

The current thesis studies the anthropology of St Gregory Palamas, and tries to prove two main points: a) man is, according to Palamas, greater than the angels, as far as the image of God is concerned. Moreover, this is due to human corporeality, to the human body; b) man has the potentiality to ‘sense’ God; in this experience the human body has a very important place. This refers to the spiritual senses, wherein the basic notion is the ‘intellectual perception’ (νοερά αἴσθησις). In trying to prove the aforementioned two points, this thesis also examines some other related topics of Palamite anthropology in its various chapters. In each chapter—and part—there is a brief introduction to set up the questions that are addressed. After the relevant analysis, the main findings are summarized in the conclusions—at the end of each chapter, and part respectively.

In the Introduction, the emergence of the question of the human person in the context of the hesychast debates is traced, as well as some key anthropological notions. These sections define the context in which the thesis moves, and help the reader better understand the subsequent chapters. In particular, Part I examines the image of God in man. After providing an overview of St Gregory’s relevant teaching, it moves on to an analysis of two major issues: a) why is man believed to bear some reflections of the Holy Trinity in himself, and b) in what sense is he regarded superior to the angels, in terms of the *imago Dei*. Then Part II explores a most interesting topic: the Palamite αἴσθησις νοερά (intellectual perception), namely man’s spiritual senses. Is man able to gain knowledge of God? How is this possible? What is the role of the divine light and of the ‘eyes of the soul’? What is the place of ‘ecstasis’ and in what sense does the body have an important role in the spiritual senses? These are some of the main research questions pursued here.

Amongst the contributions of this thesis are these three basic conclusions. First, according to Palamas, the image of God is inherent in man, both soul and body, but man’s final goal is to attain likeness to God. In this road, he passes through the νοερά αἴσθησις, either now, or in Paradise. Besides, the fact that man is made *kat’ eikona*, enables him to perceive and, even, sense God. Moreover, man is superior to the angels in terms of the image of God for some specific reasons, all based in his corporeality. However, the angels have preserved the perfection of the καθ’ ὁμοίωσιν and for this reason they have a greater dignity than us; they are much closer to the divine illumination that comes from God.

Second, intellectual perception refers both to the soul and the body. However, in Paradise the body will be absorbed by the spirit, and acquire a totally spiritual aspect. But this does not mean at all a devaluing of the body. On the contrary, in this thesis, it is clearly shown that Palamas attributes extremely great value to the human body. Finally, Palamas' most central theological position is his strong insistence on the potentiality of man's union with God, namely theosis: that is, of the transition from the image of God, to the *kath' omoiosin*, and the activation of his *voepà αἴσθησις*. And herein lies, perhaps, his most important gift to the anthropological discussions of our epoch.