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ИНСТИТУТ ЗА СРЕДНОВЕКОВНА ФИЛОСОФИЯ И КУЛТУРА

**АРХИВ
ЗА СРЕДНОВЕКОВНА
ФИЛОСОФИЯ
И КУЛТУРА
СВИТЪК XIV**

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**POPE BENEDICT XVI'S USE OF THE BYZANTINE
EMPEROR MANUEL II PALAIOLOGOS' *DIALOGUE WITH
A MUSLIM MUTERIZES*: THE SCHOLARLY BACKGROUND**

A lecture delivered in 2006 by pope Benedict XVI at the University of Regensburg¹ became famous because of a reference of the speaker to the allegedly different ways Christians and Muslims were supposed to view the duty of propagating religious faith. A passage from the Byzantine emperor (1391-1425) Manuel II Palaiologos' (1350-1425) *Dialogue With a Certain Persian, Who Held the Office of Muterizes, in Ankara of Galatia* (Μανουήλ Παλαιολόγου διάλογος, ὃν ἐποιήσατο μετὰ τινος Πέρσου τὴν ἀξίαν Μουτερίζη ἐν Ἀγκύρα τῆς Γαλατίας) (*paulo ante* 1400²) was quoted, where Muslims from their very appear-

¹ «Der Vernunft ihre Ganze Weite Wieder Eröffnen» (September 12, 2006), in: Benedict XVI, *Gott und die Vernunft. Aufruf zum Dialog der Kulturen*, Augsburg, 2007, pp. 124-140. An English version of the lecture («Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections») is available, *inter alia*, in: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg_en.html (Libreria Editrice Vaticana); http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/15_09_06_pope.pdf.

² The discussion took place in the winter of 1390/91 or in the subsequent one (most probably, in December 1391) and was transformed into a literary piece in 1392/93 or, the latest, during the same decade of the century (on this see E. Trapp, *Manuel II. Palaiologos. Dialoge mit einem "Perser"* ("Wiener byzantinistische Studien", II), Wien, 1966, p. 54*; ed. T. Khoury, *Manuel II Paléologue. Entretiens avec un musulman. 7^e controverse. Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes* ("Sources chrétiennes", 115), Paris, 1966, pp. 23-28, esp. pp. 27-28).

ance on earth up to that time were accused of regarding violence against “non-believers” as a legitimate means of disseminating their faith. In contrast, it was held by an appeal to some of Palaiologos’ statements on the rational character of Christian morality (an appeal that also made Palaiologos’ text famous for a while), Christianity excluded violence against other religions from its mentality, partly because, having been blessedly cultivated from almost its very beginnings within a culture imbued with the «Hellenic (i.e. the Greek philosophical) spirit», accepted «reason» («λόγος») as a substantial criterion for judging the morality of human acts, religious behaviour included, and regarded God’s will and His commandments as *e limine* in conformity with reason. It is not my intention, of course, to be entangled in any inter-religious discussion (which may have been the aim of the Pope’s reference to Manuel II, as the very date of the lecture suggests). Instead, I would like to comment on the validity of the scholarly material that formed the background to the way Palaiologos’ text was used in that lecture.

Presenting the Christian notion of God as having been positively influenced by the rational element of “Hellenic” thought and, therefore, as being, from this point of view, superior to the concept of God occurring in other, purely ‘Oriental’, religions, can in principle be argued on more solid, more evident and more recognizable grounds. One might, for example, refer to the direct and indirect contribution of Middle Platonism and Stoicism to the formation of the Patristic notion of God,³ or to the way Medieval Christian theology came to terms with

³ Cf. J. Ratzinger (Benedetto XVI), *Il Dio della fede e il Dio dei filosofi. Un contributo al problema della theologia naturalis. Prolusione a Bonn nuovamente pubblicata e commentata da H. Sonnemans* [Der Gott des Glaubens und der Gott der Philosophen. Ein Beitrag zum Problem der Theologia naturalis. Hrsg. Und mit einem Nachwort versehen von H. Sonnemans, Trier, ³2006]. Traduzione di E. Coccia, Venezia, 2007, p. 44: «La sintesi operata dai Padri della Chiesa tra la fede biblica e lo spirito ellenico, in quanto rappresentante in quel momento dello spirito filosofico in genere, fu non solo legittima, ma necessaria, per dare espressione alla piena esigenza e a tutta la serietà della fede biblica. ...La verità filosofica rientra in un certo senso come elemento costitutivo nella fede cristiana...». To be sure, this way of emphasizing the “Greek” elements of Christian thought risks being misunderstood as bordering on A. Harnack’s historical scheme of an «Hellenisierung des Christentums» (see especially his *What Is Christianity?*

Aristotelian and Neoplatonic philosophical theology and offered a repertoire of highly elaborated answers to fundamental philosophical questions.⁴ As for showing Christianity's aversion to religious violence,

*(Das Wesen des Christentums). Lectures Delivered in the University of Berlin during the Winter-Term 1899-1900. Translated by T.B. Saunders. Second Edition Revised, New York, 1908 (1901), Lecture XI, pp. 214-224; see also his Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte, Band I, Tübingen, 1931, p. 20; cf. the monograph of E.P. Meijering: Die Hellenisierung des Christentums im Urteil Adolf von Harnack, Amsterdam, 1985, as well as E. Peroli's remarks in his «Saggio integrativo» to: C. de Vogel, Platonismo e cristianesimo: antagonismo o comuni fondamenti? Introduzione G. Reale. Traduzione E. Peroli, Milano, 1993, pp. 107-110), which is explicitly rejected in the Pope's lecture («Der Vernunft...», in: Benedict XVI, Gott und die Vernunft... (cf. supra, n. 1), pp. 132-133; cf. J. Ratzinger (Benedict XVI), Glaube – Wahrheit – Toleranz. Das Christentum und die Weltreligionen, Freiburg / Basel / Wien, 2003 (42005), pp. 74-78). Incidentally, it should be added that, though Harnack's conception of the relation between Christianity and Hellenism is nowadays all but at the peak of its influence (partly because Harnack was a Lutheran and partly because he stated the fact in a peculiar way), the fact remains that he contributed a good deal to the understanding of one of the peculiarities of Christian religion, i.e. its being strongly influenced by Greek philosophy and expressing itself at the theoretical level by creating a new speculative branch, namely, theology. Needless to say, however, great conceptions are often doomed to oblivion (*ne dicam* repudiation), if they clash with well-established bias. Even É. Gilson, who fervently stressed the Greek spirit of Christian thought (see next note), felt the need to explicitly warn his reader against mistaking his views as akin to those of Harnack (see É. Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, London, 1955 (31989), pp. 5-6).*

⁴ This was the way É. Gilson conceived of the contribution of Christianity (especially of Western Medieval Christianity) to the history of philosophy (see, e.g., the first, second and last chapter of his breaking-through book *L'esprit de la philosophie médiévale*, Paris, 1932, pp. 1-44; 203-226). Gilson went as far as to say that Christian thinkers not only produced innovative answers to old questions but also introduced new problems into the history of philosophy (see, e.g., his *God and Philosophy*, Yale U.P., 151967 (1941), pp. 39-43). He also stressed that the Catholic (Scholastic) concept of the *lumen naturale*, in contrast with the principal trends of Protestantism, which

one might pick out some Patristic passages where religious and, more generally, ideological violence is emphatically repudiated, as a rule, in the name of the most fundamental Christian virtue, namely, love.⁵

regarded human nature denigrated by original sin, contains an anthropology ideally apt for the development of philosophy (see especially his: *Christianisme et philosophie*, Paris, 1949, pp. 18-42; 75-104). Yet declared followers of Gilson's historiography are not as many today as to allow for an easy appeal to it. Furthermore, positively presenting Western Medieval thought as the peak of Christian rationality comprises *de facto* what many Catholic historians of Medieval philosophy and theology have described as «the decline of Scholasticism» (see, e.g., G. Fritz / A. Michel, «Scolastique», in: *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* 14/2, Paris, 1941, cols. 1691-1728; see esp. cols. 1709-1711: «Scolastique occidentale, la décadence»), i.e. the implicitly or explicitly anti-Thomist theology of John Duns Scotus and William Ockham (whose concept of the «potentia Dei absoluta» is explicitly repudiated in the Pope's lecture, because it borders on 'the' Muslim doctrine of God as being as supreme as not to be bounded by any sort of rules, either rational or moral).

⁵ See, e.g., Gregory Nazianzen's *Oratio V (Contra Julianum imperatorem II)*, 37 (PG 35: 712C-713B) and John Chrysostom's *De Babyla contra Julianum et gentiles* 13 (ed. M. Schatkin, *Critical Edition of, and Introduction to, St. John Chrysostom's "De sancto Babyla, contra Iulianum et gentiles"* (Doct. Diss., Fordham University, 1967 = PG 50: 537). On the other hand, however, some opposite Patristic passages do exist, especially with regard to heretics; see, e.g., Cyril of Jerusalem's *Catecheses* VI,20 and 36 (edd. W.C. Reischl / J. Rupp, *Cyrelli Hierosolymorum archiepiscopi opera quae supersunt omnia*, Vol. I, München, 1848, repr. Hildesheim, 1967, pp. 182 and 202: «Hate all heretics... Hate those also who have ever been suspected in such matters...»); C.G. Browne / J.E. Swallow, *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church. Second Series. Translated into English with Prolegomena and Explanatory Notes. Volume 7: S. Cyril of Jerusalem, S. Gregory Nazianzen*, New York, 1893, pp. 172; 179). These two conflicting traditions did coexist within Christianity (a collection of telling passages on both sides is available in the first part of the old but useful entry «Inquisition» by J. Blötzer in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. VIII, New York, 1910). Although neither the former nor the latter was introduced to the history of religious attitudes by Christians, there is, I think, no historically legitimate way to get rid of the one in preference to the other and present Christianity as by nature more tolerant

Finding out the *causa principalis* of overlooking all this well-known (and well-worn) material and using a specific passage from a Byzantine text dating from approximately 1400 as a means of extolling the allegedly «rational» and sober *mentalité* of Christianity and juxtaposing it with Islam⁶ lies beyond my scope. Instead, I would like to shed some

than aggressive or *vice versa*. T. Khoury (*Manuel II Paléologue...* (cf. *supra*, n. 2), pp. 34-35) is quite right in noting that regarding the military success of a religious empire (which is in part based on arms, at times used defensively, at others offensively) as a mark of God's approval of a religion «a coloré la pensée byzantine aux jours de prospérité» (e.g., in the 6th century) but was directly dismissed by Palaiologos, in whose time the Byzantine empire was rather miserable; purging military success from any theological implication, he maintains that in the course of history every state and nation has its ups and downs. Obviously, any religion, when being in its ascendant, tends to assign its success to God, whereas in the opposite state of things it avoids such a theology of history (cf. the same argument in the pope Pius II (Enea Silvio Piccolomini)'s *Epistula ad Mahumetem II*, chapters XV-XVI, addressed to an 'impious' ruler at the peak of his military success; ed. G. Toffanin, *Pio II (Enea Silvio Piccolomini). Lettera a Maometto II (Epistula ad Mahumetem)*, Napoli, 1953, pp. 162-167). In the same spirit, every religion, when suffering violence, tends to repudiate violence as inhuman and immoral, whereas, when at its historical peaks, does not refrain from using violence to expand and establish itself. Cf. Ch. L. de Montesquieu, *De l'esprit des lois* XXV,9: «C'est un principe, que toute religion qui est réprimée devient elle-même réprimante; car sitôt que, par quelque hasard, elle peut sortir de l'oppression, elle attaque la religion qui l'a réprimée» (ed. L. Versini, *Charles de Secondat, baron de Montesquieu. De l'esprit des lois*, tome II, Paris, 1995).

⁶ In fact, contrary to what is stated in the Pope's lecture on the basis of a second-hand note in T. Khoury's partial edition of Palaiologos' work (*Manuel II Paléologue...*; cf. *supra*, note 2), denying the intrinsic moral value of human acts and regarding God's commandments as self-established and programmatically not bound to any reason-based moral law is not the only moral line of thought in the Medieval Muslim world; from the age of early Islam, this theory, nowadays classified as "theistic subjectivism", contrasted the so-called "objectivist" theory of the Mu'tazila as well as of some philosophers (see, e.g., O. Leaman, *An Introduction to Classical Islamic Philosophy*, Cambridge U.P., 1985, pp. 147-173; G.F. Hourani, *Reason and Tradition in Islamic Ethics*, Cambridge U.P., 1985, pp. 15-97 et *passim*; cf.

light on a *causa adjuvans* or *concomitans* of this choice, namely, the specific edition of Palaiologos' text, that by T. Khoury.⁷ As I shall argue, Khoury's comment on the passage in question in his fragmentary and provisional edition lacked some important evidence on Palaiologos' sources;⁸ furthermore, it was dominated by some bias that lead the reader astray from doing justice to the sense of the text it was intended to explain.

1. Palaiologos' arguments for the irrationality of religious violence

1.1. Content and sources

The passage in question forms part of Palaiologos' attack on the quality of Mohammed as a «legislator»⁹ (i.e. as a founder of a religious

id., «Islamic and Non-Islamic Origins of Mu'tazilite Ethical Rationalism», *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 7, 1976, pp. 59-87).

⁷ See *supra*, n. 2. Khoury's edition is available in an Italian version, too (*Manuele II Palaiologo. Dialoghi con un Musulmano. VII discussione. Introduzione, testo critico e note Th. Khoury. Traduzione F. Artioli* ("Sources chrétiennes. Edizione italiana", 3), Roma / Bologna, 2007).

⁸ This accords with the obsolete estimation of C.B. Hase («Notice d'un ouvrage de l'empereur Manuel Paléologue, intitulé: *Entretiens avec un professeur mahométan*»; PG 156, Paris, 1866 (= C.B. Hase, *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Impériale et autres Bibliothèques*, tome VIII, 2^{ème} partie, Paris, 1810), cols. 125-126) that «...en effet Manuel Paléologue a emprunté peu de ses prédécesseurs». Especially denying the influence of some Latin writings translated into Greek on Palaiologos' work (as T. Khoury does; cf. *infra*, n. 39) accords with the still prevalent prejudice that Byzantine thought remained closed to the 'West'. A counter-instance is probably the argumentation against virginity produced by the *persona* of Muterizes in the 7th discussion (ed. E. Trapp, *Manuel II. Palaiologos...* (cf. *supra*, n. 2), pp. 80,34-81,22), which looks like being a borrowing from Thomas Aquinas' *Summa contra Gentiles* III,136,2-7. Cf. n. 37, pp. 278-279.

⁹ Ed. E. Trapp, *Manuel II. Palaiologos...* (cf. *supra*, n. 2), pp. 78,4-79,9 (= ed. T. Khoury, *Manuel II Paléologue...* (cf. *supra*, n. 2), pp. 138,4-144,6).

moral code). This quality is ranked low, because Mohammed is deemed as heavily dependent upon Jewish (and, to some restricted extent, Christian) moral laws, to which he had only bad commands to add, such as killing for faith's sake. Spreading faith by means of violence, Palaiologos strongly objects, is «utterly absurd» («ἀτοπώτατον») for two reasons:

ὅτι τε (1) Θεὸς οὐκ οἶδεν αἵμασι χαίρειν καὶ (2) τὸ μὴ σὺν λόγῳ ποιεῖν ἀλλότριον Θεοῦ.¹⁰

(first, because God has no taste for blood; and second, because acting irrationally is not in accordance with how God would like us to act).

The central idea of this argument also occurs in one of Palaiologos' epistles, where Muslims are described as not only «βάρβαροι... καὶ ἀμαθεῖς» («barbaric and ignorant») but also «τρυφῶντες αἵμασι καὶ σφαγαῖς» («delighted in bloodshed and massacre»).¹¹

1.1.1. 1st argument

The first argument must not be anachronistically mistaken for having a humanist air. In all probability, its direct source is Gregory Nazianzen's well-known rhetorical question in his famous *Oration XLV (In Sanctum Pascha)*, 22:

¹⁰ Ed. E. Trapp, *Manuel II. Palaiologos...* (cf. *supra*, n. 2), p. 79,9-10 (= ed. T. Khoury, *Manuel II Paléologue...* (cf. *supra*, n. 2), p. 144,6-7).

¹¹ Manuel II Palaiologos, *Epistle XXXI*, ll. 88-93 (ed. G.T. Dennis, *The Letters of Manuel II Palaiologos* ("Corpus fontium historiae Byzantinae. Series Washingtonensis", 8), Washington, D.C., 1977, p. 85). In Byzantine theology, a trend of toleration of religious 'otherness' is discernible, whose main point is summarized by Theodoros Studites in his *Epistle 455* (ed. G. Fatouros, *Theodori Studitae Epistulae*, Vol. II ("Corpus fontium historiae Byzantinae. Series Berolinensis", 31), Berlin, 1992, pp. 644-647 = PG 99: 1481C-1485D), who cites some relevant passages from John Chrysostom, pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite etc. This toleration, however, is not applied to the enemies of Christianity (who are supposed to be constantly repelled if attacking "the people of God"), but only to heretics. In this context it is said that «God was not delighted» («οὐκ ἠρέσθη Θεός»; *Epistle 455*, l. 86; ed. G. Fatouros, *op. cit.*, p. 647 = PG 99: 1485D) in an act of suppression of some heretics by the secular branch of Byzantine theocracy in Studites' time.

Τίς ὁ λόγος Μονογενοῦς αἷμα τέρπειν Πατέρα...;¹²

(«On what principle would the blood of His Only-Begotten Son delight the Father...?»¹³).

Of course, Gregory's statement is made in a Christological context; it aims at refuting a long since established dispensational doctrine (that of the devil's "rights" over the lapsed human race and the consequent need for a "redemption" in the literal sense of the word). Still, there is a properly theological basis for this statement: God the Father cannot gain any delight from human blood, either of His Son (as is stated in Gregory's sentence just quoted) or anybody at all (as Gregory holds in the sequel of this sentence¹⁴). Furthermore, the verbal similarity between the two passages is striking; and it is more than probable that Palaiologos had read such a famous oration by one of the most favourite Fathers of the Church in Byzantium, many orations of whose were, indeed, used by him in this *Dialogue*.¹⁵

Apart from this, another Christian theological text –this time a Latin one translated into Greek in Palaiologos' time– seems to present itself as a parallel implicit source of Palaiologos' argument: the *Cur Deus homo* (1095-98) of Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) («the most influential soteriological work in the Roman Catholic Church» after St. Paul's Epistles¹⁶), which was translated by Manuel Calecas (*ob.* 1410).

¹² PG 36: 653B.

¹³ Translation by C.G. Browne / J.E. Swallow (*The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church. Second Series. Translated into English with Prolegomena and Explanatory Notes. Volume 7: S. Cyril of Jerusalem, S. Gregory Nazianzen*, New York, 1893, p. 826).

¹⁴ «...ὃς οὐδὲ τὸν Ἰσαὰκ ἐδέξατο παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς προσφερόμενον, ἀλλ' ἀντηλλάξατο τὴν θυσίαν, κριὸν ἀντιδοῦς τοῦ λογικοῦ θύματος» (PG 36: 653B; «...who did not receive even Isaac, when he was being offered by his father, but changed the sacrifice, putting a ram in the place of the human victim?»; translation, slightly changed, by C.G. Browne / J.E. Swallow, *ibid.*).

¹⁵ *Orations XXV, XXIX, XXX, XXXI, XXXVIII, XL, XLI, XLII, and XLIII* (see the *Index fontium* in E. Trapp's edition (*Manuel II. Palaiologos...* (cf. *supra*, n. 2), pp. 305-306).

¹⁶ J. Rivière, «Rédemption», in: *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* 13/2, Paris, 1937, cols. 1912-2004, esp. col. 1972.

The translation is still unedited; since, however, I am preparing an edition of it, when I read Palaiologos' text the relevant passage (from I,10) came to mind:

Θαυμαστὸν γὰρ εἰ οὕτως ὁ Θεὸς ἐπὶ δικαίου αἵματι τέρπεται ἢ τούτου δεῖται, ὡς μὴ τοῦ δικαίου τούτου (sc. Christ) σφαγέντος οὐκ ἂν τῶν ἀνθρώπων φείσασθαι βουληθῆναι ἢ δυνηθῆναι.¹⁷

¹⁷ *Vat. Gr. 609*, f. 89^r («Mirum enim est, si Deus sic delectatur aut eget sanguine innocentis, ut non nisi eo interfecto parcere velit aut possit nocenti»; ed. F.S. Schmitt, *Anselmi Cantuariensis archiepiscopi opera omnia*, Vol. II, Romæ / Edinburghi, 1946, p. 66,24-26). (My very study of Palaiologos' text was the result of my research into the influence of Calecas' translation of the *Cur Deus homo* on Late Byzantine literature, especially on its polemic-apologetic pieces.) Anselm's passage sounds as an echo of Augustine's *De Trinitate* XIII,11,15 (edd. W.J. Mountain / F. Glorie, *Sancti Aurelii Augustini De Trinitate libri XV. Tomus II: libri XIII-XV* ("CSEL", LA), Turnholti, 1968, pp. 401-402). As has been recently shown, Anselm's process in the *Cur Deus homo* follows the main patterns of Augustine's *De Trinitate* XIII (see F. Van Fleteren, «Traces of Augustine's *De Trinitate* XIII in Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo*», in: P. Gilbert / H. Kohlenberger / E. Salmann (eds.), *Cur Deus Homo. Roma, 21-23 maggio 1998* ("Studia Anselmiana", 118), Rome, 1999, pp. 165-178; see. esp. 177). As is known, however, Anselm sets this idea in a context of his own, aimed at contrasting with Augustine's subscription to the doctrine of the devil's rights over the post-lapsarian human race (see, e.g., R.W. Southern, *St. Anselm. A Portrait in a Landscape*, Cambridge U.P., 1991, pp. 203-205; *Saint Anselm and His Biographer. A Study of Monastic Life and Thought 1050 – c. 1130*, Cambridge U.P., 1963, pp. 87; 357-361). Thanks to Maximus Planudes' translation (1281), Augustine's text was available to Palaiologos (edd. M. Papathomopoulos / I. Tsavari / G. Rigotti, *Αὐγουστίνου Περὶ Τριάδος βιβλία πεντεκαίδεκα, ἅπερ ἐκ τῆς Λατίνων διαλέκτου εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα μετήνεγκε Μάξιμος ὁ Πλανούδης. Εἰσαγωγή, ἑλληνικὸ καὶ λατινικὸ κείμενο, γλωσσάριο*, Vol. II, Athens, 1995, p. 735: «Ἄρα γὰρ ὀργιζόμενος ἡμῖν ὁ Θεὸς καὶ Πατὴρ εἶδε τὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τοῦ Υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ θάνατον καὶ κατηλλάγη ἡμῖν; ... Ὁ δὲ Πατὴρ... μέχρι τοσοῦτου ἔτι ὠργιζετο, ὡς εἰ μὴ ὁ Υἱὸς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἀποθάνη, μὴ καταλλαγῆναι;»), as to any Late Byzantine author, several of whom (from the late 13th century up to the very last years of the Byzantine era) were influenced by it, since he was regarded as one of the great Fathers of the golden age of Patristic thought (see

(«For it is a surprising supposition that God takes delight in, or is in need of, the blood of an innocent man, so as to be unwilling to or unable to spare the guilty except in the event that the innocent has been killed»¹⁸).

Once more, the context is not exactly the same; yet the similarity between the Anselmian passage from Calecas' translation and Palaiologos' sentence under discussion is more than striking. And having access to Calecas' translation was in principle just as easy for Palaiologos, since he had been taught by¹⁹ –and, later on, he had taken as a close collaborator of his²⁰– the intellectual whom the translator explicitly recognized as his mentor²¹, i.e. Demetrios Cydones (1324/25 – 1397). Furthermore, Calecas had contacted Palaiologos through several letters.²² So it is not strange at all that Palaiologos seems to have used Calecas' translation of Anselm's *Cur Deus homo* some times in his *Dialogue*.²³ And, in fact, he was not the first to do so. Apart from

the first paragraph of the recent study of M. Trizio: «“Un uomo sapiente ed apostolico”. Agostino a Bizanzio: Gregorio Palamas lettore del *De Trinitate*», *Quaestio* 6, 2006, pp. 131-189, esp. pp. 131-138). Still Palaiologos' passage under discussion does not bear any special affinity with it.

- ¹⁸ B. Davies / G.R. Evans, *Anselm of Canterbury. The Major Works. Edited with an Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 282.
- ¹⁹ See T. Khoury, *Manuel II Paléologue...* (cf. *supra*, n. 2), pp. 12-13; G.T. Dennis, *The Reign of Manuel II Palaeologus in Thessalonica, 1382-1387* (“*Orientalia Christiana Analecta*”, 159), Rome, 1960, p. 14; J. Chrysostomides, *Manuel II Palaeologus. Funeral Oration on His Brother Theodore. Introduction, Text, Translation and Notes* (“*Corpus fontium historiae Byzantinae*”, 26), Thessaloniki, 1985, pp. 11-12.
- ²⁰ See, Manuel's numerous and intimate letters to him (N° 3-5, 8, 10-12, 14, 16, 19-23, 25, 26, 29, 31, 36, and 64 (cf. G.T. Dennis, *The Letters...* (cf. *supra*, n. 11), pp. xxxix-xl).
- ²¹ *Epistle* 25, l. 4 (ed. R.-J. Loenertz, *Correspondance de Manuel Calécas* (“*Studi e Testi*”, 152), Città del Vaticano, 1950, p. 199). Cf. *Epistle* 45, ll. 10-12 (ed. R.-J. Loenertz, *op. cit.*, p. 230).
- ²² *Epistles* 14; 20; 34; 39; 47; 71; 87 (ed. R.-J. Loenertz, *op. cit.*, pp. 186-187; 200-201; 213-216; 222-223; 233-234; 267-268; 303-304).
- ²³ Cf. discussion XIII (ed. E. Trapp, *Manuel II. Palaiologos...* (cf. *supra*, n. 2), p. 161,29-37) with *Cur Deus homo* II,18 (*Vat. Gr. 609*, ff. 107^r-108^r); discussion XXI (ed. E. Trapp, *op. cit.*, p. 253,14-16: «...καὶ πρὸς γε τῷ Θεῷ προσενέγκαι

the life-long friend of Cydones, namely, Nicholas Cabasilas (1319/23 – post 1391), who in his masterpiece, the *De vita in Christo*, and in some of his *Orations* relied heavily on it,²⁴ Emperor (1347-54) John VI Cantacouzenos (ca. 1292 – 1383) did the same when writing his *Adversus*

τὴν ὀφειλομένην αὐτῷ τιμὴν παρ' ἡμῶν ἀντὶ τῆς ὑβρεως ἐκείνης, ἣν εἰς αὐτὸν διὰ τῆς παραβάσεως ἐξυβρίσαμεν») to *Cur Deus homo* I,11 (*cod. cit.*, f. 89^r: «Ταύτην τὴν ὀφειλομένην τιμὴν ὁ μὴ τῷ Θεῷ ἀποδιδούς τὸ ἴδιον ἀφαιρεῖ τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τὸν Θεὸν ἀτιμάζει») and I,14 (*cod. cit.*, f. 90^{r-v}: «Ὅτι οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἐν τῇ τῶν πραγμάτων τάξει οὕτως ἦττον ποιητέον ἢ τὸ τὴν κτίσιν τὴν ὀφειλομένην τῷ δημιουργῷ τιμὴν ἀφαιρεῖν καὶ μὴ ἀποδιδόναι, ὃ ὀφείλει. ... Καὶ γὰρ ὁ ἄνθρωπος τὴν ὀφειλομένην τῷ Θεῷ τιμὴν εἴτε μὴ ἁμαρτάνων εἴτε ὃ ἥμαρτεν ἀποδιδούς ἐκουσίως παρέχεται»); discussion XXIII (ed. E. Trapp, *op. cit.*, pp. 271,37-272,6) to *Cur Deus homo* I,6 (*cod. cit.*, f. 85^v: «-B. “Ἄρα γὰρ οὐχ ἡ τοῦ Θεοῦ δύναμις βασιλεύει πανταχοῦ; Πῶς οὖν ἐπὶ τῷ τοῦ διαβόλου περιγενέσθαι οὐρανόθεν κατελθεῖν ἐδεῖτο;”. Ταῦθ' ἡμῖν ἐγκαλεῖν δύνασθαι δοκοῦσιν οἱ ἄπιστοι») and I,5 (*cod. cit.*, f. 85^{r-v}: «Ὅτι ἡ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀπολύτρωσις οὐκ ἐδύνατο γενέσθαι δι' ἐτέρου προσώπου εἰ μὴ διὰ θείου προσώπου. - B. Αὕτη τοίνυν ἡ ἐλευθερία, εἰ δι' ἐτέρου μᾶλλον ἢ τοῦ θείου προσώπου, εἴτε δι' ἀγγέλου εἴτε δι' ἀνθρώπου, γενέσθαι ὀτρωδῆποτ' ἂν λέγοιτο τρόπῳ, τοῦτο πολλῶ προσηνέστερον ἂν δέχοιτο ἢ ἀνθρωπίνῃ διάνοια. Ἐδύνατο γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς ἄνθρωπον χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας οὐκ ἐκ τοῦ ἁμαρτωλοῦ φυράματος οὐδ' ἀφ' ἐτέρου ἀνθρώπου, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ τὸν Ἀδάμ, ποιῆσαι, δι' οὗ τοῦτ' αὐτὸ τὸ ἔργον δυνηθῆναι ἂν γενέσθαι δοκεῖ. - Ἀνσλ. Ἄρ' οὐ συνίης ὡς, ὅπερ ἂν ἄλλο πρόσωπον ἀπὸ τοῦ αἰωνίου θανάτου τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐλυτροῦτο, ὀρθῶς ἂν αὐτὸς ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἦν δοῦλος ἐκείνου; Τοῦτο δὲ εἶπερ ἦν, οὐδενὶ τρόπῳ πρὸς ἐκείνην ἂν ἐπανήλθε τὴν ἀξίαν, ἣν ἔχειν ἔμελλεν, εἰ μὴ ἡμάρτανεν· ὁ γὰρ μηδὲν ἄλλο πλὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ δοῦλος καὶ τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς ἀγγέλοις παρόμοιος κατὰ πάντα γενήσεσθαι μέλλων, τοῦ μὴ ὄντος Θεοῦ δοῦλος ἂν ἦν καὶ οὐτινος οὐδ' οἱ ἄγγελοι δοῦλοι ἦσαν»).

²⁴ See J.A. Demetracopoulos, *Nicholas Cabasilas' «Contra Pyrrhonem». Introduction, Critical Edition, Modern Greek Translation, Philosophical Analysis, and Historical Context* (in Modern Greek with an English Summary), Athens, “Parousia”, 1999, pp. 157-158, notes 35-36; id., «A Critical Note on St. Anselm's *Cur Deus homo* I,21», *Βυζαντινὰ* 18, 1995/96, pp. 113-117, esp. pp. 114-115, note 3. A full treatment of Cabasilas' dependence on Calecas' translation of Anselm's *Cur Deus homo* will be included in my Introduction to the forthcoming edition of the translation.

Judæos.²⁵ No doubt, Manuel was familiar with Cantacouzenos' works. Apart from the fact that Cantacouzenos was his grandfather, Manuel mentions explicitly John VI's apologetic work against the Muslims²⁶ in the Proœmium of his *Dialogue*²⁷. Apparently, the *Cur Deus homo* was attractive for any Christian author of apologetic works against Islam or Judaism; for it is a dialogue between its Christian author and one of his Christian disciples, Boso, who stands as the *persona* of the «infidelis» (i.e. of a Jew or a Muslim) and refuses to be converted to Christianity unless strong, purely rational proofs for Christian dogmas (especially for Incarnation) are offered to him.

1.1.2. 2nd argument

The second of Palaiologos' arguments against religious violence seems to come from the *Cur Deus homo* (I,8), too. An idea permeating this text throughout is that God, be «His ways» as «incomprehensible» (Rom. 11,33) as they may, never acts irrationally:

Ἡ γὰρ τοῦ Θεοῦ θέλησις ἄλογος οὐκ ἔστι.²⁸

²⁵ Ed. Ch. G. Soteropoulos, Ἰωάννου ΣΤ' Καντακουζηνοῦ Κατὰ Ἰουδαίων λόγοι ἐννέα τὸ πρῶτον νῦν ἐκδιδόμενοι. Εἰσαγωγή, κείμενον, σχόλια, Athens, 1990 (text written probably in 1371/73; see Ch. G. Soteropoulos, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16). Cf., e.g., John VI Cantacouzenos, *Contra Judæos* IV,364-368 and VII,124-135 (ed. Ch. G. Soteropoulos, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-140 and 178) ad *Cur Deus homo* II,11 (*Vat. Gr. 609*, ff. 101^v-102^r).

²⁶ PG 154: 371-692.

²⁷ Ed. E. Trapp, *Manuel II. Palaiologos...* (cf. *supra*, n. 2), p. 6,11-17. Cf. K. Förstel, *Manuel II. Palaiologos. Dialoge mit einem Muslim. Commentierte griechisch-deutsche Textausgabe* ("Corpus islamo-christianum. Series græca", 4), Würzburg, 1993, p. 373, note 6; PG 156: 130D, note 3.

²⁸ *Vat. Gr. 609*, f. 86^v («Voluntas namque Dei numquam est irrationabilis»; ed. F.S. Schmitt, *Anselmi Cantuariensis archiepiscopi...* (cf. *supra*, n. 17), p. 59,11). In so stating Anselm apparently implies the mature Scholastic distinction between "supra rationem" and "contra rationem". However, as Hegel has rightly pointed out (G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie. Dritter Band. Mit einem Vorwort von K.L. Michelet*, Stuttgart, 1928, pp. 162-169, esp. 163 and 169), this was not exactly what Anselm really meant; for, for him, all the *rationes necessariae* are in principle

(«For the will of God is never irrational»)²⁹

True, strictly speaking, Anselm is referring to the acts of God, whereas Palaiologos is primarily referring to human acts and their due conformity to divine law. Yet the emperor used a sentence more general than necessary for referring to human acts — a sentence that can be read as containing two propositions, a declared and an implied (but easy to grasp) one: *i*) human acts incompatible with reason are not approved by God (declaration); and *ii*) any act not being in accordance with reason does not fit with God's nature; God's commandments are, therefore, *ex limine* reasonable (implication).

Finally, one of Palaiologos' arguments against forced conversion is identical with Thomas Aquinas' main argument against forcing men born in this or that religious community to become Christians. Palaiologos stresses that

ἡ πίστις ψυχῆς, οὐ σώματός ἐστι καρπός, καὶ δεῖ γε γλώττης ἀγαθῆς καὶ διανοίας ὀρθῆς τῷ πρὸς τὴν πίστιν ἐνάγοντι, οὐ βίας, οὐκ ἀπειλῆς, οὐ δάκνοντός τινος ἢ φρικώδους. ...Τὸ πείθειν ψυχὴν λογικὴν οὐ χειρός, οὐ μάστιγος, οὐδ' οὔτινοσοῦν ἑτέρου τῶν καὶ θάνατον ἀπειλούντων. Οὐκ ἄρα τίς ποτ' ἂν φαίη, ἐθελοκακεῖν μὴ βουλόμενος, ἐπίταγμα ταῦτα εἶναι Θεοῦ.³⁰

(Faith is a fruit not of body, but of soul; and he who would endeavour to lead somebody to faith needs skilfull language and right reasoning, not compulsion and threat... Convincing a rational soul is not a task to be carried out by means of hands and whip or by means of any other thing that may cause even death. Nobody, therefore, would ever claim –unless one is determined to speak wrongly– that such things are an order by God).

accessible to human reason, even though, for various reasons, it comes about that this or that man in this or that age of the development of Christianity fails to grasp many (or even most) of them (see the first lines of Anselm's *Commendatio operis ad papam Urbanum II* (ed. F.S. Schmitt, *op. cit.*, pp. 39,2-40,12), where he justifies his very attempt at a rational approach to the mystery of Incarnation).

²⁹ B. Davies / G.R. Evans, *Anselm of Canterbury...* (cf. *supra*, n. 18), p. 274.

³⁰ Ed. E. Trapp, *Manuel II. Palaiologos...* (cf. *supra*, n. 2), p. 79,12-18.

Likewise, Aquinas, while he regards even capital punishment as a legitimate means of defending faith against heresies and apostasy,³¹ in an article with the title «Should the infidels be compelled to the faith?»³² (in Demetrios Cydones' translation, wherefrom Palaiologos could read Aquinas: «Εἰ τούτους (sc. τοὺς ἀπίστους) δεῖ βιάζεσθαι πρὸς τὴν πίστιν») states:³³

Τῶν ἀπίστων τινές [μέν]^{34a} εἰσιν, οἳ μηδέποτε τὴν πίστιν ἐδέξαντο, ὥσπερ οἱ ἔθνηκαὶ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι. Καὶ τούτοις^{34b} οὐδαμῶς δεῖ πρὸς τὸ πιστεύειν βίαν ἐπάγειν· “τὸ γὰρ πιστεύειν τῆς θελήσεώς ἐστιν”.

³¹ *Summa theologiae*, II^a II^e, qu. 11, art. 3; qu. 12, art. 2; qu. 64, art. 2-4. See also *Summa contra Gentiles* III,146 («Quod iudicibus licet poenas inferre» / «Ὅτι τοῖς δικασταῖς ἔξεστι τὰς τιμωρίας ἐπάγειν») (ex cod. *Marc. gr. II,2* (1012), f. 228^vb). Cf. J.A. Demetracopoulos, Ἀπὸ τὴν ἱστορία τοῦ βυζαντινοῦ θωμισμοῦ. Πλήθων καὶ Θωμᾶς Ἀκρινάτης (“Ελληνικὸ Βυζάντιο καὶ Λατινικὴ Δύση. Φιλοσοφία – Μελέτες”, N^o 2), Athens, 2004, pp. 132-133; id., «Georgios Gemistos-Plethon's Dependence on Thomas Aquinas' *Summa contra Gentiles* and *Summa Theologiae*», *Archiv für mittelalterliche Philosophie und Kultur* 12, 2006, pp. 276-341, esp. pp. 334-335.

³² *Summa theologiae*, II^a II^e, qu. 10, art. 8.

³³ II^a II^e, 10,8, Resp.: «...Infidelium quidam sunt qui nunquam susceperunt fidem, sicut gentiles et Judaei. Et tales nullo modo sunt ad fidem compellendi, ut ipsi credant, quia *credere voluntatis est*» (G. Leontsinis / A. Glycophrydi-Leontsini (eds.), Δημητρίου Κυδώνη, Θωμᾶ Ἀκρινάτου Σούμμα θεολογική, ἐξελληνισθεῖσα, Vol. II,15 (“Corpus philosophorum Græcorum recentiorum”), Athens, 1976, p. 167,3-6). In this work (*ibid.*, arg. 3) Palaiologos could also read an epitomizing of a relevant passage from Augustine: «Ἄλλα δύναται μὴ θέλων ὁ ἄνθρωπος, πιστεύειν δὲ μὴ θέλοντα ἀδύνατον» (Augustine, *In Johannis Evangelium tractatus* XXVI,2; PL 35: 1607: «Intrare quisquam ecclesiam potest nolens, accedere ad altare potest nolens, accipere Sacramentum potest nolens: *credere non potest nisi volens*. Si corpore crederetur, fieret in nolentibus: sed non corpore creditur. ... Sed nec debes vocare confitentem, quem iudicas non credentem. Hoc est enim confiteri, dicere quod habes in corde; si autem aliud in corde habes, aliud dicis, loqueris, non confiteris»).

^{34a} Editionis μέν (quod quonam modo insertum sit omnino nescio) eliminavi.

^{34b} Ex editionis τούτους correxi (ἐπάγειν cum dativo personæ) codicem *Par. Gr. 1273* (f. 94^v31) secutus.

(«Among unbelievers there are some who have never received the faith, such as heathens and Jews. These are by no means to be compelled, for “belief is voluntary”»).³⁵

And he adds that the only acceptable motive for a Christian ruler to conquer a non-Christian territory is to defend, not expand Christianity and that, therefore, a Christian conqueror is not entitled to force non-believers to be converted:

..Πολλάκις οί πιστοί τοῦ Χριστοῦ πόλεμον κατὰ τῶν ἀπίστων κινουῦσιν, οὐχ ἵνα τούτους ἀναγκάσωσι δέξασθαι τὴν πίστιν (καὶ γὰρ καὶ νικήσαντες αὐτούς καὶ αἰχμαλώτους λαβόντες οὐδὲν ἦττον ἐπ' ἐκείνοις καταλείψουσιν, εἰ βούλοιντο, πιστεῦσαι), ἀλλ' ἵνα τούτους ἀναγκάσωσι τῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ πίστει μὴ ἐνοχλεῖν.³⁶

(«Christ's faithful often wage war on infidels, not indeed for the purpose of forcing them to believe, because even were they to conquer them and take them captive, they should still leave them free to believe or not, but for the purpose of stopping them obstructing the faith of Christ»).³⁷

³⁵ Th. Gilby, *St. Thomas Aquinas. Summa Theologiae. Latin Text and English Translation, Introductions, Notes, Appendices and Glossaries. Vol. 32: Consequences of Faith (2^a 2^{ae}, 8-16)*, London / New York, 1975, p. 63.

³⁶ *Summa theologiae*, II^a II^{ae}, qu. 10, art. 8, Resp. (edd. G. Leontsinis / A. Glycophrydi-Leontsini, *Δημητρίου Κυδώνη, Θωμᾶ Ἀκκινάτου...* (cf. *supra*, n. 33), p. 167, 11-15; cf. cod. *Par. Gr. 1273*, f. 94^v24-26): «...fideles Christi frequenter contra infideles bellum movent, non quidem ut eos ad credendum cogant (quia si etiam eos vicissent et captivos haberent, in eorum libertate relinquerent an credere vellent), sed propter hoc, ut eos compellant ne fidem Christi impediant»). On the historical setting of Aquinas' position see the excellent article by I. Bejczy: «*Tolerantia: a Medieval Concept*», *Journal of the History of Ideas* 58/3, 1997, pp. 365-384, esp. pp. 372-373.

³⁷ Th. Gilby, *ibid.* (cf. *supra*, n. 35). As Ch. Dendrinis has shown («Co-operation and Friendship among Byzantine Scholars in the Circle of Manuel II Palaiologos (1391-1425) as Reflected in Their Autograph Manuscripts», <http://www.mml.cam.ac.uk/greek/grammarofmedievalgreek/unlocking/Dendrinis.pdf>), Palaiologos was a close friend of Macarios Makres (1382-1431), with whom he co-operated for the composition of some of his writings. Now, as is known, Makres had used Aquinas in his anti-Islamic polemics (A. Argyriou, *Macaire Makrès et la polémique contre l'Islam* (“Studi e Testi”, 314), Città del Vaticano, 1986, pp. 86-94 and 309-326; cf. H.C. Barbour, *The Byzantine*

1.2. Reason-based vs. revelation-based morality: an assessment of T. Khoury's approach to Palaiologos' arguments

1.2.1. The apparently 'rational' character of Christian morality in Dialogue VII

The conclusion therefore presents itself that accounting for the theological grounds of Palaiologos' anti-violence statement in terms of his being «nourri de la philosophie grecque», as T. Khoury suggested four decades ago³⁸ following, in all probability, an obsolete remark by C.B. Hase,³⁹ is not only vague (which philosophical trend are we presumably

Thomism of Gennadios Scholarios and His Translation of the Commentary of Armadur de Bellovisu on the "De ente et essentia" of Thomas Aquinas ("Studi Tomistici", 53), Città del Vaticano, 1993, pp. 40-45), especially with regard to Christian virginity. Palaiologos' relevant pages (in Dialogue VII, where the passage evoked by the Pope occurs; ed. E. Trapp, *Manuel II. Palaiologos...* (cf. *supra*, n. 2), pp. 81,15-22) seem to rely on Aquinas' *Summa contra Gentiles* III,136, which was used for the same purpose by Makres, too (see A. Argyriou, *ibid.*).

³⁸ T. Khoury, *Manuel II Paléologue...* (cf. *supra*, n. 2), p. 144, note 1.

³⁹ From Hase's old preface to the earliest (partial) edition of Palaiologos' text («Notice d'un ouvrage...») (cf. *supra*, n. 8), col. 123): «il fait voir que le christianisme enseigne à cultiver sa raison, à modérer ses désirs, à vaincre ses passions, à persuader avec douceur...» (with regard to the content of the 7th discussion). — Incidentally, E. Trapp's suggestion (*Manuel II. Palaiologos...* (cf. *supra*, n. 2), p. 79, ad ll. 5 sqq.; cf. K. Förstel, *Manuel II. Palaiologos...* (cf. *supra*, n. 27), p. 376, note 5) to see in a passage from Demetrios Cydones' translation of Riccoldo da Montecroce's (1243-1320) *Contra legem Saracenorum* (6; PG 154: 1068A) as well as in a passage from John VI Cantacouzenos' *Contra Mahometem apologia* (IV,4-5; PG 154: 544A-D) the source of Palaiologos' passage holds true for some other points of the entire paragraph of Palaiologos' text, but not for the specific one under discussion. Apart from this suggestion, the most close passage from Cydones' translation to that of Palaiologos is the following: «Ἀλλὰ ἄτοπον φρονεῦσθαι διὰ τὸ μὴ δύνασθαι [sc. τὰ ὀρθὰ φρονεῖν]: οὐς καὶ δυναμένους οὐ προσήκον ἦν ἀναγκάζεσθαι, διὰ τὸ μὴ ἀρέσκειν τῷ Θεῷ τὴν κατηναγκασμένην λατρείαν» (*Contra legem Sarracenorum* 8; PG 154: 1080C). *Contra T.*

meant to think of as having influenced him?⁴⁰) and inaccurate (even in Palaiologan times, ancient Greek philosophy was less influential on Byzantine authors than Christian religion and theology) but also misleading. Rather, a Church Father of the 4th century well-known in the Byzantine world⁴¹ and a prominent theologian of the 11th century,

Khoury, who estimates that «Manuel... se defend de lui [sc. Riccoldo] faire des emprunts directs quelque peu importants», because he did not share his tutor's admiration for «Western theology» (who, nevertheless, kindly sent him this translation along with a covering letter; see T. Khoury, *Manuel II Paléologue...* (cf. *supra*, n. 2), p. 16; ed. R.-J. Loenertz, *Démétrius Cydonès. Correspondance. Vol. II* (“Studi e Testi”, 208), Città del Vaticano, 1960, pp. 258-259; cf. J.-M. Merigoux, «L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur florentin en Orient à la fin du XIII^e siècle: le *Contra legem Sarracenorum* de Riccoldo da Monte di Croce», in: *Memorie Domenicane*, Pistoia, 1986, pp. 1-144, esp. 52) and does not point out any case of Palaiologos' dependence on Riccoldo at all, E. Trapp (*op. cit.*, p. 305, s.v. «Cydonès») has shown that Palaiologos had read and used this translation (see E. Voordeckers, «Les *Entretiens avec un Perse* de l'empereur Manuel Paléologue (à propos de deux éditions récentes)», *Byzantion* 36/1, 1966, pp. 311-317, esp. pp. 316-317), and so we can be sure that he knew this passage. Its similarity, however, with Palaiologos' passage is not as close as to suggest that the former was the source of the latter. – Riccoldo's original text was edited by J.-M. Merigoux (*art. cit.*; cf. *id.*, «Riccoldo da Monte di Croce», in: *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique* 13, Paris, 1988, cols. 554-556). The Latin text that accompanies Cydonès' translation in PG 154 is a Renaissance translation of Cydonès' version by Bartholomæus Picensis de Montearduo, which accompanied the Greek translation in its *editio princeps* (Basel, 1543) (see the dedicatory epistle of Bartholomæus in PG 154: 1035-1036; cf. P. Mandonnet, «Fra Riccoldo de Monte Croce, pèlerin en Terre sainte et missionnaire en Orient», *Revue Biblique* 2, 1893, pp. 44-61, 182-202 and 584-607, esp. pp. 597-600; A. Dondaine, «Ricoldiana. Notes sur les œuvres de Riccoldo da Montecroce», *Archivum Fratrum Prædicatorum* 37, 1967, pp. 119-179, esp. p. 145).

⁴⁰ Cf. Khoury's vague description of the revival of the Byzantine's interest in «Hellenism» in the Introduction to his edition (*Manuel II Paléologue...* (cf. *supra*, n. 2), pp. 13-16; 17).

⁴¹ See G. Podskalsky, *Theologie und Philosophie in Byzanz. Der Streit um die theologische Methodik in der späthbyzantinischen Geistesgeschichte* (14./15.

both of whose texts were available to our author, suffice for that. Even Anselm's high appraisal of the *ratio* and his correlate idea of using it as an apt means for establishing Christian dogmas had not, of course, as a *causa principalis* any conditioning by Greek philosophy whatsoever; this appraisal was for him the basis of the methodological axiom (*sola ratione*) of his own apologetic strategy against the «non-believers» («infideles») of his time (atheists, Jews and Muslims included).⁴²

1.2.2. The strikingly 'revelational' character of Christian morality in Dialogue VIII

Regardless, however, of the non-philosophical character of Anselm's apologetic programme, it has been plausibly argued that his conception of the principles of morality stands as an exceptional Medieval case of elaboration of a deontological moral theory, which was the result of seriously thinking about the old Socratic question⁴³ of whether an action of cult is good because it conforms with God's will or *vice versa*, and that Anselm argued for the latter.⁴⁴ Was Palaiologos aware of the fact that, borrowing Anselm's idea of the intrinsic rationality of God's acts and commands, he declared *de facto* an adherence to a specific theory of the principles of morality? No. Such an optimistic reading of his passage under discussion collapses in view

Jh.), *seine systematischen Grundlagen und seine historische Entwicklung*, München, 1977, p. 60.

⁴² To confine myself to just one of the illuminating studies of this topic, see J. Gauss, «Anselm von Canterbury. Zur Begegnung und Auseinandersetzung der Religionen», *Saeculum* 17, 1966, pp. 277-363.

⁴³ See Plato's *Euthyphro* 10E-11B. From the vast bibliography on this topic see, e.g., J.H. Brown, «The Logic of the *Euthyphro* 10A-11B», *Philosophical Quarterly* 14, 1964, pp. 1-14; J.C. Hall, «Plato: *Euthyphro* 10A-11A», *Philosophical Quarterly* 18, 1968, pp. 1-11; A. Anderson, «A Socratic Reasoning in the *Euthyphro*», *Review of Metaphysics* 23, 1969, pp. 461-481; S.M. Cohen, «Socrates and the Definition of Piety: *Euthyphro* 10A-11B», *Journal of Philosophy* 48, 1971, pp. 1-14; T.D. Paxson, «Plato's *Euthyphro* 10A to 11B», *Phronesis* 17, 1972, pp. 171-190.

⁴⁴ A lucid and accurate account of this is offered by J.E. Brower («Anselm on Ethics», in: B. Davies / B. Leftow (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, Cambridge U.P., 2004, pp. 222-256; see esp. pp. 230-232).

of several explicit statements that occur elsewhere in his text. Rather unfortunately for anybody reading the passage on the basis of Khoury's partial edition of Palaiologos' work (only the 7th discussion –out of 26– of the work is available in it⁴⁵), these statements occur in some of the other discussions. In the concluding part of the preceding one, that is just a few pages before the passage in question, Palaiologos makes a declaration that, according to Khoury's sharp distinction between reason-based Christian morality and revelation-based irrational Muslim morality, should be regarded as falling under the latter rubric:

Ἀνθρώπων γάρ τι δοκούντων πράττειν ἀθέμιτον καὶ τῶν ὀρθῶν λογισμῶν ἀλλότριον, εἰ μὲν θεόθεν τοῦτ' αὐτοῖς ἐστὶν ἐπιτεταγμένον, ἀριδῆλως ἀγαθόν, ἀγαθὸς δὲ καὶ ὁ πράττων, μήτε θυμῶ νικώμενος μήτε ἐπιθυμία δουλεύων, ἀλλὰ τῷ προστεταχότι Θεῷ. ... Οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν, οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκεῖθεν (sc. from God) οὐδ' ὁ,τιοῦν, ὃ γε μὴ σφόδρα καλόν, οὐδὲ Θεοῦ προστάγμασιν ὑπηρετεῖν καὶ μὴ πράττειν ὅσια πάντων ἔνεκα, κἂν δέη πᾶσαν καταστρέψαι τὴν γῆν, κἂν ἀποσφάξαι ἅπαντας καὶ ταύτη γε τὰς χεῖρας αἰμάξαι. Εἰ δὲ τὸ πρᾶγμα μὲν οὐ καλὸν καθ' ἑαυτὸ φαίνοιτο, ἡμῖν δὲ τέως ἀμφισβητήσιμον γένοιτο, πότερον θεόθεν ἔχων ὁ ποιῶν τοῦπίταγμα ἢ οἴκοθεν κινούμενος ποιεῖ, εἰ μὲν ὁ τοῦ ποιῶντος βίος θεοφιλῆς καὶ ἄμεμπτος, οὐ δεῖ κλονεῖσθαι τοὺς λογισμούς, οἵτινες τοῦτον <τοιοῦτον>⁴⁶ ἐπίσταιντο· εἰ δὲ μοχθηρὸς ἐστὶ φανερώς, τὴν ἐναντίαν πάντως περὶ αὐτοῦ πάντες ψῆφον ἐξοίσουσι. Κακὸν γὰρ δὴ πεπραγμένον, οἷς ὁ βίος ὅλος ἀνόσιος, πῶς ἂν νομισθεῖη καλὸν καὶ θεοφιλές;⁴⁷

(In the case that some people seem to do something immoral and alien to the dictates of right reasoning, if what they do has been commanded to them by God, then it is plainly good, and its doer as well, since he is paying service not to his own anger or desire [i.e. to the two irrational faculties of his soul],

⁴⁵ Of course, the Pope was not alone in having taken just a hasty glance at the passage under discussion and overlooked the rest of Palaiologos' work; in the Byzantine section of the library of the Department of Ancient Literature of the University of Cologne, where it came out that I read this work for the last time, I found the copy of Khoury's edition cut only at the pages of the passages rendered famous by the pope's lecture.

⁴⁶ Pronomen conjiciendo addidi, ut sensui sententiæ integritatem præbeam. Pronomen ob similitudinem suam pronomini præposito a scribis omissum esse et ideo decidisse potest.

⁴⁷ Ed. E. Trapp, *Manuel II. Palaiologos...* (cf. *supra*, n. 2), pp. 74,29-75,2 (the arguments ends up to 75,7 without any further clarification).

but to God, Who commanded him to do so. ... Nothing, absolutely nothing at all springs from God without being for certain nothing but good; and there is no way to act nefariously by serving God's commands, whatever the command may be – even to destroy the earth in its entirety, even to slaughter everybody on it and thus put one's hands in the midst of blood. In the case, however, that the act under examination appears, considered *per se*, not good, we must immediately scrutinize whether he who executes the [really or allegedly divine] command has really received an order from God or he does so *sua sponte*; and if there results that his life is one that pleases God and is irreproachable, we need not shake our thoughts, according to which he is indeed ordered by God to do what he does; if, on the contrary, there results that he is plainly an evil man, all will definitely vote for the contrary.⁴⁸ For how an evil deed acted by some whose lives are full of impious acts would be deemed good and pleasant to God?).

To establish this position, Palaiologos sets forth the instances of Samuel's cold-blood killing of an enemy of Israel⁴⁹ and Osee's copulation and marriage with a prostitute⁵⁰ as actions that, though intrinsically bad, turned into good because they were God-ordained and done by such eminently moral men as the prophets of the Old Testament. Let us recall that this was Muterizes'⁵¹ line of argumentation for the morality of some intrinsically bad actions of Mohammed in the 6th discussion.⁵²

⁴⁸ I.e. that he is not really authorized by God to break a generally established moral rule, but he in fact wants to break it on his own profit.

⁴⁹ I Reg. 15,32-33.

⁵⁰ Os. 1,2-8; 3,1-3. Cf. Thomas Aquinas' comment on Osee's action: «...quod homo facit ex voluntate Dei, eius præcepto obediens, non est contra rationem rectam, quamvis videatur esse contra communem ordinem rationis» (*Summa theologiae* II^a II^e, 154,2 ad 2). In Cydones' translation, available to Palaiologos, the passage reads: «...ὅπερ ἂν ὁ ἄνθρωπος κατὰ τὴν ἐντολὴν καὶ τὴν θέλησιν ποιήσει [ἀν ποιήσῃ?] τοῦ Θεοῦ, οὐκ ἔστιν ἐναντίον τῷ ὀρθῷ λόγῳ, εἰ καὶ πολλάκις δοκεῖ ἐναντίον εἶναι τῇ κοινῇ τάξει τοῦ νόμου» (cod. *Par. Gr. 1237*, f. 217^r).

⁵¹ According to M. Balivet («Le sufi et le basileus: Haci Bayram Velî et Manuel II Paléologue», *Medioevo Greco* 4, 2004, pp. 19-30, esp. pp. 29-30), the Muterizes who discussed with Palaiologos is Haci Bayram Velî (born in the region of Ankara in 1339/40 or 1352; died in Ankara in 1429).

⁵² Ed. E. Trapp, *Manuel II. Palaiologos...* (cf. *supra*, n. 2), p. 73,20-28. On the traditional character of this line in Muslim theology see e.g., G.F. Hourani, *Reason and Tradition in Islamic Ethics*, Cambridge U.P., 1985, pp. 20-21.

The reason why Palaiologos adopts this position must be examined in the context of its formulation. The passage just cited is Palaiologos' improved version of the statement of the same idea by his Muslim interlocutor, who, in order to defend the morality of Mohammed against Palaiologos' long list of every sort of awful and base acts Mohammed has been reported to have committed,⁵³ claimed that «an act should be judged as good or bad not on the basis of its nature but according to the intention of the person who commits it».⁵⁴ Palaiologos had no reason to object to this shift of the basis for judging morality; after all, the shift was profitable for him, too, since the typically immoral acts of many persons of the Old Testament "holy history" can be justified only by laying emphasis on the motive putting behind them (e.g., one's wish to obey God). As for the issue at stake, Palaiologos says that, if one focuses on Mohammed's case, one will realise that the evil deeds exceed so blatantly the good ones that nobody would pass him for a man of good intentions and thus release him from the accusation of having perpetrated grave crimes against others' lives, honour, property etc. as well as having insulted his own dignity.

In contrast, in the 7th discussion, a rationalist-objectivist ethical doctrine of how good and evil should be defined is set forth, which, as it served well Manuel's current purpose, namely, repudiating the "holy war" of the Muslims, is promptly appealed to. The fact that Manuel, in so doing, stands at odds with what he himself had admitted in the former discussion does not trouble him at all. Rather, he loves flattering himself for never missing the line of the discussion⁵⁵ and accuses his interlocutor from time to time of proving unable to do the same.⁵⁶ And,

⁵³ Ed. E. Trapp, *Manuel II. Palaiologos...* (cf. *supra*, n. 2), pp. 70,28-34; 71,15-17; 72,23-73,19.

⁵⁴ Ed. E. Trapp, *op. cit.*, p. 74,22-23 (cf. pp. 69,10-11; 73,20-28).

⁵⁵ Ed. E. Trapp, *op. cit.*, p. 75,14 et al.

⁵⁶ See, e.g., his bitter remark: «Οὐδὲ γὰρ λεληθότως πάντως εὐρίσκη ἄλλοτε ἄλλοσέ ποι φερόμενος, ὅποι ἂν ἀγάγοι τὸ ρεῦμα τοῦ τότε λόγου» («You are obviously seen to move in different directions at different times, namely to the direction the stream of our discussion happens each time to follow») (ed. E. Trapp, *Manuel II. Palaiologos...* (cf. *supra*, n. 2), p. 73,35-36; cf. pp. 74,4-8; 75,1-3). It is, therefore, difficult to share E. Voordeckers' flattering assessment: «Le ton engagé, qui anime son exposé *sans* nuire son objectivité...»

what is equally astonishing, the Muslim adversary fails to object to this policy by pointing out Manuel's obviously opportunistic way mode of discussion.

Apparently, therefore, Manuel II Palaiologos had not formed any clear idea regarding the intrinsic moral value of human acts such as coercing others to convert and, in case of refusal, killing them. After all, Palaiologos was a man of deeds (even though a cultivated one), not an intellectual, still less a theologian or a philosopher devoted to the study of the principles of morality and their application to everyday life.⁵⁷ If only because of this, his text cannot be regarded as representing 'the' Christian stand towards "holy war", still less an elaborated one, based on the "Greek" taste for "reason" and clearly differentiating itself from a non-"Greek" one (in particular, that of the Muslim religion). Before sweetly succumbing to the temptation of drawing an attractive conclusion with regard to the essence of an author's thought, one must needs dedicate oneself to at least two boring tasks; i) reading texts in their entirety and ii) detecting as many citations or allusions latently but significantly present in the author's texts as possible. In this respect, Byzantine texts, both lengthy and full of connotations unnoticed as yet as they are, represent a slippery ground for a reader impatient to grasp their quintessence;⁵⁸ such a policy unavoidably results in not paying the due attention to what has

(«Les *Entretiens avec un Perse* de l'empereur Manuel Paléologue (à propos de deux éditions récentes)», *Byzantion* 36/1, 1966, pp. 311-317, esp. p. 316).

⁵⁷ True, he can aptly be described as «by nature poetic, studious, reflective... a man of letters at heart» (J. Chrysostomides, *Manuel II Palæologus...* (cf. *supra*, n. 19), p. 12); yet these qualities fall short of making him an intellectual. Especially the analysis of his argument offered here casts doubt on H.-G. Beck's description of Palaiologos as «one of the best Byzantine theologians» (*Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinische Reich*, München, p. 748).

⁵⁸ Cf. T. Khoury's reservation: «Seule la publication de l'ouvrage en entier nous permettra de nous rendre compte dans quelle mesure... Manuel a amplifié certains arguments, remanié des parties ou des débats entiers pour avantager ses propres raisonnements. ... En attendant [une édition complète], nous ne pourrons émettre que des jugements partiels et forcément provisoires» (*Manuel II Paléologue...* (cf. *supra*, n. 2), p. 27).

been actually laid down on the paper one is looking at when reading a text.⁵⁹

Apart from this, the allegedly “rationalist” air of Christian morality is not always so clear as not to be mingled with “theistic subjectivism”. Anselm himself, who stated that «God’s will is never irrational», did so not to encourage an unconditioned rational research into God’s will but to justify exactly the opposite. In Calecas’ translation:

Ἀρκεῖν ἡμῖν δεῖ πρὸς λόγον τὴν αὐτοῦ (sc. God’s) θέλησιν, ἐπειδὴν τι ποιῆ, εἰ καὶ συνιέναι μὴ δυνάμεθα, διατί οὕτω βούλεται.⁶⁰

(«When God does something, ‘the will of God’ ought to be sufficient explanation for us, even if we do not see why it is His will».⁶¹)

After all, the “Greek” elements of Christianity, however numerous and important they may be, can in no way provide sufficient grounds for obscuring the fact that Christianity is not a philosophy, but a revelational religion.

2. A “Greek” argument of Palaiologos’ Muslim interlocutor for the irrationality of religious violence: the “Sceptical” way

2.1. “Dogmatic” vs. “Sceptical” Use of Reason

Another remark relevant to the allegedly distinctive rationality of the Christian conception of God as well as of Christian morality is in order. Using “reason” to resolve any theoretical disagreement or elaborate a *modus vivendi* in spite of unresolved disagreement

⁵⁹ Even worse, old texts appealed to for modern purposes are as a rule read through the distorting glasses of the biases to which the reader happens to be committed. And possessing a high official position makes it even less probable for somebody that he spells out any word that would really reflect the meaning of the text appealed to; such positions call more for suiting the spirit of the age than aiming at historical accuracy.

⁶⁰ *Vat. gr. 614*, f. 86^v («Sufficere nobis debet ad rationem voluntas Dei cum aliquid facit, licet non videamus cur velit»); ed. F.S. Schmitt, *Anselmi Cantuariensis archiepiscopi...* (cf. *supra*, n. 17), p. 59,10-11).

⁶¹ B. Davies / G.R. Evans, *Anselm of Canterbury...* (cf. *supra*, n. 18), p. 274.

is ambiguous. It can be meant either as aiming at proving some propositions conclusively and presenting them henceforth as beliefs to be held firmly, or as what K.R. Popper called «the unended quest»,⁶² that is modestly attempting to come closer to the truth (or moving, as far as possible, away from error) regarding this or that particular issue, without any strong commitment to this or that view. This distinction corresponds to the well-known difference between what was called in Hellenistic philosophy the “Dogmatic” and the “Sceptical” way of doing philosophy.⁶³ The Pope concluded his lecture by inviting the members of the various non-Christian religions and civilizations to participate in a universal seeking after truth by means of «reason». Which of these two uses of reason did he have in mind? I got the impression that he had the former. After all, it would be quite unexpected for a leader of an established institutional religion to exhort people to get involved in a quest for truth on the basis of *sola ratio*, as if Christian revelation had never existed at all.⁶⁴ Had he used, however, the full edition of Manuel

⁶² K.R. Popper, *The Unended Quest: An Intellectual Autobiography*, Illinois, 1982; revised edition, London, 1992 (first published as *Autobiography of Karl Popper*, Illinois, 1974).

⁶³ See a description of these two wide epistemological trends of ancient Greek philosophy by Sextus Empiricus in his *Pyrrhonian Outlines* (I, 1 and 7; ed. I. Mau post H. Mutschmann, *Sexti Empirici opera. Vol. I Πυρρωνείων ὑποτυπώσεων libros tres continens*, “Teubner”, Lipsiæ, 1958, pp. 4 and 7-8; cf. K. Janáček, *Sexti Empirici opera. Vol. IV: Indices*, “Teubner”, Lipsiæ, 1962, pp. 74-75, s.v. «δόγμα» and «δογματικός»).

⁶⁴ Actually, this is what Anselm did in the 11th century («remoto Christo»; *Cur Deus homo*, Præfatio; ed. F.S. Schmitt, *Anselmi Cantuariensis archiepiscopi...* (cf. *supra*, n. 17), p. 42,12; cf. R. Roques, *Anselme de Cantorbéry. Pourquoi Dieu s'est fait homme. Texte latin, introduction, traduction, notes et bibliographie* (“Sources chrétiennes”, 91), Paris, 1963, pp. 65-91; 174-179). But this was done in an age when Christianity was still striving for her faith to be granted a strong and officially established authority in Europe and had to overcome the intense opposition by Jewish and Muslim theological challenges and objections, which gave rise to the sophisticated apologetic response by Anselm. A millennium later, the place of institutional Christianity in the net of international and inter-religious relations allows for avoiding such a concession to the same enemy. See also note 73.

II Palaiologos' text by E. Trapp, in the next Discussion –the 8th– he would have met with an excellent allegorical description of the latter way of using “reason” reported by the anonymous interlocutor of the Christian emperor, which by nature privileges mutual understanding more than reasoning understood in the former way does:

- Λίαν ἀληθές μοι δοκεῖ τὸ παρ' ἡμῖν θρυλούμενον ἐκ τῶν Περσῶν τε καὶ Μήδων καὶ Ἀσσυρίων τὴν ἀρχὴν εἰληφός, ἅτε σοφωτέρων ἡμῶν ὄντων ἐκείνων. Τί τοῦτο; Ἐρῶ γε πάντως. Φασὶ μηδένα σαφῶς ἐπίστασθαι, εἰ ὑγιές τὸ σέβας αὐτῷ παντάπασιν ὃν τυγχάνει καὶ τοῦ τῶν ἄλλων ὑπέρεκκεται νομίζει μὲν γὰρ ἕκαστος ὡς ἄρα μόνος αὐτὸς τὸν χρυσοῦν κατέχει κίονα, Θεὸς δὲ μόνος οἶδε τὰληθές, ἄνθρωποι δὲ πάντες δόξαις ἀμφιβόλοις στηριζόμεθα.

- Καὶ τίς γε οὗτος, ἔφην, ὁ κίων; Βούλει περὶ τούτου φράζειν καθαρώτερον ἢ μέχρι τούτου στήσεις τὸν λόγον;

- Τῶν ἡμετέρων, ἔφη, δογμάτων καὶ παραδόσεων οὐδ' ὅ,τιοῦν σοι παρ-υποκρύψαι βουλήσομαι, μανθάνειν γε ἀξιοῦντι.

- Βούλομαί γε.

- Οὐκοῦν μάνθανε. Ἰστορήται παρ' ἡμῖν γεγονέναι βασιλέα διαφερόντως ἀγαθὸν καὶ σοφώτατον καὶ πάντ' ἐκεῖνα κεκτηῆσθαι, δι' ὧν ἂν γένοιτο βασιλεῖ, θελήσαντι μόνον, πάσης ἐξῆς κρατῆσαι τῆς γῆς. Καὶ τοῦτον⁶⁵ τῆς οἰκουμένης κρατήσαντα καὶ δείξαντα τοῖς ἔργοις τὸν ἄρχοντα τὴν ἀπάντων πρὸς ἀλλήλους ὁμόνοιαν μηδενὸς ἀλλάττεσθαι ἔχρην γὰρ πάντως αὐτῷ χρησαμένῳ τῇ δυνάμει καὶ τὴν ἐπιείκειαν ἐνδείξασθαι. Ὅρωντα τοίνυν σχεδὸν πάντας σχιζομένους εἰς πλεῖστα μέρη δογμάτων ἕνεκα διαφορῶν καὶ πολεμοῦντας ἀλλήλοις καὶ φθειρομένους τῇ διαστάσει καὶ τῷ πολέμῳ, τούτων αὐτὸν οὐκ ἀνέχεσθαι.

Τοιγαροῦν εἰρήνην τοῖς ἑκασταχοῦ γῆς ἀνθρώποις βουλόμενον ἐξευρηκέναι σοφόν τι δρᾶσαι ἄνδρῶνα μέγαν δείμασθαι προστεταχέναι τοῖς ἀρχιτέκτοσι σκοτεινὸν καὶ ἀφεγγῆ τὸ παράπαν παντοδαπούς τε κίονας ἔνδον ἔχοντα καὶ τινά που χρυσοῦν ἐν μέσοις αὐτοῖς· εἶτα πίστεως ἀφ' ἐκάστης ἕνα ὡς αὐτὸν ἐλθεῖν, ἅμα δὲ πάντας συναθροισθέντας εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὸν ἀνδρῶνα καὶ ζητῆσαι τὸν χρυσοῦν ἐκεῖνον κίονα καὶ ὃν ἂν ἕκαστος περιλάβοι (ὑπῆρχον δὲ ἴσοι τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῖς γε ἀνθρώποις οἱ κίονες), τοῦτον δὴ⁶⁶ διακατέχειν ἀπριξ εἰδότα ὡς τιμῶν αὐτῷ καὶ δωρεῶν τῶν μεγίστων αἴτιος ἔσται, εἰ ὁ χρυσοῦς εἴη κίων.

Καὶ δὴ τῶν διατεταγμένων πέρας λαβόντων καὶ νομίζοντος ἐκάστου τὸν πολυύμνητον ἔχειν κίονα, φώτων πληρωθῆναι τὸν οἶκον κελεύσαι τὸν βασιλέα, ὡστ' ἀπελαθῆναι τελέως τὸ σκότος, ἀπελαθῆναι δὲ σὺν αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν τῶν πολλῶν ἀπάτην, ὡς μήτ' ἐκεῖνο φωτὶ κραθῆναι

⁶⁵ Ex editionis τὸν conjeci.

⁶⁶ Ex editionis δὲ correxi.

δυνάμενον μήτε ταύτην ἀντιστήναι τοῖς φανεροῖς. Τῶν οὖν φώτων εἰσκομισθέντων ὁ μόνος ὁ χρυσοῦς πάντας ἐξέπληττε τῇ παρ' ἑαυτοῦ ἀστραπῇ. Τούτων δὲ οὕτω γεγονότων ὁ μὲν φανείς τοῦ ζητουμένου πᾶσιν ἐπιτυχῆς πομπεύων ἦν κροτούμενος, χρυσῶ στεφάνῳ τιμώμενος, οἱ δ' ἄλλοι γνόντες ἠπατημένοι ὑπανεχώρουν κατησχυμμένοι. Τοιαῦθ' ὑπὲρ εἰρήνης καὶ ὁμονοίας τῆς ἡμετέρας τῷ βασιλεῖ κατεσκευάστω τε καὶ πεπραγμάτευτο· ἡμεῖς δ' ἐσμὲν ἐν διαφοραῖς ἔτι καὶ θηριώδεσι μάχαις οὐδὲν ἦττον ἢ πρίν, εἰ δὲ βούλει γε, καὶ χείροσιν ἢ πρίν. Οὕτως ὁ σοφὸς καὶ ἀγαθὸς βασιλεύς, οἷς γε κατέπραξεν, ἔδειξε νυκτὶ τὸν βίον εἰκότα τὸν ἐνταυθοῖ καὶ ἡμᾶς μηδὲν ἐπισταμένους ἀκριβῶς περὶ τῶν θείων πραγμάτων· ἡμεῖς δὲ περὶ τούτων ἰσχυρίζομεθ' οὕτως ἐπίστασθαι, ὥσπερ καὶ περὶ τῶν οἴκοι κειμένων καὶ φαινομένων. Οὕτω πάντων κατεκράτησε τό τε μέγα φρονεῖν ἕκαστον καὶ ἀμείνω γε τῶν ἄλλων εἶναι ἑαυτὸν δοξάζειν. Καίτοι πῶς ἂν κάλλιον εἶχε διδάξαι μετριάξιν ἅπαντας καὶ μηδένας τῶν ἑτεροδόξων κατεπαίρεσθαι θαρροῦντας σφίσις αὐτοῖς καὶ τοῖς αὐτῶν λογισμοῖς ὑπὲρ τῶν δογμάτων τῆς πίστεως ἢ τουτωῖ τῷ δράματι; Ὁ σε καὶ θαυμάζειν πείθομαι, εἴτε πεπρᾶχθαί σοι φαίνεται εἴτε πεπλάσθαι ὑπό τινων. Τίς γὰρ πάντων ἐπίσταται, εἰ τῷ ὀρθῷ καὶ ἀληθεστάτῳ λόγῳ παντάπασιν ἔπεται καὶ οὐ διαμαρτάνει καθ' ὅ,τιοῦν, πιστεύων μὲν εἰς Θεὸν (ὡς δὴ καὶ πάντες ἀπλῶς), εἰς ὃν δὲ πάντως οὐχ ἑώρακεν οὐδ' ἔγνωκεν ἀκριβῶς; Πῶς γὰρ ἂν καὶ γνοίημεν σαφῶς τὸν ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν κατάληψιν; Πῶς δ' ἂν καὶ νοῦς περιγραφτὸς τὸν ἀπερίγραφτον περιλάβοι; Καλὸν ἄρα μὴ προπετεῖς τοὺς λογισμοὺς ἔχειν, ἀλλ' ἡσυχίαν ἄγειν καὶ τὴν λαμπάδα περιμένειν ἐκείνην τὴν ἄσβεστόν τε καὶ ἄπαυστον, ἣ τοῖς πάντων ὀφθαλμοῖς τὰ νῦν ἀμφιγνοούμενα δείξει τοσοῦτο κρεῖττον καὶ καθαρώτερον ἢ νῦν ἡμῖν δοξάζεται, ὅσον γε καὶ προὔχειν προσήκε κόσμου θνητοῦ τὸν ἀθάνατον.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Ed. E. Trapp, *Manuel II. Palaiologos...* (cf. *supra*, n. 2), pp. 102,42-104,10. Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 106,30-107,3 (from the 9th Dialogue): «Καὶ ὁ πρεσβύτης ἐπὶ τούτοις βαρὺ ἀναστενάξας καὶ περιδάκρυς γενόμενος ᾧδὲ πη ἔφη· -“Ἄρ' ἐστὶ τῶν ἐνδεχομένων (τὰ γὰρ αὐτὰ πάλιν ἐρῶ) ὄντινούν τῶν ἀνθρώπων βέβαιον παντάπασιν εἶναι περὶ τὴν πίστιν, καὶ ὡς ὁ νόμος αὐτῷ τῶν ἄλλων πάντων προὔχων ἐστὶ καὶ μόνος ἀληθείας κανὼν καὶ ὁδὸς καὶ γέφυρα καὶ κλίμαξ ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν καὶ πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα, οἷς γε μόνοις ἔνεστι τῶν ἐν οὐρανοῖς τυχεῖν ἀγαθῶν; Ἀκούω μὲν γὰρ σου λέγοντος τοῦτο, καὶ μέντοι καὶ πιθανοῖς αὐτῷ βεβοήθηκας λόγοις, πολλοῦ δὲ τέως δέω πεισθῆναι, ὡς ἔνι τούτ' εἰδέναι σαφῶς, πρᾶγμα μὴ βλεπόμενον μηδὲ γινωσκόμενον καθαρῶς πρὸ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης, ἣ δὴ πάντα δείξει γυμνὰ μηδενὶ προβλήματι καλυπτόμενα. Τότε εἰσόμεθα τάληθές, τὰ δὲ ταυτησὶ τῆς ἡμέρας ἅπαντα

(– Muterizes: ‘I think that a legend that originates from Persians, Medians and Assyrians (nations wiser than us) and nowadays circulates in our country, speaks the truth. What truth? I shall tell you immediately. It suggests that nobody knows clearly if his own religious convictions are absolutely sane and superior to the convictions held by others. Each person thinks that he is the only one to have grasped the ‘golden column’; as a matter of fact, however, only God knows truth, whereas all of us, human beings, rely upon doubtful opinions.’

– Palaiologos: ‘And what is this column? Would you like to speak more clearly or are you going to put a full stop here?’

– Muterizes: ‘It is not my intention to hide from you not even the slightest of our doctrines and traditions, if you express your wish to learn about them.’

– Palaiologos: ‘Definitely I wish.’

– Muterizes: ‘So keep learning. The legend runs that once upon a time a king appeared in our nation, who was unusually good and extremely wise; he possessed all those qualities by means of which a king could, should he just like to, absolutely dominate the entire earth. This king, indeed, dominated all the earth and showed by means of his deeds who the ruler was. Nothing, however, was for him as precious as universal concordance; for, after having shown his power, he wanted to show his genuine interest for the welfare of his subjects as well. So he could not stand seeing almost all being separated into innumerable sects because of holding different religious beliefs, fighting against each other and being killed because of their discord and conflicts.

Willing, therefore, to establish peace in every place on earth for the good of all people, he conceived of a wise plan. He ordered his architects to construct a huge guest-house, absolutely dark [i.e. without any entrance of natural light, such as windows] and completely lacking lights [i.e. without any source of artificial light, such as firebrands], put inside some columns, each of them made of any material whatsoever, and place somewhere amidst them a golden one. Then he ordered that one person from each religious faith come to him. When everybody arrived at his palace, they were all ordered to enter the guest-room⁶⁸ and search for the golden column; the rule was that everybody had to grasp firmly the

σκότος πρὸς τὴν ἀνέσπερον ἐκείνην παρατιθέμενα· καὶ τῶν ὑπνούντων οὐ τοσοῦτον οἱ ἐγγρηγορότερες διενηνόχασιν, ὅσον οἱ τῆς καταστάσεως ἐκείνης τετυχηκότες τῶν τὴν ἐπίκηρον σάρκα τήνδε περικειμένων”».

⁶⁸ «Ἄνδρων» (or «ἀνδρεών») was reported to be decorated with silver and golden pieces (see, e.g., Plutarch’s *Alcibiades* IV,5; ed. K. Ziegler, *Plutarchus. Vitae parallelae. Vol. I, fasc. 2*, “Teubner”, Lipsiæ, 1964, p. 230,25-26; Philostratus,

[first] column he would meet (columns were equal in number to men) and feel sure that his column would prove for him the cause of the greatest honours and gifts, if it should be the golden one.

So, everything was done according to the King's ordains; and each of the men thought that it was he who was holding the much-praised golden column. The king ordered that the building be full of light, so that the darkness ran away and, along with it, the deception of the most [of the participants in the play] (since neither darkness can coexist with light nor deception can resist obviousness). The lights were brought; and the golden column alone struck the eyes of everybody with the splendor it was radiating. After this, the person who, to the testimony of everybody's eyes, found what he was looking for, celebrated a triumph when applauded and glorified with a golden crown, whereas the others realized that they had failed and started moving away and leaving the building in pure shame.

This is what our king had once upon a time done because of his interest in peace and concordance; yet we, for our own part, are still in a state of discordance and brutal battles in no less degree than earlier, or rather more than ever. Through this act the wise and good king showed that this life is like the darkness of night and that we actually know nothing concrete of things divine. And yet we claim that we know them in the same way we claim to know the things abiding in our houses and being obvious to us; as a result, the state of things established itself such that each human being is full of pride and takes himself to be superior to those who differ from him. In fact, however, how else could the king teach [his subjects] better that everybody must be modest and that no religious group should be so confident of itself and its own way of reasoning about the doctrines of faith as to raise itself above another that happens to be attached to a different doctrine, than through this play? I may guess that this play gained your admiration, whether you think of it as having actually taken place or not. For who of the entire population on earth knows for sure that he follows without even the slightest error whatsoever the right and absolutely true reasoning and that he commits no error at all, since the case is that he (rightly, of course) believes in God, as everybody believes in some sort of God, but he has neither definitely seen nor exactly known what is God he believes in? In fact, how could we clearly know Him, Who lies beyond any comprehension, or how could a finite mind grasp and contain an infinite being? It would be therefore advisable not to make any audacious and risky estimations, but be wise and wait for the inextinguishable and everlasting torch, which will render for everybody

the things now disputed over as better and clearer than we now see them as the world of immortality is by nature superior to that of mortality’).

2.2. The affinities of Muterizes’ argument to Greek Scepticism

The central epistemological idea of this passage from Palaiologos’ text occurs in some well-known ancient Greek philosophical texts. The earliest of them is the famous fragment B34 of Xenophanes:

Καὶ τὸ μὲν οὖν σαφὲς οὐ τις ἀνὴρ ἴδεν οὐδέ τις ἔσται
εἰδὼς ἀμφὶ θεῶν τε καὶ ἄσσα λέγω περὶ πάντων·
εἰ γὰρ καὶ τὰ μάλιστα τύχοι τετελεσμένον εἰπών,
αὐτὸς ὅμως οὐκ οἶδε δόκος δ’ ἐπὶ πᾶσι τέτυκται.⁶⁹

(«And of course the clear and certain truth no man has seen nor will there be anyone who knows about the gods and what I say about the entire world. For even if, in the best case, one happened to speak just of what has been brought to pass, still he himself would not know. But opinion is allotted to all».⁷⁰)

Apart from the obvious identity of the doctrine stated in the two texts, the verbal similarities are extremely striking:

1) ἄνθρωποι (103,5); ἀνθρώποις (103,19); ἀνδρῶν (103,23) / ἀνὴρ (in latent but clear contrast with God⁷¹) (l. 1);

⁶⁹ Edd. H. Diels / W. Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker. Griechisch und Deutsch. Erster Band*, Weidmann, Dublin/Zürich, ¹⁵1974, p. 137.

⁷⁰ This is a modified version of J.H. Lesher’s translation (*Xenophanes of Colophon. Fragments. A Text and Translation with a Commentary*, University of Toronto Press, 1992, p. 39). On the various translations of the passage see some illuminating critical notes by Lesher (*op. cit.*, pp. 156-159; see also the translation of R.G. Bury in his: *Sextus Empiricus in Four Volumes with an English Translation. II: Against the Logicians*, “Loeb Classical Library”, Harvard U.P., 1961 (¹1935), p. 25). There is no reason to enter here into a discussion of how some particular points of the passage should be translated.

⁷¹ Cf. Muterizes’ statement: «Θεὸς δὲ μόνος οἶδε τὰληθές» (ed. E. Trapp, *Manuel II. Palaiologos...* (cf. *supra*, n. 2), p. 103,5). Obviously, in the Persian allegory the king personifies God, Who alone is supposed to know the truth

- 2) μηδένα (103,3); μηδένας (103,42) / οὐ τις (l. 1); οὐδέ τις (l. 1);
- 3) σαφῶς (103,3; cf. 106,39) / σαφές (l. 1);
- 4) ἐπίστασθαι (103,3; 103,39) or εἰδέναι (106,39) / ἴδεν (l. 1); εἰδέναι (ll. 2; 4);
- 5) περὶ τῶν θείων πραγμάτων (103,38) (cf. 102,40: περὶ τὸ σέβας; 103,3: τὸ σέβας) / ἀμφὶ θεῶν (l. 2);
- 6) ἐπιτυχῆς (103,32) / τύχοι τετελεσμένον (l. 3) (to attain); and
- 7) δόξαι ἀμφίβολοι (103,5-6) / δόκος (l. 4).

What is more striking is that in the most detailed analysis of Xenophanes' fragment, that by the Greek Sceptical philosopher Sextus Empiricus (ca. 200 a.D.), an allegory very close to the Persian one reported by Palaiologos as having been narrated to him by his interlocutor occurs:

“Ὡσπερ γὰρ εἰ ἐν ζοφερῷ οἰκῆματι καὶ πολλὰ ἔχοντι κειμήλια ὑποθοίμεθὰ τινὰς χρυσὸν ζητοῦντας, ὑποπεσεῖται διότι ἕκαστος μὲν τούτων λαβόμενός τινος τῶν ἐν τῷ οἰκῆματι κειμένων οἰήσεται τοῦ χρυσοῦ δεδράχθαι, οὐδεὶς δὲ αὐτῶν ἔσται πεπεισμένος ὅτι τῷ χρυσῷ περιέπεσε, κἂν μάλιστα τύχη τούτῳ περιπεπτωκῶς, ᾧδε καὶ εἰς τουτονὶ τὸν κόσμον ὥσπερ τινὰ μέγαν οἶκον παρήλθε πλῆθος φιλοσόφων ἐπὶ τὴν τῆς ἀληθείας ζήτησιν, ἧς τὸν λαβόμενον εἰκός ἐστιν ἀπιστεῖν ὅτι εὐστόχησεν.”⁷²

and meant to render it patent for the entire humankind in the light of the life to come.

⁷² Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos* VII,49-54 (ed. H. Mutschmann, *Sexti Empirici opera. Vol. II Adversus dogmaticos libros quinque (Adversus mathematicos VII-XI) continens*, “Teubner”, Lipsiæ, 1914, p. 13). A list of common words and phrases can be offered for these passages, too: 1) ἀνδρῶν σκοτεινός καὶ ἀφεγγής (103,20-21; cf. 106,5: σκότῳ βαθεῖ) / ζοφερόν οἴκημα (VII,52,1); 2) χρυσοῦς κίων (103,5; 103,21-22; 103,31) / χρυσός (VII,52,2-5 ter); 3) ὃν ἂν ἕκαστος περιλάβοι (103,24) / ἕκαστος τούτων λαβόμενος (VII,52,3); 4) νομίζοντος ἐκάστου... ἔχειν... (103,27) / ἕκαστος... οἰήσεται... δεδράχθαι (VII,52,3-4); 5) ἐπιτυχῆς (103,32) / εὐστόχησεν (VII,52,9). All these common elements, however, can be explained in terms of the fact that two roughly similar stories are expected to be told by means of similar words (cf. also the parable of the “precious pearl” of Timothy I in n. 73); and it is the content similarity that really interests here. – Incidentally, Muterizes' «ἀνδρῶν σκοτεινός καὶ ἀφεγγής» and Sextus' «ζοφερόν οἴκημα» remind us strongly of the «κατάγειος οἴκησις σπηλαιώδης» of Plato's famous cave allegory (*Republic* VII; 514A sqq.). Needless to say, the central point of this

(«For just as, if we were to suppose that certain people are searching for gold in a dark room containing many treasures, what will happen is that each of them, whenever he lays hold of some one of the treasures in the room, will imagine that he has grasped the gold, even though none of them will be convinced that that he has lighted on the gold, even though, in fact, he has lighted upon it; so also into this universe, as into a great house, there has entered a host of philosophers bent on the search for truth, and it is quite likely that the one who has laid hold of it has not the conviction that he has achieved his aim».⁷³)

allegory permeates the entire history of philosophy and a part of the history of Christian theology (see, e.g., M. Geiser, *Il paragone della caverna. Variazioni da Platone a oggi*, Napoli, 1985; W. Blum, *Höhlengleichnisse. Thema mit Variationen*, Bielefeld, 2004). Palaiologos' report, however, of Muterizes' story and Sextus' illustration of the 3rd and 4th line of Xenophanes' famous fragm. B34 are very close to each other. Is that similarity the result of a Greek *remaniement* of the story by Palaiologos, or should it be accounted for in terms of the much-debated Oriental influence on Hellenistic philosophy, especially on Scepticism? (see in main: V. Brochard, *Les sceptiques grecs. Deuxième édition*, Paris, 1923, pp. 41-45 and 50; M. Piantelli, «Possibili elementi indiani nella formazione del pensiero di Pirrone d'Elide», *Filosofia* 29, 1978, pp. 135-164; E. Flintoff, «Pyrrho and India», *Phronesis* 25, 1980, pp. 88-108; cf. *e contra*: G. Reale, «Ipotesi per una rilettura della filosofia di Pirrone di Elide», in: G. Giannantoni (ed.), *Lo scetticismo antico. Atti del convegno organizzato dal Centro di studio del pensiero antico del C.N.R. (Roma 5-8 Novembre 1980)*, Vol. I, Napoli, 1981, pp. 243-336, esp. 283-285 and 329-333; L. Groarke, *Greek Scepticism: Anti-Realist Trends in Ancient Thought*, Montreal / Kingston, 1990, pp. 81-82; 94-96; A. Bailey, *Sextus Empiricus and Pyrrhonian Scepticism*, Oxford, 2002, pp. 22-23).

⁷³ Translation (slightly modified) by R.G. Bury (*Sextus Empiricus... II...* (cf. *supra*, n. 70), p. 27). Another simile, close to that, is offered in Sextus' *Adversus Mathematicos* VIII,325 (ed. H. Mutschmann, *Sexti Empirici opera. Vol. II...* (cf. *supra*, n. 72), pp. 177-178). Strikingly enough, a similar simile ("the precious pearl") was produced by the Nestorian Patriarch of Syria Timothy I (778-823) in a discussion of his (held in Bagdad in 781/782) with the caliph (775-785) Al-Mahdi. According to the Syriac reproduction of the simile by Timothy himself, «in this world all of us are as in a dark house, who search in the middle of the night. If at night and in a dark house a precious pearl happens to fall in the midst of people, and all become aware

2.3. The affinities of Muterizes' legend with Oriental toleration

At the same time with Hellenistic philosophy, some Oriental intellectual trends close to Scepticism and a subsequent version of tolerance, appeared. It may be that Muterizes' story reflects the way Ashoka, the famous Mauryan king (ca. 268-239 b.C.) of India, ruled. In the edicts of Ashoka, a Buddhist convert fervently encouraging religious tolerance, one reads:

of its existence, every one would strive to pick up the pearl, which will not fall to the lot of all, but to the lot of one only, while one will get hold of the pearl itself, another one of a piece of glass, a third one of a stone or of a bit of earth, but everyone will be happy and proud that he is the real possessor of the pearl. When, however, night and darkness disappear, and light and day arise, then every one of those men who had believed that they had the pearl, would extend and stretch the hand towards the light, which alone can show what everyone has in hand. He who possesses the pearl will rejoice and be happy and pleased with it, while those who hand in hand pieces of glass and bits of stone only will weep and be sad, and will sigh and shed tears. In the same way we children of men are in this perishable world as in darkness. The pearl of the true faith fell in the midst of all of us, and it is undoubtedly in the hand of one of us, while all of us believe that we possess the precious object. In the world to come, however, the darkness of mortality passes, and the fog of ignorance dissolves, since it is the true and real light to which the fog of ignorance is absolutely foreign. In it the possessors of the pearl will rejoice, be happy and pleased, and the possessors of mere pieces of stone will weep, sigh, and shed tears, as we said above» (edition and translation by A. Mingana, «Timothy's Apology for Christianity», in: *Woodbrook Studies. Christian Documents in Syriac, Arabic, and Garshuni*, Vol. II, Cambridge, 1928, pp. 88-89; cf. K.-J. Kuschel, "L'ebreo, il cristiano e il musulmano s'incontrano?". "Nathan il saggio" di Lessing ("Jud, Christ und Muselmann vereinigt?". Lessings "Nathan der Weise", Düsseldorf, 2004). Traduzione di C. Danna, Brescia, 2006, pp. 212-215). J. van Ess (*Die Erkenntnislehre des Adul'addin al-Ici. Übersetzung und Kommentar des ersten Buches seiner Mawaqif*, Wiesbaden, 1966, p. 227) has noticed the affinity of this simile with the Ancient Greek Scepticism.

Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, honors both ascetics and the householders of all religions, and he honors them with gifts and honors of various kinds. But Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, does not value gifts and honors as much as he values this – that there should be growth in the essentials of all religions. Growth in essentials can be done in different ways, but all of them have as their root restraint in speech, that is, not praising one’s own religion, or condemning the religion of others without good cause. And if there is cause for criticism, it should be done in a mild way. But it is better to honor other religions for this reason. By so doing, one’s own religion benefits, and so do other religions, while doing otherwise harms one’s own religion and the religion of others. Whoever praises his own religion, due to excessive devotion, and condemns others with the thought “Let me glorify my own religion”, only harms his own religion. Therefore contact between religions is good. One should listen to and respect the doctrines professed by others. Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, desires that all should be well-learned in the good doctrines of other religions.⁷⁴

This is pretty close to Muterizes’ words:

Each person thinks that he is the only one to have grasped the ‘golden column’... We claim that we know things divine... Each human being is full of pride and takes himself to be superior to those who differ from him. ... The king taught... that everybody must be modest and that no religious group should be so confident of itself and its own way of reasoning about the doctrines of faith as to raise itself above another that happens to be attached to a different doctrine...

Further, the report reproduced by Muterizes that the king «dominated all the earth» may be just a remote reflection of the way the inhabitants of his vast empire (most parts of India; Nepal; Pakistan; Afghanistan) felt their being ruled by him; since he had united so many and great regions under his control, he looked like ruling everywhere. Besides, some of the tales of Ashoka describe him as «a king... who reigned over the whole world».⁷⁵

⁷⁴ *Rock Edicts*, XII; translation by S. Dhammika, *The Edicts of King Ashoka. An English Rendering*, Kandy (Sri Lanka), 1993, p. 8 (also available in: <http://cs.colostate.edu~malaiya/ashoka.pdf>).

⁷⁵ P.O. Skjærvø, «Asoka, Mauryan emperor of India (ca. 272-231 B.C.)», Part III («The Legend of Asoka in Khotanese»); <http://www.iranica.com/newsite/articles/v2f7/v2f7a094.html>.

Further, the legendary king's strong aversion to the separation of his subjects «into innumerable sects because of holding different religious beliefs», which resulted for them in «fighting against each other and being killed because of their discord and conflicts» and his inclination to «universal concordance» is very close to Ashoka's fostering of universal religious tolerance and understanding. Even the legendary king's two phases of ruling (conquest of people and demonstration of force *vs.* fervent interest in the peoples' well-doing and demonstration of goodness) matches with Ashoka's transition from the phase of his cruel conquest of Kalinga to his 'illuminated' way of exerting power over all his subjects.

Further, one can compare the following words from the *Rock Edict XII* (l. 8):

Πρέπει δὲ ἀλλήλους θαυμάζειν καὶ τὰ ἀλλήλων διδάγματα παραδέχεσθαι⁷⁶

with Muterizes' words:

Ὁ [sc. the legend of the golden column and its moral] σε καὶ θαυμάζειν πείθομαι,⁷⁷

which looks like a kind exhortation to Palaiologos to take, at least for a while, a positive attitude to what he is told. Muterizes himself declares that the reason why he was involved in a discussion with Manuel was not «ἔρις», i.e. a desire to defeat his interlocutor's religious convictions, but his «love of learning and hearing» the others' views («τῷ φιλομαθῆς τε καὶ φιλήκοος εἶναι»).⁷⁸ Palaiologos presents him as being excited by what was convincingly presented to him as the truth of Christianity («πολὺς μὲν ἦν θαυμάζων τὰ λεγόμενα καὶ... ἤδετο μανθάνων τὰ ληθῆ»⁷⁹).

⁷⁶ Ed. É. Benveniste, «Édits d'Asoka en traduction grecque», *Journal Asiatique* 252/2, 1964, pp. 137-157, esp. 138. A recent succinct setting of Ashoka's ideas and politics into his age is to be found in K. Armstrong's *The Great Transformation. The World in the Time of Buddha, Socrates, Confucius and Jeremiah*, London, 2007, pp. 357-363.

⁷⁷ Ed. E. Trapp, *op. cit.*, p. 104,1-2.

⁷⁸ Dialogue IX; ed. E. Trapp, *op. cit.*, p. 107,12-14.

⁷⁹ Prooemium; ed. E. Trapp, *op. cit.*, p. 5,22-23.

In addition, Muterizes' willingness to teach Palaiologos a doctrine of his own tradition, expressed in the following words:

“Τῶν ἡμετέρων”, ἔφη, “δογμάτων καὶ παραδόσεων οὐδ’ ὄτιοῦν σοι παρ-
υποκρύψαι βουλήσομαι, μανθάνειν γε ἀξιοῦντι”⁸⁰,

though apparently being a conventional expression of good manners, looks also like an application of Ashoka's exhortation that religious men should be eager to communicate their own religious doctrines with each other:

Ταῦτα δὲ ποιοῦντες [sc. τὰ ἀλλήλων διδάγματα παραδέχεσθαι] πολυμαθέστεροι ἔσονται, παραδιδόντες ἀλλήλοις ὅσα ἕκαστος αὐτῶν ἐπίσταται.⁸¹

(«Those acting in this way [i.e. not being reluctant to listen to somebody expounding a different religious doctrine] will become better educated, providing for each other as much as each knows»⁸²).

Palaiologos,⁸³ for his own part, a strong adherent to the spirit of the traditional Christian polemical writings on the *vera religio*, felt strangely when seeing his interlocutor not feeling obliged to abandon his own faith for another. Yet Muterizes, in accordance with the spirit of Ashoka's edicts as well as with the relativism suggested by the legend of the 'golden column', could pretty well declare that, although he held his own religion to be the best, he could not hold this conviction as absolutely certain and that this is the case with all religious beliefs.⁸⁴ This

⁸⁰ Ed. E. Trapp, *Manuel II. Palaiologos...* (cf. *supra*, n. 2), p. 103,9-1.

⁸¹ *Rock Edicts XII*, ll. 9-10 (ed. É. Benveniste, *ibid.* (cf. *supra*, n. 76).

⁸² Translation by D.H. Sick («When Socrates Met the Buddha: Greek and Indian Dialectic in Hellenistic Bactria and India», *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Series III)* 17/3, 2007, pp. 253-278, esp. p. 254).

⁸³ Prooemium; ed. E. Trapp, *op. cit.*, p. 5,23-26.

⁸⁴ «Τὸ ἡμέτερον τοῦτο σέβας (sc. Muslim faith) κρεῖττον μὲν πάντων εἶναι δοξάζω, βεβαίαν δὲ παντάπασιν ἔχειν τὴν δόξαν οὐ δύναμαι. Ἐγοῦμαι μέντοι καὶ ὑμᾶς ταῦτα πάσχειν ἐμοὶ...» (Dialogue IX; ed. E. Trapp, *op. cit.*, pp. 118,40-119,2). If M. Balivet's identification of Muterizes with Haci Bayram Velî («Le sufi et le basileus...»; cf. *supra*, n. 51) is to be taken for true, the Muterizes was a Sufi, and the Sufi normally «adopted a liberal and tolerant attitude toward non-Muslims» (J. Frembgen, *Derwische. Gelebter Sufismus*, Köln, 1993, p. 16), since they believed that, according to Muhammad, «many

is close to the Sceptical attitude towards religion as stated by Sextus Empiricus.⁸⁵ The Sceptical philosopher, he says, does not revolt against the religious views of his society, but adheres to them without any ideological commitment («ἀδοξάστως»). In this sense, an apparent discrepancy between Ashoka's spirit and Muterizes' "Golden column" can be

are the ways of God, as numerous as men's souls» (I. Shagrir, «The Parable of the Three Rings: a Revision of Its History», *Journal of Medieval History* 23/2, 199, pp. 163-177, esp. pp. 168-169; cf. K.-J. Kuschel, «L'ebreo, il cristiano e il musulmano»... (cf. *supra*, n. 73), pp. 138-139; 220). It is, therefore, not surprising at all that the Muterizes reproduced the legend of the "Golden Column" and fervently adopted its moral.

- ⁸⁵ *Pyrrhonian Outlines* I,23-24: «Τοῖς φαινομένοις οὖν προσέχοντες κατὰ τὴν βιωτικὴν τήρησιν ἀδοξάστως βιοῦμεν... Ἐοικε δὲ αὕτη ἡ βιωτικὴ τήρησις τετραμερῆς εἶναι... ἐν παραδόσει νόμων τε καὶ ἐθῶν... Ἐθῶν δὲ καὶ νόμων παραδόσει, καθ' ἣν τὸ μὲν εὐσεβεῖν παραλαμβάνομεν βιωτικῶς ὡς ἀγαθόν, τὸ δὲ ἀσεβεῖν ὡς φαῦλον... Ταῦτα δὲ πάντα φαμὲν ἀδοξάστως» (ed. I. Mau post H. Mutschmann, *Sexti Empirici opera. Vol. I...* (cf. *supra*, n. 63), p. 23) («Adhering, then, to appearances we live in accordance with the normal rules of life, undogmatically... And it would seem that this regulation of life is fourfold... [The fourth and last aspect of this regulation regards] ... the tradition of laws and customs... ...Tradition of customs and laws, that whereby we regard piety in the conduct of life as good, but impiety as evil... But we make all these statements undogmatically»; translation by R.G. Bury, *Sextus Empiricus in Four Volumes with an English Translation. I: Pyrrhonian Outlines* ("Loeb Classical Library"), Harvard U.P., 1993 (¹1993), p. 17); *Adversus Mathematicos* IX,49: «Τάχα γὰρ ἀσφαλέστερος παρὰ τοὺς ὡς ἑτέρως φιλοσοφοῦντας εὐρεθήσεται ὁ σκεπτικός, κατὰ μὲν τὰ πάτρια ἔθη καὶ τοὺς νόμους λέγων εἶναι θεοὺς καὶ πᾶν τὸ εἰς τὴν τούτων θρησκείαν καὶ εὐσέβειαν συντεῖνον ποιῶν, τὸ δ' ὅσον ἐπὶ τῇ φιλοσόφῳ ζητήσῃ μηδὲν προπετευόμενος» (ed. H. Mutschmann, *Sexti Empirici opera. Vol. II...* (cf. *supra*, n. 72), p. 224) («For perchance the Sceptic, as compared with philosophers of other views, will be found in a safer position, since in conformity with his ancestral customs and laws, he declares that the gods exist, and performs everything which contributes to their worship and veneration, but so far as regards philosophic investigation, declines to commit himself rashly»; translation by R.G. Bury, *Sextus Empiricus... Against the Physicists. Against the Ethicists* ("Loeb Classical Library"), Harvard U.P., 1987 (¹1936), pp. 27-29).

bridged; the religious toleration promoted by the former by means of mutual understanding can be based on Scepticism or relativism or accepting the limits of human knowledge.⁸⁶

2.3. Manuel II Palaiologos' clumsy rejection of Muterizes' argument

As one can easily guess, Manuel absolutely scorned the message of the legend of the 'golden column'. On what grounds did he do so? Oddly enough, he did so in terms of its being just a legend – although the intention of his interlocutor, who put it forward, was not to make Manuel believe in it as a historical fact (according to Manuel's very report, Muterizes was quite clear on that)⁸⁷ but just to warn him against being intellectually proud, even when reason seems to justify absolutely one's beliefs against those held by others. Manuel goes so far as to distrust the honesty of the declaration of his interlocutor's intention. He prefaces Muterizes' exposition of the Persian legend by stating that the Muslim set forth a tale («μυθολογία») in order to relativize religious doctrines *en bloc* and gain from this the profit of presenting the well-founded on reason Christianity as having no more likelihood to be true than any

⁸⁶ If M. Balivet's identification of Muterizes with Haci Bayram Velî («Le sufi et le basileus...»); cf. *supra*, n. 51) is to be taken for true, Palaiologos' interlocutor was a «docteur de la loi islamique» and «fin lettré» (*art. cit.*, pp. 27-28). Thus having access to ancient and contemporary laws was for him quite possible. Still, the evidence produced in § 2.3 is not intended to suggest that the hero of Muterizes' tale is Ashoka or to establish a direct dependence of Muterizes' words on Ashoka's Greek edict in Kandahar or even that the moral of Muterizes' tale can be fully reduced to this edict; showing the affinities between the two is enough for my argument. Besides, I. Shagrir's interesting survey of the Oriental antecedents to the famous parable of the "three rings" in G.E. Lessing's *Nathan der Weise* («The Parable of the Three Rings...») (cf. *supra*, n. 84), Timothy I's allegory (cf. *supra*, n. 73) included (*art. cit.*, pp. 167-168), does not contain any parable close to Muterizes' tale. Specialists to Oriental religions and civilizations may hopefully shed some light on its provenance.

⁸⁷ Ed. E. Trapp, *Manuel II. Palaiologos...* (cf. *supra*, n. 2), p. 104,2.

other set of religious beliefs.⁸⁸ Likewise, after Muterizes' narration, Manuel accuses⁸⁹ both the unknown creator of this «fiction» («πλάσμα») and Muterizes himself, who adhered to it, of lacking «real» – that is unshakable– faith and trying (consciously?) to achieve some consolation for this defect of theirs by making the members of other religious groups cast doubt on their convictions, too. Admittedly, it was not so kind on Manuel's part to latently but clearly depict his interlocutor in the colours the malicious tail-cut fox is depicted in a well-known Aesopean tale.⁹⁰ And, directly relevant to the present point, Manuel did not combat the “relativist” use of *ratio* from the viewpoint of the “Dogmatic” use of it, i.e. by trying to reach certainty through sound and coherent theories, but from the standpoint of religious faith, the most important ingredient of which is for him an *a priori* certainty, which admits of neither increase in view of any rational argument for its content nor decrease in the case that a rational counter-argument appears. Had Palaiologos been shaped by «Greek philosophy», as T. Khoury stated (see *supra*, n. 38), he would not have replied to Muterizes' tale in this typically unphilosophical and fideist way. At last resort, “myth” (μῦθος) has been explicitly recognized as a means of expressing philosophical truths as legitimate as “reason” (λόγος) in Plato's writings.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Ed. E. Trapp, *op. cit.*, p. 102,39-42. For sure, this does not render justice to the spirit of Muterizes' words. Since he was a Sufi (cf. *supra*, n. 84), his reproduction of the legend of the “Golden Column” was not a stratagem; it resulted from a genuinely tolerant view of the others' religions.

⁸⁹ Ed. E. Trapp, *op. cit.*, p. 105,3-28. Cf. pp. 108,25-29; 117,9-17; 117,36-37; 118,31-33.

⁹⁰ *Fabulae Graecae XVII* (ed. B.E. Perry, *Aesopica. A Series of Texts Relative to Aesop or Ascribed to Him or Closely Connected with the Literary Tradition That Bears His Name. Collected and Critically Edited, in Part Translated from Oriental Languages, with a Commentary and Historical Essay. Vol. I: Greek and Latin Texts*, The University of Illinois Press, 1952, p. 328).

⁹¹ See, e.g., the well-known passage from Plato's *Protagoras* 320C2-4: «Protagoras: Ἄλλ', ὦ Σώκράτες,... πότερον ὑμῖν... μῦθον λέγων ἐπιδείξω ἢ λόγῳ διεξεληθῶν;».

3. Conclusion

3.1. Rationality

Construing the Christiano-Islamic debate laid down by Manuel II Palaiologos as one between an intrinsically rational and an intrinsically irrational faith would be utterly misleading. The relation of reason with Christian faith as presented in this discussion falls under a Christian *Motiv* deriving from a Jew, Philo of Alexandria, and being well-known since the early 2nd century — *philosophia ancilla theologiae*. To put it more concretely (indeed, one has to, since the *ancilla* has been used by her *domina* in a lot of different services), Manuel was not an adherent to any kind or version of “reasonableness of Christianity”⁹² or “Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft” *avant la lettre*; he just took refuge in an external and opportunistic use of reason to put down the moral part of Muslim faith and establish the superiority of Christianity before the eyes of an official representative of the Muslim faith. For such a use of reason some apt terms have been long since established in scholarship, which have no philosophic connotations at all — ‘apologetics’, or, if one would like, ‘religious polemics’. This

⁹² In some respect, any theologian eager to point out some instances of synthesis of Christianity with “reason” might find a lot (and, for sure, more fine than Manuel II Palaiologos’) among the Reformant (i.e. non-Catholic) Christianity of the Modern era, such as John Locke and Jean Leclerc. Let us remind, for example, the former’s statement that «Reason must be our last judge and guide in everything», religion explicitly included (*An Essay concerning Human Understanding* IV,19,14; ed. A.C. Fraser, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding, Complete and Unabridged, by John Locke*, Vol. II, New York, 1959, pp. 438-439) or the latter’s claim that «...quidquid est Fidei, id sola Ratione niti...» (*Logica sive ars Ratiocinandi* II,10,9; in: J. Clericus, *Opera Philosophica in Quatuor Volumina Digesta. Editio tertia auctior et emendatior*; Amsterdam, 1704, p. 112). Needless to say, however, such fervent but “deviant” Christians (let us remind that Locke’s *Essay*, in its French translation, figured in the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* up to 1948; see, e.g., <http://www.cvm.qc.ca/gconti/905/BABEL/Index%20Librorum%Prohibitorum-1948.htm>) could no way find a place in the pope’s lecture (cf. Benedict XVI, «Der Vernunft...», in: *Gott und die Vernunft...* (cf. *supra*, n. 1), pp. 131-132).

genre has nothing to do with “Hellenism”; it was introduced (along with many other) into the history of literature by Christians.

3.2. Toleration

Likewise, construing (on the basis either of the above false contrast or of any thing whatsoever) this debate as one between an intrinsically tolerant and an intrinsically intolerant religion would be completely misleading. For Muterizes, let alone once during his long discussions with his host in Ankara, Palaiologos, and in striking contrast with the rigid religious patriotism of the Byzantine emperor,⁹³ left room for his

⁹³ Another possibility for promoting a positively coloured Christian-Islamic dialogue occurred to some Muslim authors who explicitly accept “reason” as the only proper arbiter for solving religious disagreements, such as al-Châsimî. I quote from the classical work of W.T. Arnold, *Preaching in Islam. A History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith. 2nd Edition, Revised and Enlarged*, London, 1913, p. 433: «Therefore bring forward all the arguments you wish and say whatever you please and speak your mind freely. Now that you are safe and free to say whatever you please, appoint some arbitrator who will impartially judge between us and lean only towards the truth and be free from the empery of passion: and that arbitrator shall be reason... Whereby I have dealt justly with you and have given you full security and am ready to accept whatever decision reason may give for me or against me. For “there is no compulsion in religion” (*Coran* 2:256; see N.J. Dawood, *The Koran with a Parallel Arabic Text. Translated with Notes*, London, 2000, p. 41) and I have only invited you to accept our faith willingly and of your own accord» (cited also by G.F. Hourani, *Reason and Tradition in Islamic Ethics*, Cambridge U.P., 1985, pp. 15-97; cf. id., «Islamic and Non-Islamic Origins of Mu’tazilite Ethical Rationalism», *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 7, 1976, pp. 59-87, esp. p. 86). Another pope, the famous “reformer” Gregory VII, in a spirit not ‘rationalist’ but ‘ecumenist’ (to use an anachronism), in an epistle of his (dating from 1076) to the Maure prince Anzour, went so far as to recognize a wide ground of common beliefs between Christians and Muslims: «Hanc denique bonitatem creator omnium Deus, sine quo nihil boni facere imo nec cogitare possumus, cordi tuo inspiravit, ipse, “qui illuminat omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum” (Joh. 1,9) in hac intentione mentem tuam illuminavit. Nam omnipotens Deus, “qui omnes homines vult

religion not to be the only and absolute truth about God and the related matters but just some result of the humble human efforts to find gold in darkness. In so doing, he obviously went more steps in the way of mutual religious understanding than his Christian interlocutor was both formed and prepared to do.⁹⁴

salvos facere” et “neminem perire” (I Tim. 2,4), nihil est, quod in nobis magis approbet, quam ut homo post dilectionem suam hominem diligat et, “quod sibi non vult fieri, alii non faciat” (Matth. 7,12). Hanc utique caritatem nos et vos specialibus nobis quam caeteris gentibus debemus, qui *unum Deum, licet diverso modo, credimus et confitemur, qui eum creatorem saeculorum et gubernatorem hujus mundi quotidie laudamus et veneramur*. Nam sicut Apostolus dicit: “Ipse est pax nostra, qui fecit utraque unum” (Eph. 2,14). Sed hanc tibi gratiam a Deo concessam plures nobilium Romanorum per nos cognoscentes bonitatem et virtutes tuas omnino admirantur et predicant. ... Scit enim Deus quia pure ad honorem Dei te diligimus, et salutem et honorem tuum in praesenti et in futura vita desideramus atque, ut ipse Deus in sinum beatitudinis sanctissimi patriarchae Abrahæ post longa hujus vitæ spatia te perducatur, corde et ore rogamus»; Gregorius VII, *Epistolæ* III,21; ed. H. Caspar, *Monumenta Germaniæ Historica. Das Register Gregors VII. I. Buch I-IV*, Berlin, 1920, p. 288,3-18; 28-32 = PL 148: 450D-452B). Benedict XVI himself appealed to this famous passage in another speech of his («Gott seinen Rechtsmässigen Platz Einräumen», November, 28, 2006; in: Benedict XVI, *Gott und die Vernunft...* (cf. *supra*, n. 1), pp. 142-147, esp. p. 146) by presenting it «als Beispiel für den brüderlichen Respekt, mit dem Christen und Muslime gemeinsam wirken können».

⁹⁴ My sincere thanks to Dr. Vasileios Syros (Helsinki) and Andrew Holiday (M.Sc.; Patras) for their remarks on the last version of my article, as well as to Dr. David Wirmer (Cologne) for our discussions on tolerance and intolerance in Islam.