

**Never the Twain Shall Meet?**

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## **Band 2**

# Never the Twain Shall Meet?

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Latins and Greeks learning from each other in Byzantium

Edited by  
Denis Searby

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Denis Searby



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**Franz Tinnefeld** is retired Professor of Byzantine Studies (LMU Munich). He studied Catholic Theology, Classical and Slavic Philology and Byzantinology at the Universities of Bonn and Munich, was awarded his PhD in 1962 at the University of Bonn for a dissertation on the textual history of the New Testament and received his *Habilitation* in Byzantine Studies at LMU Munich in 1971. He has published important studies of the social structures of the early Byzantine Empire, social and political aspects of the later empire, and has translated Demetrios Kydones’ correspondence. His most recent book is *Die Briefe des Demetrios Kydones. Themen und literarische Form* (Wiesbaden 2010).



Denis M. Searby  
**Foreword**

The poster of the conference on which this volume is based shows the Valens Aqueduct as it may have looked in thirteenth century Constantinople. This fourth century aqueduct, which is still standing in modern Istanbul, appears to divide the city in two, and thus is an apt symbol of division; yet it is symbolic in other ways as well. Its construction was ordered by a Latin-speaking emperor, reminding us, obviously, that the Byzantine East in its very foundations was conjoined with the Latin West. Moreover, though in one respect the aqueduct may be said to separate, in another it unites. It united, of course, the water of the hills with the reservoirs of the city, but, in so doing, it also united people; it was and is like a bridge. This serves as a reminder that at least some of the perceived divisions between East and West – even the tiresome Filioque controversy – may on closer examination reveal an underlying unity.

This volume of papers, like the conference, was conceived as a means of shedding light on the mutuality of theological and philosophical methods and interests in the two halves of the former Roman Empire in its final period, to emphasize the lively intellectual engagement between “Latins” and “Greeks” of the Palaeologan period as well as the long-lasting repercussions of the dialogue between them. Historically speaking, the volume concentrates primarily on the period from the reconquest of Constantinople in 1261 by Michael VIII Palaiologos up to the aftermath of the Fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans in 1453, a period covering cataclysmic political, philosophical and theological developments, including the ill-fated but tremendously important attempt at ecclesial union at the Council of Florence-Ferrara (1437–39) and the stream of Greek emigrés to the West once their capital city had fallen; it was a period that saw the end of the Middle Ages and a new world discovered in 1492, transforming all previous conceptions of East and West. A reader equipped only with general knowledge of the Fourth Crusade of 1204, which resulted in the subjugation of Constantinople under Frankish power for six decades, and formed by perceptions of some fundamental dichotomy between Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, cannot but be astonished to discover not only translations of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas into Greek at this time along with an appropriation of Western scholastic ideas and methods in Constantinople but also an impressive knowledge of Latin theology and philosophy among Byzantine intellectuals throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

During the first half of the twentieth century, scholars, in particular Catholic scholars and especially Martin Jugie (1878–1954), published a number of studies and editions of these Thomistically-minded Byzantines, provoking responses from Orthodox theologians, such as John Meyendorff (1926–1992), among others. Though Jugie’s works were solid, even great, contributions to scholarship, they could be put to polemical use and, thus, bore the taint of controversialism. This volume is intended

to transcend the confines of confessional scholarship, to move beyond the stereotypes and point the way to a more nuanced understanding of the dialogue between Eastern and Western Europe during the late Middle Ages – for the papers collected here show that it was a dialogue, at least in its early stages, if not always friendly, and that, happily, it is once more becoming a dialogue, that is, a genuine exchange of ideas and scholarship.

Since several of these papers pursue their arguments in great philological detail, this foreword is an attempt to summarize certain essential points in order to aid the reader. The first paper itself provides a framework for the remainder of the volume. In it Franz Tinnefeld sets the stage for the ensuing discussion with a clear presentation of one of the most basic forms of intellectual exchange, namely, translation. In the past forty years, translation studies have burgeoned into a fertile field of research detailing the impact of translation on society throughout literate history, although the impact on Byzantine society and subsequently on Greek and Slavic Orthodoxy of the translations of Latin theological works into Greek remains relatively unknown to many scholars. Two pivotal figures dominate Tinnefeld's presentation, Maximos Planoudes, the learned monk of the late thirteenth century, and Demetrios Kydones, a leading statesman of the fourteenth. Likewise, two of their translation projects in particular had a philosophical and theological impact that will reverberate throughout the papers contained in this volume. Although Planoudes translated much besides, not least Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, his translation of Augustine's *De trinitate* will emerge as a source not only for the "latinophrones" but also for, more significantly, Gregory Palamas and his followers. Furthermore, Demetrios Kydones' enthusiasm for the thought of Thomas Aquinas, which resulted in translations of the *Summa contra gentiles* and the *Summa theologiae*, provides the framework for much of the intellectual exchange between the "Latin West" and the "Greek East" studied in the remainder of this volume. If one were not already cognizant of the fact but only informed by modern perceptions of the differences between Roman Catholicism and Greek Orthodoxy, who would expect to discover an enthusiastic reception of Aquinas as well as translations of his works from one moribund language to another in fourteenth century Byzantium?

It was the discrepancy between the Byzantine reception of Thomas Aquinas and our own expectations of "clearly delineated theological and ecclesial categories" of East and West that furnished a starting-point for Marcus Plested's exploration of the construction of these categorical concepts in his book *Orthodox Readings of Aquinas* (2012). In his contribution to the present volume, he revisits and develops this topic. Plested shows that assumptions of a fundamental doctrinal or methodological dichotomy between eastern and western theology are not an accurate reflection of the historical sources. Rather, there was a presupposition of harmony and compatibility on both sides in the late Middle Ages as well as in the early modern period. He traces the beginnings of a pervasive and "instinctive anti-Westernism within Orthodox theology" to the Russian Slavophile movement of the nineteenth century, in reaction to the "policy of Westernisation favoured by Peter the Great and his successors" as well as to

the thitherto dominant Thomistic and scholastic traditions in the theological schools of the Russian Empire. After pointing out the influence of German idealism on Slavic anti-Westernism, Plested goes on to discuss the construction of the identities of the cataphatic and rationalizing West (think Augustine and Aquinas) and the apophatic and mystical East (think pseudo-Dionysius and Palamas) in the leading Orthodox theologians of the twentieth century. Toward the end of his paper, “to explode the notion of an inherent East-West dichotomy”, Plested returns to the Middle Ages, pointing to Palamas’ serious engagement with Augustine, and to the fact that it was precisely Aquinas’ use of the Greek tradition that fired Kydones’ enthusiasm. He also discusses the scholasticism of the anti-unionist Mark Eugenikos and that fervent Thomist but committed Palamite, George Gennadios Scholarios, patriarch of Constantinople, who will figure amply in these pages. In his conclusions, Plested conjectures that the oppositional mode of Orthodox self-definition was more suited to the Cold War period of clearly defined blocks, whereas in our globalized era we are better positioned to “eschew simplistic dichotomies”.

Let us now consider another supposed dichotomy, that between scholasticism and humanism. The engagement of Byzantine intellectuals with Latin scholasticism took place primarily in the form of an encounter with Thomism during the late thirteenth century and onwards. This encounter lasted throughout the fourteenth and up to and beyond the fall of Constantinople, acting as an important stimulus to the final blossoming of Byzantine thought and Byzantine humanism, what we sometimes refer to as the Palaeologan Renaissance. Humanists like Demetrios Kydones, his friends and students Andreas and Theodore Chrysoberges, Manuel Chrysoloras, and others later on, such as the famous Cardinal Bessarion, as well as many other Greek humanists took a tremendous interest in and expressed admiration of Thomas Aquinas and his brand of scholastic Aristotelianism. There is a deep irony in this. At a time when Petrarch was lamenting the low level of learning in the West and was complaining about the “noisy, crazy crowd of scholastics” (*insanum et clamosum scolasticorum vulgus*), a number of Byzantine Greeks were studying Thomistic Aristotelianism. As John Monfasani makes abundantly clear in his paper, George of Trepizond (1395–1484) not only resists facile labelling as belonging to either East or West but also “fractures the supposed wall between humanism and Scholasticism”. As Monfasani notes, George, “despite being one of the leading humanists of the Quattrocento and one of the most important, if not the most important authority on rhetoric in the Renaissance up to the second half of the sixteenth century ... vigorously and vociferously defended Scholasticism against the attacks of its critics.” Neither, however, can George be classed among the Byzantine Thomists, at least not without a number of qualifications, the first of which is simply that he moved to Italy from his native Crete at too young an age to be counted among them. Examining George’s *Comparatio Philosophorum Platonis et Aristotelis* (1457), Monfasani finds that he took positions contrary to Aquinas on four out of five key philosophical issues. George was not a Byzantine Aristotelian nor a Byzantine Thomist but rather “a Greek émigré who enthusiastically em-

braced the philosophical and theological traditions of his new home” and “a Latin Aristotelian with a knowledge of Greek”. Who is Latin, who is Greek? What is East, what is West? In his very person George of Trepizond challenges us to rethink the way we use these labels.

Here I must pause to say a word about the internal arrangement of the papers in this volume. Tinnefeld, Plested and Monfasani were three of the four keynote speakers at the conference in Stockholm, and for this reason their papers are placed first. Because it raises broad issues relevant to the volume as a whole, Antoine Levy’s paper follows these three. After this the papers are arranged alphabetically by author’s surname. The fourth keynote speaker was John Demetracopoulos, whose lecture dealt with “The Essence of Speculative Thought in ‘East’ and ‘West’ in light of Latin into Greek Translations” and who offered participants a long and detailed list of translations in a handout. In the end, Demetracopoulos preferred not to publish his lecture at the conference, opting instead to submit a more specialized study, which explains why it is placed among the alphabetically arranged papers. As the driving force behind the project *Thomas de Aquino Byzantinus*, John Demetracopoulos was essential to the success of the conference and his research is mentioned in nearly every paper in this volume.

Now to resume my sketch of the contents of the papers, Antoine Levy questions the apparent incompatibility of Aquinas and Palamas, a tenet of the Orthodox identity discussed by Plested. The controversy regarding Palamism revolved at first around the doctrinal issue of the distinction between God’s essence and his operations or energies but subsequently expanded to become a discussion on the meaning of deification. Before entering the thick of the debate, however, Levy first ruminates on problems inherent in translations and on the concept of retroversion, i. e. the process of translating a translation back into its original language. Paradoxically, a “bad” translation is one that reveals more of the untranslatable genius of the original than the typically “good” translation that manages to build a semantic economy equivalent to that of the original, thus masking in its smoothness the untranslatable greatness of the original. Levy claims that Demetrios Kydones, deeply impressed with the “Greekness” of Aquinas, intended his translations of Thomas to be a means of giving back to Byzantine thinkers an awareness of their own tradition. However, this new reading of the Greek Fathers through Latin lenses so unsettled these Greek-speakers that the “retroversion” gave rise to impressions of dogmatic incompatibility between the two poles on the theological compass represented by Thomas Aquinas and Gregory Palamas. Feeding these impressions were Kydones’ own anti-Palamism and the use of Kydones’ translations by the anti-Palamite faction as well as the lingering effects of the condemnation of certain Greek theses by William of Auvergne, bishop of Paris, in 1241. At the heart of the whole controversy concerning the “divine energies” lies, according to Levy, a difference in cosmic perspective that is obscured in the process of translating. Palamas views the doctrine from the perspective of God’s perfections emanating to the realm of created things, God manifesting himself through a plurality of attributes, whereas



Aquinas views deification from the perspective of the multiple ways in which rational creation receives the divine outpourings or supernatural grace. Aquinas' emphasis on the creature's receptivity to God seemed to obscure his affirmation of God's essential incomprehensibility, while Palamas' emphasis on the eternal energies seemed to obscure God's essential simplicity as well as the inseparable character of divine essence and divine energies. Yet the two theologians are viewing the same phenomenon from two different angles, Levy claims, and their supposed incompatibility is a mirage: the anti-Palamite stance of Kydones and his colleagues was not that of Thomas Aquinas who, it turns out, understood the Greek tradition better than his Greek translator.

All the remaining papers but one document the Byzantines' thoroughgoing engagement with Latin scholasticism in the final centuries of the Empire. The one exception is Brian Jensen's paper dealing with Hugo Eterianus (1115–1185), an example, one might suppose, of Latins and Greeks not learning from each other. It is also the one paper specifically dealing with the Filioque controversy, that bugbear of ecumenists. However, Hugo as well as his brother Leo Tuscus did at least learn Greek from the Greek-speakers and both did in their different ways supply Greek-speakers with knowledge of both Latin theology and political affairs. Jensen thus highlights the role of bilingualism and translation that is the *sine qua non* of intellectual exchange between language communities and that forms the pre-text of this volume.

Also dealing specifically with translations are the papers by Marie-Hélène Blanchet and Michail Konstantinou-Rizos, both of whom are editing Byzantine translations of Latin works. Konstantinou-Rizos analyzes the translation style of the other Kydones, Prochoros the monk, who predeceased his older brother Demetrios by many years. He takes a look at Prochoros' translations of two treatises by Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de potentia Dei* and *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis*, both chosen for their relevance to Palamism. He confirms Prochoros' thorough grasp of Latin and capacity for rendering it into good Atticist Greek, underscoring the importance of stylistic considerations in Prochoros' style. Interestingly, Prochoros, like his brother Demetrios, gives priority to rendering the Latin as it stands even in those passages where Thomas quotes Greek sources accessible to the translator.

Marie-Hélène Blanchet, on the other hand, is able to contrast two different translations of the same Thomistic treatise, *De rationibus fidei*, the one by Demetrios Kydones, the other by an otherwise unknown translator named Atoumes, perhaps to be identified with Theodore Atouemes or Simon Atoumanos. Blanchet defends, moreover, the importance of editorial work on the Greek translations of Thomas Aquinas, a task which, it is safe to say, remains low on the list of priorities among most Byzantinists. However, as she points out, editorial work is the necessary preparation for an analysis of how Aquinas entered the Byzantine intellectual universe and for an appraisal of both the borrowing and the rejecting of key Thomistic ideas in this formative period of Orthodox identity. She calls for a different paradigm than that of estrangement and mutual hostility in order to analyze the relationship between the Byzantine-Slavic East and the Latin-dominated West.

John Demetracopoulos has provided us with an in-depth analysis of George Scholarios' homily on almsgiving as a case-study proving Scholarios' heavy dependence on Thomistic sources even when delivering a moralizing discourse; indeed the subtitle runs: "How to convert a scholastic *quaestio* into a sermon". It is a *tour-de-force* that will be indispensable for future research on Scholarios and the *corpus Thomisticum*. At the same time, given that Scholarios does not cite Thomas as a source, his paper provokes questions for a modern reader: Is this an act of plagiarism? Did fear lead Scholarios to conceal his sources?

Similar questions arise in Irini Balcoyiannopoulou's study of Scholarios' logical treatise entitled by Jugie the *Ars vetus*, which she is reediting based on new knowledge of the sources and manuscript tradition. The part Balcoyiannopoulou focuses on is the commentary on Aristotle's *De interpretatione*, but both this and all the other parts represent a patchwork of translations made from Latin sources – Thomas Aquinas, Radulphus Brito, and others. Although Scholarios acknowledges using Latin sources, he does not mention the specific sources by name, and he does claim his work as his own, making frequent use of the heading "Scholarios' *exegesis*". Is this plagiarism or is it a recycling of sources that pays homage to its origins by hinting at them? It is perhaps our own presuppositions that view Scholarios' methodology as mere plagiarism.

Pantelis Golitsis uses the question of plagiarism as a springboard to a discussion of Scholarios' understanding of Thomas Aquinas' short but seminal work *De ente et essentia*. In his book on the Thomism of Scholarios, Hugh Barbour expressed amazement at Scholarios' pawning off Armandus de Bellovisu's commentary on the *De ente et essentia* as his own. Yet Golitsis shows this to be a misunderstanding on Barbour's part, perhaps due to prejudices against Scholarios and, at any rate, a less than careful reading of the Greek. Linguistic misunderstandings, he argues, are one factor impeding the meeting of East and West. Golitsis proceeds to offer a nuanced case-study of the difficulties in translating the words for being and essence back and forth between Greek and Latin in order to point out deficiencies in our own traditional interpretative and historiographical categories – "Byzantine", "Palamite", "Thomist", etc.

Scholarios figures again in Georgios Steiris' paper on that more eastern East represented by Arabic philosophy. He contrasts the approaches to it in the rival philosophies of Pletho and Scholarios, the rivalry of these two reflecting the perceived rivalry between Platonism and Aristotelianism. Pletho was averse to Arabic philosophy while Scholarios at least appreciated its value. However, the salient point here is that, although the Byzantine world bordered on the Islamic world for centuries, knowledge of Arabic philosophy was primarily a result of Byzantine interaction with Western Scholasticism: the Byzantines of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were not familiar with Arabic philosophy in the original but only with its interpretation in Western Europe. Pletho's critical stance toward Arabic philosophy reflects his hostility to scholasticism; Scholarios' appreciation of it reflects his sympathy for Western scholasticism.

Chris Kappes traces an intricate interplay between Greek East and Latin West in his discussion of Scholarios' understanding of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary, an intricacy seen in the very title of his paper with its string of genitives positing relationships between various thinkers. He finds not only reactions to but also a surprising assimilation of the Augustinian conception of original sin already in Gregory Palamas. As he points out, Scholarios could be regarded simply as the culmination of a process of synthesizing Augustinism and Thomism with Orthodox theology; more than a synthesis it was a process of dialogue between Eastern and Western theologians. Despite his Thomistic proclivities, Scholarios shows a keen awareness of the position of Duns Scotus and his followers on the immaculate conception, which readily lent itself to being harmonized with eastern Mariology.

George Scholarios was only one of the prominent Greek delegates at the unionist Council of Florence-Ferrara who makes frequent appearances in these pages. Two others are Mark Eugenikos or Mark of Ephesus and Basilios Bessarion, the former refusing to sign the act of union, the latter going on to become a Roman cardinal. Panagiotis Athanasopoulos offers us a study of how these two clashed over the typically Thomistic "principle of individuation" regarding material substances in the preparation of the Council; this metaphysical issue had a bearing on the Filioque controversy central to the discussions at the Council. Mark addressed the issue in his *Capita syllogistica* and Bessarion replied in his *Refutatio Marci Ephesini*. It will not surprise the reader to find Bessarion drawing on a wide range of texts within the Aristotelian tradition. What is surprising is to see how thoroughly the anti-unionist Mark has absorbed the modes of discourse of western Scholasticism and, even more so, the coincidences of his argumentation with passages in Duns Scotus.

Another great personage at the Council of Florence was Georgios Gemistos Pletho who, one might say, brought the debate of "Plato versus Aristotle" to the West with the treatise he wrote during the Council, *Περὶ ὧν Ἀριστοτέλης πρὸς Πλάτωνα διαφέρεται*. Sergei Mariev explores Cardinal Bessarion's contribution to this debate by investigating how Bessarion made use of Aquinas' conception of nature as God's instrument in order to prove the basic accord between Platonism and Christianity. In the face of criticism from that eastern Westerner, George of Trepizond, Bessarion made the Greek East and Latin West converge in the service of Christian Platonism.

I close my survey of the contents of the papers with Tikhon Alexander Pino's study of the extent to which Mark Eugenikos' angelology is indebted to Thomas Aquinas. Pino uses his study of the specific, to modern minds, abstruse question of angelic matter to make important points relevant to the theme of this volume as a whole. For he finds a Byzantine theological milieu *in conversation with* the sources and problems of Latin Scholasticism. As he puts it: "Not only are Greeks and Latins learning *from each other* ... it is clear that they were also to a great extent learning, and philosophizing, together."

Up until now I have said nothing about the title of this book, but I will do so in conclusion. The first line of Kipling's *Ballad of East and West* has often been used to

supply catchy but unimaginative titles for books or conferences about real or supposed dichotomies, and the present volume is no exception. But the poem, though acknowledging a division between Eastern (i. e. Asian) and Western (i. e. European) culture, is really about mutual respect and friendship across cultural divides. Not many people who cite the line “Oh, East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet” know how the poem continues. In fact Kipling’s ballad, an adventure story set at the border between British India and Afghanistan, and rooted in the historical, intercultural context of Queen Victoria’s Own Corps of Guides, immediately proclaims borderless brotherhood within the same refrain:

But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth  
When two strong men stand face to face, tho’ they come from the ends of the earth!

Yet those opening words have become so proverbial as to be used as a mere cliché, a conversation-stopper, a thought-stopper, much like that other phrase “to each his own” (*suum cuique*), which has become similarly detached from its original context. East and West are, of course, relative terms, entirely dependent, geographically speaking, on one’s position between the rising and the setting sun, but also relative when used metaphorically. The papers collected here underscore how the paradigmatic construct of a supposedly Greek East and a supposedly Latin West as well as that of an Eastern and a Western Church obscures the fact that we are dealing with twin phenomena, far more alike than unlike, comparable indeed to the twin lungs of a single organism, to borrow a favorite expression of Pope John Paul II. In a careful and scholarly way these papers prove that the twain has met and still meets.