DIRE DIEU

Principes méthodologiques
de l'écriture sur Dieu en patristique

Actes du colloque de Tours, 17-18 avril 2015
Textes édités par Bernard Pouderon
et Anna Usacheva

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VALERY PETROFF

CORPUS AREOPAGITICUM AS A PROJECT
OF INTERTEXTUALITY

The author is not a reliable interpreter of his work,
he often is less sure of what he had written than any of his attentive readers.
He, as his reader, has to approach to his book from the outside...
There is no point to ask about the work the person who had finished it all...
So let them [pages] be interpreted by the person who is to judge them, – their reader.
Pavel Florensky, *Roads and Crossroads* (1922)[1].

Das nenne ich den Mangel an Philologie:
einen Text als Text ablesen können,
ohne eine Interpretation dazwischen zu mengen...
Friedrich Nietzche, *Nachgelassene Fragmente* (1888).

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1. Cf. H.-G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*. 2nd, rev. ed. Transl. revised by Joel Weins-
heimer and Donald G. Marshall (London, New York: Continuum, 1989), 191-192: 191
« Schleiermacher asserts that the aim is to understand a writer better than he understood
himself... Since Schleiermacher others, including August Boeckh, Steinthal, and Dilthey,
have repeated his formula in the same sense: "The philologist understands the speaker and
poet better than he understands himself and better than his contemporaries understood
him, for he brings clearly into consciousness what was actually, but only unconsciously,
present in the other"... The artist who creates something is not the appointed interpreter
of it. As an interpreter he has no automatic authority over the person who is simply
receiving his work. »

INTERTEXTUALITY OF THE CORPUS AREOPAGITICUM
AS THE METHOD CHOSEN BY THE AUTHOR

This essay deals with intertextual nature of the *Corpus Areopagiticum* (CA) – the work composed between the 5th and 6th centuries AD in an attempt to combine philosophy of Neoplatonism and Christian theology. These writings were apparently written by some Greek-speaking Syrian, who received a Christian education, but acquired a thorough Neoplatonic training in Athens, and perhaps also in the Alexandrian school in the second half of the 5th century.

I will not address issues of the *CA*'s authorship and *skopos*, focusing on the analysis of the techniques used by the author to construct the text, exploring the intertextual[2] strategy of the corpus.

While creating a text, a writer inevitably brings into it the semantic content of other texts (or contexts) belonging to the field of his attention. Moreover, in some cases (and this applies to the *CA* in full measure) the author initially and deliberately makes the text open to more than one interpretation, and thereby can program the reader to prefer one interpretation to another.

Needless to say, the positions of the author and the reader are fundamentally different in the space of the discourse, their contextual landscapes vary. The fact that the author and the reader always perceive the text against different contexts that shape horizons of their expectations[3], is the foundation of hermeneutic freedom.

The influence of the contexts can be diverse and sophisticated. In many cases, intertextuality involves recontextualization, i.e. transfer and

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2. The term « intertextuality » was introduced by Julia Kristeva: « Une découverte que Bakhtine est le premier à introduire dans la théorie littéraire : tout texte se construit comme mosaïque de citation, tout texte est absorption et transformation d'un autre texte. À la place de la notion d'intersubjectivité s'installe celle d'intertextualité », see J. Kristeva, Σημειωτικὴ. *Recherches pour une sémanalyse*, Paris, 1969), p. 84-85 ; Eng. transl. J. Kristeva, *The Kristeva Reader*, Oxford, 1986, p. 37.

3. Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations. An Introduction to Phenomenology*. Transl. by Dorion Cairns (The Hague, Boston, London: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), p. 44 : « Every subjective process has a "horizon", which changes with the alteration of the nexus of consciousness to which the process belongs and with the alteration of the process itself from phase to phase... For example, there belongs to every external perception its reference from the "genuinely perceived" sides of the object of perception to the sides "also meant" not yet perceived, but only anticipated and... are "coming" now perceptually... Furthermore, the perception has horizons made up of other possibilities of perception, as perceptions that we could have, if we actively directed the course of perception otherwise: if, for example, we turned our eyes that way instead of this. »

transformation of meaning from one discourse to another. Recontextualization may be explicit when one text quotes another directly, or implicit, when some textual invariant is reformulated within different texts.

The text, regardless of the will of its author, is often open to multiple interpretations. But what is important, it can initially be designed to presuppose certain set of interpretations. That type of writings, which not only allows different rendering, but suggest various interpretations on the part of the reader, Umberto Eco called « open texts », stating that they « the role of its addressee (the reader, in the case of verbal texts) has... been envisaged at the moment of its generation *qua* text »[4]. In this kind of texts, « a cooperation from the part of the reader was part of the generative strategy employed by the author »[5]. Thus, by making a text built in a certain way, the author creates his « ideal reader » (as James Joyce would called him), or, as called by U. Eco, a « Model Reader », « whose intellectual profile is determined only by the sort of interpretive operations he is supposed to perform »[6]. Remarkably, Eco rejects Paul Valéry's opinion that *any* possible interpretation is allowed[7]. The task of expositor (a philosopher, a historian, a philologist) is to reconstruct the *relevant* contexts, namely the contexts closest to the semantic core of the original act of writing and to present them to the intelligent reader,

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4. Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader. Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (Bloomington : Indiana University Press, 1979), p. 3: « The very existence of texts that can not only be freely interpreted but also cooperatively generated by the addressee (the "original" text constituting a flexible *type* of which many *tokens* can be legitimately realized) posits the problem of a rather peculiar strategy of communication based upon a flexible system of signification. » According to Eco, when his thoughts became available in French « as the first chapter of *L'œuvre ouverte* (Paris : Seuil, 1966), in a structuralistically oriented milieu, the idea of taking into account the role of the addressee looked like a disturbing intrusion, disquietingly jeopardizing the notion of a semiotic texture to be analysed in itself and for the sake of itself. »

5. *Ibid.* p. 4: « This semantic affinity does not lie in the text as an explicit linear linguistic manifestation ; it is the result of a rather complex operation of textual inference based upon an intertextual competence. If this is the kind of semantic association that the poet wanted to arouse, to forecast and to activate such a cooperation from the part of the reader was part of the generative strategy employed by the author. »

6. Eco, p. 11.

7. *Ibid.* p. 24: « A text, in itself potentially infinite, can generate only those interpretations it can foresee (it is not true that, as Valéry claims, "*il n'y a pas de vrai sens d'un texte*" ; we have seen that even the more "open" among experimental texts direct their own free interpretation and preestablish the movement of their Model Reader). » Cf. Paul Valéry, *Au sujet du « Cimetière marin »* (1933) : « ... il n'y a pas de vrai sens d'un texte. Pas d'autorité de l'auteur. Quoi qu'il ait *voulu dire*, il a écrit ce qu'il a écrit. Une fois publié, un texte est comme un appareil dont chacun se peut servir à sa guise et selon ses moyens : il n'est pas sûr que le constructeur en use mieux qu'un autre. »

proving their competence and legitimacy. If we are interested in the Areopagite, and not the rhetoric of self-expression, we should not follow J.-L. Marion who declares the right to propose, in fact, any kind of interpretation[8]. Indeed, already Plato showed in *Cratylus* that the word exists not only θέσει but also φύσει. As M. Merleau-Ponty puts it: an author endows certain text with particular meaning in the way that the word becomes the external existence of the sense, the presence of that thought, its token and its body[9].

The study of hermeneutical practices and their role in identifying the most appropriate modes of interpretation and reading of the philosophical texts shows that such approaches and practices of post-structuralism, as methods of intertextuality can be fruitfully employed in historical and philosophical studies to analyze philosophical and scientific texts of Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages.

With regard to the *CA* in particular, the awareness of its intertextual nature allows to dramatically change the interpretative paradigm towards a multidimensional interpretational model and overcome the deadlock of monologic approach, with which researchers belonging to opposing fields (that of patristics or history of philosophy) cannot come to agreement for more than a century. In fact, now we have extensive research literature, the creators of which, as a rule, belong to opposing camps. Some exclusively see in the *CA* its adherence to Christian tradition, while others argue that this is a text basically created within the Neoplatonic tradition, and seemingly Christian in its outer appearance. (Only a relatively small number of authors tend to believe that the author intended to achieve a synthesis of both traditions, but did not succeed in this.)

This paper argues that the *CA* presents a striking example of intertextual approach of its author, who deliberately constructed a text referring at once to two different traditions and formed so as to allow various interpretations, changing depending on what other texts and traditions

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8. Cf. Jean-Luc Marion, *L'Idole et la distance. Cinq études* (Grasset, 1977). Ouverture : « Enfin, nous ne pensons pas devoir entrer dans un faux débat, qui demanderait si les auteurs invoqués avaient bien les "intentions" que l'interprète leur aurait prêtées : les penseurs n'ont pas d'intentions, ou, quand ils en ont, elles se tiennent rarement à la hauteur de leurs pensées ; l'histoire de la philosophie le montre assez. Le seul critère d'une interprétation, c'est sa fécondité. »

9. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Paris : Gallimard, 1945), p. 209-212 : « La parole et la pensée... sont enveloppées l'une dans l'autre, le sens est pris dans la parole et la parole est l'existence extérieure du sens... Il faut que... le mot et la parole cessent d'être une manière de désigner l'objet ou la pensée, pour devenir la présence de cette pensée dans le monde sensible, et non pas son vêtement, mais son emblème ou son corps. »

(in this case, ancient Platonism or Christian theology) are taken by its reader as relevant and interpretative context. The strategy of duality is carried out at all levels: doctrinal, lexical, meta-textual.

At doctrinal level the author formulates theoretical propositions in such a way that his teaching becomes, albeit by a bit of a stretch, acceptable to both traditions. His meta-textual technique is evident in the practice of introducing into the narrative various authoritative (historical and fictional) characters from both traditions, with whom he is supposed to have had personal connections. The same duality is achieved by lexical means, when peculiar Christian vocabulary or Neoplatonic terminology is openly used, or lexical cliché are borrowed. And, of course, the simplest intertextual techniques are citations, references and allusions, which are so abundantly presented in the *CA*[10].

Two-directional references of the CA at the meta-textual level. Already in application to the persons whom the Areopagite calls his teachers, these are the contexts and not the text itself, which do most of the work. Although the author passes in silence the central episode of his biography, namely the event of his conversion after hearing Apostle Paul's speech at the Areopagus (Acts 17:15-34), the powerful background of Christian tradition does not allow the reader to forget that this was St Paul who brought the Areopagite from pagan philosophy to Christianity and thus was the author's immediate teacher and instructor[11].

On the other hand, in the *Divine Names*, the author presents himself as a disciple and friend of some Hierotheus, « inspired by God and divine hymn-maker », the follower of Apostle Paul. He calls him « real Hierotheus »[12], emphasizing by this that « Hierotheus »[13] is rather a nickname. According to the Areopagite, Hierotheus wrote some « Theological Elements » (Θεολογικαὶ στοιχειώσεις), composed in the form of « condensed

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10. The discussion of the technique that the Areopagite uses in paraphrasing, isolating, reorganizing or incorporating texts of Proclus and Origen, see in : I. Perczel, « Pseudo-Dionysius and the "Platonic Theology": A Preliminary Study », *Proclus et la Théologie platonicienne. Actes du Colloque International de Louvain (13-16 mai 1998)* (Leuven ; Paris, 2000), p. 491-530; Idem, « God as Monad and Henad : Dionysius the Areopagite and the "Peri Archon" », *Origeniana Octava : Origen and the Alexandrian Tradition* (Leuven, 2003), p. 1193-1209.

11. The influence of Pauline background in the *CA* is so strong that it was even saggested that the whole corpus should be read through the prism of Paul's speech on the Areopagus, see : Ch.M. Stang, « Dionysius, Paul and the Significance of the Pseudonym », *Modern Theology* 24/4, 2008, p. 541-555.

12. Cf. Areop. *DN* 3, 3, 684CD : τῷ ὄντως Ἱεροθέῳ.

13. Ἱεροθέος – (Gr.) « priest of God ».

definitions » (συνοπτικοὺς ὅρους)[14]. The closest match to this description in the whole corpus of Greek literature is Proclus' *Theological Elements* (Στοιχείωσις θεολογική), written exactly in the form of brief and condensed theses. Vocabulary, the context of reasoning, imagery and oppositions used by the Areopagite are close to those of Proclus[15]. And in fact, the content of the « Divine Names » is a Christian equivalent to systematic discussion of the divine attributes from the first book of Proclus' *Platonic theology*[16]. In other words, the treatise explaining the « doctrine of Hierotheus », follows the example by Proclus, and not by someone else. Thus, already at the meta-textual level « teacher/student », the duality is manifested; the Areopagite has two teachers: Apostle Paul, who first taught him Christian dogma, and his guide or instructor (καθηγεμών) Hierotheus/Proclus.

A combination of lexical and meta-textual techniques is presented in the formulas by which the Areopagite addresses fictional or historical personages of his writings. This method consists in reproducing well-known addressing formulas from the texts authoritative for both traditions. For instance, some treatises of the *CA* are dedicated to a certain « Timothy », the disciple and companion of the author. Timothy is supposed[17] to be

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14. Areop. *DN* 3, 2, 681AC (139, 13-141, 4).

15. In particular, the Areopagite uses rare adjective συνοπτικός (lit. « seen together »), which before the Areopagite occurs mostly in Proclus, meaning sometimes « comprehensive », sometimes – « condensed », « concise ». Cf. Proclus, *In Tim.* I, 148, 27-30: « For its synoptic character (τὸ συνοπτικόν) is the image of intellective indivisibility (ἴνδαλμα τῆς νοερᾶς ἀμερείας), while that which goes forth into multiplicity (τὸ εἰς πλῆθος) is an image of the generative power, which multiplies, draws forth, and subdivides the forms through otherness » ; Idem, *In Parmenidem* 695, 30-38 : « When the first hypothesis has been read, Socrates summarizes (συναιρεῖ) the entire argument, showing Zeno the comprehensiveness of his mind (τὸ συνοπτικὸν τῆς ἑαυτοῦ διανοίας), his acuteness and capacity for clarifying obscure statements, and in general his fitness for uplifting (τὸ πρὸς ἀναγωγὴν ἐπιτήδειον), that is, his ability to bring together (συναιρεῖν) a plurality of ideas, to grasp the truth firmly, and to expound (τὸ ἀναπλοῦν) the hidden meaning of the divine doctrines. » Proclus twice associates τὸ συνοπτικόν with the « doctrine of Parmenides » (ἡ τοῦ Παρμενίδου διδασκαλία), see Idem, *Theologia Platonica* 3, 83, 3-8 : « First of all, let's look at the teaching of "Parmenides" (τὴν τοῦ Παρμενίδου διδασκαλίαν) concerning intelligible gods... We have to bring this into one contemplation, based on reality and concise (πραγματειώδη καὶ συνοπτικήν... συνάγειν εἰς ἓν θεωρίαν) » ; Idem, *In Parmenidem* 1018, 9-11 : « The teaching of Parmenides is easily managed by those who have developed the habit of condensed and perfect contemplation (ἡ τοῦ Παρμενίδου διδασκαλία τοῖς μὲν συνοπτικοῖς καὶ τελείοις ἤδη κατὰ τὴν ἕξιν εὐμήχανός ἐστι). »

16. This was pointed out by H.D. Saffrey and L.G. Westerink in the Preface to their edition of *Platonic Theology*, see Proclus, *Théologie Platonicienne*. Livre I. Texte établi et traduit par H.D. Saffrey et L.G. Westerink. Paris, 1968, p. cxci-cxcii.

17. Cf. Areop. *Ep* IX, 1, 1104B.

a historical person, the apprentice of Apostle Paul spoken of in the Gospels. In the *CA*, he is presented either as an initiate, to whom the author dedicates treatises and communicates secret knowledge, or as a neophyte eager to learn the doctrine of hierarchies.

The established tradition of reading the *CD* silently assumes that whenever no other person is explicitly mentioned, the addressee of the author's writings is Timothy[18]. By what means and for what purposes this tradition was built, we are not going to discuss now. Whatever it was, « the Areopagite » sometimes refers to the « Timothy », literally repeating the words, which Apostle Paul directed at « his » Timothy. For instance, insisting on disciple's keeping in secret the hidden doctrine from the profane, the Areopagite, in the final paragraph of the first chapter of the *Divine Names*, uses the words of Apostle Paul from the final paragraph of the First Epistle to Timothy (1 Tim 6:20):

> – The Areopagite: « and you, dearest *Timothy, should keep watch of this* ».[19]
> – Apostol Paul: « *O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust,* avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called ».[20]

In contrast, the *Hierarchies* never calls the recipient by name, preferring such generic definition as « child » or « youth »[21]. This gives the author freedom to address his disciple with the quotation from Plato's *Phaedrus*, in which Socrates speaks to a « fair youth ».

Remarkably, each time the chosen context (be it from the Gospels or from Plato) is absolutely appropriate, being defined by a specific topic.

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18. It can be shown that such a reading of the *CA* corresponds to a later stage of its reception and eliminates the differences between originally heterogeneous texts subsequently united in one corpus.

19. Areop. *DN* 1, 8 (121, 14, 597C) : Σοὶ μὲν οὖν ταῦτα **φυλάξαι** χρεών, ὦ καλὲ **Τιμόθεε**.

20. 1 Tim 6:20: **Ὦ Τιμόθεε**, τὴν παραθήκην **φύλαξον** ἐκτρεπόμενος τὰς βεβήλους κενοφωνίας καὶ ἀντιθέσεις τῆς ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως. Concerning this parallel see: H. Koch, *Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita in seinen Beziehungen zum Neuplatonismus und Mysterienwesen. Eine litterarhistorische Untersuchung* (Mainz, 1900), S. 117sq. ; Pseudo-Dionysius. *The Complete Works* (New York, 1987), p. 58. n. 9 ; *Corpus Dionysiacum*. Vol. I. Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita. De divinis nominibus (Berlin ; New York, 1990), S. 121 ; M. Nasta, « Quatre états de la textualité dans l'histoire du *Corpus dionysien* », *Denys l'Aréopagite et sa postérité en orient et en occident* (Paris, 1997), p. 38.

21. Areop. *CH* II, 5, 145BC (16, 9) : Σὺ δέ, ὦ παῖ, ... ἄκουε (« So, you, fair youth, ... listen ») ; *EH* I, 1, 369A-372A (63, 4) : παίδων ἱερῶν ἱερώτατε (« most sacred of sacred youths ») ; *EH* III, 3, 1, 428A (81, 15) : ὦ παῖ καλέ (« oh, fair youth ») ; *EH* VII b, 11, 568D-569A (131, 30) ὦ παῖ (« oh, fair youth »).

Thus, combining lexical and meta-textual means, the author skillfully constructs recognizable references, referring the reader to both traditions simultaneously.

It seems that even in this two-directional approach the Areopagite's mimetic efforts become manifest, since early Christian authors too willingly pointed to parallels between pagan and Christian wisdom. Thus, in relation to necessity of esotericism Clement of Alexandria wrote:

> « Rightly then, *Plato*, in the *Epistles*, treating of God, says: "... The greatest safeguard is not to write... for it is utterly impossible that what is written will not vanish. " *Akin to this* is what the holy *Apostle Paul* says, preserving the prophetic and truly ancient secret from which the teachings that were good were derived by the Greeks: "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them who are perfect (τελείοις)... the wisdom of God hidden in a mystery" (1 Cor 2:6-7). »[22]

The principal difference, however, lies in the fact that Clement openly points to parallels between Plato and Paul, while allusions of the Areopagite are secret indicators, distinguishable only to himself and those who are able to identify the « codes » embedded in the text and the intertextual game that he invites the reader to join.

Two-directional references at the doctrinal level can be illustrated, without going into specific analysis of particular theories, by pointing out, for example, that the author picks up numerous analogies from the realm of the intelligible and sensible being even for the Neo-Platonic triad πρόοδος, μονή, and ἐπιστροφή (« procession », « rest », and « return »); besides he finds apparently similar lexical parallel in Apostle Paul: ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ δι᾽ αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα, « for of him, and through him, and to him, are all things » (Rom 11:36)[23].

Quite naturally, the topic of unknowable/unknown God, so important to the apophatic theology of the *CA*, goes back to St Paul too. It corresponds to Acts 17:23: ὁ οὖν ἀγνοοῦντες εὐσεβεῖτε, τοῦτο ἐγὼ καταγγέλλω ὑμῖν, « Whom therefore you ignorantly worship, him I proclaim

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22. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata* V, 10, 65, 1-5.

23. Cf. The « Neoplatonic triad » from the speech on the Areopagus : ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ζῶμεν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἐσμέν, « for in him we live, and move, and have our being » (Act 17:28). The very tripartite structure of the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*'s chapters, which split in introduction into the mystery, its description, and its theoretic interpretation (θεωρία), is a reflection of the Neo-Platonic triad « rest, procession, and return », and presupposes typical Platonic parallelism between speech (*logos*) and extramental reality. Cf., for example, in conjunction : Plato, *Phaedrus* 264c (speech / λόγος as a living being) and *Timaeus* 30b-31a (the world as a living being).

to you. » This phrase was transformed in the *CA* into the theoretical principle: « whom you honor through ignorance ».

The term θεουργία frequently used in the *CA*, and borrowed from the language of Iamblichus, being a contraction of the words ἔργον θεοῦ, also allows to allude to St Paul: μὴ... κατάλυε τὸ ἔργον τοῦ θεοῦ, « do not destroy the work of God ».

PLATO'S ESCHATOLOGICAL MYTHS IN THE AREOPAGITE'S *LETTER* VIII

Letter VIII provides extremely rich material for the discussion concerning the intertextual nature of the *CA*. In this letter the Areopagite appropriates a history, taken from quite a late author, Nilus of Ancyra, an ascetic writer of the 5th century, in which Nilus encourages some Bishop of Olympia not to be too harsh (ἀπότομος) to those who are weak in spirit. Nilus illustrates his appeal by an « ancient history » (ἱστορίαν ἀρχαίαν), beginning with the words: « There was a certain Bishop Carpos, a contemporary of the apostles (Κάρπος τις γέγονεν ἐπίσκοπος σύγχρονος τῶν ἀποστόλων)[24]. » Once Carpos got angry with two youths recently converted to Christ from pagan error (ἐξ τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς πλάνης): after leaving the pagan school (τῶν ἔξωθεν παιδευτήριον), they almost came to the Church but their former classmates, who had learned about the case, persuaded one of them to return to paganism. Enraged Carpos asked God to punish them as people « the most ungodly and unholy » (ἀσεβέστατοι καὶ ἀνοσιώτατοι) men:

> « And when he asked about it, he saw a terrible and startling vision (θέαμα). Christ came down from heaven, and fiery serpents (δράκοντες)[25] fled away, while Christ in his grace took the youths with great patience, and brought them up from the abyss (τοῦ χάσματος) and put on the ground, thereby showing that they are saved. And indeed, subsequently converted, these young men have become valiant Christians. And Christ rebuked Carpos for his gloom and harshness (μελαγχολίας καὶ ἀποτομίας), as well as for the fact that he curses people, having no compassion to them[26]. »

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24. Areop. *Ep*. VIII, 6, 1 : Γενόμενόν μὲ ποτε... ὁ ἱερὸς ἐξεναγώγησε Κάρπος...
25. Cf. Areop. *Ep*. VIII 8, 6, 34 : ὄφεις.
26. Nilus Ancyranus, *Ep*. II, 190 (PG 79, 300AB).

Literary source of Carpos' vision. Remarkably, already the Carpos' vision itself as described by Nilus has a literary source, heretofore unnoticed. It is significant that Nilus uses a rare adjective ἀσεβέστατοι[27]. Together with another rare adjective ἀνοσιώτατοι[28] it occurs in the corpus of Greek literature only once, and not just anywhere, but in Longus' famous novel *Daphnis and Chloe*[29]. This lexical parallel is not accidental because not only the formula « ἀνοσιώτατοι καὶ ἀσεβέστατοι » is identical, but there are similarities in *mise-en-scène*, the context to which it belongs. Indeed, in Longus' novel the pirates kidnapped Chloe, making the god Pan angry. To terrify the pirates, the gods sent to them visual and sound apparitions: the earth was on fire, the noise came from the sea. Then, not without the help of the gods (οὐκ ἀθεεὶ) the captain of the pirates went to sleep, where Pan appeared to him and said:

> « O, the most ungodly and unholy (῏Ω πάντων **ἀνοσιώτατοι καὶ ἀσεβέσ-τατοι**) of all men! What made you so bold as madly to attempt and do such outrages as these?.. You have taken sacrilegiously from the altars... a maid of whom Eros is going to create a story (ἐξ ἧς Ἔρως μῦθον ποιῆσαι θέλει)... I will make you food for the fish, unless you speedily restore Chloe to the Nymphs. »[30]

As we see, the details of the stories are quite similar: the kidnapping of a young soul from the altars of the gods, the anger of deity caused by the crime, frightening phenomena sent to the thieves, and finally, the same exclamation: « the most ungodly and unholy » addressed to the kidnappers. Most probably, these correspondences were evident to educated people of that time: there were not so many novels then, and Longus' pastoral could be quite popular.

It seems unusual that the Areopagite borrows material for Carpos' story from such later writer as Nilus. The self-imposed identity of the Areopagite might have been disclosed and compromised. Certainly, he himself was attracted by Nilus' words that Carpos was « a contemporary of the apostles ». Moreover, if he was aware of the literary source behind Nilus' narrative – the novel by Longus, then a phrase ἐξ ἧς Ἔρως μῦθον ποιῆσαι θέλει, « of whom Eros is going to create a myth », could become significant for him too.

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27. There are only 22 occurences of the ἀσεβέστατοι (in plural and superlative) in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* database (TLG).

28. And only 9 occurences of the ἀνοσιώτατοι in the TLG.

29. Longus, *Daphnis et Chloe* II, 27, 1-5.

30. *Ibid.* II, 25-30 (transl. by G. Thornley).

Whatever it was, by borrowing this story the Areopagite retains the characteristic exclamation « ἀσεβέστατοι καὶ ἀνοσιώτατοι » and, moreover, introduces himself into the narrative, arguing that the holy Carpos personally welcomed him in Crete and told him about his vision in personal conversation.

The transformation of Carpos' vision in the CA. As was already shown, the Areopagite was not satisfied with a simple retelling of Carpos's vision in his *Letter* VIII but, as usual, incorporated into the narrative some recognizable lexemes and formulas from Plato's eschatological myths, with amazing skill – by means of a few indicative words – linking together the myths from *Gorgias, Phaedrus* and *The Republic* (« The Myth of Er »)[31].

From the outset, the Areopagite gives a hint to the reader: his narrative concerning Carpos is placed within a special contextual frame, since it opens and closes with quotations from Plato's *Gorgias*, which in Plato bracket the « myth » describing the posthumous trial of the souls. Let's see how it works. The Areopagite begins Carpos' story with an unusual (and therefore easily revealing its source) phrase: « and do not laugh, because I am going to speak the truth. » With similar words Plato opens his story about the judgment of the souls by Minos and Rhadamanthus: « Listen, then, as they say, to a pretty story which you will regard as myth, I suspect, but which I regard as a real account (λόγος), for what I am about to say to you will be true[32]. »

The context explaining the Areopagite's attitude to the truth hidden beneath sacred symbolical narrative can be found in his *Letter* IX, where he argues at length that the mysteries viewed from the outside by the uninitiated appear filled with fiction and absurdities:

> « Among uninitiated (ἀτελέσι) souls the fathers of unspeakable wisdom give an impression of outstanding absurdity (ἀτοπίαν δεινήν) when, with secret and daring riddles, they make known the truth which is divine, mysterious, and, so far as the profane are concerned, inaccessible. That is why so many do not believe what the Oracles say about the divine mysteries (μυστηρίων), for we contemplate them solely by way of the perceptible symbols attached (προσπεφυκότων) to them... For viewed from the outside,

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31. R.F. Hathaway, *Hierarchy and the Definition of Order in the Letters of Pseudo-Dionysius* (The Hague, 1969), p. 93-99.

32. Areop. *Ep.* VIII, 5, 29-30 : καὶ μὴ γελάσῃς, ἀλήθειαν γὰρ ἐρῶ.

what a number of incredible and monstrous shapes (πλασματώδους τερα-τείας) they do contain[33]! »

The Areopagite completes the story of Carpos with the words: « These things, which I heard myself, I believe to be true[34]. » This is again a literal quotation from the same section of the *Gorgias*. Indeed, when Socrates closes the story of the judgment of souls, he says: « This is what I have heard, Callicles, and believe to be true[35]. »

Thus, the Areopagite incorporates the « Carpos narrative » into the context of the eschatological argument from Plato's *Gorgias*, and, in doing so, he communicates to the informed reader the meanings and dimensions which, being absent in the text itself, fashion his understanding and perception by means of the text's implied background[36].

There are still more references to Plato in Areopagite's *Letter* VIII. According to the Areopagite, Carpos seemed to see that:

« a shining flame appeared coming down to him from heaven... The sky itself seemed to be unfolding and *on the ridge of the heaven* (ἐπὶ τῷ νώτῳ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ) Jesus appeared amid an endless throng of angels in human form... Carpos glanced down and the ground seemed to open into a yawning, shadowy chasm (χάσμα)[37]. »

What is this « ridge of the heaven »? Once again, this is an easily recognizable Plato's formula from Socrates' mythical narrative in *Phaedrus*.

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33. Areop. *Ep.* IX, 1, 4-18 (1104BC).

34. Areop. *Ep.* VIII, 6, 46-48, 1100C: Ταῦτά ἐστιν, ἅ ἐγὼ ἀκηκοὼς πιστεύω ἀληθῆ εἶναι.

35. Plato, *Gorgias* 524a8 : Ταῦτ' ἐστιν, ὦ Καλλίκλεις, ἅ ἐγὼ ἀκηκοὼς πιστεύω ἀληθῆ εἶναι.

36. Cf. I Perczel, « Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite and the Pseudo-Dormition of the Holy Virgin », *Le Muséon* 125/1-2, 2012, p. 74: « As is generally the case with Dionysian passages, the deciphering of this text depends on identifying its literary source, or background text. Normally, it is that source that contains all the information that is missing from the Dionysian text itself. » On similar necessity to identify Maximus the Confessor' sources in order to understand some of his texts, see : V. Petroff, « Maximus the Confessor's *Ambiguum ad Iohannem* XXXVI (PG 91, 1304D-1316A) in the Context of the Earlier Philosophical and Theological Tradition », *17th Annual Theological Conference of St Tikhon's Orthodox University*. Vol. 1 (Moscow : St Tikhon's University Press, 2007), p. 99-109 [= В.В. Петров, « О трудностях к Иоанну XXXVI (PG 91, 1304D-1316A) Максима Исповедника в контексте предшествующей философско-богословской традиции », XVII Ежегодная богословская конференция Православного Свято-Тихоновского гуманитарного университета. Т. 1. М., 2007. С. 99-109].

37. Areop. *Ep.* VIII, 6, 21-32, 1100A.

« Those souls that are called immortal, when they reach the top, pass outside and take their place on *the ridge of the heaven* (ἐπὶ τῷ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ νώτῳ): and when they have taken their stand, the revolution carries them round and they behold (θεωροῦσι) the things outside of the heaven. Of that place beyond the heavens (ὑπερουράνιον τόπον) none of our earthly poets has yet sung, and none shall sing worthily » (transl. by H.N. Fowler, with my corrections)[38].

Not accidentally, the Areopagite makes another reference to the same fragment of *Phaedrus*: « Jesus, moved to pity at what was happening, had risen from *the throne beyond the heaven*, and descending to them he reached out a helping hand...[39] » Obviously, the Areopagite's « the throne beyond the heaven » (τοῦ ὑπερουρανίου θρόνου) has doctrinal identity and phonetic resemblance to Plato's « the place beyond the heaven » (τὸν ὑπερουράνιον τόπον).

References to Plato's dialogues in *Letter* VIII have been discovered by Joseph Stiglmayr and Hugo Koch. Stiglmayr pointed out that the chasm mentioned by the Areopagite during the discussion concerning the judgment of souls[40], immediately brings to memory another important Plato's eschatological myth, that is the famous « myth of Er » from the epilogue of the *Republic*, which also describes the judgment of souls and two chasms: « he saw, by each chasm of heaven and earth (καθ' ἑκάτερον τὸ χάσμα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ τε καὶ τῆς γῆς), the souls departing, after judgement had been passed upon them[41]. »

As H. Koch[42] pointed out, it is already at the outset of *Letter* VIII that Jesus, identified with the Good, is represented as the demiurge from Plato's *Timaeus*.

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38. Plato, *Phaedr.* 247b6-c4 : αἱ μὲν γὰρ ἀθάνατοι καλούμεναι, ἡνίκ' ἂν πρὸς ἄκρῳ γένωνται, ἔξω πορευθεῖσαι ἔστησαν ἐπὶ τῷ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ νώτῳ, στάσας δὲ αὐτὰς περιάγει ἡ περιφορά, αἱ δὲ θεωροῦσι τὰ ἔξω τοῦ οὐρανοῦ. **Τὸν δὲ ὑπερουράνιον τόπον** οὔτε τις ὕμνησέ πω τῶν τῇδε ποιητὴς οὔτε ποτὲ ὑμνήσει κατ' ἀξίαν.

39. Areop. *Ep.* VIII, 6, 46-48, 1100C : τὸν δὲ Ἰησοῦν ἐλεήσαντα τὸ γιγνόμενον ἐξαναστῆναι **τοῦ ὑπερουρανίου θρόνου** καὶ ἕως αὐτῶν καταβάντα καὶ χεῖρα ἀγαθὴν ὀρέγειν...

40. Areop. *Ep.* VIII, 6, 29-32 : Κάτω δὲ κύψας ὁ Κάρπος ἰδεῖν ἔφη καὶ τοὔδαφος αὐτὸ πρὸς ἀχανές τι **χάσμα** καὶ σκοτεινὸν διερρηγμένον καὶ τοὺς ἄνδρας ἐκείνους, οἷς ἐπηρᾶτο, πρὸ αὐτοῦ κατὰ τὸ στόμιον ἑστηκέναι **τοῦ χάσματος** ὑποτρόμους.

41. Plato, *Respublica* 614d3-5 : ὁρᾶν δὴ ταύτῃ μὲν καθ' ἑκάτερον **τὸ χάσμα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ τε καὶ τῆς γῆς** ἀπιούσας τὰς ψυχάς.

42. H. Koch, *Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita*, S. 25-27.

The Areopagite: « Is this not a sign of goodness... that He made beings to be and, having led all things into being, *He wanted everything* eternally *to be as similar to him as possible*[43]? »

Plato: the demiurge « *wanted everything to be as similar to himself as possible*[44]. »

Thus, according to the Areopagite, Christ with his angels is seated « on the ridge of the heaven » just as immortal souls in Plato's *Phaedrus*, and is a personification of the demiurge (1085D), who creates all and wants everything to become similar to himself. If we render this in terms of an anthropomorphic myth, we may say that he comes down from heaven into the chasm, and holds out his helping hand to the apostates.

To conclude: the author combines three eschatological myths of Plato, taking them out of the dialogues that were used in the lecture courses in Athens in the 5th century AD. It is noteworthy, because both the Neoplatonists (Proclus, Olympiodorus) and Christians (Eusebius, Theodoret of Cyrrhus) considered the myth of Er, together with those presented in the *Phaedo* (not *Phaedrus*) and in *Gorgias*, as interconnected, counting them among νέκυια, the myths depicting the underworld and the journey of the soul[45].

Particularly remarkable is the fact that the Areopagite introduces himself into the story of Carpos, who, as we remember, was called by Nilus « a contemporary of the apostles. » By Nilus, but not in the *CA*, where the source of Carpos' story is not indicated. In this regard, a reader, who could by chance find out this parallel, is programmed to perform a « discovery », after which he would be satisfied to consider Nilus' letter an independent witness confirming the apostolicity of the *CA*.

This is another meta-textual procedure by which the Areopagite skillfully suggests and constructs the context, which should – in the reversed order of reading – legitimize the text itself. Therefore, it is rather the context, implicitly imposed on the reader, than the text itself that becomes the point of departure (both in application to acts and

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43. Areop. *Ep.* VIII, 1, 38-40, 1085D: Ἆρα γὰρ οὐκ ἔστιν... ἀγαθότητος, ὅτι τὰ ὄντα εἶναι ποιεῖ καὶ ὅτι πάντα αὐτὰ πρὸς τὸ εἶναι παρήγαγε καὶ **πάντα βούλεται ἀεὶ γενέσθαι παραπλήσια ἑαυτῷ**.

44. Plato, *Timaeus* 29e3 : **πάντα ὅτι μάλιστα ἐβουλήθη γενέσθαι παραπλήσια ἑαυτῷ**. This Plato's sentence occurs almost verbatim in Proclus, who, therefore, can be direct source to the Areopagite, cf. Proclus, *In Tim.* I, 324, 6-7 : πάντα ὅτι μάλιστα ἠβουλήθη γενέσθαι παραπλήσια αὐτῷ.

45. Niketas Siniossoglou, *Plato and Theodoret. The Christian Appropriation of Platonic Philosophuy and the Hellenic Intellectual Resistance*, Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 176-184.

techniques of writing, and the acts of reading). The context programs the reader and interpreter to choose particular sets of hermeneutical moves that later might become part of the history of the text itself and define modes of its subsequent reception.

THE TWO-SIDED DOCTRINE OF « ANAMNESIS » AS SYNTHESIS OF PLATO AND THE GOSPELS

The description of the Eucharistic rite in the *CA* is marked by similar duality of the text and its references. For instance, a section of the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* devoted to the explanation of the sacrament of Eucharist and entitled θεωρία (that is « contemplation » or « interpretation ») begins with the words:

> « And now, my fair youth (ὦ παῖ καλέ), from the images (εἰκόνας) let us pass in orderly and sacred fashion to the godlike truth of their archetypes[46]. »

The addressing « ὦ παῖ καλέ », although it looks like an ordinary colloquial phrase, is a rare formula which, as it often happens in the *CA*, unambiguously points to its precise source: the beginning of the second speech of Socrates in Plato's *Phaedrus* (243e-257b), which contains parallels to the reasoning of *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* III, 3. The search with the help of electronic text database *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* shows that before the Areopagite the formula ὦ παῖ καλέ occurs only in *Phaedrus* and the texts depending on it[47].

In the corresponding section of the *Phaedrus* Socrates teaches his listeners that the soul is immortal; that it can ascend from earthly beauty

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46. Areop. *EH*. 3, 3, 1 (428B).
47. Cp. Plato, *Phaedrus* 243e9: « Understand then, fair youth (ὦ παῖ καλέ), that... » (transl by H.N. Fowler) ; 252b 2 : « This condition (πάθος), about which I am speaking, fair boy (ὦ παῖ καλέ), is called Love by men » (transl by H.N. Fowler). Later Themistius (*Erotikos* 171a8, Harduin) would allude to Phaedrus speaking about Eros (he also mentions Socrates there). This formula once occurs in Stobaeus (*Anthologium* 1, 9, 11, 2) and twice in Neoplatonist Hermias (*In Platonis Phaedrum scholia* 80, 11; 81, 3; 187, 20), but each time these are quotations from Plato's *Phaedrus*. Cf. (with different word order) Plato, *Euthyd.* 289b 5 : « Then the sort of knowledge we require, fair youth (ὦ καλὲ παῖ), I said, is that in which there happens to be a union of making and knowing how to use the thing made » (transl. by W.R.M. Lamb) ; and Theognis, *Elegiae* 1280.

to the gods and contemplate spectacles beyond the heaven; that the soul happened to become unable to keep up with the gods, and became filled with forgetfulness (λήθης πλησθεῖσα) and evil, growing heavy, until it eventually fell down to earth (ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν πέσῃ).

Socrates tells that, in spite of all this, even during their dwelling on earth the souls possess « recollection » (ἀνάμνησις) of things which they once beheld, sojourning with gods. « There and then » the souls saw the shining beauty, the blessed spectacles and were initiated into the mysteries (ἐτελοῦντο τῶν τελετῶν): « being initiated (μυούμενοι) into perfect and simple and calm and blessed apparitions (φάσματα), we contemplated (ἐποπτεύοντες) them in pure light. » After falling down to earth, the souls turned towards unrighteousness and « have forgotten the sacred sights they once saw ». However, they preserve innate aspiration for pure beauty, the beauty by itself (αὐτὸ τὸ κάλλος).

These sections of the CA and EH contain important correspondences. For instance, Plato's word play τελέους τελετὰς τελούμενος (« he is initiated into perfect mysteries ») becomes a model for lexical play in the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, which is overflowing with derivatives from the stem τελε- (almost 300 occurrences). Mysterial vocabulary of Platonism, which in due time had been borrowed by Philo[48] and thus had influenced Christian authors[49], is excessive in the CA, being a distinctive feature of his writing style.

The Areopagite knew Plato's dialogue (in full or in excerpts), which is evident from his quoting Phaedrus 249c8-e1 (concerning the discussion of the fourth kind of the divine madness)[50].

Without dwelling on all the parallels between the Phaedrus and Ecclesiastical Hierarchy III, 3[51], let's mention the three of them:

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48. Cf. Philo, De specialibus legibus I, 56, 3-4 : τελουμένους δὲ τὰς μυθικὰς τελετάς (« those initiated into the fabulous mysteries ») ; De gigantibus 54, 5 : « τελούμενος τὰς ἱερωτάτας τελετάς » (« performing the most sacred mysteries »).

49. Cf. Joannes Chrysostomus, Epistola 132 (PG 52, 691.12-15) : « ... τὴν μεγάλην οὕτω καὶ φιλόσοφον ψυχὴν ἰδεῖν τελουμένην ταχέως τὴν ἱερὰν τελετὴν, καὶ τῶν ἱερῶν ἐκείνων καὶ φρικτῶν καταξιουμένην μυστηρίων. »

50. Areop. DN VII, 4 (872D-873A).

51. See : V. Petroff, « Plato's Phaedrus and Neoplatonic Teaching on Dissimilar Symbols and Sacred Fiction in the Corpus Areopagiticum », Byzantine Theology and Its Philosophical Background, Turnhout, 2011, p. 32-49 ; Idem, « The Second Speech of Socrates in Plato's Phaedrus as a background for liturgical metaphysics of the Corpus Areopagiticum », Platonic Investigations. Issue 1 (Moscow, Saint Petersburg, 2014), p. 296-311 (in Russian) [= « Вторая речь Сократа из Федра Платона как фон для литургической метафизики Ареопагитского корпуса », Платоновские исследования. Вып. 1. М. ; СПб., 2014. С. 296-311].

1) In the *Phaedrus* the soul imitates its (σφέτερος) god, and the recollection of the heavenly realm is awakened in it, when it looks at the earthly beauty which reproduces (literally, « imitates », μεμιμημένον) the archetypical beauty. The man who uses recollections rightly becomes initiated into the perfect mysteries (τελέους τελετὰς τελούμενος) and truly perfect (τέλεος). Only philosopher's thought (διάνοια) ascends to the real being (τὸ ὂν ὄντως) since only thought comes close to the divine be means of the memory[52].

In similar way, hierarch's imitation of God (τὸ θεομίμητον) is achieved through turning the memory towards the superior things (μνήμης ἀνανεουμένης). By means of sacred hymns and acts, the memory is directed to the theurgic deeds of Jesus[53]. The hierarch « mystically sees with the eyes of his soul (ἐν νοεροῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἐποπτεύσας) their intelligible spectacle », and then « proceeds to the sacred symbolic act (συμβολικὴν ἱερουργίαν) », which means that he imitates the theurgic deeds in the sacred rite.

2) The *Phaedrus* explains that the soul recollects « heavenly » beauty while seeing its earthly reflections and imitations; by collecting them the reason can come to the idea of beauty as such. The Areopagite invites to contemplate Jesus' « most divine life in the flesh » because Jesus is « our intelligible life. » The general idea is the same: to contemplate Jesus' intelligible essence by means of looking at his earthly deeds.

3) However, the brightest example of the doctrinal duality of the *CA* and the intertextual nature of its author's practices is given by the doctrine of ἀνάμνησις (recollection). The Areopagite completes the chapter dedicated to the sacrament of Eucharist, turning to the world of Plato's *Phaedrus.*

> « *Taste and see,* the Oracles say (Ps 34:8). Because through the sacred initiation (μυήσει) into the divine, the initiates (μυούμενοι) will recognize its mercy that gives them great gifts. In perfect holiness they will in participation (τῇ μεθέξει) mystically gaze upon (ἐποπτεύοντες) its most divine loftiness and magnificence. Then they will gratefully (εὐχαρίστως) praise in hymns God's benefits beyond the heaven (ὑπερουρανίας)[54]. »

Both on the lexical, and the doctrinal level, this fragment directs the reader to the Gospels and to Plato. Its Eucharistic connotations bring to memory Jesus' commandment « do this in recollection (ἀνάμνησιν) of

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52. Plato, *Phaedr.* 249c4-6.
53. Areop. *EH.* 3, 3, 12 (441C).
54. *Ibid.* 3.3.15 (445C), transl. by C. Luibheid / P. Rorem.

Me[55] », while its mysterial vocabulary and imagery, together with the word ἀνάμνησις, allude to the well-known passage from *Phaedrus*:

> « This is a recollection (ἀνάμνησις) of those things which our soul once beheld, when it journeyed with god and, lifting its vision above the things which we now say exist, rose up into real being. And there it is just that the thought of the philosopher only has wings, for it is always, so far as it is able, in *communion* through memory with those things, the communion with which causes god to be divine. Now a man who employs such memories (ὑπομνήμασιν) rightly is always being initiated into perfect rites (τελετάς) and he alone becomes truly perfect[56]. »

According to the *Phaedrus*, « none of our earthly poets has yet sung, and none *shall celebrate in hymns* worthily *the place beyond the heavens* (τὸν ὑπερουράνιον τόπον ὕμνησέ) », for it is seen by intellect only. According the Areopagite, the initiates *will celebrate in hymns* (ὑμνήσουσι) God's good deeds *beyond the heaven* (τὰς ὑπερουρανίας ἀγαθουργίας)[57] in the moment of communion (τῇ μεθέξει), eucharistically (εὐχαρίστως). They will recognize the divine, since they taste and see (γεύσασθε καὶ ἴδετε).

To conclude: the networks of contexts, artfully arrayed by the author around the « letter » of his text, are so rich and suggestive that his addressee (the reader) can easily recognize patterns he is inclined to see. A Christian-oriented interpreter perceives the tradition he belongs to, while a Platonist (or a modern student of Platonism) finds familiar topics of Plato's school. In utilitarian terms, all this legitimizes the text and facilitates its reception. Much more important is the « fonction endotélique » of this technique, namely the goals of inner harmonization of the text initially molded by the author from essentially heterogeneous components[58].

The Areopagite's doctrine of apophatic and kataphatic ways of theological thinking is well known. In certain sense, intertextuality and

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55. Lc 22:19 ; 1 Cor 23-25.

56. Plato, *Phaedrus* 249C, in H.N. Fowler, *Plato : Euthyphro. Apology. Crito. Phaedo. Phaedrus* with an English translation, Loeb Classical Library 36. Cambridge, MS / London: Harvard University Press, 1914.

57. On the link between celebrating in hymns and imitation of gods see : Proclus, *In Tim.* I, 72, 30-73, 4 : « they will celebrate in hymns (ὑμνήσουσι) the power of such a city and [by this] imitate those [gods] who arrange the All (τὸ πᾶν) according to the intermediate type of creative activity and who comprehend in uniformity (μονοειδῶς συνέχοντας) the opposites and multifaceted movements. »

58. About the complex structure and various functions of the category « symbol » in the *CA* see : V. Petroff, « Symbol and the Sacred Action in the Later Neoplatonism and

interpretative « openness » of the *CA* present a parallel to apophasis. The author speaks of God, but cannot express the teaching in the form of a positive doctrine: partly due to the fact that the object of his reasoning is fundamentally ineffable, partly due to the fact that many unorthodox statements he is forbidden to formulate. This is why, in the *CA*, not only text speaks to the reader, but also its contexts, whereas not explicitly manifested, but precisely defined and extremely powerful. In doctrinal terms, this is paradoxical and illegal but effective way to refer to realities, which transcend reason and speech. The contexts, implicit and seemingly silent, hovering outside the text, *dire Dieu* – speak out invisible and ineffable God. In practical aspect too, this is convenient way to engage heterogeneous traditions, which, according to the author, adequately grasp the required meaning.

We have analyzed some intertextual and meta-textual methods and practices of the Areopagite, designed to ensure coherence and integrity of the metaphysical structures he constructs. Both on declarative and practical level he consistently advocates the multilayered discourse, openly emphasizing that the outer exposition (myth) is just a curtain that conceals doctrinal content, potentially heterogeneous to the main narrative.

References skillfully incorporated into the text become the keys that unlock access to implicit, not explicitly expressed contexts, forming the metaphysical framework of the *CA*. They invariably direct the attentive and informed reader to unpublicized sources of the author's thought. Borrowing the term « hermeneutical Latin » introduced by Michael Lapidge[59], I would define the writing technique of the Areopagite as a « hermeneutical Greek » because the doctrinal richness of his construc-tions emerges (still staying far from being clear) only if we know the

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the *Corpus Areopagiticum* », ΠΛΑΤΩΝΙΚΑ ΖΗΤΗΜΑΤΑ. *Studies in the History of Platonism.* Ed. by V. Petroff (Moscow: Krugh, 2013), p. 264-308 (in Russian) [= Idem., « Символ и священнодействие в позднем неоплатонизме и в Ареопагитском корпусе ». ΠΛΑΤΩΝΙΚΑ ΖΗΤΗΜΑΤΑ. *Исследования по истории платонизма* (М.: Кругъ, 2013), с. 264-308.

59. The term « hermeneutical Latin » was introduced by Michael Lapidge for a group of medieval texts, understanding of which necessarily required the knowledge of the same glossaries from which the author borrowed his vocabulary. See M. Lapidge, « The Herme-neutic Style in Tenth-Century Anglo-Latin literature », *Anglo-Saxon England* 4, 1975, p. 67 : « By "hermeneutic" I understand a style whose most striking feature is the osten-tatious parade of unusual, often very arcane and apparently learned vocabulary... It implies that the vocabulary is drawn principally from the *hermeneumata*, a name by which certain Greek-Latin glossaries are designated. » In the case of the *CA*, the place of Greek-Latin glossaries is reserved for the writings of the Neoplatonists.

sources to which the text unequivocally refers, demanding its « unfolding » in commentaries.

Given the substantially intertextual nature of the text, the interpretations offered by its readers are destined to differ from each other. The history of the *CA* demonstrates that numerous hermeneutical and editorial intrusions produced supposedly already in the absence of its author, secured unprecedented breadth and influence of its reception in Syriac, Greek, Latin, Arabic, Armenian, Georgian and Slavonic traditions. As a result, the *CA* in its current state became a true hypertext with its complex network of layers, editorial versions, contexts, interpretations, and metatexts, the comprehensive analysis and accurate reconstruction of which requires future research.

ABBREVIATIONS

Areop. – Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita.
CH – *De coelesti hierarchia*
DN – *De divinis nominibus*
EH – *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*
Ep. – *Epistulae*
PG – Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Graeca / Ed. J.-P. Migne. Paris, 1857-1866.
TLG – The Thesaurus Linguae Graecae. A Digital Library of Greek Literature.

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DIRE DIEU
Principes méthodologiques de l'écriture
sur Dieu en patristique

Actes du colloque de Tours, 17-18 avril 2015

Textes édités par Bernard Pouderon et Anna Usacheva

Dire l'ineffable. Entre les anthropomorphismes de la Bible et une conception très haute de la transcendance qui est celle d'un platonisme réinterprété par le courant gnostique, les premiers Pères de l'Église, pour exprimer leur conception du Dieu suprême *et distinguer leur « vraie philosophie » de celle des intellectuels païens*, ont dû se créer leurs voies propres, conciliant l'héritage de la Bible et celui de la pensée grecque. Certains d'entre eux ont théorisé leurs principes *dans une véritable réflexion méthodologique et introspective*, d'autres les ont simplement laissé entrevoir. Le colloque dont ce volume constitue les Actes s'est attaché à définir les fondements méthodologiques de la définition de Dieu chez les Pères les plus représentatifs de la première théologie chrétienne, depuis Justin Martyr et Tertullien jusqu'à la fin de l'époque patristique.

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