

PETER THE IBERIAN AND DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE: HONIGMANN — VAN ESBROECK'S THESIS REVISITED*

In two papers published in 1993 and 1997¹ Michel van Esbroeck explained his reasons for “revisiting” the idea of Shalva Nutsubidze

* Abbreviations:

LOURIÉ 2001 — В. М. ЛУРЬЕ, *Время поэтов, или Praeparationes Areopagiticae*: к уяснению происхождения стихотворной парафразы Евангелия от Иоанна [An Epoch of the Poets, or *Praeparationes Areopagiticae*: Toward a Comprehension of Origin of the Versified Paraphrase of the Gospel of John], in: Д. А. ПОСПЕЛОВ (отв. ред.), *Нонн из Хмима, Деяния Иисуса* (Москва, 2002) (Scrinium Philocalicum, I) 295–337; reprinted on-line, with some corrections, under the title «Дионисийский субстрат в византийском юродстве. Время поэтов, или *Praeparationes Areopagiticae*» in *Amsterdam International Journal for Cultural Narratology* (2005) N 1, Spring: The Many Faces of Narratological Agenda. Research Application to Literatures and Cultures vis-à-vis History and Tropology: <http://cf.hum.uva.nl/narratology/lurie.htm>;

LOURIÉ 2007 — B. LOURIÉ, *L'Histoire Euthymiaque*: l'œuvre du patriarche Euthymios/Euphemos de Constantinople (490–496, † 515), *Warszawskie Studia Teologiczne* XX/2 (2007) [Miscellanea Patristica Reverendissimo Domino Marco Starowieyski septuagenario professori illustrissimo viro amplissimo ac doctissimo oblata] 189–221;

PERCZEL 2008 — I. PERCZEL, The Earliest Syriac Reception of Dionysius, *Modern Theology* 24 (2008) 557–571 (the whole issue 4 of vol. 24 dedicated to Dionysius is now reprinted as: S. COAKLEY, Ch. M. STANG (eds.), *Re-thinking Dionysius the Areopagite* (Chichester—Oxford, 2009) (Directions in Modern Theology), Perzcel's paper on p. 27–42);

VAN ESBROECK 1993 — M. VAN ESBROECK, Peter the Iberian and Dionysius the Areopagite: Honigmann's thesis revisited, *OCP* 59 (1993) 217–227

VAN ESBROECK 1997 — M. VAN ESBROECK, La triple préface de Phocas, in: Y. DE ANDIA (éd.), *Denys l'Aréopagite et sa postérité en Orient et en Occident. Actes du colloque international, Paris, 21–24 septembre 1994* (Paris, 1997) (Collection des Études Augustiniennes. Série Antiquité, 151) 167–186.

(1) VAN ESBROECK 1993, VAN ESBROECK 1997.

(1942)² and Ernst Honigmann (1952)³ that Peter the Iberian was the main author of the *Corpus Areopagiticum* in the 460s, after about 465 (the *Corpus* being expanded, especially by short letters, and reattributed to Dionysius after Peter's death in 491). Since then, van Esbroeck's study has been mostly ignored, with rare exceptions such as A. M. Ritter (1994, critically)⁴ and me (additional proofs).⁵ However, some other relevant publications have appeared, without referring to van Esbroeck.⁶ It seems that now is the time to reopen the discussion.

Part One: From Honigmann to van Esbroeck

1.1. Honigmann's Thesis

Nutsubidze's hypothesis, as it appeared in 1942, was rather a vague intuition than a scholarly hypothesis in the proper sense. Thus, van Esbroeck starts from Honigmann who put forward the same hypothesis independently a bit later (1952) but with scholarly grounding. Honigmann based his argument on two elements:

1. the vision of John the Eunuch (close friend and spiritual companion of Peter the Iberian),
2. the commemoration days of Dionysius the Areopagite and Hierotheos of Athens in the calendars.

(2) Ш. НУЦУБИДЗЕ, *Тайна Псевдо-Дионисия Ареопажита* [Mystery of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite] (Тбилиси, 1942); it should not be confused with its reprint in: *Известия Института языка, истории и материальной культуры АН Грузинской ССР имени академика Н. Я. Марра*, № 14 (1944) 1–55 (in Russian, English summary). After the WWII, Nutsubidze widely published on the topic and became the main promoter of Honigmann's works in the USSR, especially in Georgia.

(3) E. HONIGMANN, *Pierre l'Ibérien et les écrits du pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite* (Bruxelles, 1952) (Académie royale de Belgique. Classe des lettres et des sciences morales et politiques. Mémoires, 47, fasc. 3).

(4) A. M. RITTER, VORWORT, in: A. M. RITTER, *Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita, Ueber die Mystische Theologie und Briefe*. Eingeleitet, übersetzt und mit Anmerkungen versehen (Stuttgart, 1994) (Bibliothek der griechischen Literatur, 40) 16–17.

(5) LOURIÉ 2001.

(6) Moreover, Cornelia Horn in her recent publications (both her monograph on Peter the Iberian and notes to the translation of the *Life of Peter the Iberian* — see below) points out some features which could be relevant for verification of the hypothesis of Peter's authorship of the *Corpus*. She seems to be in favour of such a possibility but does not enter into discussion.

His reasoning was the following. The vision of John Eunuch in about 444, as described in the *Vita* of Peter the Iberian by John Rufus, contained a revelation of the heavens opening with the angelical hierarchies. It is likely that this was the core of the future hierarchical speculations in the *Corpus Areopagiticum*, where the author (Dionysius the Areopagite) refers to the revelation attained by his teacher, the holy Hierotheos. The mutual relationship between Hierotheos and Dionysius in the *Corpus* is similar to that of Peter the Iberian and John the Eunuch.

The commemorations of Dionysius and Hierotheos in some Syrian (Jacobite) calendars are October 3 and 4, respectively. It is unlikely that this is not because of some mutual relationship between the two which is known from the *Corpus Areopagiticum* only. Most important, John the Eunuch died on October 4, the commemoration day of Hierotheos (*Life of Peter the Iberian*, § 171). Therefore, one can suggest that under the names of Dionysius and Hierotheos, it is the pair of the cell-mates Peter the Iberian and John the Eunuch that are commemorated on October 3 and 4.

This opinion of Honigmann should be understood properly within the context of his studies on Church history of fifth century Palestine. Honigmann's Palestine that emerges from his different studies was more like a populated world than a schematic reconstruction, and so, an adequate comprehension of his thesis would imply sharing with him this or another, but not less vivid vision of historical reality. Nevertheless, at least, one of his critics, Irénée Hausherr, did share his historical vision but categorically rejected his thesis.

1.1. Honigmann's Critics

The main critics of Honigmann were the three: Irénée Hausherr,⁷ Hieronymus Engberding,⁸ and René Roques.⁹ Their main arguments are the following (van Esbroeck's enumeration of their arguments is not absolutely exhaustive, but some parts of their argumentation are

(7) I. HAUSHERR, Le pseudo-Denys est-il Pierre l'Ibérien ?, *OCP* 19 (1953) 247–260.

(8) H. ENGBERDING, Kann Petrus der Iberer mit Dionysius Areopagita identifiziert werden?, *Oriens Christianus* 38 (1954) 68–95. This article is, regardless of its direct purpose, an important study in the development of the September and October calendar throughout the Byzantine Commonwealth.

(9) R. ROQUES, Pierre l'Ibérien et le « Corpus » dionysien, *Revue d'histoire des religions* 145 (1954) 69–98.

similar,¹⁰ and so, it is enough to consider only the most elaborated version of a given argument):

Hausherr was an eminent specialist in Christian oriental mystical and ascetical literature. According to him, Peter the Iberian belonged to an ascetic milieu strictly opposed to profane philosophy: indeed, his teacher was, for some time, Isaias of Gaza known by his idiosyncrasy toward worldly wisdom. Being a disciple of Isaias, Peter could not be a likely author of the *Corpus Areopagiticum*.

Engberding, being an outstanding liturgical scholar, corrected Honigmann in the liturgical part of argumentation. The memories of Dionysius and Hierotheos on 3 and 4 October, as he rightly pointed out, did not emerge within the Monophysite tradition because their sources are the Greek Chalcedonian calendars where these memories are preserved until now. Their appearance in some Syrian Monophysite calendars is secondary, under the Byzantine influence. So, they have nothing to do with the Monophysite saints Peter the Iberian and John the Eunuch.

Roques, the author of the now classical *L'Univers dionysien* (1954), explored the contents of the vision of John the Eunuch in the context of the visions of the heavens available in Christian literature to the end of the fifth century. He concluded that the vision of John presupposes another type of the arrangement of heavenly hierarchies than that of the *Corpus Areopagiticum*. It was especially important that John saw seven angelic ranks instead of nine, and that he saw, among them, the figures of holy humans as separate ranks of heavenly beings.

This threefold attack was enough to bury Honigmann's thesis for a while.

1.2. van Esbroeck's Apology of Honigmann

Michel van Esbroeck answered the three critics of Honigmann and provided a further development of Honigmann's argumentation. In his replies to Hausherr and Engberding he introduced some important new data.

(10) E. g., Hausherr, too, compared the contents of the vision of John the Eunuch with that of the Areopagitic hierarchies, but not in such an elaborated manner as Roques.

1.2.1. van Esbroeck's Reply to Hausherr

Peter the Iberian's attitude toward the secular philosophy of his time, especially the Platonic philosophy, must be very familiar, despite his close ties with Isaias of Gaza. The Empress Eudocia, being the daughter of an Athenian pagan philosopher and also being a poet and philosopher herself, was not only the *de facto* stepmother of Peter, but also a person deeply involved in the Palestinian monastic circles connected with Melania the Younger (ca 382–439) and subsequently opposed to the Council of Chalcedon. Peter's monastic formation (and not only his young years in the Emperor's palace) was deeply influenced by the concept of monasticism acknowledged in the entourage of Melania and formulated by Eudocia in the words of Plato "So for those who despise the vain appearance, that is the deadly cloth which the soul is born to leave, according to the sayings of Plato" (Οὕτω τὴν κενὴν δόξαν περιφρονοῦσιν, ὃν τελευταῖον χιτῶνα Πλάτων ὁ φιλόσοφος φησιν ἢ ψυχὴ πέφυκεν ἀποτίθασθαι; quoted in Nicephorus Callistus, PG 146, 1237A; tr. by van Esbroeck, and also, in a slightly different form, in Evagrius Scholasticus, I, 22; ed. Bidez, p. 31, the latter being — very probably but not certainly — the source of the former).

For the sake of space, I summarised this argument of van Esbroeck-taking into account my own addition (LOURIÉ 2001) when introducing the figure of Melania the Younger (however, my 2001 paper was written in close contact with van Esbroeck, and so, even this detail was found under his direction).¹¹ Eudocia, too, characterised Melania as her "true spiritual mother" (*Life of Melania the Younger*, 58).¹²

Eudocia's quotation from Plato is not a free periphrasis of *Phaedo* 87DE (*pace* van Esbroeck) but more an exact quote from a lost work preserved in Athenaeus (XI, 116, l. 29–31).¹³ One should note (*pace* van Esbroeck) that neither Nicephorus Callistus nor Evagrius attribute this quotation to Eudocia explicitly, but it appears in the description of some peculiar kind of Palestinian asceticism at Eudocia's time. Any-

(11) For the role of Melania the Younger as spiritual teacher of Peter the Iberian see now: C. B. HORN, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy in Fifth-Century Palestine: The Career of Peter the Iberian* (Oxford, 2006) (The Oxford Early Christian Studies) 138–141.

(12) D. GORCE, *Vie de sainte Mélanie* (Paris, 1962) (SC, 90) 242.

(13) G. KAIBEL, *Athenaei Naucratis Deipnosophistarum libri XV*. Vol. 3 (Lipsiae, 1890; reprint: Stuttgart, 1966) 507d.

way, I think¹⁴ the ultimate source of the Platonic quotation belongs to the same monastic milieu as Eudocia when she became monastic.

I think that we have to conclude that, despite these minor corrections, this argument of van Esbroeck still holds. Moreover, it is now enforced by taking into account the role of Melania the Younger as the figure who shaped the relevant milieu of Palestinian monasticism.

Therefore, *pace* Hausherr, Peter the Iberian had sufficient background in the Christian rethinking of Hellenic philosophy to not to be excluded, on this ground, from the possible authors of the *Corpus Areopagiticum*. Indeed, Hausherr wrote himself: “Jusqu’à nouvelles preuves, Pierre l’Ibérien n’est pas le pseudo-Denys. Mais le pseudo-Denys se dissimule dans ce milieu où M. Honigmann le cherche.”¹⁵ “Jusqu’à nouvelles preuves” does not mean “jamais.”¹⁶

1.2.2. van Esbroeck’s Reply to Engberding

To meet Engberding’s objection, van Esbroeck elaborates on the possibility of reconciliation of Peter the Iberian with the followers of the Chalcedon, and thus, the possibility of his recognition as a Chalcedonian saint. His main arguments here are the following three:

1. the hard anti-Chalcedonian bias of John Rufus, Peter’s hagiographer, which makes his information about Peter’s continuous anti-Chalcedonian stay somewhat unreliable,
2. Peter’s rejection of the Christological Trisagion of Peter the Fuller, which is testified to indirectly by John Rufus in his *Plerophoriae*, ch. 22,¹⁷

(14) Cf. analysis in LOURIÉ 2001.

(15) HAUSHERR, *Le pseudo-Denys...*, 260.

(16) Moreover, Hausherr and Roques put forward an argument that the relationship between Peter the Iberian and John the Eunuch was not the same as that of Dionysius and Hierotheos, that is, not the relationship of disciple and teacher (HAUSHERR, *Le pseudo-Denys...*, 248–250; ROQUES, *Pierre l’Ibérien...*, 77–78). This observation is, indeed, right. Nevertheless, it does not affect the prophetic and apocalyptic sense of the vision of John the Eunuch. In the scene of this vision, it was certainly John who was the spiritual leader among both. This would be enough — and especially in conformance with the universal ascetic principle of humility — to develop, in another context, the story of Dionysius as an Aaron with Hierotheos as his Moses.

(17) Moreover, van Esbroeck was referring to a Chalcedonian source as a direct witness, Theodorus of Petra, *Panegyricon* on Theodosius Cenobiarchos [H. USENER, *Der heilige Theodosios. Schriften des Theodoros und Kyrillos*

3. the example of Eudocia who was converted to the Chalcedonian faith by Symeon the Stylite in about 456, not long before her death (460).

These arguments and especially the second one are much important in view of further argumentation for the authorship of Peter the Iberian, but I would consider all of them rather superfluous when answering Engberding (and so, I will return to them later).

Peter the Iberian died in 492¹⁸ and was widely considered a saint. This was the epoch when the *Henotikon* of Zeno (482) was in force throughout the Orient. All the saints of this period, starting from Daniel the Stylite — the spiritual leader of the epoch of *Henotikon*, like prophet Daniel during the rule of Zeno and early (pacific) part of the rule of Anastasius — entered the Eastern Christian synaxaries without problems. It was only after 505, after the reinterpretation of the *Henotikon* in a militant monophysite sense in a sermon of John III Niceotes, patriarch of Alexandria,¹⁹ and especially after 512 (forced change of the leading figures in the Eastern episcopate) that the *Henotikon* became deeply controversial not only in Rome but in the Orient too.

The attitude of Peter toward the Council of Chalcedon simply did not matter in the period when he died (492), between 482 and 505/512. Doubts concerning his loyalty toward the *Henotikon* have no grounds except a purely hypothetical interpretation of some facts and ignoring others.²⁰ Therefore, he had to take, after 482, an “irenic” attitude towards those who did not anathematize Chalcedon providing that they did confess that it was God who was born and crucified.

It is an attitude that is too Chalcedonian, which would prevent the acceptance of a Church leader of this epoch as a Byzantine saint. I think that this is the real cause of the almost complete oblivion of the memory of the patriarch of Constantinople Euthymius/Euphemius (490–496,

(Leipzig, 1890) 66.8–10]: ἐπιτιμᾶτω τούτοις ὁ μακάριος Πέτρος Χριστοῦ παθόντος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν σαρκί οὐχὶ δὲ καὶ θεότητι ἀποφηνάμενος. However, this “fine praise of Peter in a thoroughly Chalcedonian context” (VAN ESBRÖECK 1993, 223, n. 20) belongs to the apostle Peter, and even the source of the quote (1 Pet 4:1) is indicated by the editor in the apparatus. This reference of van Esbroeck is due to a misunderstanding but is, unfortunately, repeated in VAN ESBRÖECK 1997, 185.

(18) Not in 491; see below, section 3.1.

(19) M. VAN ESBRÖECK, Le manifeste de Jean III le Nicéote en 505 dans le *Livre des Lettres arméniennes*, *Revue des études arméniennes* 24 (1993) 27–46.

(20) See Note 2 below this section.

† 515) who was deposed for his attempt to interpret the *Henotikon* in an openly Chalcedonian sense, even if without rejecting it formally.²¹

The acceptance of an anti-Chalcedonian saint of this epoch in the Byzantine Orthodox calendars could be seen as problematic only if the whole situation is seen from Rome, then separated from the whole remaining Church and accusing the other patriarchates of the “Acacian schism.” Normally, the cults established in this epoch were preserved in the Eastern Churches after the restoration of official Chalcedonism in 518 (among the most known examples are St Daniel the Stylite, the “prophet Daniel” of Zeno’s Constantinople,²² the feast of the Robe of the Theotokos in Blachernae on July 2,²³ and Vakhtang Gorgasali, the king of Georgia who received the revelation of the *Henotikon* faith²⁴). The abrogation of the *Henotikon*, already reinterpreted in a strongly monophysite sense, under Justin I (518) was compensated by the “neo-Chalcedonian” reinterpretation of the Chalcedonian *horos* (leading to further conflicts with Rome known as the theopaschite controversy and the schism of Pope Vigilius) that was, in fact, a restoration of the mainstream theology of the epoch of Zeno.

Of course, the attitude of John Rufus when he wrote his *Life of Peter the Iberian* around the year 500 was closer to the militant anti-Chalcedonian reinterpretation of the *Henotikon* given by John Niceotes in 505.

The memory of Peter the Iberian as a saint was preserved in the Georgian Church when it became Chalcedonian in the early seventh century²⁵ but seems to be suppressed in the mainstream Byzantine tradition. These topics still need to be studied properly. Peter the Iberian

(21) LOURIÉ 2007.

(22) On this cult, see H. DELEHAYE, *Les saints stylites* (Bruxelles—Paris, 1923) (SH, 14), on his prophetic and spiritually leading role in the epoch of *Henotikon* see especially Delehayé’s remarks on p. LI–LIV.

(23) This cult was established earlier but only in this epoch received its normative (since then) hagiographic legend, when the Robe was stolen from a Jewish woman by the noblemen Galbas and Candidus. In its genuine sense, this legend was anti-Chalcedonian where the old Jewish woman was an allegorical image of Empress Pulcheria; cf. LOURIÉ 2007.

(24) M. VAN ESBROECK, La Vision de Vakhtang Gorgasali et sa signification, in: E. KHINTIBIDZE (ed.), *Proceedings of the First International Symposium in Kartvelian Studies* (Tbilisi, 1988) 181–191; IDEM, La portée politico-religieuse des visions pour la conversion des peuples, *Revue de l’Institut Catholique de Paris* 53 (1995) 87–104.

(25) Of course, not without “rewriting” his *Life* in its anti-Chalcedonian parts. Cf. HORN, *Asceticism...*, 47–49.

is listed among the leaders of heretics in the *Synodical Epistle* of Sophronius of Jerusalem (634)²⁶ published as the first reaction to the ongoing monothelite union. This letter became a first-value dogmatic document after the definitive condemnation of monothelitism (not earlier than after 715). However, the diothelite doctrine of Sophronius himself was then not quite common in the Orient where verbal “monothelitism” seems to me to have prevailed.²⁷ It is likely that, in his condemnation of Peter the Iberian, Sophronius was depending on a marginal Palestinian tradition whose legacy he was sharing, but even this tradition did distinguish Peter as the head of a separate movement within the Monophysite milieu. M. van Esbroeck argues that the corresponding part of the *Synodical Epistle* is simply copied from a Chalcedonian document of the early sixth century.²⁸ Be this as it may, such a suppression of Peter’s name in the lists of saints could not affect his “indirect” veneration under the name of Dionysius the Areopagite. And this is the only point that is needed to answer Engberding.

However, my own conclusion in the analysis below will be different from that of Honigmann. I do not see any trace of the veneration of Peter under the name of Dionysius. Instead, I do see that their liturgical memories were interconnected, in one way or another.

Note 1: Peter the Iberian and the Trisagion Controversy

Cornelia Horn in her very important monograph on Peter the Iberian treats at some length the role of the Trisagion controversy in the life (and the *Life* by John Rufus) of Peter.²⁹ The controversy started between 468 and 470 when Peter the Fuller, patriarch of Antioch, introduced the words “crucified for us” in the Trisagion hymn. John Rufus, of course, is quite supportive of this innovation. Horn thinks that Peter’s attitude was the same. However, she does not mention van Esbroeck’s arguments and, what is more important, confuses in her theological analysis two different matters: the claim that it is God who was crucified for us (so-called “theopaschism”) and the meaning of the Christological Trisagion at the time of

(26) Sophronius of Jerusalem, *Epistula synodalis ad Sergium*, PG 87/3, 3192B.

(27) B. LOURIÉ, Un autre monothélisme : le cas de Constantin d’Apamée au VI^e Concile Œcuménique, *SP* 29 (1997) 290–303; ИДЕМ [B. М. ЛУРЬЕ], *История византийской философии. Формативный период* [*History of the Byzantine Philosophy. Formative Period*] (Санкт-Петербург, 2006).

(28) VAN ESBRÖECK 1997, 185–186.

(29) HORN, *Asceticism...*, 391–395.

the controversy. Moreover, Horn refers to but seems to not really take into account the study of Janeras³⁰ demonstrating that the Christological Trisagion was — and still is — familiar to the Byzantine (Chalcedonian) liturgy, however, without addition. It is the addition only that made a problem.

There is no doubt that Peter the Iberian shared the “theopaschite” convictions, but he has here on his side such prominent Chalcedonians as Emperor Justinian and the fathers of the Fifth Ecumenical Council. It was not the “theopaschism” that made the Trisagion controversy of the late fifth and early sixth centuries so acute but especially the role of Peter the Fuller during his second tenure (485–488) when the addition was made the slogan of radical Monophysitism aiming at the genuine “irenic” spirit of the *Henotikon*. In the epoch of the *Henotikon*, both main sides of the Trisagion controversy were “theopaschite,” but they did differ in the matter of the subject of the passion in God. Horn does not take into account the letter of Peter to John Rufus quoted in the *Plerophoriae* (ch. 22)³¹ where Peter suggests to him to decline the invitation to Antioch on the part of Peter the Fuller in the 480s (“...si tu vas à Antioche, tu seras troublé, puis convaincu par tes amis et par celui qui est maître là-bas; [et alors] ou bien tu te joindras à lui, ou bien tu tomberas dans [son] inimité s’il te renvoie”).

One can mention here an interesting hypothesis of van Esbroeck — that Demophilus, the addressee of the eighth letter of the *Corpus Areopagiticum*, has his prototype in the person of Peter the Fuller. “The author of the letter sees himself as sharing Demophilus’s views, but urges him not to innovate in the liturgy: one thinks immediately of the famous expression ‘one of the Trinity has been crucified’.”³² His argumentation is based on a parallel with the *Laudatio Barnabae* ab Alexandro Cyprio (BHG 226), and I will try here to explain in more detail his rather blind reference.

(30) V.-S. JANERAS, Les Byzantins et le Trisagion christologique, in: *Miscellanea liturgica in onore di Sua Eminenza il Cardinale Giacomo Lercaro*, II (Roma, 1967) 468–499.

(31) F. NAU, Jean Rufus, évêque de Maïouma, *Plérophories. Témoignages et révélations contre le concile de Chalcédoine*. Version syriaque et traduction française (Paris, 1912) (PO, 8, 1) 49–50. Cf. HORN, *Asceticism...*, 27, n. 87: only a mention of this letter as an evidence that Peter did write, at least, something by his own hand.

(32) VAN ESBRÖECK 1993, 227. It is interesting that the final part of the *Letter VIII* (§ 6), the story of Carpus with his unmerciful attitude toward those fallen from the Church, could explain the reasons of Peter the Iberian not to accept the addition to the Trisagion. Such an addition was too harsh for the people disposed toward the Chalcedon.

Alexander of Cyprus (527–565) includes in his encomium a digression on Peter the Fuller.³³ Alexander writes that some people “from ours” (ἐκ τῶν ἡμετέρων) accepted this addition “out of simplicity of reason but not out of evil will” (ἀπλῶτητι λογισμοῦ καὶ οὐ κακίας γνώμης). Alexander does not treat the innovation as heretical *per se*. Instead, he defends the original text as revealed in a miracle under Proclus of Constantinople, and thus, unliable to changes: “Because we are not correctors of Christ but obedient of Christ” (Οὐ γάρ ἐσμεν διορθωταὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἀλλ’ ὑποτακεῖται τοῦ Χριστοῦ), and, moreover, “...it is an extreme stupidity to accept an innovation of an heretic even if without thinking heretically” (...ἰδιωτία ἐσχάτη ἐστὶ τὸ παραδέξασθαι τὴν καινοτομίαν τοῦ αἰρετικοῦ, κἂν μὴ φρονῶσι τὰ τοῦ αἰρετικοῦ).³⁴ Alexander’s degree of aversion to Peter the Fuller seems to be, naturally, higher than that of Peter the Iberian but the general attitude is the same: the addition *per se* is not heretical but, nevertheless, unacceptable.

No doubts, “Peter had every reason to trust in Christ, the crucified God, without any hesitation.”³⁵ However, this fact is not especially relevant to his attitude toward the addition of Peter the Fuller. Such a “theopaschite” confession was shared by the Patriarchates of the whole Orient in the epoch of *Henotikon* and will be confirmed even during the Chalcedonian restoration in the sixth century, when the hymn Ὁ Μονογενής, being a theopaschite liturgical confession, was attributed to Severus of Antioch by the Severians and to Emperor Justinian by the Chalcedonians. Thus, van Esbroeck’s observation of the importance of the *Plerophoriae*, 22 testimony still holds. Peter the Iberian was not an ally of Peter the Fuller.

Note 2: Alleged Rejection of the Henotikon by Peter the Iberian

Peter’s acceptance of the *Henotikon* was taken as granted by Honigmann³⁶ and, after him, by van Esbroeck. However, van Esbroeck did not answer the criticisms put forward against this point of Honigmann’s argumentation.

(33) AASS, Iunii II (1698) 447–449.

(34) AASS, Iunii II (1698) 448DE. Thus, Horn’s statement (with reference to Schulz) that “...Chalcedonian theologians, applying the Trisagion to the Trinity, rejected the insertion as heretical” (HORN, *Asceticism...*, 394) is an oversimplification. Cf. also the actual Byzantine matins of the Great Saturday (Christ’s burial rite), its burial procession with Trisagion chant applied to Christ. On the history of this rite and its parallels in liturgics and homiletics see JANERAS, *Les Byzantins et le Trisagion christologique...*

(35) HORN, *Asceticism...*, 395.

(36) HONIGMANN, *Pierre l’Ibérien...*, 13.

The first critique was provided by René Roques in consultation with Antoine Guillaumont.³⁷ Roques proposes here three arguments against Honigmann:

1. "En réalité, les *Plérphories* de Jean Rufus <...> ne semblent guère autoriser cette supposition." — This seems to be an argument *ex silentio* but, in fact, as we shall see, the *Plerophories* are not absolutely silent on this matter.

2. "De plus, Pierre, comme l'abbé Isaïe et Théodore d'Antinoë, s'est dérobé devant l'invitation de l'Empereur Zénon, qui n'était probablement pas sans rapport avec la signature de l'*Hénotique*." — This argument is the most serious, and we will meet it in a more elaborated form in Cornelia Horn, when it will be discussed.

3. Sophronius of Jerusalem in the *Synodical Epistle* (mentioned above) calls Peter's monophysite faction ἀκέφαλοι (Peter and Isaïas, "...qui parmi les acéphales enseignaient une autre hérésie acéphale"; Roques' translation), but, according to the heresiological treatise ascribed to Timotheos of Constantinople (second half of the sixth cent.), this name belongs to those who broken communion with Peter Mongos when he accepted the *Henotikon*.³⁸ — This argument is based on a misunderstanding of Timotheos' terminology in particular and of the terminology of the epoch in general. First of all, it ignores Sophronius' terminology in the quote translated by Roques himself where Sophronius uses the term "acephaloi" as a general term for the anti-Chalcedonians: Peter's and Isaïas' kind of "acephalian heresy" emerged among the "Acephals." Moreover, Timotheos of Constantinople provides a common heading to his list of the anti-Chalcedonian factions: "A brief explanation for knowing in how many parts is divided the heresy of the Acephals or Theopaschites."³⁹ Thus, the term "Acephals," especially in Sophronius of Jerusalem, has nothing specific to conclude, on these grounds, that Peter was with those who broke communion with Peter Mongos because of the *Henotikon*.

Cornelia Horn provides the most elaborated argumentation in favour of the view that Peter rejected the *Henotikon*. Her main arguments are based on two facts:

(37) In a large footnote 5, ROQUES, Pierre l'Ibérien..., 70–71, where he expresses his gratitude to Guillaumont for his consultation concerning Timotheos of Constantinople.

(38) PG 86/1, 45A. This reference is pointed out to Roques by Guillaumont.

(39) PG 86/1, 41B.

1. Peter the Iberian was the leader of the anti-Chalcedonian “monastic committee” in Egypt which examined the orthodoxy of Peter Mongus when he accepted the *Henotikon*,

2. Peter and Isaias were reluctant to accept an invitation of Zeno to Constantinople (the same argument as that of Roques, nr 2).⁴⁰

Indeed, the reason for the invitation of two authoritative monastic leaders to the capital was, most probably, an attempt to obtain additional confirmation of the religious policy of *Henotikon*. However, this does not mean that their reluctance to accept the invitation is proof that they themselves did not accept the *Henotikon*. Many other reasons are not less possible, especially those connected with the evading of vainglory. Moreover, as it seems, there was no serious problem with acceptance of the *Henotikon* in the Orient outside Egypt.⁴¹ Thus, Horn’s and Roques’ second argument is by no means decisive.

Horn’s first argument must be considered in more detail. In Horn’s résumé of the story, it looks like Peter the Iberian was among those monks who, finally, rejected communion with Peter Mongus and were expelled by the latter.⁴² But, in fact, the story (Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, VI, 1) runs as follows: “Then Peter the Iberian, the bishop of Gaza, who was sojourning there, and Elijah the monk, surnamed *the potter*, were appointed to consider and examine into these matters. And having examined into them, together with the council of the monks, they selected four of Peter’s [Peter Mongus’] discourses concerning the faith, and they said to him, ‘If thou dost agree to these, sign them’; and he signed them. Whereupon several of them entered into communion with him, because he thereby anathematised the Synod and the Tome, when he delivered those discourses in the ears of the people. However, the others remained unwilling to hold communion with Peter [Mongus]. And the latter, seeing this, took away the monastery of Bishop Theodore, and thrust out that wonderful man...” Then, Zachariah mentions one more name of an expelled monastic leader, Nephalius.⁴³

(40) HORN, *Asceticism...*, 104–105, with no reference to Roques.

(41) At least, the only schism that we know (outside Rome) provoked by acceptance of the *Henotikon* took place in Egypt, see above.

(42) HORN, *Asceticism...*, 105: “In front of that committee, Mongus defended his orthodoxy on the basis of four of his homilies, thus condemning Chalcedon with his own signature. Yet *in the eyes of the committee and especially in Peter’s eyes that was insufficient*. Apparently, Peter showed in this situation his most irreconcilable side. When Peter Mongus expelled the monks, who refused communion with him, it only made matters worse.” (Italics mine. — B.L.)

(43) Translation according to F. J. HAMILTON, E. W. BROOKS, *The Syriac Chronicle known as that of Zachariah of Mitylene*. Translated into English (Lon-

It is never stated, in Zachariah, that Peter the Iberian was among the monks who rejected communion with Peter Mongus. Instead, it is rather the opposite that is said. Peter the Iberian and the monk Elijah were the authors of the compromise idea to obtain from Peter Mongus his signature under his four earlier homilies containing anathematisation of Chalcedon. Peter Mongus did accept this condition which was proposed by none other than Peter the Iberian and Elijah. Thus, to count Peter the Iberian and Elijah among those who rejected communion with Peter Mongus would say that they suddenly changed their mind, apparently with no reason. Such a supposition seems to me absolutely without basis. The whole story from Zachariah Rhetor confirms nothing but acceptance of the *Henotikon* on the part of Peter the Iberian.

After having taken Zachariah's story as the first evidence of Peter's acceptance of the *Henotikon*, we are able to add, at least, two others:

1. The attitude of Severus of Antioch, the, future patriarch, toward Peter the Iberian.⁴⁴ Severus was always among those who accepted the *Henotikon*. Nevertheless, he, very probably, met Peter the Iberian personally and, in any case, esteemed him very much. Severus' monastic tonsure was performed in Peter's monastery, even if (soon) after the death of Peter. All this would be impossible if Peter was, from Severus' viewpoint, a schismatic.⁴⁵

2. Peter the Iberian's letter to John Rufus (*Plerophoriae*, 22) quoted above (Note 1): "...si tu vas à Antioche, tu seras troublé, puis convaincu par tes amis et par celui qui est maître là-bas; [et alors] ou bien tu te joindras à lui, ou bien tu tomberas dans [son] inimité s'il te renvoie." Only disadvantages of Peter the Fuller are discussed but, nevertheless, it goes as self-evident that it is he who is the legitimate patriarch of Antioch. This is the only reason why, from Peter the Iberian's viewpoint, subordination to him is theoretically possible, even if not reasonable. If Peter the Iberian had not accepted the *Henotikon*, his evaluation of

don, 1899) 134. Original: E. W. BROOKS, Zachariah Rhetor, *Historia ecclesiastica* (Louvain, 1953) (CSCO, 84; Syr 39) 3.

(44) On this, see especially HORN, *Asceticism...*, 108–109.

(45) ROQUES, Pierre l'Ibérien..., 76–77, erroneously considers one place in Zachariah's *Life of Severus* as having relation to Peter the Iberian. When Severus became patriarch, all the inhabitants of Antioch "considered him as second Peter" (M.-A. KUGENER, Zacharie le Scholastique. *Vie de Sévère* (Paris, 1907) (PO, 2, 1) 114). "L'éloge ne devait pas être médiocre, car ce même biographe rapproche Sévère des plus grands noms de la théologie et de l'éloquence, de Jean Chrysostome notamment," wrote Roques. However, it is clear that it is apostle Peter, the first bishop of Antioch, who is meant.

Peter the Fuller would have been quite different, excluding the very possibility of any subordination and communion.

Therefore, Honigmann's conviction that Peter the Iberian did acknowledge the *Henotikon* is in perfect accord with the historical evidence.⁴⁶

1.2.3. van Esbroeck's Reply to Roques

The reply to Roques is the most succinct. Indeed, the vision of John in about 444 showed not the exactly same heavens that are described in the *Corpus Areopagiticum*.⁴⁷ However, the distance between the vision and the formation of the earliest layer of the *Corpus* is not less than 20 years. Peter could reshape the earlier mystical experience of his friend. Therefore, Roques' considerations are not especially relevant to the problem of the authorship of the *Corpus*.

1.3. van Esbroeck's Main Contributions to the Issue

Having answered the criticisms put forward against Honigmann, van Esbroeck smoothed the way for himself. His own investigations were concentrated on two different fields: the first appearance of the *Corpus* and its further reshaping that resulted in the actually known collection of the 14 epistles, four long and ten short, patterned after the 14 epistles of Paul. The very idea that the *Corpus* passed through different editorial stages until appearing in its present shape was established before van Esbroeck⁴⁸ and now is without doubts.⁴⁹

(46) In her Introduction to the *Life of Peter the Iberian*, Horn rightly states that "Peter's followers were increasingly isolated after Sabas's appointment" (C. B. HORN, R. R. PHENIX JR, *John Rufus: The Lives of Peter the Iberian, Theodosius of Jerusalem, and the Monk Romanus*. Edited and Translated with an Introduction and Notes (Atlanta, GA, 2008) (Writings from the Greco-Roman world, 24) lvi). Such a step-by-step isolation was possible only if both monastic communities were initially in canonical communion with each other, that is, if both acknowledged the *Henotikon* and the patriarchs accepting it.

(47) Honigmann tried to interpret the structure of hierarchies seen by John the Eunuch as exactly the same as depicted by Dionysius. Thus, Roques' and Hausherr's criticism against this part of his argumentation was basically justified.

(48) Cf. especially B. BRONS, *Sekundäre Textpartien im Corpus Pseudo-Dionysiacum: Literarkritische Beobachtungen zu ausgewählten Textstellen, Nachrichten von der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen. Philos.-hist. Kl. 5* (1975) 99–140.

(49) Cf. especially VAN ESBOECK 1997 and PERCZEL 2008.

1.3.1. van Esbroeck's "Hagiographical Argument"

The main argument of van Esbroeck could be called "hagiographical" Indeed, the *Corpus Areopagiticum* contains a hagiographical legend and served to establish a new cult (at least, a specific cult of Dionysius and Hierotheos). Therefore, apart from other equally legitimated viewpoints, the *Corpus* could be analysed by the methods of critical hagiography. I share van Esbroeck's conviction that such an approach is the best way to reach the *Sitz im Leben* of the collection. I will consider van Esbroeck's "hagiographical argument" at length in the final part of the present study. It is sufficient now to state that, according to van Esbroeck, the vision of John the Eunuch took place on the very day of the feast of the Dormition of the Virgin, when the heavens opened and Christ descended to receive the soul of the Theotokos, and the feast of Dormition itself subsequently was a major point in Peter the Iberian's personal piety. Thus, after the death of John in about 464, Peter wrote the core of the future *Corpus Areopagiticum* considering himself as a mere interpreter, if not simply a scribe of the teaching of his cellmate.

The "hagiographical argument" was immediately attacked by Ritter⁵⁰ who reacted to the first unpublished communication of van Esbroeck at the Eleventh Oxford Patristic Conference in 1991 (thus, without the full text of the article, he simply misunderstood him in several other points). Ritter pointed out that it is only a scholion of John of Scythopolis that is the earliest explanation of the scene in *DN* 3:2 as the Dormition, and so, we simply do not know what was meant by the author. We will return to this argument later.

1.3.2. Early Editorial History of the *Corpus Areopagiticum*

The names of Dionysius and Hierotheos appeared in the text of the *Corpus* at a later stage, when also the "Dormition account" in *DN* 3:2 was added (this account was pointed out among the "secondary parts" of the text already by Brons in 1975) as well as most (if not all) short letters. At least, the tenth letter (to John the Theologian) must be considered as an attempt to explain an "anachronistic" quotation from Ignatius of Antioch in *DN* 4:12: a reaction to an objection posterior even to the *Preface* of John of Scythopolis.⁵¹ It is very likely that the scholies of John were added to a recension that did not contain most (if not all) short letters.

(50) RITTER, Vorwort..., 16–17.

(51) Thus according to VAN ES BROECK 1997, 180.

John of Scythopolis, according to van Esbroeck (1997), had a hand in the early distribution, if not early reshaping of the *Corpus*. Thus, van Esbroeck established a chronology of his life in contrast with the commonly accepted one (see Note 3, "John of Scythopolis' chronology," below).

The purpose for the radical reshaping of Peter the Iberian's work that resulted in our *Corpus Areopagiticum* was, according to van Esbroeck (1993), the need to answer the Palestinian monastic Origenism as it was formulated in the so-called *Book of Hierotheos* in the 490s. Of course, this time, once more, van Esbroeck goes against the scholarly consensus considering the *Book of Hierotheos* as exploiting the already established reputation of the teacher of the author of the *Corpus Areopagiticum*.⁵² However, van Esbroeck's appreciation of the *Book of Hierotheos* could be reconciled with different hypotheses of its provenance, including the authorship of Stephen bar Sudaili. There is here a lot of room for further research.

Note 3: John of Scythopolis' Chronology

Van Esbroeck published his study (1997) almost simultaneously with that of Rorem and Lamoreaux,⁵³ and so, there was no reference to each other in their analyses. Rorem and Lamoreaux repeated the arguments of Honigsmann (in a work with no relation to his thesis on Dionysius⁵⁴) allowing to situate the start of John of Scythopolis' literary activity as being not earlier than the early sixth century. The difference is in the interpretation of the same documents: Photius, *Bibliotheca*, codd. 95 and 107.

Cod. 107 is a detailed summary of the work *Against John of Scythopolis* written by some Basil of Cilicia. Photius said that he was writing under the patriarch of Antioch Flavian (498–518). Rorem and Lamoreaux rightly observe that his own attitude was not Nestorianism but some sort of strict

(52) Cf. K. PINGGÉRA, *All-Erlösung und All-Einheit. Studien zum 'Buch des heiligen Hierotheos' und seiner Rezeption in der syrisch-orthodoxen Theologie* (Wiesbaden, 2002) (Sprachen und Kulturen des christlichen Orients, 10) 25.

(53) P. ROREM, J. C. LAMOREAUX, *John of Scythopolis and the Dionysian Corpus. Annotating the Areopagite* (Oxford, 1998) 28–32.

(54) E. HONIGSMANN, *Évêques et évêchés monophysites d'Asie antérieure au VI^e siècle* (Louvain, 1951) (CSCO, 127; Subs, 2) 81; cf. L. PERRONE, *La chiesa di Palestina e controversie christologiche, dal concilio di Efeso (431) al secondo concilio di Costantinopoli (553)* (Brescia, 1980) (Testi e ricerche di scienze religiose, 18) 244.

Chalcedonism.⁵⁵ However, following Honigmann and Perrone, they think that the date under Flavian is fictive: the author was writing much later, during the theopaschite controversy that started in 519. "...Basil was attempting to arrogate to himself the authority of Flavian, the resolute opponent of Philoxenus, the same Flavian who was eventually exiled (512) to Petra for his defence of Chalcedon."⁵⁶

Now we know, and not least of all due to the studies of van Esbroeck, that the strict Chalcedonian party continued to exist in the epoch of the *Henotikon*,⁵⁷ and thus, such polemics as we see in the *Against John of Scythopolis* would be appropriate even then. Moreover, Rorem and Lamoreaux themselves have made an important observation: "Neo-Chalcedonian objections to the theology of Basil and others like him may perhaps explain two peculiar passages in the *Scholia* (*SchEH* 181.10, *SchCH* 72.5) which mention a sect associated with the Nestorians and called 'Basileans'".⁵⁸ Such a sect, if it was Chalcedonian, would be especially probable before the abrogation of the *Henotikon* under Justin I.

Thus, the arguments against the date stated explicitly in our source are too stretched. And so, van Esbroeck is right in taking the data of Cod. 107 at face value. Moreover, it is important to him that only the patriarch of Antioch is mentioned: this suggests that the polemics between Basil of Cilicia and John of Scythopolis took place in Antioch.

Cod. 95 is John of Scythopolis' own work (*Against the Aposchists*) written as a reply to an anonymous author who entitled his treatise *Against Nestorius* but, in fact, according to John, aimed at the doctrine of the Council of Chalcedon. John wrote a detailed refutation of the followers of Eutychius and Dioscorus in twelve books. This work was commissioned to him by a bishop (ἀρχιερέυς) named Julian. Indeed, to van Esbroeck, this Julian is the patriarch of Antioch (471–475) alternative to Peter the Fuller who was certainly in need of such antimonophysite works. Honigmann, Perrone, and Rorem and Lamoreaux are forced to opt for either some Julian of Bostra (opposed to Severus' consecration in 512, fled to Palestine in 515, and restored to his see in 518) or a completely unknown person. Needless to say that it is only van Esbroeck's solution that I consider natural and verisimilar. Rorem and Lamoreaux seem to miss the point, in particular, because they pose an irrelevant question as to whether "Pho-

(55) ROREM, LAMOREAUX, *John of Scythopolis*..., 31–32.

(56) *Ibid.*, 31, n. 42.

(57) Cf. LOURIÉ 2007.

(58) ROREM, LAMOREAUX, *John of Scythopolis*..., 31, n. 46.

tius meant the patriarch of Antioch" or rather somebody else,⁵⁹ while we need to know what was meant in the source of Photius, regardless of what meant Photius.

The chronology of John of Scythopolis' life is important for dating his *Scholies* to the *Corpus Areopagiticum*, even if the decisive argument for their dating is the date of John's *Preface* whose genuine recension is preserved only in Syriac.⁶⁰ This *Preface* was added to a recension earlier than what we know in Greek. Its date is presumably the same as the date of the scholies of John and it must be very close to the date of the first publication of the *Corpus* after its pseudonymisation. While van Esbroeck was reluctant to propose a specific date for the scholies, we can apply his approach to the data collected by Rorem and Lamoreaux.⁶¹ Thus, we have to accept their first *terminus post quem* 518 as the date of the beginning of the schism between Severus and Julian of Halicarnassus (mentioned two times in the scholies) but reject their second *terminus post quem* 532 (beginning of the Origenist quarrels in the Laura of St Sabbas) taking into account another Origenist quarrel in Palestine in about 500 connected with the appearance of the *Book of Hierotheos*. Their third *terminus post quem*, 537/8, based on John's quotation from the anti-Origenist works of Antipater of Bostra (*fl ca* 460) seems to me equally unsubstantiated. "This [quotation from Antipater. — B. L.] makes it possible to be even more precise," said Rorem and Lamoreaux, "for at the beginning of the hegumenate of Gelasius (537/8) Antipater's anti-Origenist treatises first appear in the sixth century fight against Origen, being supported by the monks of the monastery of St Sabas."⁶² Their reference here to the *Life of Sabbas*, 84, by Cyril of Scythopolis says nothing about any rediscovering of Antipater's works but simply about reading of them. Nothing is mentioned in this source that would prevent John from reading them earlier.

Another line of argumentation for the late chronology of John's life follows from the chronological data collected by Rorem and Lamoreaux concerning the date of John's alleged episcopate.⁶³ Leontius of Jerusalem and Sophronius of Jerusalem call John *bishop* of Scythopolis. If he actually was the bishop, our early chronology is impossible. Indeed, for the period up to about 530 we know, from different sources, that John certainly was a layman. The name of the bishop of Scythopolis between *ca.* 518 and some

(59) ROREM, LAMOREAUX, *John of Scythopolis...*, 29–30.

(60) VAN ESBRÖECK 1997.

(61) ROREM, LAMOREAUX, *John of Scythopolis...*, 37–38.

(62) *Ibid.*, 38.

(63) It is Gregory Benevitch who drew my attention to this problem.

date after 536 is Theodosius. The next known bishop of Scythopolis was Theodore (*ca* 548 – *after* 558/559). Rorem and Lamoreaux opt for the period from a date after 536 up to *ca* 548 as the time of John's episcopacy.⁶⁴ This date is too late if we accept that John was an authoritative theologian in the early 470s, more than 60 years earlier, when Julian of Antioch asked him to write a theological treatise. It is theoretically possible but unlikely that he was in his twenties in the early 470s and it is even more unlikely that he was in his eighties when he was consecrated bishop in about 560 (the probability of the latter event is equal to the product of the probability of the former and the probability of John's consecration in about 560 in the hypothetical case if his age was then appropriate for consecration). However, the witnesses of John's episcopacy are not as reliable as it seems.

Recently, Dirk Krausmüller proposed to return to a seventh-century date for Leontius of Jerusalem, making him a contemporary of Sophronius of Jerusalem, and so, not a contemporary of John of Scythopolis.⁶⁵ Therefore, Leontius' witness is not of any exceptional value. Both seventh-century authors refer to John as to a bishop of Scythopolis who wrote against the Monophysites in defence of the Chalcedon. Leontius of Jerusalem is more precise attributing to this bishop John disclosure of the Apollinarian forgeries used by the Monophysites among their *testimonia*. Sophronius (or, maybe, Photius in his paraphrase of this lost Sophronius' work known in his paraphrase only⁶⁶) calls John "the bishop of Scythopolis, who is among the saints." The first fact (anti-monophysite literary activity) is compatible with our John of Scythopolis as well as with many other figures, the second fact (disclosure of the Apollinarian forgeries) is quite peculiar but not known from any other source in relation to our John of Scythopolis even if it is easily compatible with his image, the third fact (veneration as a saint) is unique to Sophronius (or Photius) but could

(64) ROREM, LAMOREAUX, *John of Scythopolis...*, 23–26. Their argument against a post-558/559 period is the date of Leontius of Jerusalem's witness in his *Against the Monophysites* (PG 86/2, 1865BD): they follow Patrick T. R. Gray's dating of the latter as between 538 and 544. This argument is, in my opinion, wrong (see below). In any case, however, it is out of probability that John, if he was a renowned theologian already in the 470s, was still a bishop in 560s. Such a late date of his episcopacy is unlikely even if Rorem and Lamoreaux's chronology of his life is correct.

(65) D. KRAUSMÜLLER, Leontius of Jerusalem, a theologian of the 7th century, *JTS* 52 (2001) 637–657, and, for a discussion (taking into account Gray's criticisms), LOURIÉ, *История византийской философии...*, 517–521.

(66) A patristic florilegium added to Sophronius' *Epistula synodalis ad Serigium*, is known from Photius' *Bibliotheca*, cod. 231.

be implied in Leontius of Jerusalem's reference, too. Thus, it is theoretically acceptable that both Sophronius and Leontius refer to a bishop of Scythopolis named John whose episcopacy took place either in between of *ca* 536 and *ca* 548 or after *ca* 560, different from our John of Scythopolis while possibly already confounded with him. However, the most natural solution is to accept that John of our seventh-century authors is the same theologian as the author of the *scholia*, and to consider John's alleged episcopacy as a post-mortem addition to his biography, which was made out of reverence to his person as an authoritative teacher.⁶⁷ In both cases, there is no necessity to reconsider the chronology of John's life with the purpose of giving him some time for remaining a bishop.

Therefore, we have to date the *scholia* to the period shortly after 518, most probably, somewhere in the 520s, but not in between 537 and 543, as Rorem and Lamoreaux thought.

1.4. *van Esbroeck's Ideas in the Light of New Facts*

From this section on I will sketch the scholarship after 1997 related to Honigmann's and van Esbroeck's thesis directly or indirectly and add some of my own, previously unpublished, considerations.

1.4.1. The Date of the *Historia Euthymiaca* as the *Corpus' terminus ante quem*

The so-called *Historia Euthymiaca* is preserved in several fragments of unequal length and even more unequal fame among scholars. The most famous fragment deals with a legend of the Dormition put in the mouth of the patriarch of Jerusalem Juvenal at the time of the Council of Chalcedon (451). When Pulcheria and Marcian ask him about the Dormition, he refers to Dionysius the Areopagite and quotes *DN* 3:2.

The *Historia* has been dated by Wenger (1955) to a large interval from the sixth to the eighth century, but van Esbroeck (1975–1976) opted for the sixth century (on the ground of a new document in Arabic). In my 2007 paper I attributed the whole work to the patriarch of Constantinople Euthymius/Euphemius (490–496, †515), most likely, after his deposition.⁶⁸

(67) As it seems, in the seventh century, the cult of John of Scythopolis as a saint was a *fait accompli*. Pope Agatho, too, refers to him in his letter to the Sixth Ecumenical Council (680); cf. ROREM, LAMOREAUX, *John of Scythopolis...*, 23.

(68) LOURIÉ 2007.

This date fits perfectly the time of publication of the pseudonymised recension of the *Corpus Areopagiticum*, but obliges one to reconsider its *terminus ante quem*. So far, the *terminus ante quem* was established by Honigmann on the grounds of the earliest quotation from the *Corpus* in a Syriac translation of anti-Julianistic works of Severus (*Adversus Apologiam Iuliani* and *Contra Additiones*) whose manuscript is dated to 528 according to the colophon. Indeed, these works of Severus were translated into Syriac by Paul of Callinicum almost immediately, but, nevertheless, this date of the manuscript of the Syriac version would presuppose a date between 520 and 525 for the Greek original (and certainly not earlier than 518, the date of the start of the anti-Julianistic polemics). My attribution of the *Historia Euthymiaca* leads to the *terminus ante quem* 515 for the *Corpus Areopagiticum*, that is, closer to van Esbroeck's dating (*ca* 500).

1.4.2. DN 3:2 as a Dormition Scene

Is DN 3:2 describing the Dormition? I was a witness of vehement polemics between van Esbroeck and Ritter at the Twelfth Oxford Patristic Conference in 1995, but, unfortunately, it has never resulted in further publications.

After Ritter (1994), several scholars supported his doubts.⁶⁹ However, nobody proposed any alternative. The only exception is István Perczel⁷⁰ with ingenuity so characteristic of him. His idea is the following.

"Consider for example the famous story from DN 3.2, which is allegedly the author's eyewitness account of the Dormition of Mary, the Mother of God, in Jerusalem. The text, however, does not say anything like this. It only speaks about an event where "Dionysius," "Timothy" the addressee of his treatises, "many of their holy brethren," as well as "James the Brother-of-God" and "Peter, the coryphee and most venerable Head of the theologians," as well as the author's teacher, the "holy Hierotheus," all "gathered together to contemplate the Body that is Principle-of-Life and Receiver-of-God." After this contemplation, "it was judged just that all the high-priests celebrate, according to their capacities, the infinitely powerful Goodness of the weakness of the Principle-of-Divinity." In his commentary on this passage, John hazards a guess: "perhaps he [Dionysius] calls 'Body that is Principle-of-Life and Receiver-of-

(69) E. g., PINGGÉRA, *All-Erlösung und All-Einheit...*, 25.

(70) PERCZEL 2008, 558–559.

God' that of the holy Mother-of-God at her Dormition." From this hypothesis, however, grew the whole legend of Dionysius' and Hierotheus' presence at the Dormition, finally canonised in the service to Saint Dionysius on October 3 by Theophanes the Confessor.⁷¹

My reading of this text is that here "Dionysius" is not inventing a fictitious story but is encoding a real one; the gathering was that of bishops contemporary to "Dionysius," who are mentioned under pseudonyms, too, so that "James the Brother-of-God" should be the bishop of Jerusalem and "Peter," apparently adorned by the attributes of the "Apostolic See," the bishop of Rome, while the contemplation of the Lifegiving and Godbearing Body is a concelebration of the Eucharist followed by the "celebration of the powerful Goodness of God's weakness," that is, a discussion on the Incarnation. So I believe that here Dionysius describes a council in which he took part, possibly the Council of Chalcedon."

I certainly do agree with Perczel's approach when he treats this legend as an allegoric presentation of apostolic sees, even if I do not agree that Peter is here presenting Rome. I think he presents Antioch, a not less "Petrine" see, quite actual to the historical context of the *Corpus Areopagiticum*. Even in the case that we reject van Esbroeck's hypothesis completely, we have to take into consideration that the four large treatises of the *Corpus*, including *DN*, are addressed to Timotheos, that is, to the see of Ephesus, within the patriarchate of Antioch. Moreover, in any case, the *Corpus* is to be dated to a period when Rome was separated from the whole East (482–519) and could hardly be any concern to a more or less important Eastern Church faction. The history of patriarch Euthymius of Constantinople who failed to re-establish communion with Rome because of his refusal to break the policy of the *Henotikon* is a demonstration of the real (minor) value of Rome even in the eyes of the most Chalcedonian groups.

Perczel's identification of the "Lifegiving and Godbearing Body" (τοῦ ζωοαρχικοῦ καὶ θεοδόχου σώματος) as the Eucharist is highly problematic. In our passage, the author clearly distinguishes the "contemplation" of this Body and the liturgy that took place only "after"

(71) In fact, Theophanes (ninth cent.) wrote the liturgical canon (hymn) that implies that the commemoration was already existing, because Theophanes' large canon-writing program was a part of a liturgical reform and by no means an introduction of cults of dozens of new saints. Thus, Perczel's dating of Dionysius' commemoration to October 3 is not correct.

the contemplation (εἶτα ἐδόκει μετὰ θεᾶν ὑμνῆσαι τοὺς ἱεράρχας...). If the “Body” here is the Eucharist, one should expect rather the reverse sequence.

In the situation of the Council of Chalcedon one could expect to see here a specific role of the body (holy relics) of the martyr Euphemia, but epithets like “lifegiving” and especially “Godbearing” [lit., “God-accepting”] are, in this case, unlikely.

Therefore, it would be safer to return to the previous hypothesis of John of Scythopolis that it is the body of Theotokos that is meant. It would be especially safer now, when we can accept for John of Scythopolis, an earlier date, closer to the appearance of the *Corpus*. Indeed, Perczel has a point when he says: “This example serves to illustrate how remote we are with John’s edition from the original context of the CD.”⁷² I agree here with Perczel while, unlike him, I think that John’s guess about the “Body” is right; nevertheless, John already needs to guess instead of being certain. But I would mean here not the distance between John and the earliest pseudonymised edition of the *Corpus*, but that between John and the *Urtext* of Peter the Iberian.

Now we have other reasons to confirm John of Scythopolis’ guess and to resolve the doubts of Ritter.

The testimony of the *Historia Euthymiaca* is to be considered now as another witness of an early tradition of the comprehension of DN 3:2, even earlier than the “re-dated” John of Scythopolis. Moreover, the agreement between both *Historia Euthymiaca* and John would reveal their common roots in an even earlier tradition of the exegesis of Dionysius. But “earlier” than 515 means “contemporaneous” to the publication of the *Corpus*. There could be nothing earlier than that.

Finally, the monograph by Stephen Shoemaker on the Dormition accounts⁷³ could help to reveal some of van Esbroeck’s too succinct formulations. This monograph illustrates at length the context that remained implicit — despite being of great importance — in van Esbroeck’s papers (which are so “esoteric” and almost unreadable to those who do not consider the work of van Esbroeck as a whole).

(72) PERCZEL 2008, 559.

(73) S. J. SHOEMAKER, *The Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary’s Dormition and Assumption* (Oxford, 2002) (Oxford Early Christian Studies).

Starting from the middle of the fifth century and up to the time of Justinian, different Dormition accounts appeared in significant numbers (see Shoemaker's 2002 monograph following the earlier studies of van Esbroeck and Wenger). The earliest preserved accounts datable to the fourth century were rescued from almost complete obscurity, and a large amount of new accounts appeared. All this was in connection with the establishment and further development of the new feast of the Dormition in Palestine. This new form of the cult of Theotokos, established sometime on the eve of the Council of Chalcedon in the context of competition between Constantinople and Ephesus in the 440s,⁷⁴ became especially important as a mean of the hagiographic expression of the post-Chalcedonian Christological discussions. Therefore, any legendary scene conforming to the accounts of the gathering of apostles before the deathbed of Theotokos would be comprehended, if it occurs in a text in the second half of the fifth century or the early sixth century, as the Dormition scene. This was the context of the hagiographical literature of the epoch.

Part Two: van Esbroeck's Ideas on the Crossroad of Different Approaches

There recently have been several studies once again searching the *Sitz im Leben* of the *Corpus Areopagiticum* from the beginning. Some of them went against van Esbroeck's and Honigmann's thesis, without any direct polemics or even mention of it.

2.1. Theological Approach

The approach that I call "theological" was and still is presented by István Perszel who published a long series of papers on the *Corpus Dionysiacum* starting from, as early as, 1999 until now (his latest 2008 article was reprinted in 2009). Perszel scanned the theological doctrines which appeared over one hundred years from the middle of the fifth century to the middle of the sixth century and pointed out any parallels or sharp oppositions to those of Dionysius. I would admit that he has been extremely successful in such a search, to the extent that no theological study of the *Corpus* could be possible now without taking into account his observations. Moreover, he contributed to the study of the text of the earliest pseudonymised recension in Greek that

(74) See on this especially LOURIÉ 2007.

is partially accessible through the earliest Syriac version⁷⁵ and to the study of the text of the *Letter IV*.⁷⁶

All this said and despite my admiration of Perczel's ability to find theological correspondences between the texts of the relevant epoch, I think that his historical reconstruction contains a serious methodological flaw. Dealing with the theological texts in general and especially with such texts as the *Corpus Areopagiticum* that was infinitely reread and rethought by almost all theological parties since the very moment of its appearance, we need some firm extra-theological landmarks allowing to locate its genuine theological sense within a large continuum of possibilities. This is why I think that it is the hagiographical approach that could be here the most effective. And this is why I think that the theological approach has to be applied only after all other approaches have been applied.

Otherwise, as we see in these studies of Perczel, we can obtain a more or less plausible explanation of mutual relations of some texts, but we will still be unable to obtain a demonstration of the uniqueness of such a decision. And this is a methodological and simply logical flaw.

Such demonstrations of uniqueness are, in patristic studies, very often obvious and, thus, could remain implicit. Such is the case when we know well the historical circumstances of the time when our theo-

(75) I. PERCZEL, Une théologie de la lumière: Denys l'Aréopagite et Evagre le Pontique, *Revue des études Augustiniennes*, 45 (1999) 79–120; IDEM, Denys l'Aréopagite, lecteur d'Origène, in: W. A. BIENERT, U. KÜHNEWEG (hrsg.), *Origeniana Septima. Origenes in den Auseinandersetzungen des 4. Jahrhunderts* (Leuven, 1999) 673–710; IDEM, Sergius of Reshaina's Syriac Translation of the *Dionysian Corpus*: Some Preliminary Remarks, in: C. BAFFIONI (a cura di), *La diffusione dell'eredità classica nell'età tardo-antica e medievale. Filologia, storia, dottrina* (Alessandria, 2000) 79–94; IDEM, Once Again on Dionysius the Areopagite and Leontius of Byzantium, in: T. BOIADJIEV, G. KAPRIEV, A. SPEER (hrsg.), *Die Dionysius-Rezeption im Mittelalter* (Turnhout, 2000) 41–85; IDEM, "Théologiens" et "magiciens" dans le *Corpus dionysien*, *Adamantius* 7 (2001) 54–75; IDEM, Pseudo-Dionysius and Palestinian Origenism, in: J. PATRICH (ed.), *The Sabbaitic Heritage in the Orthodox Church from the Fifth Century to the Present* (Leuven, 2001) 261–282, and in a number of other publications; cf. bibliography in PERCZEL 2008. Perczel is now working on a monograph dedicated to Dionysius and Origenism.

(76) I. PERCZEL, The Christology of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite: the *Fourth Letter* in Its Indirect and Direct Text Traditions, *Le Muséon* 117 (2004) 409–446.

logical documents were produced. Sometimes, however, they turn out to be an important part of the whole theological investigation. This is especially true in the case of the *Corpus Areopagiticum*. However, this component of Perczel's studies is meagre and not convincing (as we have seen above in the case of the Dormition scene). The author of the *Corpus* as the object of Perczel's reconstruction does have very elaborated theological views, but we do not know any landmark of his life on the earth, outside his Platonic world of ideas. Perczel produces, so to say, some kind of Platonic idea of the author rather than an image of a man in blood and flesh. This forms to me enough grounds not to accept his reconstruction even on the level of ideas.

Beside these grounds "not to accept," there are some grounds to reject his reconstruction. According to Perczel, the author of the *Corpus* is an Origenist representing the kind of Origenism condemned by the Constantinople councils of 543 and 553 and very close to that of the *Book of Hierotheos*. His Christology was that of the strict Chalcedonians, influenced by Theodore of Mopsuestia, that is, crypto-Nestorian from a "neo-Chalcedonian" point of view.⁷⁷

Karl Pinggéra in a recent article⁷⁸ addressed the whole cycle of Perczel on the Origenism of the *Corpus*. In particular, he explained, once more, a sharp distinction between the latter and the *Book of Hierotheos* which is really Origenistic and falls under the sixth century condemnations of Origenism. Here I am not in a position to undertake a similar analysis of Perczel's Christological studies of the *Corpus*. It seems to me enough now to note that the legacy of the Antiochean theologians of the fourth century (among whom Theodore of Mopsuestia was the leading figure) has never been usurped by the open or "crypto-" Nestorians. It was shared by them with the Monophysites, especially Severus of Antioch. For instance, in Severus' treatment of the humanity of Christ before the resurrection, there were obvious parallels with Nestorian (and, of course, Theodore of Mopsuestia's) treatment of the humanity of Christ, and such facts were pointed out by the Julianists. I suspect that Perczel's criteria, if they were applied to Severus of

(77) Indeed, let us add, it would be difficult to imagine any Origenist Christology that would be not, in some sense, "Nestorian"; cf., for the sixth – 9th centuries material, LOURIÉ, *Un autre monothélisme...*, and IDEM, *Le second iconoclasme en recherche de la vraie doctrine*, SP 34 (2000) 145–169.

(78) K. PINGGÉRA, *Die Bildwelt im „Buch des heiligen Hierotheos“ — ein philosophischer Mythos?*, in: M. TAMCKE (hrsg.), *Mystik — Metapher — Bild. Beiträge des VII. Makarios-Symposiums* (Göttingen, 2008) 29–41.

Antioch, would reveal him to be a crypto-Nestorian. In fact, this is the methodology already applied to Severus by Julian of Halicarnassus, and so, it is far from being senseless.

In some way, all of them — Theodore of Mopsuestia, “open” and “crypto-” Nestorians, and Severus — considered the humanity of Christ to be the part of Christ that forms, in some way, another subject in Christ beside God (in the case of Severus, such was his doctrine of the corruptibility of the body of Christ, rejected, in this sense, by both Chalcedonians and later Severians⁷⁹). All the species of Origenists were in the same camp. In the opposite camp, however, there was a tradition of rethinking and reusing the passages of the earlier “two subject Christology” authors in a “one subject Christology” sense. I do not see how to unravel such confusion without setting landmarks on the ground of the real historical earth.

Instead of criticizing every detail in Perczel’s Christological conclusions I will limit myself to the history of only one but absolutely key term in Dionysius’ allegedly crypto-Nestorian Christology, *θεανδρική ἐνέργεια* (see the section 2.3.3 below).

2.2. Philosophical Approach

It was the philosophical approach that made it possible to discover, in the late nineteenth century, close parallels and even quotes in Dionysius from Proclus.⁸⁰ Recently it resulted in discovering many correspondences with Damascius⁸¹ which has culminated in the attempt

(79) Cf. LOURIE, *Un autre monothélisme...*, with further bibliography.

(80) Cf. also, in recent scholarship, H. D. Saffrey’s search of “lien objectifs” between Dionysius and Proclus: H. D. SAFFREY, *Un lien objectif entre le Pseudo-Denys et Proclus*, *SP* 9 (1966) (TU, 94) 98–105 [reprint: IDEM, *Recherches sur le Néoplatonisme après Plotin* (Paris, 1990) (*Histoire des doctrines de l’antiquité classique*, 14) 227–234]; IDEM, *Nouveaux liens objectifs entre le Pseudo-Denys et Proclus*, *Revue des Sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 63 (1979) 3–16 [reprint: IDEM, *Recherches sur le Néoplatonisme...*, 235–248]; IDEM, *Le lien le plus objectif entre le Pseudo-Denys et Proclus*, in: J. HAMESSE (éd.), *Roma, magistra mundi. Itineraria culturae medievalis, Mélanges offerts au Père L. E. Boyle à l’occasion de son 75^e anniversaire* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1998) (*Textes et études du Moyen Age*, 10) 791–810 [reprint: IDEM, *Le Néoplatonisme après Plotin* (Paris, 2000) (*Histoire des doctrines de l’antiquité classique*, 24) 239–252]. Saffrey believes that the author of the *Corpus* is an otherwise unknown Christian neoplatonic whose mind has been shaped by Proclus through reading.

(81) S. LILLA, *Pseudo-Dénys l’Aréopagite, Porphyre et Damascius*, in: DE ANDIA (éd.), *Denys l’Aréopagite et sa postérité...*, 117–152, here 135–152, but also

to identify the author of the *Corpus* with Damascius by Carlo Maria Mazzucchi.⁸² The very idea that Dionysius the Areopagite could be none other than Damascius was first proposed by Alexandre Kojève (Kozhevnikov), a French specialist in Hegel, in a personal letter to Mazzucchi in 1964.

The lists of parallels between Dionysius and Damascius, especially that presented by Lilla, are, indeed, impressive. Salvatore Lilla and Rosemary Griffith take for granted that the direction of borrowing was from Damascius to Dionysius and not *vice versa*. Perczel has rightly noted⁸³ that such a way of thinking is a *petitio principii* unless one has first demonstrated that Damascius' activity took place earlier than the publication of the *Corpus*. Perczel himself believes that Dionysius was earlier than Damascius⁸⁴, who died after 532 and wrote his academic writings before 529 (according to Westerink, mostly in the 520s⁸⁵). Lilla is imprecise about the date of Dionysius which he accepts. Griffith would like "to push the date of the Dionysian corpus even further forward," including such a date as 529 AD⁸⁶ (that betrays her unawareness of the Monophysite theological traditions where a reference to the *Corpus* appeared first).

Mazzucchi resolved the debate on the priority between Damascius and Dionysius seemingly in the most economic way, but, in fact, at the cost of a fantastic portrait of Damascius as a pagan spy-subversive acting in the Christian camp. Indeed, the Ockham razor is not the best tool for writing fiction.

Perczel's interpretation of the parallels between Dionysius and Damascius seems to me the only realistic one: "the similarities...

R. GRIFFITH, Neo-Platonism and Christianity: Pseudo-Dionysius and Damascius, *SP* 29 (1997) 238–243.

(82) C. M. MAZZUCCHI, Damascio, autore del *Corpus Dionysiacum*, e il dialogo *Περὶ Πολιτικῆς Ἐπιστήμης*, *Λεον* 80 (2006) 299–334.

(83) PERCZEL, The Christology of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite..., 421, n. 27.

(84) Cf. an explication of his reasons in PERCZEL 2008.

(85) L. G. WESTERINK, Damascius, commentateur de Platon, in: C. J. DE VOGEL, H. DÖRRIE, E. ZUM BRUNN (éds.), *Le Néoplatonisme. Actes du colloque international du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Royaumont, 9–13 juin 1969* (Paris, 1971) 253–260 [reprinted in: IDEM, *Texts and Studies in Neoplatonism and Byzantine Literature. Collected Papers* (Amsterdam, 1980) 271–278].

(86) GRIFFITH, Neo-Platonism and Christianity..., 243.

should be attributed to the general atmosphere of the school to which both authors belonged, rather than to any literary dependence".⁸⁷

Seconding Perczel, I think that there is no need to reconsider the previously established dates of the *Corpus* on the grounds of these newly detected parallels with Damascius.

2.3. Philological Approach

I define here "the Philological Approach" as a study of the *Corpus Areopagiticum* in the context of non-theological and non-philosophical literature. Indeed, regardless to its theological and philosophical contents, the *Corpus* can be considered as a high-quality literary work. Such studies became important to the search of the *Sitz im Leben* of Dionysius after keen observations of the late Sergei S. Averintsev, a brilliant Russian scholar in classic philology.⁸⁸

In the late Roman Empire, "[t]o capture a clever and able poet like Claudian was like gaining control of a leading newspaper."⁸⁹ Church politics were not exempt from this rule. This is why the history of the poetry of this time could not be less important for patristic studies, than the history of hagiography.

2.3.1. Dionysius and Nonnus: a Fundamental Stylistic Unity

Averintsev set the *Corpus* into the context of two large poems of the middle of the fifth century, one of a pagan poet, another of a Christian poet. One poem is dedicated to the god Dionysus (and its title is *Διο-νυσιακά*), another one is a paraphrase of the Gospel of John. However, both poems are ascribed to the same author, Nonnus of Panopolis (*fl ca* second quarter of the fifth cent.⁹⁰). And this is not all: the gos-

(87) PERCZEL, The Christology of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite..., 421, n. 27.

(88) С. С. АВЕРИНЦЕВ, *Поэтика ранневизантийской литературы* [*Poetics of Early Byzantine Literature*] (Москва, 1977) 137–140 [the monograph is available in several reprints and in Italian translation: S. S. AVERINCEV, *L'anima e lo specchio: l'universo della poetica bizantina*. Tr. G. Ghini (Bologna, 1988) (Collezione di testi e di studi)]. Unfortunately, this work remains unknown to the Western students of Areopagite.

(89) A. CAMERON, Wandering Poets. A Literary Movement in Byzantine Egypt, *Historia* 14 (1965) 470–509, here 502.

(90) Cf. A. CAMERON, The Empress and the Poet, in: J. J. WINKLER, G. WILLIAMS (eds.), *Later Greek Literature* (Cambridge—New York, 1982) (Yale Classical Studies, 27) 217–289.

pel paraphrase quotes extensively from the poem on Dionysus, sometimes in a rather risky manner (*e.g.*, the words shown to describe Peter swimming are taken verbatim from a voyeuristic scene depicting Zeus looking at Semela swimming *Gospel paraphrase* 21:45–46 = *Dionysiaka* 7:185–187,189).

Averintsev managed to demonstrate a fundamental stylistic unity between the two poems ascribed to Nonnus, on the one hand, and the *Corpus Areopagiticum*, on the other. All of them, according to Averintsev, share the following fundamental feature: they are not trying to find out precise and graphic descriptions but, instead, try to describe their objects through enumerating things that are *not* these objects. These things form a circumference whose centre is the object to be described. This procedure is by no means trivial. Everyone can easily recall how important this manner is in Dionysius' way of expressing his idea of "apophatic theology." Stylistic differences between Dionysius and neoplatonic philosophers explaining their ideas on the "apophatic" way of knowledge are obvious. The corresponding feature of Dionysius' style is preceded by Nonnus and not by philosophers. So far I have summarized the main lines of Averintsev's argument.

2.3.2. Nonnus' Literary Network

Going further, we meet Nonnus in close connection with the milieu of Empress Eudocia. I wrote on this in detail in LOURIÉ 2001, but now I will add to the data from this article some new facts.

Eudocia was a poet herself,⁹¹ and even an author of another gospel paraphrase (in Homeric centons). However, the most brilliant Christian poet of the epoch was Cyrus Panopolitanus, a native of the same Egyptian town as Nonnus and his (most probably, a bit younger) con-

(91) Cf. now M. D. USHER, *Homeric Stitchings: The Homeric Centos of the Empress Eudocia* (Lanham, MD, 1998). The same author republished Eudocia's works based on a new and quite important manuscript evidence: M. D. USHER, *Homero-centones Eudociae Augustae* (Stuttgart–Leipzig, 1999) (BSGRT), replacing the earlier edition of A. LUDWICH in the same series [*Eudociae Augustae, Procli Lycii, Claudiani carminum graecorum reliquiae accedunt Blemyomachiae fragmenta* (Lipsiae, 1897) 1–114]. Cf. also M. D. USHER, Prolegomenon to the Homeric Centos, *American Journal of Philology* 118 (1997) 305–321; P. VAN DUEN, The poetical writings of the Empress Eudocia: An evaluation, in: J. DEN BOEFT, A. HILHORST (eds.), *Early Christian poetry: a collection of essays* (Leiden–New York–Köln, 1993) (VC Supp., 22) 273–282.

temporary, deeply influenced by Nonnus in his poetic work.⁹² At the same time, Cyrus was a high imperial official close to Eudocia. He is known as one of the most energetic prefects of Constantinople, even while his tenure was relatively short, from 439 (or, maybe, 437) to his sudden fall in 441, when Eudocia's court party was been destroyed. It is worth noting that Cyrus occupied the position of prefect, probably, either in 438 (when the historical visit of Eudocia to Palestine took place) or, at least, a bit later when she pursued her policy in establishing a new Marial cult distributed between Jerusalem and Constantinople and opposed to the Marial cult of Ephesus.⁹³

Indeed, it is the prefect Cyrus who is reputed to have constructed (between 438 and 441) the first church in the capital dedicated to the Virgin, lately known under the name τὰ Κύρου.⁹⁴ Here, ἐν τοῖς Κύρου, Romanos the Melodos (before 493–551/555) received his famous revelation from Theotokos that made him the Melodos — already as a young man, in the years of the monophysite Emperor Anastasius (491–518). Romanos lived, died, and was buried here, and this was the central place of his cult. Thus, under Anastasius, this church continued to exist as a major place of the Theotokos cult.

After 441, Cyrus followed an extremely exotic career pattern as a bishop but left his see after the death of Theodosius II (450). He returned to the capital to live as a private person under the spiritual guidance of Daniel the Stylite (who accepted the Council of Chalcedon but subsequently accepted the *Henotikon* supporting it to a very large extent by his authority). Cyrus wrote a poetical inscription that decorated his pillar. Cyrus died about 470, certainly under Leo (457–474) and, thus, before the *Henotikon*.

As a bishop, Cyrus became famous for his unprecedentedly short Nativity sermon containing only one meaningful sentence before the concluding doxological phrase. However, in this sentence he managed to quote Evagrius and to allude to the polemical sermon of Proclus of

(92) See now, on all this, CAMERON, *The Empress and the Poet...*; M. VAN ESBROECK, *La pomme de Théodose II et sa réplique arménienne*, in: C. SODE, S. TAKÁCS (eds.), *Novum Millenium. Studies in Byzantine History and Culture dedicated to Paul Speck* (Ashgate, 2001) 109–111.

(93) On the role of Eudocia in establishing of the Marial cult in Palestine, see LOURIÉ 2007.

(94) R. JANIN, *Le siège de Constantinople et le Patriarcat Oecuménique. Les églises et les monastères* (Paris, 1969) (Géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire Byzantin) 193–195.

Constantinople on the Theotokos, against Nestorius.⁹⁵ Thus, he presented himself as a partisan of philosophical monasticism (inevitably connected, more or less, with the Origenist tradition) and the Theotokos cult with a strong anti-Nestorian inspiration.

These mutual links between Nonnus, Cyrus, Eudocia, and, finally, Daniel the Stylite — the further prophet Daniel of the epoch of the *Henotikon* — could explain the stylistic kinship between Nonnus and Dionysius noticed by Averintsev. The author of the *Corpus*, if all these names are related to his own milieu, must have been inspired by the Marial cult centred in Jerusalem (thus, implicitly opposed to the Marial cult of Ephesus) and having strong anti-Nestorian connotations, and, moreover, he must have been an admirer of neoplatonic philosophy and of the poetry of Nonnus' school. His asceticism is not exempt from the Evagrian influence, so transparent in the *Corpus Areopagiticum* and quite natural for the milieu of Eudocia (let us recall that Eudocia's spiritual mother was Melania the Younger, the granddaughter of Melania the Elder who, in turn, was the spiritual mentor of Evagrius himself).

Such an identification of the milieu of the origin of the *Corpus* is extremely favourable in the attribution to Peter the Iberian.

2.3.3. Θεανδρική ἐνέργεια vs Θεανδρότης

In his *Letter IV*, to Gaius, Dionysius says that, in Christ, "God became male" (ἀνδρωθέντος θεοῦ) and "lived among us according to certain new theandric energy (καινήν τινα τὴν θεανδρικήν ἐνέργειαν)."⁹⁶

The first "objective link" between Dionysius and Proclus pointed out by Henri-Dominique Saffrey was that between Areopagite's expression θεανδρική ἐνέργεια and the name of an Arabian god Θεανδρότης, mentioned by Damascius in his *Life of Isidore* (fr. 198) and known as an addressee of a lost hymn composed by Proclus. John of Scythopolis elaborated on this similarity of words in his scholion *SchEP* 536.⁹⁷ trying to reject any suspicion of connection between Christ and Theandrites. Saffrey considers this scholion as evidence among others of the independent knowledge of Proclean Neo-Platonism by John of Scythopolis.⁹⁸

(95) CAMERON, *The Empress and the Poet...*, 243–245.

(96) G. HEIL, A. M. RITTER, *Corpus Dionysiacum II: Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita, De coelesti hierarchia, de ecclesiastica hierarchia, de mystica theologia, epistulae* (Berlin, 1991) (PTS, 36) 161.

(97) PG 4, 536A.

(98) See SAFFREY, *Un lien objectif entre le Pseudo-Denys et Proclus...*, and the whole series of Saffrey's studies on Dionysius.

Rosemary Griffith considers the very epithet “theandric” as going back to Damascius.⁹⁹ However, the word is to be found already in Pindarus, *Nemean Odes* 4:10, who expressed intention to sing “Theandrides” (Θεανδρίδαισι). The word itself was nothing but a common legacy of the Ancient Greek culture.

The only interesting aspect seems here its Christological use considered unprecedented before Areopagite’s *Letter IV*.

John of Scythopolis comments: “Let nobody, fallen into foolish talk (εις μωρολογίαν τραπείς), say that he [Dionysius] called the Lord Jesus ‘Theandrites.’ Because he did not say ‘theandritic’ (θεανδριτικήν) derived from ‘Theandrites’ (ἀπὸ τοῦ ὁ Θεανδρίτης σχηματίσας), but ‘theandric energy,’ in the sense of interwoven energy of God and male (οἶον Θεοῦ καὶ ἀνδρὸς συμπεπλεγμένην ἐνέργειαν). This is why he said ‘God became male’ instead of ‘male became God’ (ἀντὶ τοῦ, Θεὸν ἄνδρα γενόμενον).”

Thus, John of Scythopolis establishes a connection between believing in the Theandrites and an opinion that some ‘male’ became God. Saffrey thinks that it is Proclean Neo-Platonism that John bears in mind here. Very probably, he is right. Nevertheless, this is not the whole picture.

There is a precedent to Areopagite’s Christological formula in the *Gospel paraphrase* ascribed to Nonnus. Here, the author uses the term “God male” (θεὸς ἀνήρ) when one could anticipate “God man” (θεὸς ἄνθρωπος): there are two occurrences, A 39 and A 157, with no occurrence of “God man.”¹⁰⁰ This peculiarity of Nonnus’ Christological terminology has so far no explanation except a guess that “[t]he main reason for this choice is probably poetic metre.”¹⁰¹

This terminology of the *Gospel paraphrase* has, I think, its own conceptual background as opposed to the perverse androgyny of the god Dionysus of another poem of Nonnus, *Διονυσιακά*, and of the corresponding late Roman cult of Dionysus. Probably, even the apparent

(99) Pace GRIFFITH, *Neo-Platonism and Christianity...*, 241.

(100) A. SCHEINDLER, *Nonni Panopolitani Paraphrasis S. Evangelii Ioannei* (Lipsiae, 1881) (BSGRT) 5 and 12–13, correspondingly. The recent critical edition was unavailable to me: C. DE STEFANI, *Nonno di Panapoli, Parafrasi del Vangelo di S. Giovanni. Canto I. Introduzione, testo critico, traduzione e commento* (Bologna, 2002) (Eikasmós — Studi, 6).

(101) A. GRILLMEIER with Th. HAINTHALER, *Christ in Christian Tradition*. Vol. 2/4. *The Church of Alexandria with Nubia and Ethiopia after 451*. Tr. O. C. Dean Jr (London—Luisville, KY, 1996) 98.

correspondence of the names between Dionysus and Dionysius is not a mere coincidence.¹⁰²

In turn, *Διονυσιακά* touches on the topic of “god male” in its own way. In canticle XX the poem describes a war between Dionysus and some Lycurgus. Unlike Homeric myths on the rivalry between Dionysus and Lycurgus, this Lycurgus is a ruler in “Arabia” (not Thrace); his capital is Arabian Nysa, that is, Scythopolis. Long ago, on the grounds of Greek and Nabatean inscriptions found in the lands of the ancient Nabatean kingdom, this Arabian Lycurgus was identified with the Arabian god Šiʿa al-Qaum (šyʿlqwm), “guide of troop” (or maybe “leader of the people”), god “who does not drink wine,” according to one Nabatean inscription.¹⁰³ Recently, Jan Retsö continued this identification of Šiʿa al-Qaum and Lycurgus by adding Theandrites as the third name of the same god. Retsö considers the whole story in Nonnus as having a historical background in the competition between two groups of Arabian tribes within the Nabatean kingdom, one of them being wine-drinkers and the other one non-drinkers.¹⁰⁴

The word “Theandrites” is never mentioned in Nonnus, however. Nevertheless, it was well-known to John of Scythopolis, whose town Scythopolis/Nysa was, in Nonnus’ *Διονυσιακά*, the capital of Lycurgus/Theandrites. Thus, the rivalry between Dionysus and Lycurgus has some parallel in contraposition of the “theandric” Christ and Theandrites in John of Scythopolis’ scholion.

(102) Cf., on these topics, LOURIÉ 2001. On perversions in the *Διονυσιακά*, see especially R. NEWBOLD, *Fear of Sex in Nonnus’ Dionysiaka*, *Electronic Antiquity* 4.2 (1998) 1–15 [online <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/ElAnt/V4N2/newbold.html>]. For a more general context, cf. D. LYONS, *Gender and Immortality: Heroines in Ancient Greek Myth and Cult* (Princeton, 1996), esp. 69–133 (ch. 3–4); H. JEANMAIRE, *Dionysos: Histoire du culte de Bacchus* (Paris, 1951) 417–482; A. HENRICHS, *Changing Dionysiac Identities*, in: B. F. MEYER, E. P. SANDERS (eds.), *Jewish and Christian Self-definition. Vol. 3: Self-Definition in the Graeco-Roman World* (London, 1982) 137–160, 213–236.

(103) R. DUSSAUD, *Les Arabes en Syrie avant l’Islam* (Paris, 1907) 153–156. Cf. also F. R. TROMBLEY, *Hellenic Religion and Christianisation, c. 370–529* (Leiden—New York—Koln, 1993) (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World, 115/1, 2) 360–361 (the cult of Theandrites was quite strong in the fifth century but was abolished in the early sixth century).

(104) J. RETSÖ, *The Arabs in Antiquity: Their History from the Assyrians to the Umayyads* (London, 2003) 610–614, 620–621. I owe this reference to Carlos A. Segovia, to whom I express my deep gratitude.

All this is of importance anyway, at least, as an additional link between the *Corpus Dionysiacum* and John of Scythopolis, on the one hand, and Nonnus, on the other. For the reasons explained above this indicates the direction of Eudocia's circle in our search of the author of the *Corpus*. In a sense, the closer to Nonnus, the closer to Peter the Iberian.

Be that as it may, it is clear that Dionysius' idea of God as "male" and the corresponding term "theandric energy" has a conceptual (Christological) precedent in the poetry of the *Gospel paraphrase*.

Let us recall that the Christology of the *Gospel paraphrase* has strong anti-Nestorian overtones, and its exegesis depends on Cyril of Alexandria's *Commentaries on the Gospel of John*.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, this text was conceptually close to the milieu of Dionysius.

2.3.4. Attitude toward Wine as a Marker

It is tempting to ask whether the attitude toward wine could help to identify the opponents of Areopagite. Those who would be treated by John of Scythopolis as the worshipers of the Theandrites, "who does not drink wine," could be principal non-drinkers, too.

Indeed, in the *Corpus*, the attitude toward wine is quite positive: the whole *Letter IX* is dedicated to the wine in the Chalice of Wisdom and the sober inebriation from it. The same was the attitude of both Peter the Iberian¹⁰⁶ and Proclus.¹⁰⁷ It is important that, in all these milieus, wine was considered a symbol of something good.

(105) GRILLMEIER with HAINTHALER, *Christ in Christian Tradition...*, 95–99.

(106) Cf., in the *Life of Peter the Iberian*, § 137, a miracle by Peter for some orthodox named Dionysius (!) the Scholastic (شولستيق; Horn and Phenix translate "lawyer") near Gaza: Peter's blessing of Dionysius' vineyards makes their yield "many times double"; HORN, PHENIX JR, John Rufus..., 198/199–200/201 (txt/tr.), with notes by Cornelia Horn who refers to PH. MAYERSON, The Wine and Vineyards in Gaza in the Byzantine Period, *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 257 (1985) 75–80 [reprint in: IDEM, *Monks, Martyrs, Soldiers and Saracens: Papers on the Near East in Late Antiquity (1962–1993)* (Jerusalem, 1994)]. Horn in her study dedicated to the activity of Peter the Iberian among the Arabs does not pay much attention to the Arabian paganism; cf. C. B. HORN, A Chapter in the Pre-History of the Christological Controversies in Arabic: Readings from the Works of John Rufus, *Parole de l'Orient* 30 (2005) 133–156.

(107) Cf., e. g., Proclus' *In Cratylus*, CLXXXII, on the theme of the wine of Dionysus as a symbol of the individual intellect: R. M. VAN DEN BERG, *Proclus' Commentary on the Cratylus in Context. Ancient Theories of Language and Naming* (Leiden, 2008) (*Philosophia antiqua*, 112) 190–191.

Were there any factions who use wine as a symbol of something negative *per se*, not by misuse only? Presently I am unable to answer definitively. Of course, abstinence from wine unless you are sick or elderly is a very common monastic practice and certainly not grounds for far-reaching speculations.

Nevertheless, there is a peculiar pair of biblical quotes in Evagrius repeated by him from one work to another, a combination of Deut 32:33 (“Their wine is the wrath of dragons”) and Num 6:3 (the Nazirites abstained from wine) — “[c]ombinaison ingénieuse de deux textes scripturaires pour assimiler vin et colère,” as Antoine Guillaumont commented on the Evagrian scholion 206 to *Proverbs* (on Prov 20:1 “Wine is an intemperate thing”), where Evagrius concluded: “Thus, the Law ordained to the Nazirites to be without wrath.”¹⁰⁸ Here, Evagrius provides the reason for this correspondence between wine and wrath: “for the same inebriation used to become from flushing with wrath (αὕτη γὰρ ἡ μέθη ἀπὸ ζέοντος τοῦ θυμοῦ πέφυκε γίνεσθαι).”¹⁰⁹ The same pair of quotes reappears in *De malignis cogitationibus*, 5 (chapter consecrated to control of irascibility)¹¹⁰ and in *Kephalaia Gnostica*, V, 44.¹¹¹

The case of the two recensions of the *Kephalaia Gnostica* is of special interest. The genuine recension S_2 has nothing to add to the Evagrian scholion to *Proverbs*. But the recension S_1 , the fruit of the efforts of censorship to reduce Evagrian Origenism, adds some attenuation: “Si ‘la colère du dragon est un vin’ mauvais...” The word “bad” (صَلْب) is here added deliberately by the editor while Evagrius himself meant wine in general. It is not Evagrian at all, as the above parallels from other Evagrian works show clearly.

Thus, there was something peculiar in the Evagrian attitude toward wine. Wine is not a polemical topic in Areopagite; however, the camp of his adversaries — connected with the non-drinking god Theandrites

(108) A. GUILLAUMONT, *Un philosophe au désert Évagre le Pontique* (Paris, 2004) (Textes et traditions, [8]) 314.

(109) Text according to P. GÉHIN, *Évagre le Pontique, Scholies aux Proverbes* (Paris, 1987) (SC 340), quoted according to TLG 4110.030.

(110) Text according to A. GUILLAUMONT, C. GUILLAUMONT, P. GÉHIN, *Évagre le Pontique. Sur les pensées* (Paris, 1998) (SC, 438), quoted according to TLG 4110.034.

(111) A. GUILLAUMONT, *Les six centuries des « Kephalaia Gnostica » d’Évagre le Pontique. Édition critique de la version syriaque commune et édition d’une nouvelle version syriaque, intégrale, avec une double traduction française* (Paris, 1958) (PO, 28, 1) 194 (version S_1 “commune”), 195 (version S_2 “intégrale”).

by John of Scythopolis — was presumably inclined to reject wine to a higher extent than the usual monastic asceticism requires. Therefore, the Evagrian attitude toward wine corroborates with the idea that the adversaries meant, at least, in the pseudonymised *Corpus Areopagiticum* were Evagrian Origenists.

2.4. Hagiographical Approach

Finally, we have to look at van Esbroeck's hagiographical approach.

Honigmann's thesis that the vision of John the Eunuch could be related to the Dormition is now much more substantiated. This vision, presented by John Rufus as an eschatological revelation on the eve of the catastrophe of Chalcedon, taken in the genuine historical context of the development of the Dormition cult in Palestine exactly in the 440s, is easily interpretable in connection with the Dormition scene.

Nevertheless, van Esbroeck's arguments in favour of this thesis sometimes are not without problems. I think that there are two major difficulties: van Esbroeck's treatment of the feast of August 7 as the date of the Dormition and his explanation of the Coptic Dormition feast on January 16.

Nevertheless, the hagiographical approach seems to me still far from being exhausted. Several links between the feast of the Dormition, on the one hand, and the *Corpus Areopagiticum*, the *Life of Peter the Iberian*, and the liturgical commemoration of Dionysius the Areopagite, on the other, are still unexplored.

2.4.1. The Dormition on August 7 and Opening of the "Latrocinium" of Ephesus on August 8

Peter the Iberian starts his liturgical services as a bishop on the day of a great feast¹¹² that is, according to van Esbroeck, Dormition. However, its date is August 7, and not August 9 that we know as an early date of Dormition. Thus, van Esbroeck goes into long speculations based on a hypothetical use of the calendar of the *Book of Jubilees* in Jerusalem during the anti-Chalcedonian patriarch Theodosius (451–453).¹¹³

(112) *Life of Peter the Iberian*, § 79: "Yet once he had arrived at the holy Church of Maiuma, being carried about by all, he sat on the throne on the seventh of the month of Ab [= August], when there took place a great, holy, and heavenly feast (ⲉⲩⲱⲛⲁ ⲉⲩⲱⲛⲁ ⲉⲩⲱⲛⲁ) and life for the souls of each of them" (HORN, PHENIX JR, John Rufus..., 118/119).

(113) VAN ESBRÖECK 1993, 223–225.

This I think, is not a good idea, because all known Christian 364-day calendars have different structures than the old calendar of the *Jubilees*.¹¹⁴ Worst of all, van Esbroeck arrives, with all these speculations, to a reconciliation of the date August 7 with the date August 8, but not 9: "...August 7th in Peter's *Life* is really August 8. Since Peter celebrates at sunset on the 8th, he is already celebrating the Assumption of the Virgin on the 9th." ¹¹⁵ However, the beginning of the day in the evening and not in the morning would contradict to van Esbroeck's "sacerdotal calendar," where the day starts in the morning. This reconstruction seems neither precise nor consistent. Fortunately, it is superfluous.

In the 450s, only the earliest recension of the *Transitus* story was available (e. g., such as preserved in the Ethiopic *Liber Requitei*, CANT 154) where the Dormition and Assumption cycle is shaped as a *triduum*: annunciation from the Angel (first day), gathering of apostles (second day), Dormition, deposition, and Assumption (third day).¹¹⁶ In the Ethiopian rite, this cycle is still partially preserved, while not reflected in the Ethiopian *Synaxarium*, already influenced by the later Coptic rite. In the Ethiopian hymnary, *Deggwa*, before the feast of Assumption on August 9 (Naḥasē 16), there is, on August 8 (Naḥasē 15), a feast of the "Gathering" (*Gubba'e*) that means the gathering of apostles in Sion before the deathbed of the Theotokos.¹¹⁷ The same feast was also pre-

(114) B. LOURIÉ, Les quatre jours « de l'intervalle » : une modification néotestamentaire et chrétienne du calendrier de 364 jours, in: M. PETIT, B. LOURIÉ, A. ORLOV (éds.), *Église des deux Alliances : Mémorial Annie Jaubert (1912–1980)* (Piscataway, NJ, 2008) (*Orientalia Judaica Christiana*, 1) 103–133; IDEM, Calendrical Implications in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*: Seven questions concerning the liturgy of the Sabbath rest, *Revue biblique* 115 (2008) 245–265; IDEM, Calendrical Elements in 2 *Enoch*, in: G. BOCCACCINI, A. ORLOV (eds.), *Proceedings of the Fifth Enoch Seminar, Naples, 2009* (forthcoming).

(115) VAN ES BROECK 1993, 223; van Esbroeck supposed that the date of Assumption in the Coptic rite, August 9 (Mesore 16) is the earliest and genuine date of the Dormition.

(116) For the chronology of the earliest *Transitus*, see now SHOEMAKER, *The Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption*; for different types of the early Dormition cycles (*triduum* or more complicated), see LOURIÉ 2007.

(117) P. JEFFERY, The Liturgical Year in the Ethiopian *Deggwa* (Chantbook), in: E. CARR (ed.), *ΕΥΛΟΓΗΜΑ: Studies in Honor of Robert Taft, S.J.* (Rome, 1993) (*Studia Anselmiana*, 110) 199–234, here 233. Jeffery's reference to Budge's translation of the Ethiopian *Synaxarium* is here misleading. In fact, not only Budge's translation but even the whole manuscript evidence used for the criti-

served in the medieval recension of the Georgian rite, while with an appropriate shift of dates (August 13, because of the different organisation of the whole cycle).¹¹⁸ Thus, the earliest Dormition *triduum* was placed on the days from August 7 to August 9, because the gathering of apostles (August 8) is the second day of the earliest *triduum*, not the first. The date of the “great feast” on August 7 in the *Life of Peter the Iberian* is the first day of Dormition celebrated according to the Transitus tradition as it is in the *Liber Requiei*.

The appearance of this liturgical cycle can be dated. The 449 Council of Ephesus (subsequently called *Latrocinium* in Rome) broke the trend (not always strict but quite clear) established by the three previous Ecumenical Councils to match the opening with Pentecost. Instead, the Council of Ephesus was opened on August 8. The purpose of the council was to defend the Theotokos, and so, this date is hardly explicable otherwise than within the *triduum* from 7 to 9 of August, where August 8 corresponds exactly to the gathering of apostles.

This date has nothing to do with the local tradition of the Theotokos cult in Ephesus (where we know the date of Dormition to be May 23), but the council of Ephesus was gathered not by the local clergy but by Emperor Theodosius. However, the Emperor together with his sister Pulcheria and his wife Eudocia were preoccupied in establishing another Theotokos cult, located in Palestine and connected to Constantinople and not to Ephesus. This was the time when a new family of Transition accounts emerges, “Bethlehem and Incenses,” whose main representative is the Syriac “Dormition in Six Books” (CANT 123, 140, 150). It starts with a preface explaining how the truth about the Dormition in Palestine and deposition in Gethsemane was brought from Ephesus, where the Transitus account was preserved in secret by the heirs of John Theologian. It is clearly an attempt to create an alternative to the local Ephesian tradition that the Theotokos died in Ephesus

cal edition say nothing about Dormition/Assumption on Naḥasē 15 (Julian August, 8); cf. I. GUIDI, S. GRÉBAUT, *Le Synaxaire éthiopien. Mois de Nahasē et de Pâguemèn* (Paris, 1913) (PO, 9, 4) 325–335.

(118) M. VAN ESBROECK, Ein georgischer liturgischer Kanon für Maria Himmelfahrt, in: R. SCHULZ, M. GÖRG (hrsg.), *Lingua restituta orientalis. Festgabe für Julius Assfalg* (Wiesbaden, 1990) (Ägypten und Altes Testament, 20) 89–110; French tr.: IDEM, *Aux origines de la Dormition de la Vierge. Études historiques sur les traditions orientales* (Aldershot, 1995) (Variorum Reprints. Collected Studies Series CS, 380) ch. XIV.

and was buried by John Theologian, according to her will, in an unknown place (with no assumption at all).¹¹⁹

The establishment of the earliest form of the Dormition cycle in Palestine (7 to 9 August) is datable to the 440s, after 438 (the first solemn visit of Eudocia to Jerusalem) and before 449 (the Council of Ephesus).

2.4.2. The Vision of John the Eunuch

The new data concerning the early Dormition feast require a fresh look at the vision of John the Eunuch, which is the core of the Areopagitic revelation, according to the Honigmann—van Esbroeck hypothesis.

The vision is described by John Rufus in the *Life of Peter the Iberian* (§ 61)¹²⁰ outside its biographical context. After having mentioning a miraculous healing of John by the prayers of Peter the Iberian when God promised to add twelve years to his life (§ 60), John Rufus proceeds as follows: “Once this blessed John beheld in a vision, for three whole days without talking to anyone at all, the fearful and glorious Second Coming of our Lord, the heavens suddenly being opened...” After having finished his account, John Rufus concludes: “This vision indeed took place a long time later, at the end [of his life].” Cornelia Horn is convincing, in her note,¹²¹ that the vision took place in about 463, shortly before the death of John the Eunuch in 464 (no more than twelve years after the miraculous healing which took place shortly after 451¹²²).

The content of the vision is the Second Coming of Christ, and this is not simply an interpretation of the hagiographer; the details are quite recognisable in and of themselves.¹²³ Indeed, the descending of Christ for Assumption might look similar but, nevertheless, the vision as it is

(119) See, on all this, LOURIÉ 2007.

(120) HORN, PHENIX JR, John Rufus..., 88/89–90/91.

(121) Ibid., 91, n. 6.

(122) I am not absolutely sure as to the latter date, because the consequence of events in John Rufus could be confused. Nevertheless, this does not affect the rough date of the vision, given that it took place short before the death of John the Eunuch.

(123) They are mostly indicated by Horn in the footnotes, but I would like to add that the appearance of the Cross before Christ himself is also a classical sign; see, e. g., *Apocalypse of Peter* [CANT 317 and D. D. BUCHHOLZ, *Your eyes will be opened: a study of the Greek (Ethiopic) Apocalypse of Peter* (Atlanta, GA, 1988)].

seems to have nothing specific which would be related to the feast of the Dormition/Assumption of the Virgin.

However, things are not so simple. According to all *Transitus*, Dormition/Assumption is not only an account of an event, but a liturgy of the eschatological Judgment, Yom Kippur. Despite the fact that the liturgical structure of this early Christian Yom Kippur remains mostly unclear, predominance of the Yom Kippur symbolism is without of doubts.¹²⁴ Thus, the Second Coming of Christ and His coming to His Mother falling asleep are not so different.

The vision has some peculiarities, too. One is connected with the use of an altar, another one with Moses and Isaias symbolism, and third one with its internal chronology.

2.4.3. The Altar in the Vision of John and the Evodius *Transitus* Tradition

John the Eunuch saw “only one altar, standing on the earth” whose appearance was the same as of that at which John and Peter were serving, and a multitude of holy monks around it. Then, all these saints were snatched away from this altar to the meeting of the Lord. Thus, it was some kind of earthly altar and not a heavenly one.

Despite the fact that the word used there for “altar,” *ἄλтарь*, is the exact calque of the Greek *θυσιαστήριον*, one of the most frequently used words in the Apocalypse of John, our “the only *θυσιαστήριον* on the earth” is not the same as the *heavenly* *θυσιαστήριον* of the Apocalypse.

The only parallel to this kind of altar known to me is contained in one of the very early traditions of *Transitus*, namely, in the Coptic tradition under the name of Evodius, “second bishop of Rome” (fictive figure, probably, going back to Evodius of Antioch as the prototype).¹²⁵ Unlike other traditions, here, on the very day of Dormition (Tobe 21, as usual for the Coptic rite), “...the Savior (σωτήρ) gathered (συνάγω) us

(124) F. MANNS, *Le Récit de la Dormition de Marie* (Vatican grec 1982). *Contribution à l'étude des origines de l'exégèse chrétienne* (Jérusalem, 1989) (Studium Biblicum Franciscanum. Coll. maior, 33).

(125) The entry “Evodius of Rome” by Tito Orlandi in the *Coptic Encyclopedia* 4 (New York etc., 1991) 1078–1079 and the entries CANT 133 and 134 are now outdated. See now: S. J. SHOEMAKER, The Sahidic Coptic Homily on the Dormition of the Virgin Attributed to Evodius of Rome. An Edition from Morgan MSS 596 & 598 with Translation, AB 117 (1999) 241–283, and IDEM, *The Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption...*, 57–62.

together by his own hands, us and the women who were with us. Then (εἶτα) he said to Peter, 'Arise and go onto the altar (θυσιαστήριον), beside which I have now gathered (συνάγω) you together, and bring me these linen garments (ἔνδυμα) that I have brought from the heavenly things (ἐπουράνιος), which my Father has sent to you to bury my beloved mother in them...' (§ 18)¹²⁶ For this Sahidic recension the *terminus ante quem* is, according to Shoemaker, the middle of the sixth century, because this text does not know Assumption on August 9.¹²⁷

The theme of this earthly altar of apostle Peter and the other apostles is even more elaborated in the Bohairic recension of Evodius of Rome. This recension already knows Assumption on August 9, and thus, its date is later than about 550. This date does not prevent some details of this account from being even earlier than those of the Sahidic recension. Namely, the gathering of apostles on Tobe 20, not on Tobe 21, that is, on the eve of Dormition instead of on the very day of Dormition, is certainly a genuine detail coinciding with all other Transitus traditions. Thus, Bohairic Evodius says: "Now it came to pass on the twentieth of the month Tobi, we were gathered together according to the command of the Lord, in the place where the holy Virgin was, and were still preparing the altar (ⲙⲁⲛⲉⲣⲱⲟⲩⲱⲓ)¹²⁸, to receive a blessing; and there came unto us our Lord Jesus Christ, and stood in our midst, and saith unto us, Peace be unto you all..." (§ 6).¹²⁹

This tradition of a specific altar on the earth is obviously in parallel with the reference of John Rufus to the altar of John the Eunuch and Peter the Iberian as to the "divine authorization and confirmation" of anti-Chalcedonism,¹³⁰ which most likely, goes back to the tradition of the anti-Chalcedonian shrine in Gethsemane. In the Coptic tradition consolidated in the *Panegyric of Macarius of Tkow* by Pseudo-

(126) SHOEMAKER, *The Sahidic Coptic Homily...*, 274/275 (txt/tr.).

(127) In fact, there is no precise date for this innovation in the Coptic rite but there is a *terminus ante quem*, a genuine homily of Theodosius of Alexandria on the Dormition.

(128) On this word which is also an exact calque of Greek θυσιαστήριον, see: W. E. CRUM, *A Coptic Dictionary* (Oxford, 1939 [reprint: 2000]) 601b, s. v. ⲱⲛⲧⲉ.

(129) Translation: F. ROBINSON, *Coptic Apocryphal Gospels. Translations together with the Texts of Some of Them* (Cambridge, 1896) (Text and Studies, IV, 2) 51; original: P. DE LAGARDE, *Aegyptiaca* (Gottingae, 1883) 46.

(130) As Horn said in her footnote to the vision of John the Eunuch: HORN, PHENIX JR, *John Rufus...*, 90, n. 2.

Dioscorus,¹³¹ the feast of Dormition on Tobe 21 in this shrine became the last heroic page of the anti-Chalcedonian *résistance* in Palestine under Patriarch Theodosius.

Thus, in the vision of John the Eunuch, the Second Coming of Christ quite unusual detail, an earthly altar with the saints gathered before it, has an obvious connection with the very peculiar Transitus tradition going back to early anti-Chalcedonism. This is an argument *pro* for placing the vision on the Dormition/Assumption feast, at least, on the level of a working hypothesis. This hypothesis could be verified using the internal chronology of the vision account.

2.4.4. Hagiographical Substrate: *The Ascension of Isaias*

The vision itself occupied three days. Then, "...when he came to himself afterwards, he remained for about thirty (ⲉⲃⲗⲁ ⲙⲉⲣⲉ) days as one dazed, not wanting to say anything to anyone, or rather he was unable to [speak], for in his mind he was wholly there [at the scene of the vision], and he was supposing that he was no longer dwelling on earth. His face was like the face of an angel, and his whole appearance was different from that of a human being." A reminiscence of Moses who saw the heavenly realms on Sinai is obvious, and is rightly noted by Horn.¹³² But Mosaic parallels say nothing about the inability of the visionary to speak. Moses is here an archetype, indeed, but the direct prototype is a later avatar of Moses, Isaias from the *Ascensio Isaiæ*.

The most relevant scene is the *Ascension of Isaias* 6:7–13:¹³³ "And the king [Hezekiah] summoned all the prophets and all the people who were to be found there, and they came. And Micah, and the aged Ananias, and Joel, and Josab were sitting on his right. And when they all heard the voice of the Holy Spirit, they all worshiped on their knees, and they praised the God of righteousness, the Most High, the One who [dwells] in the upper world and who sits on high, the Holy One, the One who rests among the holy ones, and they ascribed glory to the One who had thus graciously given a door in an alien world, had graciously given it to a man. **And while he was speaking with the Holy Spirit in the hearing of them all, he became silent, and his mind was taken up from him, and he did not see the men who were standing**

(131) Cf., in the section 2.4.7, on the Coptic *Panegyric of Macarius of Tkow*.

(132) HORN, PHENIX JR, John Rufus..., 91, n. 5.

(133) M. A. Knibb's translation, according to J. H. CHARLESWORTH (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2 (Garden City, NY, 1985) 164–176.

before him. His eyes indeed were open, but his mouth was silent, and the mind in his body was taken up from him. But his breath was [still] in him, for he was seeing a vision. And the angel who was sent to show him [the vision] was not of this firmament, nor was he from the angels of glory of this world, but he came from the seventh heaven."

The underlined words are a rather exact parallel to the mutism and being out of this world of John the Eunuch. Needless to say this parallel is quite relevant because the vision of Isaias is, too, a vision of heavenly hierarchies (seven heavens).

Moreover, the vision of Isaias was an elaborated, so-to-say, Sinai revelation of Moses. In the *Matyrium of Isaias* Isaias is accused for positioning himself as someone greater than Moses (*Ascension of Isaias* 3:8–9). The tradition of Isaias as a New Moses is, however, much earlier and goes back to the canonical books of the Old Testament.¹³⁴

Thus, the scene of the vision of John the Eunuch is not simply a scene of the *imitatio Mosis* topics which is a leitmotif of the *Life of Peter the Iberian*.¹³⁵ This is a scene of the *imitatio Isaiae* who, in turn, imitated Moses. *Ascensio Isaiae* is the hagiographical substrate¹³⁶ for this scene.

2.4.5. The Ascension of Isaias and the Corpus Dionysiacum

Cornelia Horn has already noted that the Moses typology of the *Life of Peter the Iberian* recalls the Moses typology of the *Corpus Dionysiacum*.¹³⁷ But, in fact, in the *Corpus*, too, the Moses typology is intermediated by the typology of Isaias, especially Isaias from the *Ascension of Isaias*. This intermediation is not limited to the parallel in contents, that both are dealing with a vision of heavenly hierarchies.

The problem of breaking the hierarchical order in the process of revelation to a human, just mentioned in the *Ascension of Isaias* ("And

(134) M. O' KANE, *Isaiah: A Prophet in the Footsteps of Moses*, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 21 (1996) 29–50.

(135) HORN, *Asceticism...*, 238–244.

(136) For this theoretical concept of critical hagiography, see M. VAN ES-BROECK, *Le substrat hagiographique de la mission khazare de Constantin-Cyrrille*, *AB* 104 (1986) 337–348.

(137) HORN, *Asceticism...*, 248, n. 49. She refers to P. ROREM, *Moses as the Paradigm for the Liturgical Spirituality of Pseudo-Dionysius*, *SP* 18.2 (1989) 275–279, but see now a more detailed exposition in P. ROREM, *Pseudo-Dionysius: A Commentary on the Texts and an Introduction to Their Influence* (New York—Oxford, 1993), *passim*, but especially on the pages dedicated to *Mystical Theology*.

the angel who was sent to show him [the vision] was not of this firmament, nor was he from the angels of glory of this world, but he came from the seventh heaven”), is dealt with at length in *De coelesti hierarchia*, chapter 13. Here, Dionysius insists that the angel seen by Isaias was, indeed, a seraphim, that is, a member of the highest angelic hierarchy and not an angel from the lowest hierarchy.

Moreover, the scene of revelation to Isaias when other prophets were standing around has striking resemblance with the Dormition scene in *DN 3:2*. Dionysius mentions by name only four: himself and Timotheos (his addressee), Peter, and James. Similarly, in the *Ascension of Isaias*, only four prophets are explicitly mentioned: Micah, Ananias, Joel, and Josab. The prophets were standing before the motionless and speechless body of Isaias, while the apostles were gathered around the body of the Theotokos, whose condition was similar: this body was apparently death but containing in itself the “principle of life” (being ζωαρχικός).

Thus, the *Ascension of Isaias* is a common background for both the vision of John the Eunuch and the *Corpus Areopagiticum*. The topics borrowed from this source are dealt with in both the description of the vision by John (from the mouth of Peter the Iberian who was here the source of John Rufus) and in the *Corpus*.

This is an important argument for both interpreting the vision of John as related to the Dormition/Assumption and, especially, for attributing the core of the *Corpus* to the vision of John as explained by Peter the Iberian.

2.4.6. Internal Chronology of the Vision Account and the Nativity of the Theotokos Feast

The vision of John the Eunuch itself occupied three days, and the subsequent “out of this world” condition of John — “about thirty” days more. It is unlikely that there is no symbolism here. We are in the hagiographical realm, though. Given that three days are, very likely, some liturgical *triduum* — that of the Dormition/Assumption, as I supposed above — it is likely, too, that 30 days are some other liturgical cycle. Thus, we have to find out, within the Palestine liturgical year of the second half of the fifth century, a pair of feasts where the first feast contains three days and the second one starts approximately the thirtieth day after the third day of the first feast.

At the time when John Rufus wrote, in about 500, the main day of the Dormition/Assumption Feast in the Palestinian liturgical rite was

August 15,¹³⁸ 30 days before September 14, the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. But the feast of August 15 in the lifetime of John the Eunuch was a quite another feast of the Theotokos, incorporated into the cycle of the Nativity of Christ (the ancient Palestinian feast of Annunciation).¹³⁹

Here, we need to take into account two important facts:

- the Dormition cycle during the lifetime of John the Eunuch was from August 7 to 9,
- John Rufus describes John the Eunuch's vision out of its biographical context, certainly with no understanding of the genuine liturgical content.

Very probably, the figure "30" was of no specific value for John Rufus; thus, he wrote "about" thirty. However, let us put his data in the context of the Dormition feast from August 7 to 9.

August 9 plus 30 days results in September, 8, another Theotokos feast while of uncertain origin, the Nativity of the Theotokos. Its existence in both Byzantine and anti-Chalcedonian rites gives the *terminus ante quem* of about 518, but its most likely date of origin is somewhere in the second half of the fifth century. The earliest datable document connected with this feast is a *kontakion* by Romanos the Melodos whose two first strophes are still in liturgical usage (before 548, the death of Empress Theodora: Romanos mentions "emperors" in plural, which leads to the period from 527 to 548).¹⁴⁰ Let us recall that Romanos, still under the Monophysite Emperor Anastasius, became a clergyman in the Church of the Theotokos constructed by Cyrus Panopolitanus. His

(138) Probably, with the *triduum* occupying August 13, 14, and 15. The reconstruction of this phase of evolution of the feast is highly conjectural. Its main witness is a Georgian canon for the gathering of the apostles, see VAN ES-BROECK, Ein georgischer liturgischer Kanon... Moreover, the date August 15 is the normative date of Dormition in the Western Syrian rite (attested to, among others, in the Jacobite calendars having no sign of later Byzantine influence). Thus, it goes back to the epoch of the full liturgical communion between the future Jacobites and the Chalcedonian Byzantines, that is, to the epoch of the *Henotikon*.

(139) On the evolution of this feast, see, first of all, Walter D. RAY, *August 15 and the Development of the Jerusalem Calendar*. A Dissertation. Directors: Paul F. Bradshaw, Maxwell E. Johnson. Notre Dame University, Department of Theology (Notre Dame, IN, 2000). A large article of the same author is forthcoming.

(140) P. MAAS, C. A. TRYPANIS, *Sancti Romani Melodi Cantica. Cantica genuina* (Oxford, 1963; reprint: 1997) 276–280.

background was in a liturgical tradition still shared with the Monophysite world.

In the Western Syrian rite, as well as in the Byzantine one, its date is September 8, with no further explanation. In the Coptic rite, there are two alternative traditions, Thout 10 (September 8) and Pashons 1 (April 26). The latter appears in some liturgical books but is never used *de facto*.¹⁴¹ The Ethiopic *Synaxarium* on Maskaram 10 (September 8) refers to the two different traditions of celebration, on Maskaram 10 and on Genbot 1 (April 26) considering both of them as equally actual while based on different liturgical books.¹⁴² Thus, the Nativity of Theotokos on September 8 is a mainstream tradition of the epoch preceding the anti-Monophysite policy of Justin I (since 518), and its dating to the fifth century is most likely.

The internal chronology of the vision of John the Eunuch can be interpreted as covering the three-day Dormition/Assumption feast from August 7 to 9 and, then, a 30-day period up to the Nativity of the Theotokos feast on September 8. Our interpretation of the vision as taking place on the three days of Dormition/Assumption becomes much stronger now, when it covers the whole internal chronology of the vision account.

2.4.7. Problem of the Origin of the Coptic Dormition on January 16

Our explanation of the feast of August 7 is in contradiction with van Esbroeck's explanation of the date of August 9 as appearing already in the Jerusalem of Theodosius in connection with another date of the Dormition cycle, January 16. According to the Coptic Dormition cycle attested to not later than in the sixth century, the Theotokos reposed and was buried on January 16, but the Assumption took place 206 days later, on August 9 (and, thus, January 16 is the Dormition, and August 9 is the Assumption). The festal date August 9, according to van Esbroeck's reconstruction, could never exist outside this connection with January 16.

(141) U. ZANETTI, *Les lectionnaires coptes annuels. Basse-Égypte* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1985) (Publications de l'Institut orientaliste de Louvain, 33) 44.

(142) G. COLIN, *Le Synaxaire éthiopien. Mois de Maskaram. Édition critique du texte éthiopien et traduction* (Turnhout, 1986) (PO, 43, 3, N 195) 68/69–70/71. The entry for Genbot 1 is of no specific interest. The origin of the date Pashons/Genbot 1 is unclear.

Our reconstruction of the Dormition cycle from August 7 to August 9 contradicts this thesis. The Western Dormition tradition of January 18, with no connection to August, could be another argument against the earlier date of the Coptic Dormition cycle.

The most important arguments are, however, historical ones. The Coptic *Panegyric of Macarius of Tkow* describes the armed attack of Juvenal of Jerusalem against the shrine of Gethsemane on January 16. This was the initial event of the return of Juvenal to Jerusalem and the fall of Theodosius in 453. This chronology contradicts, however, the Byzantine historians who say that Juvenal returned in the summer (after 20 months of the rule of Theodosius). There is no possibility to accept the exact chronology of the Coptic panegyrist even if his account is basically realistic.¹⁴³ Therefore, this Coptic text does not explain the origin of the date January 16, but, on the contrary, tries to inscribe this already existing date into the frame of the Coptic 206-day Dormition cycle.

Fortunately, the history of January 16 as a Dormition date is hardly relevant to the origin of the *Corpus Areopagiticum*.

2.4.8. What Do Timotheos and Gaius Mean as the Addressees?

The four long treatises are addressed to apostle Timotheos and the four first short letters to apostle Gaius ("To Gaius therapeutes"). Both names are taken from the close entourage of apostle Paul and both point out bishops of Ephesus, its first bishop Timotheos and its second bishop Gaius.¹⁴⁴

Now we are in a position to judge why it was so important. If the hagiographical legend in the core of the *Corpus Areopagiticum* is that of the Dormition, then, as it was necessarily in the fifth century, it must to establish some link with Ephesus, that is, with the previously widely known but now replaced cult of the Theotokos.

(143) See, on all this, LOURIÉ 2007.

(144) This Gaius is never mentioned by Dionysius as a bishop (and, as it seems, his title "therapeutes" means "monk" — see esp. *Letter VIII* to "therapeutes" Demophilos) but his name is borrowed from the narrow circle of "Pauline" names and, as an addressee of Areopagite, his place is second after Timotheos, in correspondence with the succession of the two first bishops of Ephesus. Dionysius is addressing Timotheos as his "co-presbyter," "confrere," "concelebrant," that is, as a bishop like himself, and to Gaius as not a bishop yet, which corresponds to the whole imaginative "historical" situation.

Dionysius' strategy was different from that of the roughly contemporaneous Syriac "Transition in Six Books" with their Preface explaining how the book containing the story of the Transition was found in Ephesus. The "Six Books" were pretending to discover some hidden information in Ephesus (nevertheless, in Ephesus, not otherwise). Instead, Dionysius prefers to appear as a teacher to Timotheos and Gaius, that is, to Ephesus.

2.4.9. Who is Sosipater, the Addressee of *Letter VI*?

The name of Sosipater is mentioned by apostle Paul in Rom 16:21 and, what is more important, his name figures among those of companions of Paul in Acts 20:4, together with Gaius (here most manuscripts have "Sopater" but many others "Sosipater"). The later legends on the apostolic career of Sosipater are hardly of relevance here but his proximity to Paul and Gaius certainly is.

The letter to "Sosipater the presbyter" is a short exhortation to avoid discussions and to prefer defending the truth independently of the polemical context. Already Paul Rorem suggested that such advice could be timely in the context of the epoch of the *Henotikon*. Concerning this epoch, he wrote: "It is entirely possible that someone would attempt to resolve these difficulties with an authoritative word from the apostolic age, to go back 'behind' the controversial language by attempting to avoid all the polemical terms and by stating the issue affirmatively without any denunciations or refutations. While this speculative scenario for the origins of the corpus is certainly a possibility, it applies only to certain of the Dionysian comments on Christology, which constitute but a few lines among thousands on other topics."¹⁴⁵

2.4.10. Commemoration Dates of Hierotheos and Dionysius

Engberding, in his recension of Honigmann's work, was the first scholar who paid serious attention to the commemoration dates of Dionysius and Hierotheos within different liturgical traditions. He limited his observations to the need of discussing with Honigmann, who thought that both dates of commemoration, October 3 and October 4, have a Monophysite origin, and the commemoration of Hierotheos/John the Eunuch on October 4 is the historical one and, thus, the most important liturgically. These suppositions were basically erroneous, as it was shown by Engberding. Namely, he demonstrated that both

(145) ROREM, *Pseudo-Dionysius...*, 12.

October 3 (Dionysius) and 4 (Hierotheos) go back to the Byzantine Chalcedonian tradition, and it is Dionysius' commemoration on October 3 that is the most important feast among the two.¹⁴⁶ To this, van Esbroeck answered that even the Byzantine Chalcedonian tradition could preserve a commemoration day for Peter the Iberian and his cellmate. Above, I have added to van Esbroeck's reasons that, in about 500, the Byzantine tradition was still not so much Chalcedonian: it was the epoch when the *Henotikon* of Zeno was in force. Therefore, the attitude of Peter the Iberian toward Chalcedon had no decisive value for his commemoration in the Byzantine tradition in about 500.

However, van Esbroeck made an important observation concerning the Coptic tradition (known to Engberding as well but left by him without an explanation). This observation made by van Esbroeck¹⁴⁷ concerning the Coptic commemoration of Hierotheos on April 16 (Parmoute 21) still holds. This day is the exact middle of the 206-day period of the Coptic Dormition cycle (between the Dormition on January 16 and the Assumption on August 9). This date of commemoration is unnoticed in either the Chalcedonian or Western Syrian milieu, and so, presents an alternative to the commemoration dates in October that those who accepted (or, maybe, created) the pseudonymised recension of the *Corpus* used.¹⁴⁸

(146) ENGBERDING, Kann Petrus der Iberer...

(147) VAN ES BROECK 1993, 225–226.

(148) For the sake of completeness, let us note that, in the Coptic rite, the commemoration of Dionysius “the Astronomer” (Areopagite who saw the solar eclipse during the Crucifixion, according to *Letter VII*, but his reputation as “the Astronomer” is due to “his” later astronomical treatise CPG 6634 written in Syriac and very popular among the Jacobites) or “the Head of Philosophers” on Paopi 23 (October 20) is by no means genuine. According to the Coptic Synaxarium (supported by the Ethiopian one as well as some Coptic calendars), this is the day of Dionysius of Corinth (historically a second century bishop, but a martyr under Diocletian according to the Ethiopian Synaxarium). Cf. F. NAU, *Les ménologes des évangélistes coptes-arabes édités et traduits* (Paris, 1913) (PO, 10, 2) 27; E. TISSERANT, *Le calendrier d'Abu'l Barakât. Texte arabe édité et traduit* (Paris, 1913) (PO, 10, 3) 13; R. BASSET, *Le Synaxaire arabe jacobite (rédaction copte). Texte arabe publié, traduit et annoté* (Paris, 1904) (PO, 1, 3) 150; G. COLIN, *Le Synaxaire éthiopien. Mois de Tēqemt. Édition critique du texte éthiopien et traduction* (Turnhout, 1987) (PO, 44, 1, N 197) 134/135–136/137 (txt/tr.). The commemoration of Dionysius the Areopagite in the Ethiopian Synaxarium is on October 3 (Tēqemt 6), where the Synaxarium places an epitome of the so-called Autobiography of Areopagite CPG 6633 (*ibid.*, 26/27–30/31).

However, the October commemoration dates are also placed in the middle of some other Theotokos liturgical cycle. October 3 is the exact middle between August 15 (main date of the Byzantine Dormition feast in about 500) and November 21 (the Presentation of Theotokos; on the origin of this feast see Note 3 below). It is especially important that all the three feasts are connected within a pentecontad cycle: October 3 is the fiftieth day after August 15, and November 21 is the fiftieth day after October 3.

August 15 is the day of an earlier Palestinian feast of Mary that was rethought of as the main day of the Dormition cycle in the late fifth century. The Marian feast of the Presentation on November 21 is datable to the patriarchate of Elias (494–516), a pro-Chalcedonian patriarch still loyal to the *Henotikon* (see Note 4 below). Its date, in about 500, is the same as that of the pseudonymised *Corpus Dionysiacum*, and its tradition is exclusively Chalcedonian, like that of the October commemoration of Dionysius and Hierotheos.

Indeed, it is the late fifth century when we see, instead of the early 3-day cycle, a 7-day cycle of the Dormition: the Dormition and Assumption are now divided by an additional three days. This cycle that I call (3+4) is already widespread in about 500 and is presented, among others, in the *Historia Euthymiaca* (the earliest document quoting our *Corpus*).¹⁴⁹

Moreover, we know judging from the formation of the Coptic Dormition cycle, that the *triduum* from August 7 to 9 is replaced by August 9 alone. Superposing on this 9 August 9 the cycle (3+4) we arrive at August 15 as the final date of the Dormition/Assumption festival.

This festival (while normally on August 9) was sometime called “Pascha” (“patterned after Pascha” as is said in a homily of Benjamin

As it seems, the older memory of Dionysius of Corinth on October 20 was transformed into the memory of another Dionysius, the Areopagite. The Ethiopic epitome of CPG 6633 contains a strange addition: the day of the Crucifixion, unspecified in the other recensions, is indicated exactly as “in the sixth day, in the month Adār,” which is “translated” as Maggābit 27 (*ibid.*, 30/31). Maggābit 27 is March 24, an acceptable date for the Crucifixion, but Adar 6 is March 6 (in Syriac). As it seems, the Ethiopic text ultimately goes back to a Syriac original (most probably, through an Arabic intermediary) relying on an unknown tradition. On the value of the sixth day of different months as a “messianic date” in the Jewish and early Christian traditions, see LOURIE, *Calendrical Elements in 2 Enoch*.

(149) LOURIE 2007.

of Alexandria, in the seventh century, preserved in Ethiopic only,¹⁵⁰ but in an Ethiopic chronicle of the seventeenth century I found the Assumption called merely “Pascha”¹⁵¹). This Coptic usage is hardly a seventh-century innovation.

To count 50 days from the feast of Dormition/Assumption to arrive at a kind of Pentecost would be quite harmonic to the *Zeitgeist*. Before 519, the feast of the Apostles (now the feast of Peter and Paul on June 29) was in Byzantium a movable feast celebrated on the fiftieth day after the Pentecost (second Pentecost),¹⁵² in the same way as the late Jewish feast of New Wine (e.g., in the *Temple Scroll*).

The commemoration dates October 3 and 4 are chosen to show that Dionysius and Hierotheos are the apostles of the Theotokos. Indeed, Engberding was right in his conclusion that the commemoration of Hierotheos on October 4 is a “Nebenfest” while the commemoration of Dionysius on October 3 is a “Hauptfest” of the same liturgical micro-cycle,¹⁵³ which became, however, a remote part of the liturgical macro-cycle of the Dormition/Assumption feast. The feast of the Presentation of the Theotokos on November 21 is a creation of the same epoch and the same milieu. It is the next, second Pentecost after the feast of Dormition. The commemoration of Dionysius on October 3 is in the middle between the two Theotokos feasts in the same manner, as it is in the Coptic rite where the commemoration day of Hierotheos is in the middle between the Dormition and another but closely connected to the Dormition feast of the Theotokos (Assumption).

(150) §§ 28 and 37; V. ARRAS, *De Transitu Mariae apocrypha aethiopica*, II (Louvain, 1974) (CSCO, 351–352; Aeth., 68–69) 69, 71/53, 55 (txt/tr.).

(151) In the royal chronicle of Iyasu I (1682–1705), regarding the Dormition feast on August 9, 1686 (Russian translation by S. B. Chernetsov: С. Б. ЧЕРНЕЦОВ, *Эфиопские хроники XVII–XVIII веков* (Москва, 1989) 96, according to the edition in I. GUIDI, *Annales Iohannis I, 'Iyāsū I et Bakāffā* [f. 2] (Paris, 1903) (CSCO, Aeth. II, 5 = 24 / Aeth., 7).

(152) A. BAUMSTARK, *Festbrevier und Kirchenjahr der syrischen Jakobiten. Eine liturgiegeschichtliche Verarbeitung auf Grund hslischer Studien in Jerusalem und Damascus, der syrischen Hsskataloge von Berlin, Cambridge, London, Oxford, Paris und Rom und des unierten Mossuler Festbrevierdruckes* (Paderborn, 1910) (Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums, III, 3–5) 265–266. On the origin of the Byzantine feast on June 29, see В. ЛУРЬЕ, *Введение в критическую агиографию* [B. LOURIÉ, *Introduction to the critical hagiography*] (Санкт-Петербург, 2009) 141–142 (in Russian).

(153) ENGBERDING, *Kann Petrus der Iberer...*, 91–95.

The cycle of the two pentecontads from August 15 to October 3 and from October 3 to November 21 was created over a short time in the late fifth — early sixth century. The whole cycle was dedicated to the Theotokos, with Dionysius the Areopagite together with Hierotheos, as witnesses of Her acceptance into the heavenly Temple. The date of October 3 is the middle between the two Temples that were accepting the Theotokos, the heavenly one and the earthly one on Sion.

Note 4: The Origin of the Feast of the Presentation of the Theotokos on November 21

The feast of the Presentation of the Theotokos on November 21 does not belong to the well studied ones. Its appearance in Constantinople is testified to in the early eighth century by two homilies of patriarch Germanos (715–730)¹⁵⁴ but even after this date it does not figure in some important Constantinopolitan liturgical documents.¹⁵⁵ Its origins, however, are to be searched for in Jerusalem, in connection to the dedication of the Church of the Theotokos called *Nea* that took place in November, 543.¹⁵⁶

The exact date of the encaenia of the *Nea* is known from the Georgian Palestinian documents only where it is one of the annual commemorations, November 20,¹⁵⁷ that is, on the eve of the feast of Presentation. The analogy with another pair of feasts, the encaenia of the Anastasis on September 13 and the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on September 14 is striking. The problem is, however, how to interpret it. What is primary, the date of the encaenia or the date of the subsequent feast?

(154) CPG 8007, 8008; PG 98, 292–320.

(155) L. BRUBAKER, M. CUNNINGHAM, Byzantine Veneration of the *Theotokos*: Icons, Relics, and Eighth-Century Homilies, in: H. AMIRAV, R. B. TER HAAR ROMENY (eds.), *From Rome to Constantinople: Studies in Honour of Averil Cameron* (Leuven, 2007) (Late Antique History and Religion, 1) 235–250, here 241.

(156) See, for the *status quaestionis* that is still actual in our days, H. CHIRAT, ΨΩΜΙΑ ΔΙΑΦΟΡΑ. II. Les origines de la fête du 21 novembre : Saint Jean Chrysostome et Saint André de Crète ont-ils célébré la Présentation de la Théotocos ?, in: *Mélanges E. Podedchard. Études de sciences religieuses offertes pour son éméritat au doyen honoraire de la Faculté de Théologie de Lyon* (Lyon, 1945) 127–134. The monograph I. E. ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΟΥ, Τὰ Εισόδια τῆς Θεοτόκου. Ἡ ἱστορία, ἡ εἰκονογραφία καὶ ἡ ὕμνογραφία τῆς ἑορτῆς (Θεσσαλονίκη, 1959) does not add anything to the early history of the feast.

(157) See esp. G. GARITTE, *Le calendrier palestino-géorgien du Sinaiticus 34 (X^e siècle)*. Édité, traduit et commenté (Bruxelles, 1959) (SH, 30) 389.

It seems to me theoretically unacceptable to think that the date of encaenia could have been chosen arbitrarily, and that the date of the corresponding feast was chosen as the following day after the encaenia. However, such a discussion in the theory of liturgics would be here out of place. Therefore, I will limit myself to the demonstration for the case of the feast of the Presentation only.

Now, especially after Chirat's 1945 article which, in turn, followed the early papers of Simon Vailhé,¹⁵⁸ there is a kind of consensus that it is the date of the encaenia of the *Nea* that defined the date of the Presentation. There were, nevertheless, some voices for the opposite point of view.¹⁵⁹ Chirat disproved them saying that they are based on the identification of the spot of the *Nea* with that of the historical Temple of Solomon but this identification is wrong (even if it was frequent in nineteenth century scholarship).¹⁶⁰ In the 1970s, the localisation of the *Nea* was established archeologically, and so, is now without of doubts.¹⁶¹ The *Nea* church was localised on the slope of Mount Sion opposite the historical Temple Mount.

However, for the Christian tradition, the historical Temple Mount and the spot of the Herod Temple were not a holy place. Instead, the Christian holy place of the Temple was Mount Sion only. Here, the Sion basilica dedicated in 394 was an already established representation of the Temple.¹⁶² The *Nea* church became the second Christian avatar of the Temple of Solomon. Procopius' account of *Nea* in *De Aedificiis*, V, 6 is patterned

(158) S. VAILHÉ, La dédicace de Sainte-Marie la Neuve. Origine de la fête de la Présentation, *Revue Augustinienne* 2 (1903) 136–140; IDEM, La fête de la Présentation de Marie au Temple, *Échos d'Orient* 5 (1902–1903) 221–224.

(159) Chirat refers to J. PARGOIRE, *L'Église byzantine de 527 à 847* (Paris, 1905²) 115, but, in fact, Pargoire follows Vailhé in priority of the date of the encaenia, while he partially identifies the spot of the *Nea* with that of the ancient Temple. I have no possibility to check the two other Chirat's references, "Échos d'Orient", 25 (1926), p. 293" and an unpublished dissertation of Sister M.-J. KISHPAUGH, O. P., *The Feast of the Presentation of the Virgin Mary* (Washington, 1941), p. 35, note 44.

(160) CHIRAT, ΨΩΜΙΑ ΔΙΑΦΟΡΑ..., 134.

(161) The archaeologist Yoram Tsafrir shows basic agreement of the data of excavations with Procopius' account in *De Aedificiis* V, 6. See Y. TSAFRIR, Procopius and the Nea Church in Jerusalem, *Antiquité tardive* 8 (2000) 149–164.

(162) See, for all these topics with further bibliography, B. LOURIÉ, Calendrical Implications in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*: Seven questions concerning the liturgy of the Sabbath rest, *Revue biblique* 115 (2008) 245–265.

after the biblical account of the building of the Temple; many constructional details of its architectural project have had correspondences with those of the biblical Temple. Such was the official ideology lying behind the Justinianic edifice.¹⁶³

Thus, the *Nea* is localised and was constructed as a new Temple of Solomon, while this Temple of Solomon was not that of our archaeologists or the Hebrew tradition but specific to the Christian tradition only, with a different localisation. At the same time, the *Nea* was dedicated as a church of Mary. Therefore, a connection between Mary and the Temple is here deliberate and obvious. It is hardly possible to avoid the conclusion that the *Nea* was constructed as the holy place for commemoration of the Presentation of the Theotokos. This, in turn, is an important argument for existence of the feast of the Presentation (in Jerusalem) before 543 and for the priority of the date of November 21 in the liturgical micro-cycle of the two feasts on November 20 (encaenia) and 21.

This interpretation is corroborated by the fact that the *Nea* was founded (θεμελιωθεῖσαν) by patriarch Elias (494–516), as it is stated by Cyril of Scythopolis in his paraphrase of Sabas' petition to Emperor Justinian in 531.¹⁶⁴ It is the period of Elias' patriarchate when the establishment of the feast of Presentation is the most likely. Elias' Chalcedonian sympathies made him a rather unpopular figure in the sixth-century anti-Chalcedonian camp, and this is an enough explanation why the feast of the Presentation is absent in the genuine Western Syrian tradition (while it is mentioned in several Western Syrian calendars under Byzantine influence¹⁶⁵).

Patriarch Elias was eventually deposed for his Chalcedonism but, nevertheless, he was following the policy of the *Henotikon* and was in communion with the Eastern patriarchs and not with Rome. The years of his patriarchate cover the date of appearance of the pseudonymised recension of the *Corpus Areopagiticum*, ca 500. Thus, the commemoration

(163) On the *Nea* as a (new) Temple of Solomon, see now S. GRAHAM, Justinian and the Politics of Space, in: J. L. BERQUIST, C. V. CAMP (eds.), *Constructions of Space II: The Biblical City and Other Imagined Spaces* (New York, 2008) (The Library of Hebrew Bible / Old Testament Studies, 490) 53–77. I am grateful to Susan Graham for providing me a copy of her paper.

(164) *Vita Sabae*, 72; E. SCHWARTZ, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis* (Leipzig, 1939) (TU, 49.2) 175.13.

(165) E.g., in the calendars Nau VI, IX, XI, XII; F. NAU, *Un martyrologe et douze ménologes syriaques, édités et traduits* (Paris, 1912) (PO, 10, 1) 66, 102, 105, 128.

of Dionysius on October 3 (the earliest commemoration date connected to the *Corpus* in the Chalcedonian tradition) could be dated to the same period.

As it seems, there is only one natural explanation for the facts reviewed facts, namely,

- rethinking of the August 15 Marian feast as the main (final) date of the Dormition/Assumption cycle in the late fifth century (possibly even before Elias),
- the appearance of the pseudonymised *Corpus Areopagiticum* in about 500,
- the establishment of the Presentation feast on November 21 in about 500 as well,
- parallelism between anti-Chalcedonian and Chalcedonian dates of liturgical commemoration of the *Corpus Areopagiticum* (Coptic commemoration of Hierotheos at the exact middle of the Coptic Dormition — Assumption cycle and Byzantine commemoration of Dionysius at the exact middle between two Marian feasts one of them also being Dormition/Assumption).

This explanation consists of the following: under Elias of Jerusalem, the feast of Dormition/Assumption on August 15 was expanded by two pentecontads up to the macro-cycle ending with the feast of Presentation on November 21. The middle-point of this cycle, the end of the first pentecontad, is October 3, the commemoration day of Dionysius. Dionysius' feast and the Presentation were established simultaneously as an expansion of the Dormition/Assumption cycle.

Part Three: Calendaric Matters and the Origin of the Pseudonymised *Corpus*

The next section will continue the hagiographical approach, but will be focused on topics almost unexplored in previous scholarship. Most of them are directly connected to liturgical calendars.

3.1. The Exact Dates of the Deaths of Abba Isaias and Peter the Iberian and the Dates of Peter's Commemoration

The traditionally accepted date of the death of Peter the Iberian is December 1, 491. The date December (First Kanon) 1 is stated explicitly in the *Life of Peter the Iberian*, and the year 491 follows from chronological evaluations made by scholars. However, both the *Life of Peter the Iberian* and Syrian calendars give somewhat contradictory informa-

tion. This fact was recently noticed but never explained by Cornelia Horn.¹⁶⁶

The chronology of the death and the burial of Peter the Iberian according to his *Life* is the following:

- Abba Isaías died on August (Ab) 11, the year is not specified (§ 167),¹⁶⁷
- the commemoration day of John the Eunuch, October (First Teshrin) 4, passed (§ 171),¹⁶⁸
- the vision of an Egyptian monk Athanasius who lived with Peter as his disciple, that took place ten days before the death of Peter: the bishop-martyr Peter of Alexandria will arrive for the soul of Peter the Iberian; the commemoration day of Peter of Alexandria was to take place in seven days (§ 173),¹⁶⁹
- the liturgical service of Peter on the commemoration day of Peter of Alexandria (§ 175),¹⁷⁰
- an account of some “blessed Stephen” who died after Peter the Iberian; his commemoration day is First Kanon (December) 4, “three days after the memorial of Abba Peter, our bishop” (§ 177),¹⁷¹
- another vision of the same Athanasius, a priest-monk from Egypt: the death of Peter the Iberian will occur on that same day which is the third day of the feast of Peter of Alexandria, “according to the

(166) In her analysis, Horn interprets the dates according to the Alexandrian (Coptic) calendar without discerning properly between the Julian calendar and the Gregorian one. Thus, she rightly states that the commemoration date of Peter of Alexandria is November 25 (Julian calendar) but, then, translates the same date, Hator 29 (= Julian November 25), as December 8 (Gregorian calendar from March 1900 till February 2100), which produces a series of chronological confusions in Horn’s commentaries. Cf. HORN, PHENIX JR, John Rufus..., 263, n. 6, and 264, n. 2.

(167) HORN, PHENIX JR, John Rufus..., 242/243. The *Life of Abba Isaías* by Zacharias gives no chronology at all; cf. E. W. BROOKS, *Vita Isaiae monachi auctore Zacharia Scholastico*, in: *Vitae virorum apud monophysitas celeberrimum*, I (Parisiis, 1907) (CSCO, Ser. III; Syr 25 [7–8, Syr 7–8]) 1–16 (txt) / 1–10 (versio).

(168) HORN, PHENIX JR, John Rufus..., 248/249.

(169) *Ibid.*, 252/253–254/255.

(170) *Ibid.*, 256/257.

(171) *Ibid.*, 258/259.

custom that one adopted in Alexandria, that his memorial was [to be celebrated] for three days" (§ 180),¹⁷²

- Peter the Iberian died on that same day (§ 181),¹⁷³
- "It was then late evening, [near] dawn on Friday;" the body of the saint was wrapped and prepared to the burial (§ 182),¹⁷⁴
- Peter's burial in his monastery in Maiuma at the evening of the second day after his death (§§ 186–188),¹⁷⁵
- the translation of Peter's relics to the new monastery building "during the following year, one day before [the anniversary] of his departure" (§ 191),¹⁷⁶
- a kind of summary of the chronological data in the final chapter of the *Life*: Peter died on First Kanon (December) 1, "when Sunday was dawning" [cf. Friday in § 182 above¹⁷⁷], on the third day of the memorial of Peter of Alexandria, five months after the departure of Abba Isaias [cf. August as the month of Isaias' departure in § 167 above: from August to December there are only four months], the *translatio* of his relics took place in the second year, one day before Peter's memorial; Peter's first deposition took place on First Kanon (December) 2; thus, we celebrate Peter's commemoration over three days: the day of his *translatio*, the day of his death, and the day of his first deposition (§ 193).¹⁷⁸ Horn already noticed that "[t]his description conflicts with the dating of the commemoration of the Peter of Alexandria indicated above at *Vit. Pet.* § 182"¹⁷⁹ but one can see some other contradictions as well.

(172) HORN, PHENIX JR, John Rufus..., 262/263.

(173) Ibid., 262/263–264/265.

(174) Ibid., 264/265–266/267; Horn's note (p. 264, n. 2; see above) that it is December 10 is wrong, unless we adopt the Gregorian calendar when its difference with the Julian one is 13 days.

(175) HORN, PHENIX JR, John Rufus..., 270/271–274/275.

(176) Ibid., 278/279.

(177) This contradiction was noticed by R. RAABE, *Petrus der Iberer. Ein Charakterbild aus Kirchen- und Sittengeschichte des fünften Jahrhunderts. Syrische Übersetzung einer um das Jahr 500 verfassten griechischen Biographie. Herausgegeben und übersetzt* (Leipzig, 1895) 132, n. 2.

(178) HORN, PHENIX JR, John Rufus..., 278/279–280/281.

(179) Ibid., 279, n. 6.

Despite its unawareness of the exact date of the death of Abba Isaías, the last chapter of the *Life of Peter the Iberian* is quite precise in its justification of the commemoration cycle of Peter constructed around December 1 as its main date. Indeed, we can see this date as that of the commemoration of Peter in some Syrian calendars.¹⁸⁰ December 1 fell on Sunday in 491. This seems to me to be the main argument for dating the deaths of both Peter the Iberian and Abba Isaías to 491. However, it is difficult to avoid the impression that the whole final chapter of the presently accessible text of the *Life of Peter the Iberian* is a later addition. In fact, it does not have any support in the bulk of the text. The note in § 177 that the commemoration of blessed Stephen on December 4 is “three days after the memorial of Abba Peter” could also be a later gloss, if it contradicts the other relevant data.

According to the main text of the *Life*, Peter’s death took place on November 27, the third day of the feast of Peter of Alexandria which started on November 25. Indeed, this date is also known to Syrian calendars.¹⁸¹ November 27 fell on Friday in 492. It seems to me, thus, beyond any reasonable doubt that the exact dates of Abba Isaías’ and Peter the Iberian’s departures are August 11, 492, and November 27, 492, respectively.

As it is stated in the *Life of Peter the Iberian* (§ 180), his death took place within a liturgical cycle of Egyptian origin, the three-day feast of Peter of Alexandria. According to the Egyptian calendar, the date of Peter the Iberian’s death is Koiak 1. This fact is the obvious source of confusion in a part of the Syrian liturgical tradition. In the Middle Ages as well as in Antiquity, it was rather customary to “translate” the dates from one calendar to another without any exact formulas but simply on the grounds of identification of the months which roughly correspond to each other. Thus, the Egyptian Koiak is to be interpreted as the Julian December (First Kanon, in Syriac), and Koiak 1 becomes December 1 instead of November 27. The final chapter of the presently accessible text of the *Life of Peter the Iberian* is an elaborated attempt to

(180) Calendar Nau VI; NAU, *Un martyrologe et douze ménologes...*, 67. The calendar of Rabban Sliba gives Peter’s commemoration two times, on December 1 and on November 25 (instead of the commemoration of Peter of Alexandria that is to be expected on this day); P. PEETERS, *Le martyrologe de Rabban Sliba*, AB 27 (1908) 129–200, here 142, 143/168, 169 (txt/tr.).

(181) Calendars Nau III; NAU, *Un martyrologe et douze ménologes...*, 48, and Nau X; *ibid.*, 108.

justify an already established liturgical cycle based on such a mistake. This chapter is a later addition with no historical value.¹⁸²

3.2. *Connected Peter the Iberian, Dionysius the Areopagite, Polycarp of Smyrna, and some Carpus*

Now, knowing the origins of the two main commemoration dates of Peter the Iberian (November 27 and December 1), we are in position to revisit Honigmann's (and van Esbroeck's) thesis that there is a connection between some memorials of Peter and/or John the Eunuch, on the one hand, and some people mentioned in the *Corpus Areopagiticum*, on the other.

What does it mean that the commemoration of Hierotheos of Athens, in the Chalcedonian tradition, coincides with the day of departure of John the Eunuch, October 4? Is it a mere coincidence or something more, as Honigmann and van Esbroeck thought? To answer, we need to recheck the available data on the memorial days of Peter the Iberian and the personages mentioned in the *Corpus Areopagiticum*.

There are some "anomalous" commemoration dates which escaped scholarly attention. The most important is the only day of commemoration of both Peter the Iberian and his teacher Abba Isaias in the Copto-Ethiopian rite, October 13 (Coptic Paopi = Arabic Babeh or, dialectal, Baba = Ethiopic Ṭəqəmt 16). This rite does not know such commemoration days as August 11, November 27, and December 1. As to November 27, it is rather natural: in the Coptic rite, this date was already occupied by the third day of the three-day festival of Peter of Alexandria. As for December 1, it is a purely Syrian invention impossible outside of the realm where the Julian calendar is at work.

(182) The trace of its liturgical cycle from November 30 to December 2 was preserved in the Georgian tradition only where the memory of Peter the Iberian was December 2. According to the Georgian version of the *Life of Peter the Iberian*, this is the day of Peter's death (§ 68). However, the medieval Georgian calendars are not studied sufficiently so far, and so, we cannot judge with certainty whether December 2 is the only memory date of Peter in the Georgian rite or not. Cf. Н. МАРР, Предисловие [N. MARR, Preface], in: ИДЕМ, *Житие Петра Ивера, подвижника и епископа майюмского V века* [*Life of Peter the Iberian, Ascetic and Bishop of Maiouma*] (Санкт-Петербург, 1896) (Православный палестинский сборник, 16.2) XIII–XIV, XVI. The date of this Georgian version is uncertain; it goes back, in turn, to a Syriac version but distinct from the known text of John Rufus. For the *status quaestionis*, see HORN, *Asceticism...*, 47–49.

Normally, October 13 is the commemoration day of bishop Carpus, deacon Pappylas and those with them killed at Pergamum in Asia Minor under Decius. This is an ancient memorial common to the Byzantine, Copto-Ethiopian, and Western Syrian rites. In the Copto-Ethiopic rite only, to these commemorations, a commemoration of Peter, the disciple of Abba Isaias (and sometime of Abba Isaias himself) are added. Very often the original connection between Carpus and his companions is broken: in many Coptic and Ethiopic documents the names of his companions are lost, and even the name of Carpus is corrupted.¹⁸³ This Carpus seems to be rather a companion of Abba Isaias and Peter his disciple or, at least, an independent person.

At the same time, there is an “anomalous” commemoration of Dionysius the Areopagite on December 3 connected with the commemorations of both Carpus and Polycarp on this same day. The calendar Nau III (Western Syrian going back to the eighth century) has on December 3 Dionysius the Areopagite, some unspecified Carpus, and

(183) BASSET, *Le Synaxaire arabe jacobite...*, 128 (Carpus is rendered as Qarbū قربو, and Pappylas as Abdalū ابدلوا). These names are often distorted in Arabic; thus, in the variant readings, Basset quotes other manuscripts where these names are rendered as Aylū (ايلا) and Tarbus (for Carpus) and Apollo (for Pappylas). A Coptic calendar in Arabic, fourteenth century (ms F; the calendar occupies several leaflets binded together with a five-language Psalter of the sixteenth cent.), gives, after Agathon of Alexandria, “...and saint Wṛnwʾ (ورنوا) and Abba Blwʾ (بلوا) and Peter” [F. NAU, *Les ménologes des évangélistes coptes-arabes...*, 59 (txt) / 27, n. 2 (tr.) among the variant readings; Nau recognizes in “saint Warnoua” Carpus and in “Anba Bloua et Pierre” Pappylas and Peter the Iberian, cf. his index of names, *ibid.*, 68 and 75]. The Ethiopian Synaxarium on Ṭəqəmt 16 (COLIN, *Le Synaxaire éthiopien. Mois de Ṭeqemt*, 90/91) gives, among others, the commemoration of “...Holy Father Abba Ablo [ms D: Ablu] and Saint Peter, the disciple of Abba Isaias the Anchorite; and the commemoration of Saint Fārbu [ms E: Fāfbu; an obvious error due to the similarity of the corresponding letters in Ethiopic] <...> and Qarbul [ms E: Qarbu] and Anālyu...” Colin rightly translates “Ablo” as “Apollo” but, in fact, this is a distortion of the name Pappylas through an Arabic intermediary (in Arabic, the form “Apollo” for “Pappylas” is attested, see above). Fārbu (Fāfbu) and Qarbul (Qarbu) are both different renderings of “Carpus” due to the similarity between *fa* and *qaf* in Arabic (these letters differ only by the number of dots, and so, are very often confused). “Anālyu” is another avatar of “Pappylas,” after confusing *ba* and *nun* in an Arabic intermediary (these letters also differ only by dots). Thus, the Ethiopian Synaxarium contains two sequences with the names of Carpus and Pappylas on the same day, and the first of them contains also the names of Peter the Iberian and his teacher Isaias.

Polycarp of Smyrna. Dionysius, while without Carpus and Polycarp, is repeated on December 3 by the late Western Syrian calendar Nau X. Finally, Qarpus (reconsidered as a Syrian martyr bishop of the fourth century whose cult was especially popular in the fifth and sixth centuries) with a “bishop Polycarp” are mentioned without Dionysius on December 3 in the late calendar Nau VI (ms A), while the same calendar (ms A) does mention Polycarp of Smyrna once more on his legitimate date February 23.¹⁸⁴

It is likely that the calendar Nau VI (ms A) represents the same tradition where the commemoration of Dionysius the Areopagite was on December 3 together with Carpus and Polycarp of Smyrna. Indeed, such a group of the three names corresponds to the realities of the *Corpus Areopagiticum* where Polycarp of Smyrna is the addressee of the *Letter VII*, and Carpus is a bishop or priest in Crete who reported to Dionysius his mystical vision of the torments of apostates (*Letter VIII*, 6). John of Scythopolis identifies him with a companion of Paul mentioned in 2 Tim 4:13¹⁸⁵ but without any explication of localization in Crete.

Thus, the commemoration of the group of Dionysius, Carpus, and Polycarp of Smyrna on December 3 is testified to directly by two calendars (one of them, Nau III, being relatively ancient) and indirectly by one more calendar. Among these calendars, the two former contain the memory of Peter the Iberian on November 27 and the latter one on December 1. One has to conclude that it was on November 27 in their common archetype.

The date December 3 is close to both alternative dates of Peter's memory: it is the seventh day after November 27 and the next day after the liturgical cycle November 30 – December 2 within which the commemoration on December 1 was introduced. It is *a priori* likely that the commemoration of Dionysius, Carpus, and Polycarpus was

(184) NAU, *Un martyrologe et douze ménologies...*, 36, 108, 67, and 72, correspondingly. The genuine Julian date of the martyr death and the commemoration of Polycarp of Smyrna is February 23 (and, thus, his commemoration in different Christian traditions is February 23 or in a near vicinity of this day), while his historic *Acta* date this event according to some Jewish-Christian calendar as a “Great Sabbath;” cf., for all this, W. RORDORF, *Zum Problem des “Grossen Sabbats” im Polykarp- und Pioniusmartyrium*, in: E. DASSMANN, K. S. FRANK (hrsg.), *Pietas. Festschrift für Bernhard Kötting* (Münster, 1980) 245–249.

(185) *SchEp* 553.8; *PG* 4, 553 C.

introduced on December 3 in some connection with the commemoration of Peter the Iberian. So far, our main argument for this is the cluster of the same commemoration of Peter the Iberian and Carpus on October 13 in the Copto-Ethiopian rite. The mutual connection of the commemoration of Peter the Iberian and Carpus mentioned by Areopagite can be proved by examination of Cretan connections of the pseudonymised *Corpus Areopagiticum*.

3.3. Cretan Connections of Carpus and Sitz im Leben of the Corpus Areopagiticum

Apostle Paul mentions Carpus as a resident of Troas, and the further mainstream Byzantine tradition (known in the Oriental languages, too) adds that the place of his apostolic mission was Thrace.¹⁸⁶ No legend is known about Carpus' preaching in Crete. According to the mainstream tradition, there is only one apostle of Crete, Titus. Nevertheless, some traces of a legend on apostolic mission in Crete of both Titus and Carpus are preserved. I found these traces in the hymnography of the Cretan feast of the Ten Holy Martyrs of Crete, December 23.

One anonymous canon, currently not in use, addresses Titus and Carpus in the beginning (Ode 1, Troparion 2)¹⁸⁷ as the founders of the Cretan diocese:

Ἱερομύστα Τίτε
καὶ θεοφόρε Κάρπε,
οἱ ἀκλινεῖς θεμέλιοι
τῆς Κρητῶν ἐπαρχίας,
Θεῷ παριστάμενοι
σὺν πολλῇ παρρησίᾳ
ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν δεήθητε
σὺν τοῖς ἀγίοις μάρτυσι
κινδύνων λυτρωθῆναι ἡμᾶς.

O Titus, initiated in holy mysteries,
and god-bearing Carpus,
the unshakable foundations
of the eparchy of Cretans,
standing before God
with a great franchise,
pray for us
with the holy martyrs
to release us from the evils.

(186) The earliest source is probably Pseudo-Epiphanius of Salamine in his *Index discipulorum*: νη'. Κάρπος, οὗ καὶ αὐτοῦ ὁ Παῦλος μέμνηται, ἐπίσκοπος Βερόοιᾶς τῆς Θράκης ἐγένετο (T. SCHERMANN, *Prophetarum vitae fabulosae* (Lipsiae, 1907) (BSGRT) 125.7–8).

(187) Canon XLVIII (1): In sanctos X martyres Cretenses, in: A. KOMINIS, G. SCHIRÒ, *Analecta hymnica graeca e codicibus eruta Italiae inferioris*, vol. 4 (Roma, 1976) 587–598; quoted according to TLG 4354.004.

Another anonymous canon which is now printed in the Greek menaion addresses the ten martyrs as “Τίτου καὶ Κάρπου κλήματα” (“branches of Titus and Carpus”). This Troparion is borrowed in another anonymous canon, now not in liturgical use, which could be more ancient.¹⁸⁸

It is extremely unlikely that these canons echo Dionysius the Areopagite, especially given that Areopagite said nothing about the apostolate of Carpus in Crete. On the contrary, if those who were pseudonymising the *Vorlage* of the *Corpus* and their audience were not acquainted with an already existing tradition on the apostolate of Carpus in Crete, the mention of Crete would be senseless. Crete itself does not play any role in the account on Carpus in the *Letter VIII*.

The only reasonable conclusion is that both the *Corpus Dionysiacum* and our Cretan canons reflect a pre-Arabian Cretan local tradition of the double apostolate in Crete of Carpus and Titus. This tradition vanished during the centuries of separation of Crete from the rest of Byzantium.

The pseudonymised recension of the *Corpus* shows clear Cretan connections. Apart from the mention of Dionysius' visit to Carpus in Crete, there is an important implicit indication, the “Titus hierarch” as the addressee of *Letter IX*. Titus is the apostle of Crete according to both our local Cretan and mainstream Byzantine traditions.

It is interesting that there is a parallel with the two apostles of Ephesus. Dionysius addresses each of them according to their status: Timotheos is the addressee of the long treatises while Gaius is that of the short ones. As for the two apostles of Crete, the picture is analogous: Titus as the addressee of a relatively long letter while Carpus appears as the hero of a story addressed to a third person.¹⁸⁹

(188) The canon presently in use is that published as Canon XLVIII (3): In sanctos X martyres Cretenses in: *ibid.*, 614–622, see ode 5, troparion 2; cf. a probably older canon XLVIII (2), *ibid.*, 599–613, ode 5, troparion 4.

(189) The names which appear in the *Corpus Areopagiticum* still need to be studied properly. The line of Timotheos, Gaius, and Sosipater points out Ephesus which is important in the context of the Dormition tradition. The line of Titus and Carpus points out Crete. The names of Polycarp of Smyrna and John the Theologian (the addressee of the *Letter X*) are used to fit Dionysius into the historical frame, especially after an apparently anachronistic quotation from Ignatius of Antioch (cf. ROREM, *Pseudo-Dionysius...*, 12–14, and 27–28, and cf. above, section 1.3.2). The sense of the names of Dorotheus (the addressee of the *Letter V*) and Demophilus are still not understood (however,

Neither Peter the Iberian nor John the Eunuch visited Crete but the role of the Cretan anti-Chalcedonian diaspora within Peter the Iberian's Palestinian milieu is firmly attested to. John Rufus in the *Plerophoriae*, 44, records the history of the monastery established by Urbicia and her brother Euphrasius who were children of an unnamed bishop of Crete.¹⁹⁰ In the time of persecution they fled to Palestine and founded a monastery there. Sometime in the late 470s, their monastery joined Epiphanius, an exiled bishop of Pamphylia, one of the most celebrated confessors of the anti-Chalcedonism. Then, a new wave of persecutions forced them to leave their monastery and to go to Alexandria. In her reply to the Chalcedonian authorities of Palestine, Urbicia referred to her late spiritual father, "the holy monk Timotheos" in Crete. Then (apparently, after the proclamation of the *Henotikon* in 482) they all returned to Palestine, in Maiouma, where Urbicia and Euphrasius died (before *ca* 500 when John Rufus wrote his *Plerophories*) preserving their anti-Chalcedonian faith. This bishop Epiphanius gave a priestly ordination to Severus, the future patriarch of Antioch, then a monk in the monastery founded by Peter the Iberian, several years after the death of the latter.¹⁹¹

This milieu connected to the monastery of Urbicia and Euphrasius in Maiouma, well-known to John Rufus, was both that of the disciples of Peter the Iberian and that of the mainstream (Severianist) anti-Chalcedonism of the reign of Anastasius (through bishop Epiphanius and Severus himself). If the pseudonymised recension of the *Corpus Dionysiacum* was prepared here, it has a good chance of containing the hallmarks of Cretan connections. the same time, such a milieu of origin opens the broadest perspective for integration into the mainstream Church tradition through Severus of Antioch.

The same milieu was (in the epoch of the *Henotikon*) in Eucharistic communion with and theologically not too far from that of John of Scythopolis, if it is John of Scythopolis portrayed by van Esbroeck and not by Rorem and Lamoreaux.

the hypothesis that the prototype of Demophilus is Peter the Fuller allows understanding of his name as "populist").

(190) NAU, Jean Rufus, évêque de Maïouma, *Plérphories...*, 94–97.

(191) KUGENER, Zacharie le Scholastique, *Vie de Sévère...*, *Sévère...*, 100.

3.4. Hallmarks of the Origin and the Liturgical Calendar

As we have seen, there are different traditions regarding the commemoration of Dionysius the Areopagite, Hierotheos of Athens, Carpus and Polycarp of Smyrna, and Peter the Iberian. Some of them are connected to the main topic of the *Corpus Dionysiacum*, the revelation of hierarchies during the Dormition of the Theotokos. Thus, these commemorations of Dionysius and Hierotheos (studied in the previous sections of this article) say nothing about the authorship. Therefore, I am hesitating even to accept that the commemoration of Hierotheos on October 4 was established by those who were keeping in mind the commemoration day of John the Eunuch.

However, the situation with the Copto-Ethiopian commemorations on October 13 and the Syrian commemorations on December 3 is quite different. Let us recall that these commemorations were never studied by the historians of hagiography.

The commemorations of October 13 give us a connection between Peter the Iberian some Carpus, already having lost his original connection with Pappylas and those with them. If we take into account that the name of Carpus is a hallmark of the milieu where the pseudonymised *Corpus* emerged, such a coincidence with the commemoration of Peter the Iberian, absolutely unjustified by his biography or that of his teacher Abba Isaias, is significant. It is to be interpreted as homage of the editors of the pseudonymised *Corpus* to the author of the core of their work.

The coincidence of the commemorations of Dionysius the Areopagite, Carpus, and Polycarp of Smyrna on December 3 is even more revealing. Moreover, this date is not far from the two Syrian commemoration dates of Peter the Iberian, November 27 and December 1 (and especially close to the memorial cycle from November 30 to December 2 described in the additional final chapter of the *Life of Peter the Iberian*).

Both the commemorations of October 13 and December 3 reveal different attempts to inscribe a connection between Peter the Iberian and the *Corpus Dionysiacum* into the liturgical calendars. These attempts were different because the followers of the late Peter the Iberian in Maiuma were dealing with different liturgical traditions of Egypt and Palestine. Their Palestinian legacy was never accepted by the Chalcedonians but partially preserved in the Western Syrian rite. In the anti-Chalcedonian milieu of Egypt, it was, of course, never challenged.

RECAPITULATIO

The thesis of Honigmann — van Esbroeck is now the most plausible explanation of the different chains of data, which were never reconciled otherwise.

Honigmann's thesis that the core of the *Corpus* was written by Peter the Iberian was rejected by most scholars already in the 1950s, but was rescued from oblivion by Michel van Esbroeck in the 1990s.

My own elaboration on van Esbroeck's arguments could be summarized as the following (omitting criticisms of some of his particular arguments).

1. In the *Corpus* itself there are clear signs that it was produced in the milieu of ex-Empress Eudocia. This could be demonstrated by an approach that I call "philological." More than thirty years ago, a brilliant Russian philologist Sergei Averintsev pointed out that there is quite specific stylistic correspondence between the *Corpus* and the two poems of Nonnus of Panopolis, one of these poems being pagan and dedicated to the god Dionysus and another one being a Christian paraphrase of the Gospel of John. However, the author of the Christian poem borrowed verbatim from the pagan one. Both Nonnus and the author of the *Corpus* are describing their object not by indication of what it is but by indication of what it is not. Thus, they enumerate, in very long chains, that something is not that, not that, not that, and so on.

I have added to this observation of Averintsev the known fact that Nonnus has severely influenced one of the leading persons of the milieu of Eudocia, Cyrus of Panopolis — a poet (probably, the most important poet of this whole epoch), prefect of Constantinople who was helping to Eudocia to reshape the cult of Theotokos, then bishop and theologian and disciple of Daniel the Stylite. It is also important that the *Gospel Paraphrase* as well as Cyrus and Eudocia — and as well as Peter the Iberian — were inspired by the Christology of Cyril of Alexandria. After the promulgation of the *Henotikon* of Zeno, Daniel the Stylite was one of the principal spiritual authorities approving this act. Peter the Iberian was loyal to the *Henotikon*. *Henotikon* resolved, during Peter's lifetime, the problems related to the Council of Chalcedon in the East. This Council was not a pretext for Church division until the time of the "monophysite revolution" after 505.

2. The famous expression θεανδρική ἐνέργεια is a hallmark of the milieu of Eudocia. The wording of "god male" instead of "god man" goes back to Greek poetry, up to Pindarus. However, such terminology as applied to Christ is known, before Dionysius, from one source only, the *Gospel Paraphrase* of Nonnus. This paraphrase never uses the term "God man", but, instead, uses two times the term "God male" applied to Christ.

3. The feast of the Dormition was even more important for Eudocia's milieu than van Esbroeck thought. It was established in Palestine after 438 and, most probably, after 443 and certainly before 449, therefore, about the date when John the Eunuch saw his vision of hierarchies, in about 444. It is very likely that this vision pertained to the first celebration of the Dormition feast in Gethsemane.

4. That the vision of John the Eunuch is, indeed, a Dormition scene is corroborated, among others, by an important fact that both this vision as it is described in the *Life of Peter the Iberian* and Areopagite's account on hierarchies have in their hagiographical substrate the scene of the vision of hierarchies in the *Ascension of Isaias*. Moreover, the scene of John the Eunuch's vision has specific common features with one roughly contemporaneous Dormition tradition (the Coptic tradition of Transitus under the name of Evodius of Rome).

5. The *Life of Peter the Iberian*, despite the fact that its author, John Rufus, places his account of the vision of John the Eunuch out of its biographical context, still preserves the traces of the liturgical localisation of this vision (three days corresponding to the early date of the Dormition feast, from August 7 to 9, and, then, the 30-day period up to another newly established Marian feast on September 8, the Nativity of Theotokos; this early date of the Dormition feast seems to be unknown to John Rufus who was writing more than half a century later).

6. Moreover, I have added some data to the history of the liturgical commemorations of Hierotheos and Dionysius. Already van Esbroeck pointed out that, in the Coptic tradition, the commemoration of Hierotheos on April 16 is inscribed in the Coptic Dormition cycle: it is exactly the middle between the Coptic date of Dormition and deposition (January 16) and the Assumption (August 9). I could add that the dates of the Byzantine tradition, October 3 and 4, are connected to the Byzantine date of Dormition on August 15 (actual, in my evaluation, since about 500, the date of appearance of the pseudonymised *Corpus*) in an analogous manner: October 3 is the fiftieth day after August 15, a kind of Pentecost, given that Dormition is a kind of Easter (indeed, we have some documents attesting to the existence of a tradition of calling the Dormition "Easter"). Moreover, another Palestinian feast, the Presentation of the Theotokos in the Temple on November 21, goes back to the same epoch, ca 500. The commemoration of Dionysius on October 3 is the middle point between the Dormition on August 15 and the Presentation on November 21. The Presentation is the second Pentecost after the Dormition.

7. So, my most important conclusion is that we have to look for the author of the *Corpus* in the milieu connected with ex-Empress Eudocia.

8. It is always probable that such an author is an otherwise unknown person. However, in our case we have to look not for a single man but for a pair of visionary teacher and his cellmate, like Hierotheos and Dionysius. Therefore, the number of possibilities is severely restricted. It is not so likely that the figure of such visionary could pass unnoticed.

9. In the pertinent milieu, we have several reputed visionary teachers, *e.g.*, apart from John the Eunuch, Peter the Iberian himself, Daniel the Stylite, and, probably, even Melania the Younger (who died before the Dormition feast was established, and so, could be excluded, anyway). However, in their hagiographical dossiers we have nothing similar to the vision of hierarchies and to the Dormition scene as it is in the vision of John the Eunuch. Therefore, I think the most natural solution is to accept that it was, indeed, John the Eunuch who had a spiritual experience described in the Platonic terms by the author of the *Urtext* of the *Corpus*, who, in this case, could be only Peter the Iberian.

10. The pseudonymised recension of the *Corpus* that was produced *ca* 500 goes back to the Palestinian monastic milieu close to the monastery established by Peter the Iberian in Maiuma and to the monastery founded by the Cretan émigrés Urbicia and Euphrasius, in Maiuma as well. To this milieu belonged such important figures of anti-Chalcedonism as confessor bishop Eusebius and Severus of Antioch (who was the first referring to the *Corpus* as an authoritative source). To the same milieu go back several liturgical traditions connecting the liturgical commemorations of Dionysius, Peter the Iberian, and some Carpus (considered the second apostle of Crete, together with Titus, and the hero of a story in *Letter VIII* of Dionysius).

I have to acknowledge that my argumentation will be unconvincing for those who take as granted that the author of the *Corpus* was originally a neoplatonic philosopher and direct disciple of the pagan teachers. I would say about this attitude that there are several reasons not to accept it, one of which is methodological: the *Corpus* could be read (and historically, indeed, was read) in a dozen of internally non-contradicting manners, and so, its philosophical and theological reading will be never able to lead to define which of these readings is that of the author. This is why, I think, that we have to start from the definition of the *Sitz im Leben* by other means, including those of philology and critical hagiography.