

THE RELEVANCE OF THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN *THEOLOGIA* AND *OECONOMIA* FOR THE CONDEMNATIONS OF 1241/ 4. CONTINUITIES AND INTERMISSIONS

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Abstract The condemnations in the West throughout the 13th century have recently drawn the attention of exegetes. Despite this seemingly favourable situation, some censorship episodes have yet to be given due attention. For example, the literature dedicated to the condemnation of 1241/ 4 does not include more than 20 studies in the last two decades, some treating the topic marginally. I am particularly interested in the hermeneutical perspective provided by M.-D. Chenu who argues in his famous 1947 study ("Le dernier avatar de la théologie orientale en Occident au XIII-ème siècle") that Eastern authors such as Maximus the Confessor and John Damascene – at that point partially translated into Latin – adopted somewhat confusingly an obscure interpretation of "economy" (i.e., the divine life known in its relations with the created being). On the other hand, the term "theology" did not enjoy a particularly great reception at the crossroads between the 12th and the 13th centuries. In this study, I aim to assess to what extent the patristical distinction between *θεολογία* and *οικονομία* was "confusing" and "obscure" in the authors of the first Christian centuries and whether this distinction had any relevance against the backdrop of the condemnations of 1241/ 4.

Keywords *Theologia*, *oeconomia*, divine providence, the condemnation of 1241/ 4, *visio Dei*, (non-) knowledge of the divine essence.

I. In the Latin West, the 13th century is marked by significant censorships, condemnations, and excommunications. The period begins in 1210 and ends with the tension stirred by the

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condemnation of 1277.¹ What were the stakes of these prohibitions? At first sight, their purpose was to defend Christian teaching against all foreign elements from the outside, especially Greek philosophy.² In such a situation, the endeavour is natural. However, concerning the condemnations of the mid-13th century, there are no philosophical elements to prohibit, but theses extracted directly or indirectly from the texts of the Church Fathers. As for any condemnation, a written or unwritten norm must be followed to judge the allegedly suspect aspects. In this case, the norm is easy to point out: Augustinianism³. The entire Christian teaching had to undergo the Augustinian filter. Whatever did not fit was deemed condemnable.

The role of the Augustinian paradigm is tremendous for Latin-speaking Christianity, impossible to include in one study. Beyond doubt, the magisters influenced by Augustine's teachings (most of them secular) began acquiring more visibility after the Fourth Council of the Lateran (1215) when Peter the Lombard (1096-1160) won to the detriment of Joachim of Fiore (1135-1202). This aspect is essential for the Latin paradigm because the Augustinian tradition was primarily enforced through the *Four Books of Sentences* written by Peter the Lombard. For Augustine, particularly in *De Trinitate*, the essence or substance category is predicable regarding God *in the sense proper to God*. This legitimate predication about God justifies the constitution of a theological epistemology ensuring at the same time:

¹ The condemnations of the 13th century are as follows: 1210, 1215, 1231, 1241 (1244), 1247, 1254-1256, 1270 and 1277.

² In 1215, at the pope's orders, it becomes prohibited to teach Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and *Physics* in Paris. Only 40 years later, in 1255, the writings of the Stagirite were officially taught again at the Paris University. However, in 1269, the philosopher was prohibited again in Paris. In addition, the condemnations of 1210 and 1215 targeted David of Dinant and Amalric of Bena explicitly (Anonymous, *Contra Amaurianos*, ed. Paolo Lucentini (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010). The statutes of the Paris University sanctioned by the papal legate Robert of Courçon (1215) mentioned that "non legantur libri Aristotelis de *metafisica* et de *naturali philosophia*, nec *summe* de eisdem, aut de doctrina magistri David de Dinant, aut Amalrici heretici, aut Mauricii Hispani" (*Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis* (hereinafter *CUP*), H. Denifle et É. Chatelain [eds.], vol. I (Paris, Delalain, 1889; reed. Bruxelles, Culture et Civilisation, 1964), 78, n. 20). It is also worth noting the interdictions of 1231 issued by Pope Gregory IX in the bull *Parens scientiarum*.

³ André de Halleux, "Palamisme et Scolastique : Exclusivisme dogmatique ou pluriformité théologique ?," *Revue Théologique de Louvain*, 4 (1973), 413 : "La tradition apophatique grecque avait été vulgarisée dans l'Occident médiéval par des nombreuses traductions patristiques ; mais le succès même de la séduction orientale finit par provoquer la réaction des augustiniens" ; for Augustinianism in the Middle Ages, see, *inter alia*, Eric Leland Saak, *Creating Augustine : Interpreting Augustine and Augustinianism in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2012) ; Idem, "Augustine and his Late Medieval Appropriations (1200–1500)", in Karla Pollmann, Willemien Otten, *The Oxford Guide to the Historical Reception of Augustine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 39-50.

I) the direct vision of God – nothing but complete happiness: “secundum <anima> facta est *ad imaginem Dei* quod uti ratione atque intellectu *ad intellegendum et conspiciendum Deum* potest;”⁴

II) the positive speech on His essence: “et ideo sola est incommutabilis substantia vel essentia quae Deus est, cui profecto ipsum esse unde essentia nominata *est maxime ac verissime competit.*”⁵

Specialists in Early Christianity agree that the Trinity dogma was fully elaborated towards the end of the 4th century. However, it must be remembered that “the dogma of the Trinity was developed as the church’s response to a question about the identity of Jesus Christ.”⁶ I believe this Christological dimension is essential when we consider the issue of *visio Dei*, central in the condemnations of 1241/4. Briefly, in the first half of the 13th century, a conflict arose from the encounter between the *Augustinian existentialism* and the *exemplarism of Greek Patristics*.⁷ According to an exegete interested in this topic, “avec saint Augustin, l’Occident pose en principe la vocation de l’homme à voir Dieu, et c’est dans cette perspective qu’il envisagera l’« invisibilité » de Dieu; par contre, dès le IV^e siècle, en réaction contre Eunome, les Pères grecs posent en principe que Dieu est invisible, et ils prennent bien garde d’y déroger quand il leur arrive de parler de la vision face à face.”⁸

II. To a certain extent, the condemnation of 1241 (and that of 1244 subsequently⁹) should be regarded as a continuation of the one in 1225 when an error denounced within the first

⁴ Augustine, *De Trinitate*, XIV, 4. 6; see, *inter alia*, *Sermo XXXVII*: “Ipse erit portus laborum nostrorum, videre Deum et laudare Deum.”

⁵ *Ibid.*, V, 2. 3.

⁶ Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, Vol. 1: *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)* (Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 1971), 226.

⁷ “Voyons donc dans les œuvres accessibles de la période 1210-1241 comment naît et se déclare la tension entre les deux traditions, que pour faire bref, nous appellerons la tradition “latine” ou augustinienne, et la tradition “grecque” ou dionysienne” (Hyacinthe-François Dondaine, “L’objet et le ‘medium’ de la vision béatifique chez les théologiens du XIII^e siècle,” *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, 19 (1952): 74). It is worth noting that some exegetes – such as Ch. Trottmann – do not view the collision between the Augustinian and Oriental traditions as a determining factor of this dispute. On the contrary, according to him, the contradictory theological opinions were a latent factor that became active only upon the addition of two other elements: Aristotle’s reception (Christian Trottmann, *La vision béatifique. Des disputes scolastiques à sa définition par Benoît XII* (Rome: Ecole française de Rome, 1995), 117-131) and maybe the scientific progress in the field of optics (*Ibidem*, 370); concerning K.-H. Tachau, *Vision and Certitude in the Age of Ockham. Optics, Epistemology, and the Foundation of Semantics 1250-1345* (Leiden/ New York: Brill, 1988).

⁸ Dondaine, “L’objet et le ‘medium’ ...,” 62.

⁹ This event is generally known in the history of ideas as the condemnation of 1241, according to the dating of *CUP*. However, this date is doubled by another: 1244. Some manuscripts are dated 13 January 1241, while some others 5 February 1244; for this topic, see André Callebaut, “Alexandre de Halès, O.F.M.

prohibition must be especially related – through the work *Periphyseon* – to Maximus the Confessor’s thinking.¹⁰ The central matter around which the entire matter pivoted regarded the vision of God (*visio Dei*).¹¹ The circles targeted in 1225 are accused of having directly denied the possibility of this vision; they argued that, as we cannot see the light in itself, but only through the air, God cannot be seen in Himself by angels or humans; He is only visible in His creatures. The Maximian background of this accusation is apparent, even if we consider only the argument of vision through the air.¹²

Odo of Châteauroux (1190-1273)¹³ – chancellor of the Paris University – was the chairman of the commission assessing the ten “suspect” theses debated in 1241.¹⁴ Henry of

et ses confrères en face des condamnations parisiennes de 1241 et 1244,” *La France Franciscaine*, 10 (1927): 257-272; Victorin Doucet, “La date des condamnations parisiennes dites de 1241. Faut-il corriger le cartulaire de l’université?,” *Mélanges A. Pelzer*, “Recueil de travaux d’histoire et de philologie” (Louvain : Bibliothèque de l’Université, 1947), 183-193.

¹⁰ This accusation is featured in a work penned by the Dominican Martinus Polonus (1210-1279), *Chronicon (Martini Oppaviensis chronicon pontificum et imperatorum*, Ludwig Weiland [Hg.], in MGH, *Scriptores* (SS) 22, *Historici Germaniae saec. XII. 2* (Hannover: Hahn, 1872), 377-475). Some exegetes – such as B. Bucur – pinpoint that these condemnations targeted mainly the works written by Dionysius the Areopagite (Bogdan Bucur, “The Theological Reception of Dionysian Apophatism in the Christian East and West: Thomas Aquinas and Gregory Palamas,” *Downside Review*, 125 (2007): 131-146, in particular 135), while others argue that the Maximian scholia to the *Corpus Areopagitica* played a decisive role in the outbreak of the crisis culminating in 1241. This tradition of Eastern Christianity was not compatible with Augustinism, for which pleaded William of Auvergne the Paris Bishop (Antoine Lévy, *Le créé et l’incréé. Maxime le Confesseur et Thomas d’Aquin: aux sources de la querelle palamienne* (Paris: Vrin, 2006), 107-108). In any case, regardless of whether they targeted the works of Dionysius or Maximus indirectly, one thing is certain: censors condemned the teachings of the Greek Church Fathers.

¹¹ Explicitly, Eriugena turns Maximus into the great theoretician of the theophanies (*Dei apparitio*): “Maximum monachum, divinum philosophum, in expositione Sermonum Gregorii Theologi de hac theophania altissime atque subtilissime disputasse reperimus” (*Periphyseon*, Liber Primus. Curavit Eduardus Jeuneau (CCCM 161) (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), 13; see also L. Liassos, “Des théophanies créées? Anciennes interprétations de la première lettre de l’Aréopagite”, in Ysabel de Andia [éd.], *Denys l’Aréopagite et sa postérité en Orient et en Occident* (Proceedings of the international colloquium, Paris, 21-24 September 1994) (Paris: Institut d’études augustiniennes, 1997), 227-235).

¹² Maximus the Confessor, *Ambigua ad Iohannem* (trans. Scotus Eriugena, CCSG 18, 25: “aer per totum illuminatus lumine”; Eriugena reprises the same example: “sicut enim aer a sole illuminatus nihil aliud videtur esse nisi lux, non quia sui naturam perdat, sed quia lux in eo praevaleat ut id ipsum luci esse aestimetur” (*Periphyseon*, I, CCCM 161, 14); see also Dondaine, “L’objet et le ‘medium’ ...,” 60-130.

¹³ Alexis Charansonnet, *L’université, l’Église et l’État dans les 65 sermons du cardinal Eudes de Châteauroux (1190 ? - 1273)*. Doctoral theses defended on at the Lyon II University on 2 October 2001; Nicole Bériou, “La prédication de croisade de Philippe le Chancelier et d’Eudes de Châteauroux en 1226,” *La prédication en pays d’Oc (XIIe-début XVe siècle)* (Toulouse: Privat, 1997), 85-109.

¹⁴ The list of the ten propositions condemned according to CUP, 170-171, n. 128 (their reprisal and English translation in Deborah Grice, *Church, Society and University. The Paris Condemnations of 1214/ 4* (London: Routledge, 2020), 203-206).

Segusio (1200-1271) – a cardinal specialist in canon law – pointed out that Maximus the Confessor was the primary source of the heretical ideas that contaminated Latin theology from 1225 to 1241 employing Eriugena’s work.¹⁵ According to an unknown author of the twelfth century, Maximus the Confessor was considered neither more nor less than a heretic (!): “Id trahere videtur a quodam Maximo, quem puto graecum fuisse, quem et Joannes Scotus usque ad haeresim imitatus est.”¹⁶ Moreover, as Henry of Segusio (1200-1271) was assessing Eriugena’s *Periphyseon*, “issuing condemnations for each and every error,” he maintained that “a certain Maximus” (!) was the primary source of these heretical ideas, which, by means of Eriugena’s *Periphyseon*, had contaminated the Latin theology. St. Maximus was, in the opinion of the censors of 1241, and especially of the chancellor of the University of Paris, Odo of Châteauroux, a “master of error”, a “heresiarch”.¹⁷

As I already stated, the condemnation of 1241 was solemnly reiterated in 1244, threatening with excommunication those who argued, among others, for the impossibility of knowing God’s essence. O. Boulnois justly asks, “Que signifiait cette proposition condamnée deux fois?”¹⁸ The answer can be synthesised as follows: the debate concerned the issue of God’s vision in theophanies – according to Dionysius the Areopagite – i.e., *the visibility of God*. The condemnation of 1241 targets the teaching of theophanies directly, as asserted by Dionysius and reprised by Eriugena. The latter states, in his turn, that no person – human or angelical – can contemplate God in His nature.¹⁹

The collision between the two traditions can also be confirmed by Hugo of Saint Victor’s reading of Eriugena (*Expositio in Ierarchiam coelestem* I, 2). The manuscript tradition of the reception of the Dionysian works in the 9th-12th centuries constitutes the best methodological guide. The Dionysian corpus displays in its margins signs of the doctrinal disputes fought across the ages. For example, above Eriugena’s commentary to the *Celestial Hierarchy*, where he was discussing the fact that the divine essence cannot be grasped by any creature, be it rational or intelligible, a hand wrote: *Cave hic ab errore* (here beware the error!), and above the sentence “Even angels do not know what God is in Himself,” we read:

¹⁵ For further details on this matter, see Antoine Lévy, *Le créé et l’incréé...*, 119. Another exegete who studied the topic argues that “vers 1235, nous n’avons perçu aucune tension appréciable entre les deux traditions; Alexandre, Hugues de Saint-Cher et surtout la Question de Douai essaient tranquillement d’assimiler des éléments de la tradition ‘grecque’ touchant l’invisibilité de l’Ousie” (Dondaine, “L’objet et le ‘medium’ ...,” 88).

¹⁶ *Disputatio catholocarum patrum adversus dogmata Petri Abelardi*, I (PL 180, 298 A).

¹⁷ Lévy, *Le créé et l’incréé...*, 463; “Cherchant à séparer, parmi les autorités grecques, le bon grain de l’ivraie, les théologiens latins mettent au compte de *Maximus philosophus* bon nombre d’idées aberrantes en cosmologie comme en noétique. A Paris, en 1241, la Faculté de théologie entend mettre définitivement terme à la diffusion de ces vues dangereuses, qui se mêlent à présent à la *falsafa*” (Ibid., 442).

¹⁸ Olivier Boulnois, *Au-delà de l’image: une archéologie du visuel au Moyen Age (Ve-XVIe siècle)* (Paris: Seuil, 2008), 253.

¹⁹ Eriugena, *Expositiones in Ierarchiam coelestem*, CCCM 31, 17. For a discussion on these matters, see Trottmann, *La vision béatifique...*, 175-186.

iterum cave (again beware).²⁰ A long passage from Hugo of Saint Victor's commentary is inserted here, as a sort of antidote to Eriugena's interpretation (as he was reading *Expositiones in Hierarchiam Caelestem*, Hugo of Saint Victor had exclaimed "Tollant ergo phantasias suas!" – PL 175, 955 B); on the same manuscript, a medieval author who approves of Hugo's criticism (the "theophanies" are "simulacres of error"), added: "for God is seen in Himself immediately" (PL 175, 953 D-956 A).²¹

Following the condemnation of 1241, it is clear how the Augustinian way regarding the vision of God opposed the Eriugenian way (inspired by the writings of the Greek Patristics), referring to the absolute transcendence of God, invisible in Himself.²² It is definite that starting from this official condemnation of the Orientals' apophatic theology, the Latin theologians believed that God could be seen in His essence, not only through his manifestations/ works by the blessed. However, at least from Basil of Caesarea,²³ Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom, passing through Dionysius the Areopagite, Maximus the Confessor, until John Damascene, Greek Patristics stated that the created was – on principle and irremediably – unable to know the Creator's essence.²⁴ However, suppose the direct perception of the Creator's essence is forbidden to all creatures. In that case, it forces Greek patristics to circumscribe the relationship between God and man through the concepts of "theophany" and "mediation".

Thus, by condemning this thesis as heretical, Latin censors did not realise they also rejected the Greek-speaking Patristics thesis of the failure to know God's essence (God in Himself is inaccessible to all creatures, angels included) as contrary to the Christian faith.²⁵ A

²⁰ Jeanne Barbet (*Expositiones in Ierarchiam coelestem*, CCCM 31, 17), refers to Ms *BN lat. 17341*, f. 20 vb (<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9066641t/f23.item.r=17341>); see also Hyacinthe François Dondaine, *Le Corpus dionysien de l'université de Paris au XIIIe siècle* (Rome: Edizione di Storia e Letteratura, 1953), 15; Antoine Côté, *L'infinité divine dans la théologie médiévale, 1220-1255* (Paris: Vrin, 2002), 35-36; Olivier Boulnois, "Augustin et les théories de l'image au Moyen Âge," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 91/1 (2007) : 75-92, here 88.

²¹ Boulnois, "Augustin et les théories ...," 88.

²² Idem, *Au-delà de l'image...*, 254-255.

²³ Basile de Césarée, *Lettre 234 à Amphiloque d'Iconium* (PG 32, 869A), in *Lettres* t. 3, Y. Courtonne [éd.], (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1966), 42.

²⁴ Some exegetes believe that the theses condemned in 1241, against the latent backdrop of Eriugena's works, targeted mostly the translations of texts written by John Chrysostom and John Damascene, which accounted for the major references when pleading against the knowledge of the divine essence. Dondaine justly highlights it when he states that "de saint Jean Chrysostome, les scolastiques semblent ignorer les Homélie *De incomprehensibili*" (Dondaine, "L'objet et le 'medium' ...," 73). For the crisis generated by the condemnations of 1241 and 1244, see Trottmann, *La vision béatifique...*, especially chapter II: "Du *quid* au *quomodo* de la vision béatifique: autour des condamnations de 1241-1244."

²⁵ According to the Eastern theology, man can never get an insight into the essence of God, but he participates, insofar as he can (*quantum potest*), to deification (θεώσις). Contrary to this tradition, the Latin theologians led by the then Paris Bishop William of Auvergne stated "Deus in sua essentia vel substantia videbitur ab angelis et omnibus sanctis et videtur ab animabus glorificatis" (*CUP*, I, 128, 170).

historical statement seems to confirm the validity of this thesis: in 1255, the Faculty of Arts in Paris introduced Aristotle's works in its syllabus. The teachers – most of them Dominicans – were already familiar with the Stagirite's writings, but they had not integrated them into their systems. The condemnation of 1241 targeted several theses argued, among others, by the Dominicans Stephen of Venizy († 1248),²⁶ Hugo of Saint-Cher (cca 1200-1263),²⁷ and Gueric of Saint-Quentin († 1245).²⁸ However, this condemnation was not particularly related to Aristotelianism but to the tradition of Eastern Christianity. For instance, the *visio Dei, Filioque*, or evil issue cannot derive from ancient philosophy.

Regarding the sources of this condemnation, Luca Bianchi admits it is far from simple, “quanto alle fonti degli articoli condannati, il discorso è ancor più complesso.”²⁹ However, there is no doubt regarding the thesis “quod divina essentia in se nec ab homine nec ab angelo videbitur,”³⁰ which seems to have an Eriugenian tradition, tributary to the Eastern teachings, though (notably Dionysian and Maximian),³¹ condemned in 1241 by William of Auvergne (the first in the line of theses condemned).³² Eriugena's texts are obvious regarding *visio Dei*. Decisively influenced by Dionysius but primarily by Maximus, he argues that we can only see/

²⁶ For the Dominican Stephen of Venizy, see Palémon Glorieux, *Répertoire des maîtres en théologie de Paris au XIIIe siècle*, vol. I (Paris: Vrin, 1933), 33-34; see also William J. Courtenay, “Dominicans and Suspect Opinion in the Thirteenth Century: the Cases of Stephen of Venizy, Peter of Tarentaise, and the Articles of 1270 and 1271,” *Vivarium*, 32/ 2 (1994): 186-195.

²⁷ Louis-Jacques Bataillon, Gilbert Dahan et Pierre-Marie Gy [dir.], *Hugues de Saint-Cher († 1263), bibliste et théologien* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004).

²⁸ Gueric of Saint-Quentin, *Quaestiones de Quolibet*, A Critical Edition by † Walter H. Principe, with Editorial Revision and a Preface by Jonathan Black. Introduction by Jean-Pierre Torrell, “Studies and Texts” 143, Toronto, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2002. Only “Frater Stephanus” – identified by exegetes with Stephen of Venizy – is featured in the manuscripts guarding the proceedings of this condemnation. The two other mentioned here can be categorised as “asertores et defensores”.

²⁹ Luca Bianchi, “Gli articoli censurati nel 1241/1244 e la loro influenza da Bonaventura a Gerson,” in Franco Morenzoni et Jean-Yves Tilliette [éds.], *Autour de Guillaume d’Auvergne (m. 1249)*, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 158.

³⁰ “That the divine essence in itself will be seen by neither man nor angel” – trans. D. Grice, 42, 203.

³¹ M.-D. Chenu called the episode “le dernier avatar de la théologie orientale.” The same author points out that “il n’est pas besoin d’une longue attention pour rattacher à l’érigénisme et au courant dionysien la thèse de l’inconnaissance de Dieu” (Marie-Dominique Chenu, “Le dernier avatar de la théologie orientale en Occident au XIII-ème siècle,” in *Mélanges Auguste Pelzer: études d’histoire littéraire et doctrinale de la scolastique médiévale offertes à Monseigneur Auguste Pelzer, scriptor de la bibliothèque Vaticane, à l’occasion de son soixante-dixième anniversaire* (Louvain: Éditions de l’Institut supérieur de philosophie, 1947), 158-181, here 171).

³² See on this topic Christian Trottmann, “Connaissance *in via*, vision *in patria*. La théologie scolastique naissante en quête d’un statut noétique: une autocritique médiévale de la raison dans son usage le plus pur,” in Jan A. Aertsen, Andreas Speer [eds.], *Was ist Philosophie im Mittelalter?, Qu’est-ce que la philosophie au Moyen Age?* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), 961-968; Dondaine, “L’objet et le ‘medium’ ...,” 60-130.

know God through his manifestations/ theophanies: “per intellectum in intellectibus, per rationem in rationibus, non per seipsam divina essentia apparebit.”³³

Regarding the condemnation of 1241/ 4, it is also worth highlighting the distinction between *essence* (οὐσία) and *energies* (ἐνέργειαι) accepted by Eastern Christians. The entire Greek-speaking patristics points out the impossibility of knowing God’s essence; we can only know His manifestations, works/energies. A keen-eyed exegete can see that it is anachronistic to discuss the essence–energies distinction for the condemnations of 1241, given that the dispute between Gregory Palamas and Barlaam of Seminara took place much later (1335-1341). Another difference, however, i.e., between *theology* (θεολογία) and *economy* (οἰκονομία) that circulated since the first centuries of Christianity, should have been familiar to all Christians, not only the commission of censors. This distinction helps us understand the relationship between what we can and cannot know from deification. To summarise, θεολογία refers to the intra-Trinity relationships as they are featured in the *Credo*; for the rest, they remain a mystery. Οἰκονομία refers to what we can know, namely the divine works (energies) pervading the entire creation.³⁴ Interestingly, M.-D. Chenu associates the distinction between *essence* and *energies* to the issue of *economy*: “À l’essence inconnaissable répond la voie négative, aux énergies révélatrices répond la théologie positive, Maxime et Damascène, maintenant traduits, acclimatent confusément cette obscure interprétation d’une ‘économie’ de la vie divine connue dans ses rapports avec l’être créé, procession manifestatrice inséparable de l’essence, tout en étant ineffablement distincte.”³⁵ The statement made by the Catholic theologian is an additional reason to argue in this study that nothing was confusing or obscure concerning the venerable Eastern tradition and the place of the economy within this paradigm.

Furthermore, whereas the Latins rejected time and time again the distinction between *essence* and *energies* explicitly or implicitly, no episode of the Christian literature rejected the

³³ Eriugena, *Periphyseon* I, ed. É. Jeuneau (CCCM 161) (Brepols: Turnhout, 1996), 15.

³⁴ “The creed of Nicea had followed its statement of the “divinity” (God in himself) with one about “economy” (God in his plan of salvation) in the confession that “for the sake of us men and for the purpose of our salvation” Christ had come down, had become incarnate, had suffered and risen again on the third day, had ascended to the heavens, and would come again to judge the living and the dead” (Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, Vol. 1, 228-229).

³⁵ M.-D. Chenu, “Le dernier avatar de la théologie orientale en Occident au XIII-ème siècle,” 171-172. In another work, the Catholic theologian has another perspective on this matter: “la philosophie des essences et des *vérités éternelles* ne fournit pas les médiations conceptuelles appropriées à la perception de la foi dans l’économie chrétienne [...]. Disons, en reprenant les catégories des Docteurs Orientaux, que n’a pas su conserver le juridisme statique des Latins, que la *théologie*, science de Dieu, n’est concevable que par et dans une économie, c’est-à-dire par une venue de Dieu dans le temps, préparée dans le peuple élu, consommée dans le Christ, réalisé désormais dans l’Église [...]. L’histoire du salut entre dans la construction de la théologie. Elle entre dans le tissu même de la vérité, substance de la foi dans le croyant: *vérité de salut*” (M.-D. Chenu, *La parole de Dieu*, II: *L’Évangile dans le temps* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1964), 667).

difference between *theology* and *economy* explicitly. However, it was forgotten and failed when it was most needed.

III. For the reasons invoked above, my goal is to analyse the patristic distinction between *theology* and *economy*, neglected or not familiar to the Paris magisters of the 13th century. To a certain extent, this distinction overlaps the one mentioned above between *essence* and *energies*. Both differences refer to the same reality: to what degree God is known/ visible and to what extent He remains unknowable/unseen. In other words, the *ad intra* Trinity and the *ad extra* Trinity. Here, the role of Christology is fundamental. The relationship between *theology* and *economy* is always found in Christology because Jesus Christ “is the image of the invisible God” (*Colossians* 1, 15), namely “the visible part of the Father”, or, according to Irenaeus of Lyons, “invisible etenim Filii Pater, visibile autem Patris Filius.”³⁶

Some exegetes – such as Isabel Iribarren – correctly indicate that after Chenu’s study of 1947, “deux thèmes seront privilégiés par l’historiographie: l’un, la controverse autour de la vision béatifique et ses sources; l’autre, l’influence de la patristique grecque et du néoplatonisme arabe sur les théologiens dominicains du XIII^e siècle, notamment Thomas d’Aquin.”³⁷ Indeed, exegetes should consider many factors. What I am interested in here is the preliminary data determining this situation. I tend to believe that the lack of knowledge/function of the distinction between *theology* and *economy* made such a condemnation possible. Only from a methodological perspective, we separate the history of the conceptual couple analysed here.

Within Christianity, the tradition of the term οἰκονομία³⁸ goes back to the Scriptures, where it is featured several time, especially in St Paul’s epistles: *First Timothy* 1, 3-4; *Colossians* 1, 24-25; *First Corinthians* 9, 17; *Ephesians* 1, 9-10; 3, 9. However, like the term θεολογία,³⁹ οἰκονομία is the creation of the Greek spirit pinpointing that “l’économe (*oikonomos*) est celui qui administre sa maison, ses propres biens ou même la propriété d’un autre. Les anciens Grecs, particulièrement sensibles au beau, à l’ordre et l’harmonie, considéraient une belle

³⁶ Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haeresis*, IV, 6, 6; ed. Harvey, vol. II, 160-161 (SC 100, Tome I, 450-451).

³⁷ Isabel Iribarren, “L’Empyrée et ses habitants au Moyen Âge,” *Revue des sciences religieuses*, 91/ 2 (2017): 184.

³⁸ The most comprehensive work about the history and meaning of the term “economy” is penned by Gerhard Richter, *Oikonomia: Der Gebrauch des Wortes Oikonomia im Neuen Testament, bei den Kirchenvätern und in der theologischen Literatur bis ins 20. Jahrhundert* (Berlin/ Boston: Walter De Gruyter, 2005).

³⁹ Plato, *The Republic* II, 379 a: “οἱ τύποι περί θεολογίας τίνες ἀν εἶεν”. Furthermore, the Greek philosopher explains the new word, “θεολογία: οἶος τυγχάνει ὁ θεός ὡν ἀεὶ δῆπον ἀποδοτέον”. Some exegetes believe that the term θεολογία may precede Plato (Victor Goldschmidt, *Questionnes platoniciennes* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1970), 148-149; see also Werner Jaeger, *À la naissance de la théologie. Essai sur les présocratiques* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1966).

ordonnance comme quasiment incluse dans l'économie."⁴⁰ Xenophon confers this meaning to the term in his work titled *Οἰκονομικός*.⁴¹

Οἰκονομία entered the Christian lexicon with a meaning associated with the term κόσμος – as God created it out of nothing, He had to manage the creation like the Greeks their households. What I want to delve into here is the distinction between *theology* and *economy*, which Origen seems to have used for the first time in *Homilies on Jeremiah* (18, 6), “Hence whenever the Scriptures speak theologically about God concerning himself and do not involve his plan (οἰκονομία) for human matters.”⁴² Other exegetes point out that the distinction is significantly more apparent in the works of Eusebius of Caesarea. The metamorphosis of this distinction can be related to the conceptual couple of *dynamis* and *oikonomia*, featured even in *Against Noetus*, 5, 7⁴³ by Hippolytus of Rome, subsequently turning into the *status-gradus* distinction made by Tertullian (*Against Praxeas* 19, 8).⁴⁴ Finally, in the texts signed by Eusebius, it expressed the distinction between *theology* and *economy*.⁴⁵ This author seems to have coined the difference between *theologia* and *oikonomia*, “mon exposé commencera par l'économie et la théologie du Christ.”⁴⁶

It is certain that the cosmic economy – still influenced by the meaning of economy in pre-Christian authors – turns into a given point within an economy of salvation, within a plan of deification to save people, all possible only through Jesus Christ. It means that “l'économie trouvait en Lui son centre et son apogée. Depuis le troisième siècle, le terme est employé sans addition pour désigner l'incarnation salvifique comme telle. Origène, qui parle des deux économies, l'une avant et l'autre après l'incarnation, applique explicitement le terme d'économie à la seule incarnation; “Surtout après l'économie le Verbe de Dieu est devenu un avec l'âme et le corps de Jésus” (Origen, *Contra Celsus*, II, 9; SC 136, p. 206).”⁴⁷

The economy issue may have also been generated by how some 4th-century authors viewed the Holy Spirit – the third person of the Trinity. For example, Marcellus of Ancyra (cca. 285-374) “did not distinguish between the eternal or ‘immanent’ proceeding of the Spirit and the temporal or ‘economic’ sending of the Spirit – a distinction that was to figure in the

⁴⁰ Kamiel Duchatelez, “La notion d'économie et ses richesses théologiques,” *Nouvelle revue théologique*, 92 (1970): 269.

⁴¹ Xenophon, *Oeconomicus: A Social and Historical Commentary*, ed. and trans. Sarah B. Pomeroy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

⁴² Translated by John Clark Smith, col. *The Fathers of the Church*, 97, 1998, 198 (SC 238, 198-199).

⁴³ Hippolytus of Rome, *Contra Noetum*. Text introduced, edited and translated by Robert Butterworth, SJ. (London: Heythrop Monographs 2, 1977).

⁴⁴ Eric F. Osborn, *Tertullian: First Theologian of the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 121.

⁴⁵ For details, see Giorgio Agamben, *The kingdom and the glory: for a rheological genealogy of economy and government*, translated by Lorenzo Chiesa (with Matteo Mandarini), (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 37-38.

⁴⁶ Eusèbe de Césarée, *Histoire ecclésiastique*, I (Livres I-IV), translated by Gustave Bardy (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf (SC 31), 1986), 5.

⁴⁷ Kamiel Duchatelez, “La notion d'économie et ses richesses théologiques,” 282.

medieval debates between East and West.”⁴⁸ Hence, notably in the first centuries of Christianity, in the fight against heretics, *economy* played a crucial role, i.e., “the concept of *oikonomia* is the strategic operator that, before the elaboration of an appropriate philosophical vocabulary—which will take place only in the course of the fourth and fifth centuries—allows a temporary reconciliation of the Trinity with the divine unity.”⁴⁹

In Latin, this term is used by non-Christian authors (mostly rhetors) like Cicero, for whom “dispositio est rerum inventarum in ordinem distribution,”⁵⁰ and Quintilian in *Institutio oratoria*, 3, 3, 9: “oeconomiae, quae graece appellata ex cura rerum domesticarum et hic per abusionem posita nomine latino caret.”⁵¹ Tertullian uses the term *economy* (already translated into Latin as *dispensatio*) with a clear theological meaning, “unicum quidem deum credimus, sub hac tamen dispensatione, quam οἰκονομία dicimus.”⁵² Although the term *dispensatio* is already featured in works by Christian authors like Tertullian or Hilary of Poitiers, Augustine’s works must have conveyed this term to medieval authors, but discretely, and it ultimately disappeared in the Latin West.

To have a better grasp of the reception of the terms *theology* and *economy* in the West, I believe it is essential to analyse the works written by two central characters of the 12th century: Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) and William of Saint-Thierry (cca. 1085-1148). It will also help us get a deeper insight into the context of the condemnations recorded in the subsequent century.

Whereas the Greek-speaking Christian literature specialists agree that Justin Martyr coined the term *theology*,⁵³ most exegetes interested in the medieval period reckon that Peter Abelard (1079-1142) coined the term *theologia* in the Latin West.⁵⁴ Furthermore, an exact date is provided: 1121, when the *Theologia Summi Boni* was written. Upon studying the matter more profoundly, it has proven to be more nuanced, which was reason enough to conduct

⁴⁸ Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, Vol. 1, 212.

⁴⁹ Agamben, *The kingdom and the glory...*, 36.

⁵⁰ Cicero, *De inventione* I, 7. 9; trans. H.M. Hubbell, (Loeb Classical Library 386), (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), 18-19.

⁵¹ Quintilian, *The Orator’s Education, Volume II: Books 3-5*. Edited and translated by Donald A. Russell (Loeb Classical Library 125) (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 27.

⁵² Tertullian, *Against Praxeas* 2. 1-4; CCL 2, 1160-1161. Some exegetes believe that in Tertullian we are dealing with a Stoic influence in the case of *economy* (Marian Hillar, *From Logos to Trinity. The Evolution of Religious Beliefs from Pythagoras to Tertullian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 215-220).

⁵³ *Justin’s Hortatory Address to the Greeks*, III, translated by the Rev. M. Dods, in Philip Schaff, *Ante-Nicene Fathers 1: The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2001), 450; see also Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, trans. Thomas Halton and Thomas Halls (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 168.

⁵⁴ J. Rivière, “Théologie,” *Revue des sciences religieuses*, 16 (1936): 47-57; see J. Jolivet, *La théologie d’Abélard* (Paris : Les Éditions du Cerf, 1997); see also O. Boulnois, “Le besoin de métaphysique,” in J.-L. Solère et Z. Kaluza [éds.], *La Servante et la consolatrice. La philosophie dans ses rapports avec la théologie au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Vrin, 2002), 113.

further investigations. In my opinion, long before Abelard used it, the term *theologia* had been present in the West in the translations from Greek. Scotus Eriugena (cca. 810-877) provides an example in this respect, whose texts feature the word *theologia*.⁵⁵ On the other hand, Abelard's *Theologia* of the 12th century is indeed the first work with this title, so original that his adversary Bernard of Clairvaux mockingly called it *Stultilogia* ("Stupidology").⁵⁶

Hence, Abelard's contemporaries could not miss the originality of this concept. For instance, one of his closest friends, Heloise, talked about his "the glorious book of your Theology"⁵⁷ at a certain point. Bernard repeatedly referenced Abelard as "our theologian",⁵⁸ which was by no means a compliment coming from him. The term "theologia" is a mysterious term (and shocking, no doubt, for the Western medieval community) not explained in his first theology, *Theologia Summi Boni*.

Facing such a harsh reaction from his friend Bernard concerning the term *theologia*, it is easy to understand William of Saint-Thierry's reticence in using this term. Still, he uses the word *dispensatio*⁵⁹ in his writings.⁶⁰ Clearly, William of Saint-Thierry follows here, too, a

⁵⁵ Jean Scot, *Homélie sur le prologue de Jean*, Introduction, critical text, translation, and notes by Édouard Jeuneau (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, (SC 151), 1969), 202-203, 238-239, 242-243, 268-269, 272-273, 274-275.

⁵⁶ Bernard of Clairvaux wrote a letter to Innocent II, in fact a veritable treatise against the main errors committed by Abelard (Bernard of Clairvaux, *Epistolae* 190, ed. Jean Leclercq, in *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, ed. J. Leclercq, C. H. Talbot, and H. M. Rochais, 8 vols., Rome, 1957-77) 8, 24). The abbot of Clairvaux ascribes to Abelard the paternity of a definition of faith as an "opinion". It seems clear that in this instance Bernard gets the inspiration directly from William of Saint-Thierry – the first chapter of *Disputatio adversus Petrum Abelardum*. He refers to the same biblical and patristical texts (II *Tim.* I, 12; Augustin, *De Trinitate*, XIII) (Bernard, *Contra quedam capitula errorum Abelardi epistola CXC seu tractatus ad Innocentium Pontificem II*, in PL 182, 1053-1072); see M.T. Clanchy, *Abelard, A Medieval life* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 264; see also Alison Beach and Isabelle Cochelin, *The Cambridge History of Medieval Monasticism in the Latin West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 697: "When Peter Abelard (d. 1142) first used *Theologia* as the title of a monograph explaining why God could be described as a Trinity of persons, Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153) was shocked by his use of the term, mockingly referring to it as his *Stultilogia* ("Stupidology")."

⁵⁷ *Abelard and Heloise: The Letters and Other Writings*, trans. with an introduction and notes by William Levitan (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company 2007), 50.

⁵⁸ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Epistolae* 19; see also *For and Against Abelard - The invective of Bernard of Clairvaux and Berengar of Poitiers* (Boydell Medieval Texts, 2), Edited and Translated by R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2020), XIV.

⁵⁹ The source is most likely Augustine who had already been using the tradition of equating the Greek οἰκονομία with the term *dispensationis* (see, *inter alia*, *De vera religione* 7, 13; 34, 128).

⁶⁰ See *De natura et dignitate amoris* 37 (116, l. 16; 41, 122, l.1); *Expositio super epistolam ad Romanos* I, 31 and 33; II, 4 and 21; III, 32 and 80; V, 16; VI, 62; VII, 81; *De contemplando Deo*, 3, 1.13; *Meditativae orationes* VI, 16, 1.3; X, 2, 1.4; 3, 1.5; *Expositio super Cantica Cantorum* 18, SC 92; 28, SC 108; 80, SC 196; 152, SC 320; 159, SC 334; *Speculum Fidei* 28, l. 6; 83, l.3; 94, l.5; *Aenigma fidei* 15, 104; cf. "Notes complémentaires," in Guillaume de Saint-Thierry, *Exposé sur l'Épître aux Romains*, tome I (livres I-III), SC 544, texte latin (CCM 86/A) de Paul Verdeyen, trad. Yves-Anselme Baudelet (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2011), 371.

tradition that precedes him – on the one hand, Augustinian, on the other hand, consistent with the translations and florilegia in Greek-speaking patristics. As I highlighted above, the principle of the *economy* played a tremendous role in Christian Antiquity, especially in the East. Among the numerous Greek authors who included the difference between θεολογία and οἰκονομία in their works, at least two may have influenced William: first of all, Origen, one of the first Christian writers discussing this distinction and focusing on economy.⁶¹ The other Greek-speaking author is Maximus the Confessor, who even wrote a book called *Capita theologica et oeconomica* (CPG 7694). Several times in other texts (i.e., *Ambiguum* 60), he approaches the relationship between θεολογία and οἰκονομία. In *Capita de caritate* I, 96, he states explicitly, “Οὐκ ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας αὐτοῦ τὸν Θεὸν γινώσκομεν” (ed. Aldo Ceresa-Gastaldo, 86) – “We do not know God from His being” – (trans. P. Sherwood). Moreover, Maximus in *Orationis dominicae exposition* provides a very curious definition of theology, “In fact, the Word of God made flesh teaches theology in that in himself he reveals the Father and the Holy Spirit.”⁶² This statement shows the indissoluble relationship between *theology* and *economy* because the thesis references the term *economy* implicitly, which focuses on the incarnation of the Word, “nothing other than the spreading out of the Father’s image in its historic manifestation.”⁶³ An informed exegete of the Maximian texts clearly shows that there is nothing “confusing” and “obscure” in the matter of economy because this principle is fundamental: “Thus for Maximus the history of salvation, the “economy”, is never a revelation distanced from the Trinitarian life of the Godhead. It represents the divine Trinitarian life in the destiny of creation, and this not only on account of the Fall, but for the perfection of creation through Man, a man who is always the corresponding Thou, the “iconic” partner, of God.”⁶⁴

Beyond the possible Greek sources familiar to William of Saint-Thierry, it is interesting to note that *theology* and *economy* – so common in the Greek-speaking theological writings – were not featured in the texts of many Latin authors. The abbot of Saint-Thierry is a relatively isolated example in Western space. As the term *theology* was widely accepted in the 13th century by classic scholastics – with Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) playing a significant role – “le terme si riche d’“économie du salut” va disparaître de l’usage vital de l’Église, au moins occidentale.”⁶⁵

⁶¹ See, for example, *Contra Celsum* II, 9 (SC 132, 304); II, 76 (SC 132, 468); IV, 9 (SC 136, 206); IV, 9 (SC 136, 206); IV, 69 (SC 136, 355-357). The influence of the Alexandrine is especially evident in the *Expositio super Cantica Cantorum* and *Expositio super Epistolam ad Romanos*.

⁶² Maximus the Confessor, *Expositio orationes dominicae* (PG 90, 876 C); ed. P. van Deun (CCSG 23), 1991, 31. 87-98: “Θεολογίαν μὲν γὰρ διδάσκει σαρκούμενος ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγος, ὡς ἐν ἑαυτῷ δεικνύς τὸν Πατέρα καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον” (trans. J.N. Madden, 1982, 633).

⁶³ Marie-José Mondzain, *Image, Icon, Economy. The Byzantine Origins of the Contemporary Imaginary*, trans. R. Franses (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 21.

⁶⁴ Lars Thunberg, *Man and the Cosmos: The Vision of St. Maximus the Confessor* (New York: Saint Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1985), 40.

⁶⁵ Duchatelez, “La notion d’économie et ses richesses théologiques,” 283-284.

Irrespective of whether the term *theology* is featured in the title or text of writings from the 9th-12th centuries, the significant aspect is the reticent usage and even rejection of this word in the 12th century. The attitude dwells even later: Thomas Aquinas, for instance, uses the term *theology* somewhat cautiously, mostly in his first writings. However, the Dominican will try to argue that *theology* should be seen as a *science* (*scientia theologia*). The stance Thomas Aquinas took concerning theology, opposed to that of Bernard of Clairvaux, must rely on an element with which the Cistercian was unfamiliar. Only introducing the *Aristotelian Corpus* in the West could justify this metamorphosis.

Despite the ancient history of the term *theology* – briefly described above – O. Boulnois believes that *theology* is a mere "invention médiévale, le fruit de la rencontre entre la rationalité grecque et la révélation biblique."⁶⁶ Hence, the French exegete's statement removes from the field of theology an entire paradigm of Christianity – the Eastern one – that never neglected *theology*. However, returning to the Western area, it is true that after Abelard, the term *theology* is increasingly featured in the texts written by scholastic authors. Albert the Great, among others, uses it frequently. It suffices to read *Summa theologiae*⁶⁷ for it to become apparent.⁶⁸ Thomas Aquinas, his disciple, does not hesitate to include it, though not as frequently. Whereas the term *theologia* is only featured thrice in *Summa theologiae*, Prima pars, q. 1, compared to 80 occurrences of the phrase *sacra doctrina*; *theologia* is mentioned 132 times in the works penned by Saint Thomas in any period, just like *theologus* (also 132 times), though not all these occurrences are used in the strict sense of "theological science", different from *theologia*, which is also the first philosophy.⁶⁹

Although the term theology is not as ordinary in the Dominican's works, some exegetes argue that Saint Thomas "employs the word *oconomia*, or *yconomia*, but this word appears mostly in his commentaries on Aristotle, and it means the government of household."⁷⁰ Consequently, at least initially, Aquinas does not ascribe a theological, patristical connotation to this term. Later, "in the *Summa Theologiae*, following St. John Damascene, St. Thomas identifies the *theologia* with the Godhead of the divine persons, and the *dispensatio* with the mystery of the incarnation: "*Et in theologia*, idest in deitate personarum, *et in dispensatione*, idest in mysterio incarnationis" (Saint Thomas, *STh* III, q. 2, a. 6, ad 1)."⁷¹

This concise history focusing on periods before the condemnations of 1241/ 4 and immediately following this event shows that the members of the censors' commission –

⁶⁶ Olivier Boulnois [dir.], *Philosophie et théologie au Moyen Age*, Anthologie, volume II (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2009), 10.

⁶⁷ Albert the Great, *Summa theologiae* tr. 1: *De theologia in quantum est scientia*, éd. Cologne, t. 34/ 1, 5-23.

⁶⁸ É.-H. Wéber, "La relation de la philosophie et la théologie selon Albert le Grand," *Archives de philosophie*, 43 (1980): 559-588.

⁶⁹ Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Recherches thomasiennes. Études revues et augmentées* (Paris: J. Vrin, 2000), 138.

⁷⁰ Gilles Emery, "Theologia and Dispensatio: The Centrality of the Divine Missions in St. Thomas's Trinitarian Theology," *The Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review*, 74/ 4 (2010): 515-561, here 517.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 518.

regardless of their philosophical and theological training – failed to account for this distinction, at least when they condemned the first and the third theses.

IV. According to Luca Bianchi, these interdictions and censorships of the 13th century can be categorised into three classes by the targeted items, i.e., books, ideas, and persons.⁷² The condemnation of 1241 seemingly targeted various ideas/ theses and certain persons discretely. Interestingly, out of the 20 manuscripts preserved of the condemned theses, only two refer to the Dominican Stephen of Venizy and his disciples, among whom only Johannes Pagus (*errores Pagi*) is noted⁷³ – the last probably carried on this teaching even after 1241. It is also relevant that the censors' commission included Franciscans: Alexander of Hales and Eudes Rigaud. Furthermore, Pope Gregory IX accused William of Auvergne – the Paris bishop between 1228 and 1249 shortly after his election in this capacity – of lack of action when the great strike at the Paris University occurred (1229), solved two years later by the bull *Parens scientiarum* (1231). This situation made him highly cautious concerning everything that happened under his watch, especially in the young university.⁷⁴ The condemnation of 1241 – solemnly reprised in 1244 – can be recognised as a consequence of the events that occurred in his early days as a bishop. The censors reacted similarly to anything contrary to the paradigm recently instilled by the Lateran Council: they judged the Jews, Eastern Christians, and heretics of all types alike. All people who “travaillaient la Chrétienté” were suspect, particularly “les ferments de la pensée orientale continuèrent à travailler les esprits.”⁷⁵ Though the categories targeted by the commission of censors were highly diverse, the only criterion for judgments and condemnations was the Augustinian teaching.

“If there is any way by which we can see by our understanding what we believe, what will that way be?”⁷⁶ Faced with such a question derived from a normative paradigm, even for the Western 13th century, some exegetes used the patristical distinction between *theology* and *economy*, “The difference between theology and economy is the difference between believing without seeing and believing while seeing. To talk about the Trinity would only be possible using the economy of speech.”⁷⁷ The censors within the Paris University of the mid-13th century disagreed with this perspective. Though they rejected such as theses “quod divina

⁷² Bianchi, “Censure et liberté intellectuelle dans l’Université...,” 49.

⁷³ Augustus Pelzer, *Codices Vaticani Latini, Tomus II, Pars Prior* (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1931), 13.

⁷⁴ In parallel with the condemnations of 1241/ 4, the Paris bishop also burnt the Talmud (*cf.* G. Dahan et É. Nicolas [sous la direction de], *Le Brûlement du Talmud à Paris, 1242-1244* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1999); see also D. Grice, *Church, Society and University...*, 178: “While the process coincided with the Talmud’s condemnation, there is no real read-across of issues between the two, with the Talmud mainly offending on Christology, a subject which is striking by its absence from the 1241/4 condemnation.”

⁷⁵ Chenu, “Le dernier avatar de la théologie orientale en Occident au XIII-ème siècle,” 179.

⁷⁶ Augustin, *De Trinitate* XV, VI, 9 (*On the Trinity*, Books 8-15, trans. Stephen McKenna (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 176).

⁷⁷ Mondzain, *Image, Icon, Economy...*, 24.

essentia in se nec ab homine nec ab angelo videbitur,” no Christian can doubt that Jesus Christ is God and Human at the same time; whoever looks at Him – Christ – sees the Father: “The one who looks at me is seeing the one who sent me” (*John* 12, 45). The biblical and patristical arguments in this respect are overwhelming.

Furthermore, in the old texts, Christ was called οἰκονόμος.⁷⁸ However, only Christ can mediate between the Father’s absolute transcendence and the immanence of the creation; only He can be the mediator between the theological and the economic dimension, “it is in opposition to the rupture that separates us from the transcendence of divinity in theology that the economy will establish the conditions of possibility of a discourse concerning God and a certain kind of knowledge of the creator by humankind.”⁷⁹ Consequently, I cannot understand why a fundamental element – Christology – was not included in the approach of the persons who tried to defend it against the trespasses and heresies of the period in the name of the Christian faith.

Deborah Grice correctly points out this absence when she argues that “if the main concerns revolved around the infiltration of heretical or Jewish views into Catholic doctrine, an obvious omission is Christology.”⁸⁰ Hence, through the condemnations of 1241/ 4, Greek theology was not compromised in its filiations, according to an informed exegete of the issue,⁸¹ but in its very core. Furthermore, the stakes were much more profound and targeted the very foundation of Christianity: Christology. Careful as they were to identify the various infiltrations they wished to eliminate, their excessive drive made them miss the essential.

Faced with the paradigm extracted from the Old Testament, where face-to-face vision is not always impossible, “the economy’s role will consist in finding a way to introduce the figure and history into the theological thought.”⁸² The distinction between *theology* and *economy* was essential to solve the iconoclastic crisis. In this respect, Theodore the Studite argued that whoever refused Christ’s representation actually refused Christ’s economy. Although this episode (resolved at the Second Council of Nicaea, 787) was misunderstood at the beginning in the West due to the faulty translation, in the 13th century, they still preserved the consequences of this fact that occurred in the late 8th century (*Libri Carolini* was coordinated by Theodulf of Orléans between 790 and 793).

⁷⁸ The idea dates back to Origen: “Dieu, de même, administre (οἰκονομεῖ) l’ensemble des siècles comme s’ils ne formaient pour ainsi dire que quelques années. Il opère en chacun d’eux tout ce qu’exige ce qui de soi est raisonnable pour l’ensemble et que Dieu est le seul, puisqu’il possède la vérité, à très clairement saisir et accomplir” (*Contre Celse*, IV, 69 ; trans. M. Borret, SC 136 (1968), 355-357); See also Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against Heresies*, IV, 20, 7 (SC 100, Tome I, 646-647: λόγος οἰκονόμος – *Verbum Dispensator*); see also *De Trinitate*, Liber Tertius, IV (attributed to Didymus of Alexandria), in PG 39, 836.

⁷⁹ Mondzain, *Image, Icon, Economy...*, 23-24.

⁸⁰ Grice, *Church, Society and University...*, 132.

⁸¹ As M.-D. Chenu claims, “Le dernier avatar de la théologie orientale en Occident au XIII-ème siècle,” 177: “dès 1210 sans doute, avec Amaury de Bène, puis en 1225, avec Scot Érigène, qui certes avait de quoi la compromettre, la théologie grecque est frappée dans ses filiations, plus ou moins légitimes.”

⁸² Mondzain, *Image, Icon, Economy...*, 23.

Another consequence of neglecting the distinction between theology and economy is directly related to the third proposition condemned: “*Tertius, quod Spiritus Sanctus, prout est nexus vel amor, non procedit a Filio, sed tantum a Patre*” (“*Third, that the Holy Spirit, as a bond or love, does not proceed from the Son, but only from the Father*” – trans. D. Grice, 43, 204). From this perspective, J. Pelikan’s commentary is highly relevant, “the most far-reaching of these distinctions was that between “economy” and “theology” in the doctrine of the Trinity. It was a part of Western as well as of Eastern trinitarianism, but it was in the East that it was more fully developed. Maintaining that Latin as a theological language was incapable of the precision necessary for such distinctions, some Eastern theologians laid the blame for the *Filioque* on the absence of a proper distinction in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit between his economic “being sent” and his theological “proceeding”.⁸³ More than the other theses condemned in 1241/ 4, the first, third, and seventh propositions had been debated since the Carolingian era when they tried to form a West-specific doctrinal identity as a counterpart to the teachings of Eastern Christians.

Many contemporary exegetes took bizarre stances concerning the principle of economy, contrary to a venerable tradition. From this standpoint, I mention only Gilbert Dagron⁸⁴ and Marie-Joseph Le Guillou.⁸⁵ In addition, even some of the exegetes who translated or commented on the ancient writings showed excessive caution and gaucherie in their interpretation of the word economy. For instance, Robert Girod – who translated Origen’s book *Commentaire sur l’Évangile selon Matthieu* (SC 162, 144-145) – puts the term economy in quotation marks; Benoit Pruche states – which is not correct – that the term economy was coined by Athanasios and Gregory Nazianzen (Basile de Césarée, *Sur le Saint-Esprit*, SC 17 bis, 13). Anne-Marie Malingrey (Jean Chrysostome, *Sur le sacerdoce*, SC 272, 100-101) does not even translate the Greek οἰκονομία by “economy”; she prefers “prévoyance”; and the list goes on.

Beyond the metaphysical and theological stakes, one cannot separate the social movements of the early 13th century from the act of condemning the ten theses of 1241/ 4, but this is a different research topic. The excessive caution of the Paris magisters supported by Pope Gregory IX led to the condemnation of theses that represented a powerful trend of the patristical tradition. The people in charge of preserving and conveying this tradition voluntarily sickled it.

⁸³ Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, Vol. 2: *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600-1700)*, (Chicago/ London: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), 193.

⁸⁴ Gilbert Dagron, “La règle et l’exception. Analyse de la notion d’économie,” in Dieter Simon (éd.), *Religiöse Devianz. Untersuchungen zu sozialen, rechtlichen und theologischen Reaktionen auf religiöse Abweichungen im westlichen und östlichen Mittelalter* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1990), 1-18

⁸⁵ Marie-Joseph Le Guillou, “Réflexions sur la théologie trinitaire à propos de quelques livres anciens et récents,” *Istina*, 17 (1972): 457-464, here 457.