of Mt Athos Holy Community, St Nikodemos was recognised as a Saint and according to Elder Gavriil Donyisiatis, St Nikodemos is "the most

important Elder and Guide in our monastic life". To support their refutation of the claims made by Yannaras, they bring forward a series of texts from St Kosmas Aitolos (one of the Kollyvades Fathers), who is regarded more favourably by Yannaras than St Nikodemos, to prove that St Kosmas Aitolos is not different than St Nikodemos in the way they see the Christian way of life. The Holy Community of Mt Athos also stress that when one sees the corpus of St Nikodemos in its entirety, one can see that, even though, in isolated instances, St Nikodemos uses some terms and ways of expression that can be found in Roman Catholic texts, this fact does not cancel the fact that the meaning and content of St Nikodemos' works go against all Christian heresies (including the Roman Catholic and Protestant ones). According to the Holy Community of Mt Athos, St Nikodemos' use of these words and expressions is due to the freedom of spirit that St Nikodemos has and his masterly and fearless way in which he can use language and theological terms in a novel way, while condemning all heresy at the same time, indicating with sternness mistakes and errors and accepting a positive innovation where he sees it as useful to express Orthodox beliefs and practice. Before citing a long list of known clergy and monastics who have spoken and written favourably about St Nikodemos, the Holy Community of Mt Athos bring to attention the words of an anonymous Elder of Mt Athos who, when someone mentioned to him the words of Yannaras about St Nikodemos, this anonymous Elder said that Yannaras, in criticising in this way St Nikodemos, is making himself a "pure" ("καθαρός"), setting himself outside the Church, coming near to the heresy of Catharism (or heresy of Albigensians, a dualist or Gnostic revival movement which thrived between the 12th and 14th centuries in Southern Europe, esp. northern Italy and southern France). The Fathers of Holy Mountain also see that hidden in the motives of Yannaras is his attempt to vindicate his own works (like *The Person and Eros*) that come to direct opposition to works of St Nikodemos (Ιερά Κοινότητα Αγίου Όρους 1993).

In the above examination of two non-Orthodox and two Orthodox (or at least Orthodox oriented) interpreters of *Philokalia* Fathers, it is evident that any interpretation of *Philokalia* that pays no attention to the collection as a whole and does not have as an interpretative direction or

principle the Palamite and wider hesychastic corpus, in their cultural and theological context, leads to serious misinterpretations. I did not investigate here blatantly wrong interpretations (that for example make *Philokalia* resemble a Sufi or a Gnostic collection of texts, with no Christian orientation and character). I am also not going to investigate recent attempts to create an amalgamation of gnostic, eastern/western wisdom and a selection of Philokalic texts to support a method of counselling that has been wrongfully termed in Greece and abroad “Philosophical Practice” or “Philosophical Counselling” (which has nothing to do with the properly named philosophical discipline of Philosophical Practice).

I will proceed next to giving a brief overview of what I mean by “appropriate cultural context” that one has to have to produce an appropriate interpretation of *Philokalia*.

10. What is the appropriate cultural context for an appropriate interpretation of *Philokalia*?

Undoubtedly, when one is embarking on a specific cultural and linguistic practice, such as the one of interpreting a collection of texts (and in our case the texts of the *Philokalia*), one is faced with this dilemma: how can I understand what people, who lived hundreds and thousands of years ago, in a completely different culture and time period, say and write? Understanding the sayings of people of a different time is part of our collective survival toolkit. We believe that certain things in our nature are the same no matter how many years have passed and no matter how different each culture is. We feel we need to learn from our past so that we can protect ourselves from dangers in the present and in the future. But we also believe that we can get things wrong. Problems such as these, of course, are with us from the very first time we started using written forms of communication.

One of the ancient Greek texts that is much quoted in relevant discussions is Plato’s *Phaedrus* (274c-275b) and the idea there is that writing has produced people who think they know a lot, but in reality, they generally know nothing; “they are a tiresome company, having the show of wisdom without the reality”. This I would like to claim is the predicament we are faced, when we look at *Philokalia*. Do we really

know what each saying or text there means, or we *think* we know? What can give us relative certainty in the meaning of each text of *Philokalia* that we study?

In contemporary philosophy and, in particular, in British Analytic Philosophy, the problem of meaning is one of endless debates and many theories have been used to argue each position on what is meaning and how best to secure our understanding of the meaning of a word or a sentence. I think one of the more successful theories comes with Wittgenstein (esp. his later work). Language for Wittgenstein is not only an expression of a given culture, it also determines it and provides its boundaries. For Wittgenstein (influenced here by Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West*, 1918), language games depend on the culture that produced them and exist as forms of life, in the same way that culture can be thought as a form of life, with its own rules, conventions, actions, institutions, behaviours and development (See Wittgenstein 2005, 134; 2004, 95, 335-6; 2005, 23; 2002, 8-9; DeAngelis 2007). But because culture cannot be changed, and it has to be lived, it binds language in what it can express about it (see Wittgenstein 2004, 95-99; Cavell 1988, 253-264)³⁸. So, language and culture determine each other and provide a barrier that cannot be penetrated (see Wittgenstein 2004, 567-9; Cavell 1979, 44-8; Glock 1997, 125-6; Baker et al. 1985, 239-246; Hacker 2015)³⁹.

So, one could claim that evidently, we cannot ever be certain about our interpretative acts in relation to texts like the *Philokalia*, because we do not have the form of life that produced it, culture being a binding force here. But is this right? Let us first see what we can understand with the term "culture".

Culture can be conceived as a shared set of beliefs, values, social practices and symbolic formations (in our case related to theological ways of understanding and interacting with the world, people and God). According to Raymond Williams (1921-1988, a Welsh cultural theorist and philosopher of education), culture is based primarily on two components: a) a whole way of life that produces it, and b) the arts and

³⁸ See also Wittgenstein's *Private Investigations*, II, 226.

³⁹ See Wittgenstein's *Private Investigations* 206, 415; *On Certainty*, 357-360.

education that are its products. In his book *Culture and Society* (first appeared in 1958, but in my examination, it will be the 1960 edition), he writes about the formation of our historical understanding of culture, thus: first, it is “a general state or habit of the mind’, having close relations with the idea of human perfection. Second, it came to mean ‘the general state of intellectual development, in a society as a whole’. Third, it came to mean ‘the general body of the arts’. Fourth, later in the century, it came to mean ‘a whole way of life, material, intellectual and spiritual” (Williams 1960, XIV). After an investigation of the various theories of culture that have been proposed through time, Williams concludes in a peculiar view of culture, influenced by Arnold, Toynbee, Elliot, and Newman who believe that religion is a key component of culture (esp. for the last three):

“What we sometimes call ‘culture’ – a religion, a moral code, a system of law, a body of work in the arts-is to be seen as only a part, the conscious part of that ‘culture’ which is the whole way of life.” (Williams 1960, 254)

Addressing our problem of how best to approach a product of a given culture (in our case the *Philokalia*), in a later work (*The Long Revolution*, 1961), Williams has this to say:

“we need to distinguish three levels of culture [...]. There is the lived culture of a particular time and place, only fully accessible to those living in that time and place. There is the recorded culture, of every kind, from art to the most everyday facts: the culture of a period. There is also, as the factor connecting lived culture and period cultures, the culture of the selective tradition.” (Williams 1961, 66)

Having Williams’ thoughts and Elliot’s dicta “the culture being essentially the incarnation of the religion [...] of a people” (Elliot 1949, 27), I think we can have a sufficiently defined and robust concept of culture with which we can formulate a brief sketch regarding the success of our task of providing some guiding principles for an appropriate interpretation of *Philokalia*.

I think Wittgenstein, if he were to revisit his Spenglerian intuitions here (see Humphries et al. 2017), would agree that an interpretation of a selection of texts like the *Philokalia* can be understood only within the level of a culture of selective tradition. If one understands and lives

within this culture then products of this culture can be understood by this person. Because selective tradition can survive time periods and limitations, one who lives within a hesychastic selective tradition can understand the *Philokalia*. Note that in this way, not only one can escape the dead ends of cultural relativism, but also can find a way to be certain about understanding a collection of texts like the *Philokalia*. Note also that to understand this culture of selective tradition one has to live it, *i.e.*, not engage with it simply to criticise and find faults at it, but one has to be fully immersed within it. This is why I maintained from the start that only someone who knows and engages fully with hesychasm as a tradition, the Palamas corpus and the Kollyvades movement can interpret the texts and the Fathers of *Philokalia* with some certainty. The details of this approach, however, will have to wait for a future study.

11. Conclusions

What I have tried to do with this work, is to present some key aspects of the collection of texts summarily named “*Philokalia*”. As the chosen name itself indicates there is a compacted group of meanings behind this collection, having to do with both a specific *praxis* and the beauty of a specific *theoria*. I briefly sketched not only some of the cultural and historical background of the work, but outlined some key principles regarding its interpretation. I argued that only someone with first-hand experience of hesychasm as a way of life, knowledge and engagement with the works of St Gregory Palamas (who has influenced the Kollyvades Fathers in the compilation and edition of the texts), and the Kollyvades movement, their aims, purposes and key texts of their protagonists, can understand and interpret these texts. I also briefly described some key mis-interpretations of *Philokalia* (two from Christian non-Orthodox sources and two from Orthodox oriented sources). The brief examination of these misinterpretations showed that they arose because of the lack of acquaintance with the hesychastic way of life, the texts of St Gregory Palamas, and a misunderstanding of what the Kollyvades movement tried to achieve. Finally, I outlined how contemporary philosophical approaches to the problem of cultural relativism can help in the support of my claim that *Philokalia* can only be

appropriately interpreted within a Hesychastic and Palamite cultural context.

REFERENCES

English references

- Athanasopoulos, C. (2015). "Demonstration (Απόδειξις) and its problems for St Gregory Palamas: Some neglected Aristotelian aspects of St Gregory Palamas' Philosophy and Theology." In *The Ways of Byzantine Philosophy*, Mikonja Knezevic (ed.). USA: Sebastian Press, 361-74.
- Athanasopoulos, C. (2015). "Demonstration (Απόδειξις) and its problems for St Gregory Palamas: Some neglected Aristotelian aspects of St Gregory Palamas' Philosophy and Theology." In *The Ways of Byzantine Philosophy*, Mikonja Knezevic (ed.). USA: Sebastian Press, 361-374.
- Athanasopoulos, C. (ed.) (2015). *Triune God: Incomprehensible but Knowable – The Philosophical and Theological Significance of St Gregory Palamas for Contemporary Philosophy and Theology*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Baker, M., Hacker, P. M. S. (1985). *Wittgenstein, Rules, Grammar, and Necessity*, Vol. 2. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Bauman, Z. (2000). *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.
- Bauman, Z. (2007). *Consuming Life*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.
- Bauman, Z. (2008). *The Art of Life*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.
- Bebis, G.B. (1989). "Introduction to Nicodemos of the Holy Mountain: A Handbook of Spiritual Counsel." In *Nicodemos of the Holy Mountain: A Handbook of Spiritual Counsel*, transl. by Peter A. Chamberas. New York and Mahwah: Paulist Press.
- Bénatouïl, T., Bonazzi, M. (2012). *Theoria, Praxis, and the Contemplative Life after Plato and Aristotle*. Leiden; Boston: Brill.
- Bloor, D. (2000). *Wittgenstein and the priority of practice*. London: Routledge.
- Bohm-Duchen, M. (2001). *The private life of a masterpiece*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press [orig. pub. 1972].
- Bourdieu, P. (1990). *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice. Stanford: Stanford University Press [orig. pub. 1980].
- Cavarnos C. (1977). *Athanasios Parios: St Macarios of Corinth: Archbishop of Corinth. An account of his life, character, and message, together with selections from three of his publications*. Belmont: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies.
- Cavarnos, C. (2003). *Orthodoxy and Philosophy*. Belmont, MA: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies.
- Cavarnos, C. (2003). *Orthodoxy and Philosophy*. Belmont, MA: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies.

- Cavell, S. (1979). *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Cavell, S. (1988). "Declining Decline: Wittgenstein as a Philosopher of Culture." In *Inquiry* 31(3): 253-264.
- Chamberas, P., Bebis, G., Harakas, S. (1989). *Nicodemos of the Holy Mountain: A Handbook of Spiritual Counsel*. New York and Mahwah: Paulist Press.
- Corrigan, K. (2009). *Evagrius and Gregory: Mind, Soul and Body in the 4th c.* London: Ashgate.
- Culp, J. (2017). "Panentheism." In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2017 as found in: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/panentheism/> (accessed 17/06/2020).
- Dahl, Svend (1968). *History of the Book*. Scarecrow Press: Metuchen, N.J.
- DeAngelis, W.J. (2007). *Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Cultural Point of View: Philosophy in the Darkness of this Time*. Ashgate Wittgensteinian Studies. London: Routledge.
- Dilman, I. (1998). "The philosopher and the Fly Bottle." In *Ratio* 11(2):102-124.
- Ehrlich, C. (2009). *From an Antique Land: An Introduction to Ancient Near Eastern Literature*, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Eikeland, O. (2008). *The ways of Aristotle*. Bern: Lang.
- Elliot, T.S. (1949). *Notes towards a definition of culture*. New York : Harcourt, Brace.
- Ernst, C. W. (2005). "Situating Sufism and Yoga." In *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 15 (1):15-43.
- Ester, P., Halmann, L., de Moor, R. (1993). *The Individualizing Society – Value Change in Europe and North America*. Netherlands: Tilburg University Press.
- Fahey W.E. (ed.) (2013). *The Foundations of Western Monasticism: The Life of Saint Anthony of the Desert. The Holy Rule of Saint Benedict, and the Twelve Degrees of Humility and Pride*. Charlotte, N.C: Saint Benedict Press, TAN Books.
- Gerson, L.P. (1996). *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Glock, H.J. (1997). *A Wittgenstein Dictionary*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Gottfried, G. (2017). "Solipsism – The Leitmotif in Wittgenstein's Life and Philosophy." In *Wittgenstein-Studien*, 8(1):1-14.
- Gouillard, J. (ed.) (1953). *Petite Philocalie de la prière du Coeur*. Paris: Points / Sagesses.
- Grube, G.M.A. (1957). *On Great Writing (On the Sublime)*. New York: The Liberal Arts Press.
- Hacker, P. (2015). "Forms of Life." Special Issue: Wittgenstein and Forms of Life. In *Nordic Wittgenstein Review*, 4(1):20 available at: <https://doi.org/10.15845/nwr.v4i0.3320>.
- Hausherr, I. (1927). *Méthode d'oraison hésychaste*. Roma: Edizioni Orientalia Christiana.
- Hisamatsu, E., Pattni, R. (2015). "Yoga and the Jesus Prayer—A Comparison between aṣṭāṅga yoga in the Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali and the Psycho-Physical Method of Hesychasm." In *Journal of Hindu-Christian Studies*, Vol. 28, available at: <https://doi.org/10.7825/2164-6279.1606>.
- Hudson, W.D. (1968). "On two points against Wittgensteinian fideism." In *Philosophy* 43 (165): 269-273.

- Humphries, C. & Schweidler, W. (eds.) (2017). *Wittgenstein, Philosopher of Cultures*. Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag.
- Hymers, M. (2010). *Wittgenstein and the Practice of Philosophy*, Broadview Guides to Philosophy. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press.
- Iaco, Moira (2013). "Wittgenstein and the Liberating Word. Aesthetics Remarks about Philosophical Attitude." In *Aisthesis: Pratiche, Linguaggi e Saperi dell'Estetico*, 6(1): 255-261.
- Inglehart, R., Basanez, M., Moreno, A. (1998). *Human Values And beliefs: A Cross-Cultural Sourcebook: Political, Religious, sexual, and Economic Norms in 43 Societies: Findings from the 1990-1993 World Values Survey*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan.
- Irigoin, Jean (1971). "Centres de copie et bibliothèques." In *Byzantine Books and Bookmen*. Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies: District of Columbia.
- Jaeger, W. (1954). *Two rediscovered works of ancient Christian literature: Gregory of Nyssa and Macarius*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.
- Johnston, C. (2020). "Solipsism And The Graspability Of Fact". In *Wittgenstein and the Limits of Language*, Appelqvist H. (ed.), Routledge Studies in Twentieth-Century Philosophy. New York: Routledge, 46-64.
- Johnstone, C. L. (1980). "An Aristotelian trilogy: ethics, rhetoric, politics and the search for moral truth." In *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, Vol. 13, 1-24.
- Jugie, M. (1932). "Palamite (Controverse)." In: M. Vacant et al. (eds.), *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, tome XI/2. Paris, cols. 1777-1818.
- Kallistos, W. (2006). "Christian Theology in the East 600-1453." In Hubert Cunliffe-Jones (ed.), *A History of Christian Doctrine*. Edinburgh: Bloomsbury, 181-226.
- Kallistos, W. (Metropolitan of Diokleia) (2004). *The inner unity of the Philokalia and its influence in East and West*. Athens: Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation (in: http://www.myriobiblos.gr/texts/english/wear_innerunity.html, accessed 09/06/2020);
- Kallistos, W. (Metropolitan of Diokleia) (2005). "St Nikodimos and the Philokalia," In Dimitri Conomos and Graham Speake (eds.), *Mount Athos the Sacred Bridge. The Spirituality of the Holy Mountain*. Oxford: Peter Lang, 69-121.
- Kemp, M. (2006). *Leonardo da Vinci: The Marvelous Works of Nature and Man*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Kitromilides, P.M. (2013). *Enlightenment and Revolution: The Making of Modern Greece*. Harvard University Press.
- Kitromilides, P.M. (ed.) (2010). *Adamantios Korais and the European Enlightenment*. Oxford: Voltaire Foundation.
- Klosko, G. (1986). *The Development of Plato's Political Theory*. New York and London: Methuen.
- Kraut, R. (1991). *Aristotle on the Human Good*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Lossky, V. (1957). *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*. London: Clarke, 8-9.
- Louth, A. (2003). "Theology, Contemplation and the University." In *Studia Theologica*, 1(2): 66-67.
- Louth, A. (2015). *Modern Orthodox Thinkers: From the Philokalia to the Present*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.

- Marshall, D.N. (1983). *History of Libraries*. Oxford & IBH Publishing Co: New Delhi.
- Meyer, H. (1988). *Religionskritik, Religionssoziologie und Säkularisation*. Frankfurt: Verlag Peter Lang.
- Moses, S. (2015). "The Ethics of "Recognition": Rowan Williams's Approach to Moral Discernment in the Christian Community." In *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, 35(1): 147-165.
- Nedelcu, Silviu-Constantin (2016). "The Libraries in the Byzantine Empire (330-1453)." In *Annals of the University of Craiova for Journalism, Communication and Management*, 2(1):74-92.
- Nielsen, K. (1967). "Wittgensteinian fideism." In *The Journal of the Royal Institute of Philosophy* XLII (161):191-209.
- Nightingale, A.W. (2004). *Spectacles of Truth in Classical Greek Philosophy: Theoria in Its Cultural Context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ouspensky, Léonide (1992). *Theology of the Icon*. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press.
- Palmer, G.E.H., Ware, K., Sherrard, P. (1979- 99). *The Philokalia: The Complete Text*, Volumes 1-4. London: Faber and Faber.
- Panagopoulos, S.P. (2020). "The Relationship of Saint Gregory Palamas' Theology of Transfiguration and the Hesychast Iconography of the 14th-16th c.". In C. Athanopoulos (ed.), *Orthodox Mysticism and Asceticism in the work of St Gregory Palamas*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 174-89.
- Patterson, J. (1978). "Hesychast Thought as Revealed in Byzantine, Greek and Romanian Church Frescoes: A Theory of Origin and Difussion." In *Revue Études Sud-Est Européennes*, 16(4):663-70.
- Perdue, L.G. (2008). *Scribes, Sages, and Seers: The Sage in the Eastern Mediterranean World*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- RC Diocese of Newton (2016). *The Jesus Prayer*. Los Angeles: Franciscan Communications. (as found in: <https://melkite.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/The-Jesus-Prayer-Leaders-Guide.pdf>; accessed 17/06/2020).
- Read, R. (2020). *Wittgenstein's Liberatory Philosophy: Thinking Through His Philosophical Investigations* (1st ed.). London: Routledge.
- Robinson, T. M. (1970). *Plato's psychology*, Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press.
- Runciman, S. (1970). *The last Byzantine renaissance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schema-Monk, M. (1994). *Blessed Paisius Velichkovsky: the man behind the Philokalia*, trans. by Fr. Seraphim Rose. Platina, Calif.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood [1976].
- Schroeder, S. (2020). "The Emergence of Wittgenstein's Views on Aesthetics in the 1933 Lectures." In *Estetika: The European Journal of Aesthetics* LVII/XIII (1): 5-14.
- Snell, B. (1953). *The discovery of the mind; the Greek origins of European thought*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1953.
- Strezova, A. (2014). *Hesychasm and Art: The Appearance of New Iconographic Trends in Byzantine and Slavic Lands in the 14th and 15th Centuries*. ANU Press.

- Tachiaos, L. (1987). "Hesychasm as a Creative Force in the Fields of Art and Literature." In *L'Art de Thessalonique et des Pays Balkaniques et les Courants Spirituels au XIVe Siècle*. Belgrade: L'Académie serbe des sciences et des arts, 117–23.
- Techio, J. (2021). *The Threat of Solipsism: Wittgenstein and Cavell on Meaning, Skepticism, and Finitude*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Tilghman, B. R. (1991). *Wittgenstein, ethics and aesthetics: The view from eternity*. London: Macmillan.
- Vlastos, R. E. (1988). "Elenchus and mathematics: A turning-point in Plato's philosophical development." In *The American Journal of Philology*, 109(3): 362-396.
- William, J. (1997). *The Inner Eye of Love: Mysticism and Religion*. London: Harper Collins.
- Williams, R. (1960). *Culture and Society 1780-1950*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Williams, R. (1961). *The Long Revolution*. Great Britain: Encore Edition from Broadview Press.
- Williams, R. (1999). "On Making Moral Decisions." In *Anglican Theological Review*, LXXXI (2):295-308.
- Williams, R. (2013). *Silence and Honey Cakes – The wisdom of the desert*. London: Lion Books.
- Wittgenstein, L. (2002). *Culture and Value*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Wittgenstein, L. (2004). *On Certainty*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Wittgenstein, L. (2004). *Remarks on Foundations of Mathematics*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Wittgenstein, L. (2005). *Blue and Brown Books*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Wittgenstein, L. (2005). *Philosophical Investigations*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Wittgenstein, W. (2004). *Zettel*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Greek references

- Κ. Παπουλίδη (1969). "Περίπτωσης πνευματικής επιδράσεως του Αγίου Όρους εις τον βαλκανικόν χώρον κατά τον 18ον αιώνα". *Μακεδονικά*, 9, 278-294.
- Podskalsky, G. (2005). *Η Ελληνική Θεολογία επί Τουρκοκρατίας 1453-1821. Η Ορθοδοξία στη σφαίρα επιρροής των δυτικών δογμάτων μετά τη Μεταρρύθμιση, μετάφραση πρωτοπρ. Γ. Δ. Μεταλληνός*. Αθήνα: Μορφωτικό Ίδρυμα Εθνικής Τραπέζης. [Original in German: (1988). *Griechische Theologie in der Zeit der Türkenherrschaft (1453-1821): die Orthodoxie im Spannungsfeld der nachreformatorischen Konfessionen des Westens*, (München: C.H. Beck)].
- Γ.Β. Δερτιλής και Κ. Κωστής (επιμέλεια) (1980). *Θέματα νεοελληνικής ιστορίας (18ος-20ος αιώ στα Βαλκάνια τον 19ο αιώνα*. Αθήνα: Θεμέλιο.
- Γέροντας Γεώργιος Καψάνης (2013). *Φιλοκαλικοί Πατέρες του 18ου αιώνας* (as found in <https://www.pemptousia.gr/2013/07/filokaliki-pateres-tou-18ou-eonos/> accessed 19/06/2020). Also found in: (2009). *Μηνιαίο περιοδικό Ιεράς Μητροπόλεως Πειραιώς, Πειραιϊκή Εκκλησία, έτος 18ο, αρ.φύλ. 205, Ιούνιος*.
- Γέροντας Γεώργιος Καψάνης (2013). *Φιλοκαλικοί Πατέρες του 18ου αιώνας* (as found in <https://www.pemptousia.gr/2013/07/filokaliki-pateres-tou-18ou-eonos/> accessed 19/06/2020).

- Γέροντας Εφραίμ Βατοπαιδινός (2020). *Διδαχές από τον Αθωνα – Η φιλοκαλία των Ιερών Νηπτικών ως προϋπόθεση της Ορθοδόξου θεολογίας και της εκκλησιαστικής ζωής* (found in <https://www.pemptousia.gr/2020/03/didaches-aro-ton-athona-i-filokalia-ton-ieron-niptikon-os-proipothesi-tis-orthodoxou-theologias-ke-tis-ekklisiastikis-zois/> accessed 19/06/2020).
- Γεώργιος Θ. Γιαννόπουλος (1992). *Νεόφυτος Κουσοκαλυβίτης ο εκ Πατρών διδάσκαλος του Γένους*. Πάτραι.
- Γεώργιος Θ. Γιαννόπουλος (1992). *Νεόφυτος Κουσοκαλυβίτης ο εκ Πατρών διδάσκαλος του Γένους*. Πάτραι.
- Γιανναράς, Χ. (2006). *Ενάντια στη θρησκεία*. Αθήνα: εκδ. Ίκαρος, 200-9.
- Διονύσιος Βαλαΐς (2005). *Πτυχές από την πνευματική κίνηση στον υπόδουλο και τον παροικιακό Ελληνισμό κατά την περίοδο του 18ου-19ου αιώνα*. Θεσσαλονίκη: Πουρναράς, 2005.
- Ιερά Κοινότητα Αγίου Όρους (1993). *Ανακοίνωσις- Αναίρεσις των πεπλανημένων θέσεων του κ. Χρήστου Γιανναρά περί του εν Αγίοις πατρός ημών Νικοδήμου του Αγιορείτου*, Εν Αγίω Όρει 1993 (as found in <https://orthodoxostypos.gr/%CE%B1%CE%BD%CE%B1%CE%AF%CF%81%CE%B5%CF%83%CE%B9%CF%82-%CF%84%CF%89%CE%BD-%CF%80%CE%B5%CF%80%CE%BB%CE%B1%CE%BD%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE%AD%CE%BD%CF%89%CE%BD-%CE%B8%CE%AD%CF%83%CE%B5%CF%89%CE%BD-%CF%84%CE%BF/> ; accessed 22/06/2020).
- Μαντζαρίδη, Γ. (1998). *Παλαμικά*. Θεσσαλονίκη: εκδ. Πουρναρά.
- Μητροπολίτης Αμφιλόχιος Ράντοβιτς (2015). *Η δυναμική του Φιλοκαλικού Κινήματος* (as found in <https://www.pemptousia.gr/2015/07/i-dinamiki-tou-filokalikou-kinimatos/> ; accessed 19/06/2020).
- Μητροπολίτης Αμφιλόχιος Ράντοβιτς (2015). *Η δυναμική του Φιλοκαλικού Κινήματος* (as found in <https://www.pemptousia.gr/2015/07/i-dinamiki-tou-filokalikou-kinimatos/> ; accessed 19/06/2020).
- Μητροπολίτου Μαυροβουνίου Αμφιλοχίου Ράντοβιτς (1984). *Η φιλοκαλική αναγέννησι του XVIII και XIX αι. και οι πνευματικοί καρποί της*. Αθήνα: Ίδρυμα Γουλανδρή – Χορν.
- Μητροπολίτου Μαυροβουνίου Αμφιλοχίου Ράντοβιτς (1984). *Η φιλοκαλική Αναγέννηση του XVIII και XIX αι. και οι πνευματικοί καρποί της*. Αθήνα: Ίδρυμα Γουλανδρή – Χορν.
- Μητροπολίτου Μαυροβουνίου Αμφιλοχίου Ράντοβιτς (1984). *Η φιλοκαλική αναγέννησι του XVIII και XIX αι. και οι πνευματικοί καρποί της*. Αθήνα: Ίδρυμα Γουλανδρή – Χορν.
- Μοναχός Θεόκλητος Διονυσιάτης (1986). “Εισαγωγή”, *Φιλοκαλία των Ιερών Νηπτικών*, μεταφρ. Αντώνιος Γαλίτης. εκδ. Το περιβόλι της Παναγίας.
- Μοναχός Μωϋσής Αγιορείτης (2010). “Η «Φιλοκαλία» και «Το αδιανόητο τίποτα»”, *Χριστιανική Βιβλιογραφία*, 2010, as found in http://alopsis.gr/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/filokalia_tipota.pdf, accessed 21/06/20)
- Μοναχού Θεοκλήτου Διονυσιάτου (2002). *Ο Άγιος Νικόδημος ο Αγιορείτης και η Νεονικολαϊτική Σχολή*. Γουμένισσα: έκδ. Ι. Κοινοβίου Οσίου Νικοδήμου.

- Μουρούτη-Γκενάκου Ζ. (1979). *Ο Νικηφόρος Θεοτόκης (1731-1800) και η συμβολή αυτού εις την παιδείαν του γένους*. Αθήνα: Βιβλιοθήκη Σοφίας Ν. Σαριπόλου.
- Μπέγζος Μ (199). Αλέξανδρος Παπαδιαμάντης και Απόστολος Μακράκης: "Αειπλόνητος Διδάχος" ή "Κοσμοκαλόγερος", *Νέα Κοινωνιολογία*, τχ. 27, 32-42.
- π. Γεωργίου Μεταλληνού (2004). "Παράδοση και Γένος στον Άγιο Αθανάσιο τον Πάριο", in: *Ο Άγιος Αθανάσιος ο Πάριος, 1721-1813: Πρακτικά Πνευματικού Συμποσίου (Χίος, 6-7 Ιουλίου 2002)*. Αθήνα, 33-43.
- π. Γεωργίου Μεταλληνού (2008). *Τουρκοκρατία- Οι Έλληνες στην οθωμανική αυτοκρατορία*. Αθήνα: εκδ. Ακρίτας.
- π. Θεοδώρου Ζήση (2004). *Κολλυβαδικά*. Θεσσαλονίκη: εκδ. Βρυέννιος.
- Π. Μ. Κιτρομηλίδης (1996). *Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός*. Αθήνα: Μορφωτικό Ίδρυμα Εθνικής Τραπέζης.
- Στ. Παπαθεμελή (1999). *Η κοινωνική διάσταση των διδαχών του Κοσμά Αιτωλού, Το άλας της γης, περί Ορθοδοξίας και Πολιτικής*. Αθήνα: έκδ. Παρουσία.
- Στ. Παπαθεμελή, *Η κοινωνική διάσταση των διδαχών του Κοσμά Αιτωλού, Το άλας της γης, περί Ορθοδοξίας και Πολιτικής* (Αθήνα: έκδ. Παρουσία, 1999).
- Στ. Ράμφος (2010). *Το αδιανόητο τίποτε. Φιλοκαλικά ριζώματα του νεοελληνικού μηδενισμού*. Αθήνα: εκδ. Αρμός.
- Σταύρος Γιαγκάζογλου (2011). "Η παρουσία του Αγίου Νικοδήμου του Αγιορείτη στη θεολογική σκέψη του 20ου αι.", στο *Πρακτικά Β Επιστημονικού Συνεδρίου, Ο Άγιος Νικόδημος ο Αγιορείτης 200 χρόνια από την κοίτησή του*. Πεντάλοφος Παιονίας: έκδοση Ιερού Κοινοβίου Οσίου Νικοδήμου, 131-160.
- Σταύρου Γιαγκάζογλου (2012). "Ο Άγιος Γρηγόριος Παλαμάς και η Νεώτερη Δυτική Θεολογία." *Θεολογία*, 83(3): 23-53.