

DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE IN THE CONTEX OF BYZANTINE – SLAVONIC LITERARY RELATIONS

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I INTRODUCTORY

In a massive corpus of philosophic literature, translated and original, current in Medieval Slavic world, the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite occupy a very distinctive place. Along with such texts as treatises by John Damascene,¹ *Dioptra* by Phillipos Monotropos,² popular selections from various Greek authors,³ the *Corpus Dionysiacum*, together with the commentaries attributed to Maximus the Confessor, played an important role in the process of development of Slavonic orthodox theology. In the famous *Cyrill book* (Кириллова книга), which was compiled in 1644 and contained a list of the books recommended and prohibited for reading by the Orthodox Christians the *Corpus* is mentioned among the books highly recommended, second only to the Bible.⁴

Composed by an unknown author in a turning point of Byzantine theological history, marked by bitter Church controversies and one of the most serious prosecutions of the Platonic School which culminated in its close in 528, the *Corpus Dionysiacum* was predestined for rebirth everywhere theological thought began its evolution in Christian society. It was the writing of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite that attracted the attention of the brilliant thinker of the ninth century, John Scottus Eriugena, who translated it into Latin, composed commentaries and made an extensive use of it in his own theological constructions. Five centuries later, in a similar situation, the Slavonic theologian, *Starets* Isaiah undertook the translation of the *Corpus* into Church Slavonic.

This period was a ground breaking one in Slavic theological culture, since at the time of Isaiah the Slavic culture was undergoing quick development, when it finally took Christian shape, incorporating the traditional values of Christendom.

In fact the history of Byzantine literary influences on Slavic thought can be traced back as far as to the time of Constantine and Method's mission and the period shortly after it, when the Bible and liturgical corpus were translated from the Greek into the newly created Church Slavonic literary *κοινή*. From that time onward the Byzantine literary heritage was constantly translated from the Greek, commented upon and paraphrased in the Slavonic literature and influenced those original literary genres that come into existence around this time.⁵

¹ For general overview see: Мещерский Н.А. *Источники и состав древней славяно-русской переводной письменности IX-XV веков* (Ленинград, 1978); especially on John Damascene in Church Slavonic translation cf.: Гаврюшин Н.К. «Диалектика» на Руси, *Памятники науки и техники 1987-1988* (Москва, 1989) с. 202-236; Weiher E. *Die Dialektik des Johannes von Damaskus in kirchenslavischer Uebersetzung* (Wiesbaden, 1969).

² Cf. Miklas H. *Die Dioptra des Phillippos Monotropos im Slavischen* (Graz, 1975); Прохоров Г.М. *Памятники переводной и русской литературы XIV - XV веков* (Ленинград, 1987), the second chapter.

³ Сперанский М.Н. *Переводные сборники изречений в славяно-русской письменности. Исследование и тексты* (Москва, 1904); Бондарь С.В. *Философско-мировоззренческое содержание «Изборников» 1073 и 1076 гг.* Киев, 1990. A facsimile edition of the *Izbornik 1073 goda* is published in Moscow in 1983 and a new edition is in progress. The best critical edition so far is: Симеонов Сборник (по Светолавовия перепис от 1073 г.). Том 1. Исследования и текст. Том 2. Речник-индекс. Под ред. акад. П. Динеков. София, 1991-1993. Unfortunately, there is virtually no apparatus and almost no attempt to trace the Greek source of the *Izbornik* is present.

⁴ For selections from this book cf.: Грицевская И.М. Индекс истинных книг в составе "Кирилловой книги". – *ТОДРЛ*. Т. XLIV. СПб., 1993. С.125 – 134 and М.Н. Громов, *Структура и типология русской средневековой философии* (Москва, 1997), с. 239-242.

⁵ Among the earliest texts is the aforementioned *Izbornik 1073 goda* as well as the *Izbornik 1076 goda*, which also included various translated materials as well as an interesting collection of original texts moulded under the Greek

Our main concern in this study – the fourteenth century Church Slavonic version of the CD – is an important and somewhat curious piece of writings. Taken together with the translator's foreword, it captures well the linguistic situation in Slavonic theological literature, witnesses about certain very touching political and historical circumstances and allows to trace the way the early Slavonic educators approached Byzantine literary heritage and adopted the Greek theology and philosophy to Slavonic language. As the medieval translator acknowledges it in his foreword, this task was difficult, mainly because of the virtual absence of developed Slavonic terminology, which could allow rendering the Greek correctly. Notwithstanding this he faced the challenge bravely and definitely succeeded in his job to a degree that the resulting text, I believe, did not lose its interest even for a contemporary reader of Dionysius and therefore is worth investigating not only from the philological point of view (which goes without saying), but also for the sake of a better understanding of the ideas of the Dionysian Corpus as such, as long as it contains things which do not depend upon particular linguistic expressions.

Let us now, after a concise general overview, study historical and philological circumstances of Isaiah's work and then proceed with an analysis of the central point of Dionysian synthesis – the symbolic theology, paying special attention to the Greek and Church Slavonic terminology used both by the unknown author of the CD and its translator.

II

THE DIONYSIAN CORPUS IN CONTEXT: A general overview and miscellaneous considerations

To begin with, let us outline the broader context in which our literary event took place. The document we have at hand, the *Corpus Dionysiacum*, consists of four treatises (*De divinis nominibus*, *De mystica theologia*, *De coelesti hierarchia*, *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*) and ten *Epistulae* addressed to different persons⁶. The unknown author of the corpus wrote under the name of St. Dionysius the Areopagite, a convert of St. Paul in Athens (*Acts* 17:16-34), but the ideas and terminology used throughout the text, its general design, numerous literal parallelisms with and even *verbatim* quotations from later Neoplatonic literature prove that the work was probably written as late as at the turn of the fifth/sixth centuries by an unknown Christian (possibly from Syria or some other part of Asia Minor), strongly influenced by later Greek metaphysics. Though it is no longer believed that the corpus is actually the work of the historical Dionysius the Areopagite, one may only guess now who is the real author of this mysterious document.

The reasons usually given to justify this (already common) opinion can be briefly summarized along the following lines.⁷ The corpus came into historical being (was mysteriously 'discovered') somewhere in the first decades of the sixth century and immediately started to play an important role in the ecclesiastic polemics which were going on in that time. As a work of apostolic authority it was explicitly appealed to by Severus of Antioch, then by John of Scythopolis⁸ and some other Church writers and the monophysite bishops at the Colloquium of 533. Therefore it can scarcely be

influence. It is worth noting that a quote from the CD and a part of a Vita of St. Dionysius are included in the former collection. For the text and study upon this selection cf.: Helmut Keipert, *Velikij Dionisije sice napisal: Die Uebersetzung von Areopagita-Zitaten bei Euthymius von Tarnovo, T'rnovska Knizhovna shkola, t. II* (The second international Symposium, Veliko Tarnovo, May 20-23 1976), S. 326-349. (We shall return to this subject later.)

⁶The most recent critical edition of the Greek text (which however does not include the Scholia) is the following: CORPUS DIONYSIACUM I. *De divinis nominibus*. Herausgegeben von Beate Regina Suchla (Patristische Texte und Studien. Bd. 33). Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1990. CORPUS DIONYSIACUM II. *De coelesti hierarchia. De ecclesiastica hierarchia. De mystica theologia. Epistulae*. Herausgegeben von Günter Heil und Adolf Martin Ritter (Patristische Texte und Studien. Bd. 36). Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1991.

⁷ One can take as an example the treatise by certain Theodorus Rhaithuensis, mentioned by Photius (Bibl., cod. 1), where the reasons for this doubt are listed. (This mysterious person will later come up again in our discussion of the earliest Slavonic translations from the CD).

⁸ On John of Scythopolis work see now a comprehensive study by Rorem Paul, Lamoreaux John C. *John of Scythopolis and the Dionysian Corpus. Annotating the Areopagite*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1998.

composed much after 500. More precisely, except to the earliest extant references to the CD (the first of which being found in the *Dormition of Virgin* dated as early as 451 and the second in the 10th chapter of *Breviarium causae Nestorianorum et Eutychianorum* by Liberatus of Carthage, composed before 560-566, which, as researchers argue, must be considered later interpolations, made on purpose in order to confirm the Dionysius' legend) the writings ascribed to the name of Dionysius were for the first time definitely referred to by Severus of Antioch in his third letter to John Higinus. Therefore, as R. Roque summarizes it:

En tout hypothèse, la composition des *Areopagitica* doit être fixée avant 528, date à laquelle Paul de Gallinice a déjà traduit en syriaque les deux traités de Sévère (...) Si l'on tient compte des délais de traduction et de composition de ces traités, on peut dire sans témérité que les *Areopagitica* ont dû être écrits : soit avant 525, si la 3^e Lettre à Jean l'higoumène est de 532 ; soit avant 510, si telle est la date de cette lettre.⁹

On the other hand, provided that the corpus apparently embodies ideas of the later Neoplatonists and those of Proclus (418-485), it appears reasonable to assume that the *Corpus* was composed no later than at the end of the fifth century. In these circumstances, although it would be interesting to learn the name of the author, it is unlikely that anything more than conjecture will ever be possible and the historical and philosophical interest of the writings is due not to the question of its authorship, intriguing as it were, but to the content, significance and influence of the text itself. In any event, judging from the text itself the unknown author was a learned philosopher, possibly a member of a Platonic School, who most probably came from Syria, Palestine or Egypt in the last decades of the fifth century to participate actively in the polemics of the monophysite Church with the orthodox Chalcedonians which was going on in that time. Who can fit this picture? Having no firm ground for accepting or rejecting this or that possible candidate we should better honestly leave this question open.¹⁰ Whoever Pseudo-Dionysius may have been, he was an admirer of the classical philosophy and much rather a convert of Plato than St. Paul. This makes his dependence on Proclus understandable, because who was Proclus, if not the legal heir of Plato in capacity of the head of the Academia in Athens (in some respects the last great one). Having adopted the Neoplatonic *via negationis* and the theory of analogical and anagogical ascent, Pseudo-Dionysius had accomplished what none of the Neoplatonists could do. He connected the metaphysics and theurgy of Neoplatonism with a theory of symbols, inherited from Jewish¹¹ and Early Christian philosophy, reconciled it with the Christian sacraments, and expressed all this in a politically correct language, having succeeded in turning it in such a way and producing it in such a light that it became compatible with the mainstream of Christian theology.

Interestingly, that already the oldest manuscript tradition preserves the complete corpus in the same form, as we know it today. Consisting of four treatises and ten letters the corpus constitutes certain unity and, despite frequent self-references to other writings by the same author is very consistent and well ordered. This fact alone allows assuming that we deal with a complete work, carefully designed by the author or an editor. It appears that the unknown author or editor wanted to be as persuasive and error free as possible. Quite probably that the prologue and commentary to the

⁹ R. Roque, 'Denys l'Aréopagite', in: *Dictionnaire de spiritualité, ascétique et mystique* (Paris, 1957), col. 249.

¹⁰ For an extended but still incomplete survey of different opinions held by various researchers about the problem of the authorship of the CD cf.: R. Hathaway. *Hierarchy and the Definition of Order in the Letters of Pseudo-Dionysius* (The Hague, 1969), pp. 31-35. In addition to the bibliography, given by Hathaway, we can mention two old but clear accounts of the problem: Скворцов К.И. Исследование вопроса об авторстве сочинений, известных под именем св. Дионисия Ареопагита [Skvortsov K.I. *An investigation of the problem of the authorship of the writings attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite*] (Казань, 1871). Донемич С.И. К вопросу о личности Псевдо-Дионисия Ареопагита [*On the question of the authorship of the Corpus Dionysiacum*], *Византийский временник*. Т. 8. Москва – Ленинград, 1956.

¹¹ Did Pseudo-Dionysius know the works of Philo of Alexandria? One may suppose he did, since the monks are called in the CD the *therapeutae*. This fact is duly noticed by the commentator (a scholion to the title of the First Letter), but, as Paul Rorem and John Lamoreaux note, the commentator most probably has acquired this information from Eusebius (John of Scythopolis and the Dionysian Corpus. Annotating the Areopagite. Oxford: Clarendon, 1998, p. 250 fnt. 1).

corpus, later attributed to Maximus the Confessor, were composed – partially or completely – simultaneously with the publication of the corpus. Is it therefore possible that their author, John of Scythopolis, is an editor or the author of the corpus? Or could Severus of Antioch, the first person to mention and probably to discover the corpus, play this role? In any case he made use of it in his argumentation and was certainly interested in accepting its apostolicity. Immediately after ‘discovery’ of the Greek CD, already in a form of a complete document (the text and a set of commentaries), it was translated into Syriac. The translator Sergius (Sargis) of Resh’aina (d. 536), a theologian and physician, who possibly came from Alexandria, was also proposed as an alleged editor of the CD.¹²

An accepted chronological sequence of the treatises within the *Corpus* is *DN* - *MTh* - *CH* - *EH*.¹³ Besides these writings the author of the *CD* mentions the following treatises: θεολογικὰ ὑποτυπώσεις (*DN* I 1; I 5; II 1; II 3; II 7; XI 5; *MTh* III, etc.), συμβολικὴ θεολογία (*DN* I 8; IX 5; XIII 4; *CH* XV 6; *MTh* III; *Ep.* IX 1, etc.) and some others¹⁴, which are either separate works that have been lost, or were never written. But if these treatises ever existed, no trace of them has remained in the later history of the *Corpus*. The *Letters*, as it is proved by a multitude of considerations, is also a work of the same author, not only because they are similar in style, but also because Proclus is used in them in the same way as elsewhere in the *Corpus* and, moreover, because they are not missing in any branch of the manuscript tradition.¹⁵

The *Corpus Dionysiacum*, known from the beginning of the sixth century, played a very ambiguous role in the history of Byzantine philosophy and theology. Doubts concerning its authenticity followed it from the very beginning until the Renaissance. Some serious doubts concerning the *Corpus* having been written by Dionysius, the convert of St. Paul, were expressed in the works of Lorenzo Valla, Theodore of Gaza, Erasmus of Rotterdam and Luther. The last "negative" solution of the problem of authenticity was given by independent studies of H. Koch and J. Stiglmayr at the end of the last century. The disciple of St. Paul has definitely become a follower of Proclus.¹⁶

But the first doubts in its authenticity arose by the time of the very first appearance of the *Corpus*. In 532/533 at a Colloquium held between the followers of Severus (Severians or moderate monophysites) and the Chalcedonian orthodoxes¹⁷, the leader of the anti-severian opposition,

¹²On this translation see especially: Gernot Wiessner, 'Zur Handschriftenüberlieferung der syrischen Fassung des Corpus Dionysiacum', *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaft in Goettingen (NAWG)* 3 (1972), S.165-216 and H. Baltasar, *Kosmische liturgie. Maximus der Bekenner*, 2.auf (Einsiedels, 1961), S. 644-672. Phoqa bar Sargis made a new Syriac translation of the *Corpus* in the ninth century. Recent studies by Istvan Perczel of the Central European University (largely unpublished) promise to present us with new discoveries.

¹³Certain comments on this see: H. Ruh, *Die mystische Gotteslehre des Dionysius Areopagita* (München, 1987), S. 13-14.

¹⁴Περὶ ψυχῆς, περὶ δικαίου καὶ θεοῦ δικαιοτηρίου, περὶ νοητῶν τε καὶ αἰσθητῶν, περὶ τῶν θείων ὕμνων, περὶ τῶν ἀγγελικῶν ἰδιοτήτων καὶ τάξεων -- cf. *Dictionaire de la spiritualite et de la mystique*, T. 1, col. 259; CD II, Register, S. 230.

¹⁵See R.F. Hathaway. *Hierarchy and the Definition of Order in the Letters of Ps.-Dionysius* (The Hague, 1969) pp. 6, 10-11.

¹⁶On this subject see: H. Koch. 'Proclus als Quelle des Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita in der Lehre von Bösen', *Philologus* 54 (1895), S. 253-273 (here the author shows direct parallels between the *CD* and the treatises of Proclus, first of all the *De malorum subsistentia* written by Proclus in around 440?); H. Koch. *Pseudo-Dionysius in seinem Beziehungen zum Neoplatonismus und Mysterienwesen* (Mainz, 1900). Stiglmayr J. 'Der Neoplatoniker Proclus als Vorlage der sogenannten Dionysius Areopagita in der Lehre vom Uebel', *Historische Jahrbuch des Gottesgesellschaften*, 16 (1895), SS. 253-273, 721-748. A new translation of Proclus' *On the Existence of Evils* by Jan Opsomer and Carlos Steel is now available from Cornell University Press (Ithaca, N.Y., 2003).

¹⁷On political and ecclesiastical circumstances of this event cf. two papers by Milton V Anastos: The Immutability of Christ and Justinian's Condemnation of Theodore of Mopsuestia. – *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 6 (1951): 123–160 and Nestorius was Orthodox. – *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 16 (1962): 118–140.

Hypatius of Ephesus, put into question the authenticity as well as the orthodoxy of these writings.¹⁸ Nevertheless, due primarily to the great commentaries of John of Scythopolis (composed around 530-540)¹⁹, and especially after the addition of those written by Maximus the Confessor in the seventh century, the authenticity of the *Corpus* was accepted by the majority of the authorities. Later its authority was enhanced in the eighth century by the references made to it by the great doctor of the Eastern Church, St. John Damascene. The commentaries which, following some confusion on the part of the scribes, were entirely attributed to Maximus the Confessor²⁰, always followed the text in the manuscript tradition during the Middle Ages, including the Slavonic translation. It should be remembered that one of the factors in the quick success of the *Corpus* was, on the one hand, the apostolic authority which it conferred to some of the tendencies characteristic to late fifth- and early sixth-century monasticism, reconciling them, on the other hand, with Episcopal authority. In the East, Theodore the Studite appealed to Dionysius in his argumentation against iconoclasm. Among theologians who commented on the *CD* were Michael Psellus (1018 - 1074) and George Pachymeres (1242-1310)²¹. During the hesychast controversies both St. Gregory Palamas and his opponent Barlaam of Calabria appealed to the *CD*.²²

In the West there are references to Dionysius in the works of Eulogius, Patriarch of Alexandria (580-607) and Moderatus, Patriarch of Jerusalem (631-634). Pope Gregory the Great, who was a friend of Eulogius, referred to Dionysius as an "ancient and venerable Father"²³. The *CD* was mentioned during the monothelitic controversies on the Lateran Council (649), in the letters of Pope Martin I (Lateran, 649) and of Pope Agatho (Dogmatic letter to the Emperor Constantine, 680), during the Constantinople (680) and the Second Nicene (787) Councils. The works of Dionysius received a new life when, around 858 John Scottus Eriugena, at the request of Charles the Bald, made a translation of the Greek text which had been presented to Louis the Pious in 827 by Emperor Michael II²⁴. John Scottus composed glosses on Dionysius that became the first in the series of Western commentaries on the *Corpus*²⁵.

¹⁸See the report of the colloquium in: *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum*. Strasburg, 1914. 4-II, S. 172, 173 (the answer of Hypatius). A detailed analysis of this and also of the evidences of Severus of Antioch cf.: Rorem and Lamoreaux, John of Scythopolis, p. 9-18.

¹⁹In addition to the above-mentioned book by Rorem and Lamoreaux see the following seminal contributions: H. Baltasar, 'Das Scholienwerk des Johannes von Scythopolis', *Scholastik*, 25.1, S. 7-38. B.R. Suchla, 'Eine Redaktion des griechischen Corpus Areopagiticum im Umkreis des Johannes von Skythopolis, des Verfassen von Prolog und Scholien. Ein dritten Beitrag zur Ueberlieferungsgeschichte des Corpus Dionysiacum', *NAWG* (4) 1985, S. 179f (here is to be found a facsimile of different Greek codices of the *CD*). See also: B.R. Suchla, 'Die Ueberlieferung des Prologes des Johannes von Skythopolis zum griechischen Corpus Dionysiacum Areopagiticum', *NAWG* (4) 1984, S. 177f.; B.R. Suchla, 'Die sogenannten Maximus- Scholien des Corpus Dionysiacum Areopagiticum', *NAWG* (3) 1980, S. 33f.; A.M.Ritter, 'Stemmatisierungsversuche zum Corpus Dionysiacum Areopagiticum im Lichte des EDV-Verfahrens', *NAWG* (6) 1980, S. 95f.; cf. also a general overview by I.P. Sheldon-Williams: 'John of Scythopolis' in: *Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*. Ed. by A.H. Armstrong (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967) pp. 473-477.

²⁰For the Greek text and a Latin translation of these commentaries cf.: *PG*, t. 4.

²¹Cf. Opera sancti Dionysii Areopagitae cum scholiis sancti Maximi et paraphrasi Pachymerae, a Balthasare Corderio Soc. Jesus Doct. Theol. latine interpretata et notis theologis illustrata... *PG*, t. 3 (Paris, 1857).

²²See: J. Meyendorff, 'Notes sur l'influence dionysienne en Orient', *Studia Patristica* (Berlin, 1957) t. 2, pp. 547-552. V. Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God* (Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985) pp. 45-69.

²³In *Euang. Homily* 34, 12. *PL* t. 76, col. 1254.

²⁴It should be noticed that before this time in 838 Hilduin, abbot of St. Denis, also undertook a translation of the *Corpus* at the request of King Louis. The immediate reason for this was that people in France believed that St. Denys the Martyr, the first bishop of Paris, was the author of the *Corpus*. For this translation and an edition of the text see: P.G. Théry, *Etudes Dionysiennes. I. Hilduin, traducteur de Denys. II. Edition de sa traduction* (Paris, 1932-1937).

²⁵Anastasius the Papal Librarian made some clarifying remarks and revision of the translation in 875. After that time this translation was adopted and did not change throughout the Early Middle Ages. For the text of the commentaries of John Scottus cf: 'Joannis Scoti expositiones super hierarchiam caelestem s. Dionysii', in *PL* t. 122, col. 125-266. The *CD* was translated several times in Latin: by John Scottus Eriugena and Hilduin (as we have said) in the 9th c., by John Sarrazin in the 12th c., by Robert Grosseteste and Thomas Gallus in the 13th c., by Ambrose of Camaldule and Marsilio Ficino in the 15th c., by Joachim Perion in the 16th c., and by Pierre Lanssel and Balthasar Cordier in the 17th c. Cf. Ph. Chevallier, *Dionysiana*, t. 1, pp. XV-XVI. This monumental work includes the text of all these translations.

During the twelfth century, the works of Dionysius attracted the attention of Abbot Suger of St. Denis (d. 1151) and of John Sarrazin (1140, 1165). The former was interested in this work from the point of view of symbolism of light.²⁶

The widespread influence of the *Corpus* can be observed at this time. Hugh of St. Victor (d.1141)²⁷, Richard of St. Victor (d.1173), St. Bernard of Clairvaux, William of St. Thierry, Aelred of Rievaulx, Alan of Lille (c.1120-1202) and Isaac of Stella (d.1169) in their works made much use of it²⁸. Robert Grosseteste (d.1253) carried out a new translation of the *Corpus* and the *Scholium* between 1240 and 1243²⁹. There are commentaries of Albert the Great³⁰ (d.1280) and of St. Thomas Aquinas (who around 1261 wrote an *Exposition on the Divine Names*³¹). St. Bonaventura hailed Dionysius as "the prince of Mystics". Finally, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries we have references, discussions and commentaries on the *CD* in the works of Master Eckhart (d.1327)³², Tauler (d.1361), Ruysbroeck (d. 1381), Nicolas of Cusa (d.1464), Dionysius Carthusianus³³ (d.1471), Marsilio Ficino (d. 1499) and the Spanish Mystics Abbot Cisneros (d.1510), Francis of Osuna and John of the Cross.

The reader will excuse me for such a wearisome but still incomplete list of names, but all this complicated story cannot remain untouched in our study of the destiny of the corpus in Slavonic philosophy and theology, since the translation of it into the Church Slavonic, accomplished in the fourteenth century, must necessarily have inherited the widespread tradition of commentaries together with the text of Pseudo-Dionysius himself.

Let us come back in Byzantium. It is known that a certain Theodorus the Presbyter composed a work defending the authenticity of the Dionysian Corpus. The treatise entitled Θεοδώρου πρεσβυτέρου, ὅτι γνησία ἡ τοῦ ἁγίου Διονυσίου βίβλος is summarized by Photius (Bibl., cod. 1; PG t. 103, col. 44-45). Long ago people identified this Theodorus with Theodorus the Monk to whom Maximus the Confessor addressed a letter (PG t. 91, col. 276ab) and also with Theodorus Rhaithuensis, the author of a short refutation of heresies (PG t. 91, 1484-1504). This view was quite widespread and shared for instance both by the composer of the *1073 year's Izbornik* (where the aforementioned passage from Maximus is found just before a selection from a treatise explicitly ascribed to Theodorus Rhaithuensis) and by the editor of the *Patrologia Graeca*, who referred to Theodorus Rhaithuensis in relation to Maximus' letter and published the treatise on heresies by him at the end of the same volume.

Modern scholars made the situation even more complicated. In his monograph on the development of Christology W. Elert tries to prove that this Theodorus Rhaithuensis actually was Theodorus the bishop of Pharant and the founder of Monothelitism.³⁴ In relation with the *1073 year's Izbornik* this hypothesis was further developed and somewhat corrected by B. Peichev.³⁵ There is no reason to repeat the arguments here. It is sufficient to note that if it is really the case that Theodorus Rhaithuensis and the founder of monothelitism are identical, as W. Elert tries to

²⁶See: McGinn, 'Pseudo-Dionysius and the Early Cistercians', in: *One Yet Two. Monastic Tradition East and West* (Kalamazoo, 1976), pp. 200-241.

²⁷He wrote the *Commentaries on the Celestial Hierarchy* (1115-1137), see: *PL* t. 175, col. 923-1134.

²⁸See: *The Spirituality of Western Christianity*. Ed. by E.R. Elder (1976). For a brief history of influence of the *CD* in the western theology and philosophy cf.: H. Kuh, *Gotteslehre*, S. 50-63.

²⁹About commentaries of Robert see: D.A. Callus (ed.), *Robert Grosseteste, Scholar and Bishop* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955) pp. 44ff.

³⁰*Beati Alberti Magni opera omnia.....* Volumen decimum quartum: commentarii in libros B. Dionysii Areopagitae. Parisiis: Vives, 1892.

³¹*Doctori angelici, divi Thomae Aquinatis, sacri ordinis EF. Praedicatorum opera omnia.....* Tomus vigesimus nonus, pp. 374-580: in libri beati Dionysii de divinis nominibus expositio. Parisiis: Vives, 1876, 1889, 1927.

³²See: V. Lossky, *Theologie negative et connaissance de Dieu chez Maître Eckhart* (Paris, 1960).

³³*Doctoris Ecstatici D. Dionysii Cartusiani opera omnia.....* Tomus quintus decimus et tomus sextus decimus: in libros s. Dionysii Areopagitae et epistulas undecim expositio. Tornaci, MDCCCCH.

³⁴Elert W. *Der Ausgang der altkirchlichen Christologie*. Berlin, 1957. S. 211.

³⁵Пейчев Б. *Философский трактат в Симеоновом сборнике*. Киев, 1983.

prove, then one can easily understand why our Theodore was so interested in establishing the CD's authenticity. It is clear that many concepts of the Pseudo-Dionysian corpus (including the famous place from the *Fourth Letter* of Ps.-Dionysius, to which Severus referred, the notion of “both human and divine action (θεανδρική ἐνεργεία)”³⁶, also mentioned in the *Izbornik*), if they were accepted as authoritative and correct ones, would work for his own monothelitic and monoenergetic interpretation of the nature of Christ.

Maximus the Confessor testifies (PG, t. 91, col. 136) that Theodorus of Pharant composed a treatise *On substance and nature* (περὶ οὐσίας καὶ φύσεως), where he addressed the controversial problems of hypostasis, personae and the like, and that his interpretation, due to some efforts on part of patriarch Sergius, became quite widespread. This small fact is highly relevant to the present study, since in the *Izbornik* we find a piece of writings of uncertain origin³⁷ on the similar subject (on the meaning of terms substance and nature), ascribed to the name of Theodorus Rhaithuensis and placed immediately after the letter of Maximus the Confessor addressed to Theodorus the Monk (from *Opuscula theologica et polemica ad Marinum* =PG, t. 91, col. 276ab), presumably as an answer to it. It is clear that the composer of the Greek protograph of the *Izbornik* considered this two Theodori identical. In order to reaffirm Maximus' authority and superiority the composer of the *Izbornik* concludes the section with another extract from Maximus (*Izbornik*, p. 223g-237b), that is to say, gives him the last word to summarize this exchange. This is also suggestive: if the composer had taken this text directly from the *Dialectic* of John Damascene, he would not need all this and we would expect that the name of Damascene be mentioned.

Thus, in the *Izbornik* we find an extract from the author who was quite interested in Dionysius. Moreover, a quote from the CD is also found in the *Izbornik* (p. 47v), unfortunately of no philosophic value. The name of Dionysius is mentioned twice. The first time it is spelled as ДИОНУСИА АРЕОПАГИТА and the second time as ДИВНИСИИ. It is curious to note how the spelling of the same Greek name can differ within the same Slavonic text.

It is clear that all the sources included in the *Izbornik* (or rather its Byzantine protograph) have something to do with the monophysits.³⁸ The authors selected are not contemporaries but mainly belong to the previous epoch of Byzantine theological history when the monophysitic controversy still raged. It appears as if having mastered it the Byzantine church authorities now passed their experience to a newly christianized state under their spiritual protection.³⁹ The orthodoxy in Bulgaria had to be protected at that time and the main threat to it was the Bogomil heresy – the movement on which we have more to say later and again in connection with the Dionysian corpus.

In relations with the heretics the CD is mentioned around the same time in a letter of Anastasius the Papal Librarian dated by March 23, 875 (Anastasius was the same erudite who made some clarifying remarks and revision of John Scotus' translation of the CD in Latin).⁴⁰ It is said that Constantine the Philosopher whom Anastasius happened to meet in Rome praised the *Corpus* as a great tool in the battle with the heresy. The text of the letter is quite interesting. It is said, that Constantine “totum codicem saepe memorati et memorandi patris *memoriae commendaverat*”. Could this mean that he made a copy of the corpus or deposited an existent one in the library? And later on: “...et, quantum utilitatis medulla eius habeat, *auditoribus commentabat*, solitus erat dicere,

³⁶ Cf. Rorem and Lamoraux, John of Scythopolis, p. 108 f.

³⁷ This text is anonymously used in the *Dialectics* of John Damascene.

³⁸ Extracts from various writings of Anastasius Sinaita, who was the major authority on this, form the bulk of the *Izbornik*. Cf. for instance the 6th chapter of his *Viae duc* (Hodegos), directed against Severus of Antioch (PG, t. 89; CChSG, t. 8).

³⁹ No doubt that this text both in Bulgaria and in Kievan Rus' enjoyed the highest official status. We do not know how the *Simeonov Izbornik* looked like, but judging from the Slavonic copy of it, we have to assume that it was a rich and lavishly illustrated copy of equally great original. It is also not improbable that the Greek text was compiled especially for the purpose of its consequent translation and dissemination.

⁴⁰ Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Epist. T. VII. Karolini Aevi V. S.433. Cf. H.Goltz, Notizien zur Traditions-geschichte des Corpus Areopagiticum slavicum, *Byzanz in der europäischen Staatenwelt* (Berlin, 1983), S. 138.

quia, si sanctos, videlicet priores institutores nostros, qui hereticos quosque vix et quodammodo cum fuste decollaverunt, Dionisium contigisset habere, cum acuto illos procul dubio gladio trucidassent, innuens profecto haec dicens, quia, quorum os laboriosius et forte tardius obstruxerunt, facilius et acutius sive velocius – ‘oxy’ quippe et acutum signet et velox – obmutescere coegissent”. So we conclude that the CD was at least known to the founder of Slavonic Church literature. He used to mention it in his public lectures and extremely valued as a weapon in the battle with heretics. He states that this new and more advanced tool is as effective as a sharp sword, and so on. It appears that Anastasius translates Constantine’s words from the Greek as if he uses his notes. So this phrase could be a *verbatim* quotation. While Constantin’s interest in Dionysius is understandable, his emphasis upon the value of the corpus as a weapon against the heretics is certainly somewhat overdone.

Generally speaking one can remember many situations when the *Corpus Dionysiacum* as a work of apostolic authority had played an important role in the development of orthodox theology. It is commonly believed that Dionysius made a successful attempt to harmonize Platonism and Christian doctrine in order to construct, as a result, a Christian-Platonic theological synthesis and this fact determined the role that the CD played in the history of theology and continues to play nowadays.⁴¹ Needless to say, that the problem of orthodoxy of this synthesis, which was questioned already in 533, still intrigues the minds of Dionysius’ readers. Byzantine theologians spilled much ink to prove this fact. The modern orthodox authors do the same. For example, a Russian researcher of the nineteenth century, I. Smirnov, took the doctrine of Dionysius as orthodox beyond any doubt. He says:

As for the religious system of Dionysius, all mistakes and ideas that contradict the Christian doctrine are removed from it. For example, the world is considered by Dionysius as a direct creation of God, matter is not a cause and source of evil; he accepts resurrection, body for him is not a source of evil and sin in men; although in a few words, he rightly teaches about the Holy Trinity.... All these ideas are basically orthodox, despite some details that still remain of his Neoplatonism, not entirely rejected for the sake of the Christian doctrine...⁴².

These words of apology by the well-known Russian scholar is just a repetition of constant remarks of the ancient commentators who also tried to prove that any doubts concerning the orthodoxy of the 'divine Dionysius' lack any real foundation. It is to prove this fact that such skillful and detailed commentaries, which follow the text of Dionysius in the corpus, were written. They clearly intend to demonstrate that Saint Dionysius is an orthodox Father; otherwise people would have to consider him a great heretic. Having this in mind, for example, the author of the Prologue and the commentary to the *Corpus* says that the reader "should not think that this divine man performs an act of impiety towards God" (*PG* t. 4, col.429), proclaiming that God is above everything and in this sense non-existent. According to him, the notion of divine darkness in the *Mystical Theology* is difficult to grasp and should be interpreted in a symbolic manner, therefore nobody has any reason to accuse Dionysius of impiety only on this basis, and so on. Wherever possible John of Scythopolis tries to maximize the Trinitarian orthodoxy of Dionysius⁴³ and certainly greatly “improves” Dionysius’ Christology. It is important to understand therefore that as a document of

⁴¹The list of the works devoted to the CD and its place in the history of Christian doctrine and Neoplatonic philosophy is already extremely extensive. For bibliographical summaries cf.: B. Brons. *Gott und die Seienden. Untersuchungen zum Verhältnis von neoplatonischer Metaphysik und christlicher Tradition bei Dionysius Areopagita* (Göttingen, 1976). J.M. Hornus 'Les recherches recentes sur le Ps.-Denys l'Areopagite (depuis 1932)', *Revue d'histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses*, 35 (1955), pp. 404-448 and 'Le recherches dionysiennes de 1955 a 1960', *Revue d'histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses* 41 (1961), pp. 28-81. W.Totok. *Handbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie. II Mittelalter* (Frankfurt am Main, 1973), S. 163-167. H. Goltz *Hiera Mesiteia: Zur Theorie der hierarchischen Sozietät in Corpus areopagiticum* (Erlangen, 1974), S. 310-357; Ps. Dionysius Areopagita, Ueber die Mystische Theologie und Briefe. Eingeleitet... von A.M. Ritter (Stuttgart, 1994) S. 149ff.

Смирнов И. Русская литература о сочинениях с именем св. Дионисия Ареопagита, *Православное обозрение*. Москва, 1872. С. 869.

⁴³ Though not always, as Rorem and Lamoreaux rightly suggest (John of Scythopolis, p. 68).

medieval culture the *Corpus* existed *only* within the framework of these commentaries, the "pure" text of Dionysius being an invention of modern times.⁴⁴ And if you take the text alone it will not appear as straightforward and compatible with the orthodox doctrine as it is commonly believed.

III CHURCH SLAVONIC TRANSLATION OF THE CORPUS DIONYSIACUM

As an important theological document the *Corpus Dionysiicum* was translated and commented upon throughout the Middle Ages by Latin and Greek authors and enjoyed high esteem, not only among mystics but also among professional writers on theology and philosophy such as John Damascene, Albert the Great, and Thomas Aquinas. In this capacity the *Corpus Dionysiicum* is considered a great monument of Greek and Latin Platonic Tradition.

Besides Greek and Latin manuscripts, today we have several codices from the sixth to ninth centuries that contain Syriac translations of the *Corpus*.⁴⁵ From 712 - 718 an Old Armenian⁴⁶ and from the twelfth century an Old Georgian translations of this work exist.⁴⁷ There is a partial translation the *Corpus* into Arabic.⁴⁸

The Church Slavonic translations of the writings ascribed to Dionysius the Areopagite, accomplished in the fourteenth century, became an event in Slavic culture. It was important not only because knowledge of this famous Byzantine theological and philosophical corpus of treatises now allowed Slavic theologians to understand a wide range of problems of traditional and contemporary Byzantine theology, but also because, thanks to the extremely rich and creative language of the *Corpus* itself, its translation opened new horizons for the development of Slavic theological terminology.

As we already know the translation of the *Corpus* from Greek into Church Slavonic has its pre-history in the earlier epoch. There are witnesses that works of the 'Great Dionysius' were considered to be an important power against heretics as early as during the Slavic mission of St. Constantine

⁴⁴S.Petersburg's researcher G.M. Prokhorov, is quite right in pointing out this unity of the commentaries and the text as an essential feature of the CD. Cf. Прохоров Г.М. *Памятники переводной и русской литературы XIV - XV веков*. Л., 1987, p. 10.

⁴⁵See: P. Sherwood, 'Sergius of Reshaina and Syriac Version of the Ps.-Dionysius', *Sacris erudiri* 4 (1954) 174-184; G. Wissner, 'Zur Handschriftenueberlieferung der syrischen Fassung des CD', *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaft in Goettingen (NAWG)* 3 (1972).

⁴⁶This translation was made by Stephan of Siunik in Constantinople and certainly influenced Armenian philosophic thought. For a short description of Armenian manuscript tradition the reader is referred to: *Dictionnaire de spiritualité, ascétique et mystique*, t. 1, col. 863.

⁴⁷On this translation of Ephrem Mtsire, Abbot of a Monastery in Kastana, cf. the extensive literature of modern Georgian researchers. A special interest in the CD was provoked in Georgia by the Nutsubidze-Honigmann hypothesis, according to which Pseudo-Dionysius was Peter the Iberian (411-491), the Patriarch of Antioch of Georgian origin. Another factor of the increasing interest in the CD in Georgia was the discovery of its influence on the classic Georgian epos of Rustaveli. On this subject matter cf.: S.I. Erukashvili, ed. *The Writings of Petrus Iberus (Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite)*: Old Georgian translation of Ephrem Mtsire. Tbilisi, 1961 (in Georgian). Ницубидзе Ш. Тайна Псевдо-Дионисия Ареопагита. [Nutzhubidze Sh. The miracle of the Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite]. Тбилиси, 1942. Ницубидзе Ш. Петр Ивер и проблемы ареопагитики [Peter the Iberian and the problems of the Areopagite]. Тбилиси, 1957. Honigmann E. *Pierre l'Iberian et les écrits du pseudo - Denys l'Areopagite* (Bruxelles, 1952). For a critical overview of this hypothesis cf.: *Dictionnaire de spiritualité, ascétique et mystique*, t. 1, col. 253 ff. It is interesting to note, that this hypothesis was recently re-evaluated and basically accepted by Michel van Esbroeck: 'Peter the Iberian and Dionysius the Areopagite: Honnigman's Thesis Revisited', *OCP* 59 (1993), 217-227.

⁴⁸About the Arabian translation of *Epistula 8* see especially: W. Scott Watson, 'An Arabic Version of Epistle of Dionysius the Areopagite to Timothy', *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, 16 (1899/1900) 225-241.

and Method. Euthymius of Tarnovo also translated a part of the CD.⁴⁹ One can say now that a long work of translation and adoption of the CD, which was brought to an end in the second part of the fourteenth century, reaped the harvest of at least three previous centuries of scholarship.

The second part of the fourteenth century was a crucial point in the history of Balkan countries: it was the period of heroic struggle with the Turkish invasion, the defeat and final fall of the most powerful Slavic armies, and this fact meant the desperate enslavement of the Balkan's Slavic population.

The author of translation, monk Isaiah, flourished in the time which immediately preceded this period of Balkan history, and his destiny was to witness and to describe the events of this time, namely the battle of Maritsa and the Turkish conquest of Serbia and Bulgaria which immediately followed it.

Researchers note that the language of the *Introduction* to the translation is strongly influenced by Russian and most of them have accepted that Monk Isaiah was the Abbot of the Russian Monastery of St. Panteleimon on Mount Athos, that is to say *Staretz Isaiah*, who was probably a very educated person and, as an Abbot, one of the influential figures in Church diplomacy of that time.⁵⁰ His theological and literary works were connected with the city of Serres in Macedonia, which was one of the centres of education and culture of the region.⁵¹ We can see from the text of the *Introduction* that Isaiah knew and loved Greek (Byzantine) literature and language. Obviously, he used to translate Greek texts, and that is why he dared to attempt the translation of one of the most difficult (and influential) monuments of Byzantine theological and mystical thought – the writings of Dionysius the Areopagite.

According to his own words he received an *official* request from Theodosius, the metropolitan of the city of Serres. It was by this metropolitan that he “was encouraged” (принужден бых) to undertake the difficult task of translation of this famous text. Isaiah obeyed and started to translate the CD from “the very pithy Greek into our [Slavonic] language [зъло скупаго еллинского языка в наш языкъ]”. Monk Isaiah says the following⁵²:

... although 'on the fall of the Sunday of my life', I managed to learn Greek, but very little, only to understand the pithiness of this language and the difficulty in translating from it into our language. Really, Greek language – from the very beginning and thanks to God's gift – is very expressive [художень - artistic] and is able to contain a lot of things [пространъ - rich in content]. Moreover, it was greatly improved by the long tradition of philosophising. On the contrary, our language is well created – since all God's creation is perfect – but it was not awarded [не удостоися] the same improvement as the Greek because of the lack of philosophical works of those lovers of literature [любоучения любочестивых слова мужей хытрости]. Therefore, though knowing this language, I myself did not dare even to touch the things that are beyond my understanding (I mean the translation from the Greek), because, according to the expression of the Scripture: 'Do not search for things that are beyond your abilities, and do not test those that are more profound than the limits of your understanding'. So, I was very afraid that I could damage the divine things, if I dared to touch upon them, or offend

⁴⁹ Helmut Keipert, *Velikij Dionisie sice napisa: Die Uebersetzung von Areopagita-Zitaten bei Euthymius von Tarnovo, T'rnovska Knizhovna shkola, t. II* (The second international Symposium, Veloko Tarnovo, May 20-23 1976), S. 326-349.

⁵⁰ Мoшин Б. Житие старца Исаяи, игумена руского монастыря на Афоне [Moshin, V. The Vita of Staretz Isaiah, the Abbot of Russian Monastery on Mount Athos], Юбилейный сборник Русского археологического общества в королевстве Югославии (Београд, 1940), т. 3, сс. 125-167. Трифуновий Ѓ. Писац и преводилац инок Исаяи [Trifunovich Dzh. The writer and translator Monk Isaiah]. Крушевац, 1980. Puskovic M.A. 'Der Vater des Starez Isaiaas', *Byzantische Zeitschrift* 44 (1951) 461.

⁵¹ Cf.: Ангелов Б. Ст. «Исай Серски», Из старата българска, руска и сръбска литература [Angelov B. St. *From Old Bulgarian, Russian and Serbian literature*]. София, 1967. Т. 2. С. 149, footnote 2.

⁵² For the text of Isaiah's *Introduction* cf. the appropriate chapter in the book by V. Angelov, *Из старата българска, руска и сръбска литература* («Исай Серски», p. 148-161). This text is also published in: Великие Минеи Четии, октябрь, дни 1-3 [Great Monthly Reading. October, days 1-3], СПб, 1870, с. 263-266.

those things that are contained in the Old or New Scripture. But the metropolitan of the god-saved city of Serres, Theodosius, this divine and most honoured man, encouraged me to do so. And I obeyed with great delight and without question this man who saw in a vision an angel, ordering him to receive the enlightening power of Dionysius.

The work of translation took years and was finished around 1371. This date can be inferred from the very words of Isaiah himself, who, in the *Introduction* to his translation, says that he started it in good days and finished it in "the most evil of all evil days" meaning by this the Turkish occupation. In fact, it was exactly in September 1371, after the catastrophic defeat and fall of the most powerful lords of Serbia, King Vukashin and his brother Despot Ioann Ugljesha in the battle of Marica, that the Turks started to conquer the Balkan Slavic countries. Isaiah's description of the events which followed the defeat in this battle is unique in South-Balkan literature of the fourteenth century, since his account is the only known story concerning this historical battle told by a contemporary who testifies as though an eye-witness.⁵³ Isaiah says that the country, its population and Christian culture seem to perish and the last hope is lost. It was really the most evil of all evil days. He continues his introduction in the following way and gives quite an impressive picture⁵⁴:

As I have already said I started the translation of this book of St. Dionysius in good days, when Churches of God and the Holy Mount flourished like Paradise, a garden in full bloom, constantly nourished by founts of water, but I have finished it in the most evil of all evil days, when all Christians of the Western countries perished in flame. Despot Ugljesha gathered together all Serbian and Greek armies, and those of his brother King Vukashin and of other noble dukes; and all these armies extended to six thousand [soldiers]. Now he moved them to Macedonia to expel the Turks, but he had forgotten that nobody was able to withstand the wrath of God! They did not oust those, but were slain and they fell, and plenty of their bones remained without burial (...) And after they had slain the brave warrior Ugljesha, the Ottoman Turks started to diffuse and spread throughout the whole country like flying birds, and they either slew by sword or took in slavery other Christians. Really, the dead were happier in these days than those alive...

The translation of the *Corpus* was a very difficult task both because of the complexity and the flexibility of the language of Dionysius and because of the fact that the translator had to face the problem of creating rather than using a similar system of philosophical categories and theological language in Slavonic. The translation of Isaiah is very literary but, on the other hand, following the Greek original almost word by word, it gives a complicated and skilful interpretation of each passage. At the same time it gives an impression of an outstanding philosophical work.

Before we turn to the text and consider a number of examples of Isaiah's translation, a few words should be said concerning the history of further development of the manuscript tradition of the *CD* in the Slavic countries and especially in Russia.

The Ottoman occupation and the destruction of many centres of education in Balkans determined the further destiny of the *Corpus Dionysiacum Slavicum*. Fortunately approximately at the same time, the victory in the battle on Kulikovo-Field and the establishment of Metropolitan in Moscow opened the great possibilities for development of Christian culture in Russia, and the *CD* found its place in this process. In fact, these writings became very popular in Russia since the time of the Metropolitan Cyprian (d.1406), who is said to bring a copy of Isaiah's translation here and possibly was in personal acquaintance with the translator Starets Isaiah.⁵⁵

⁵³Cf. Angelov, id., p. 148.

⁵⁴ Isaiah's Introduction: Angelov, id., p. 159-160.

⁵⁵ For a general overview cf.: Дмитриев Л.А. Роль и значение митрополита Киприана в истории древнерусской литературы (к русско-болгарским литературным связям 14–15 вв.). – ТОДРЛ. Т. XIX. М.–Л., 1963. С. 218–240.

The *CD* played an important and ambiguous role in Russian history. It was used both by heretics, e.g. Novgorod 'freethinkers'⁵⁶, and by Church and State authorities. *Tsar* Ivan the Terrible quoted the *CD* in his Letter against *Knyaz* Andrew Kurbsky, a well-known educator and translator of John Damascene into Church Slavonic.⁵⁷ On the other hand, the *CD* was constantly in the focus of interest of pro-hesychastic oriented clergy of Russian Church. This way it found its place in the realm of iconography and the philosophy of icons. According to observations of many researchers, certain ideas of the *CD* influenced the iconography of Sophia, Wisdom of God⁵⁸, and this influence can be traced back as far as to the time of Metropolitan Cyprian himself who probably was in personal contact with the most famous of Russian painters of that time.⁵⁹

The writings of Dionysius were included in the first great corpus of Monthly Reading [Великие Минеи Чети], arranged according to the days of memory of the saints. This edition, prepared under direction of Makary, Metropolitan of Moscow, in 1552, became standard and had then been reprinted for almost three hundreds years.⁶⁰ It should be noticed here, that according to the considerations of Gelian M. Prokhorov, the text of this first printed edition of the Slavonic translation of the *CD* belonged to the same manuscript tradition as the Serbian codices of Isaiah's time.⁶¹

In the above-mentioned book G.M. Prokhorov publishes a part of the manuscript of the last part of the 14th century (namely, the Church Slavonic translation of *the Mystical Theology* and *the Ninth Letter* of Dionysius together with commentaries of John of Scythopolis). This manuscript from A.F. Gilferding's collection (Gilf. # 46) of the State Public Library in S. Petersburg can (according to Prokhorov's suggestion) be the 'autograph' of Isaiah himself or one of the earliest copies from it and (which is important) the scribe or translator must have followed the structure of the Greek original.⁶² In fact the situation (as usually happens in such cases) is more complicated. As my Novosibirsk colleague V. Itkin argues, it is quite probable that two scribes wrote the manuscript. The first of these scribes composed the first part of manuscript (namely up to the *CH* 3, 4, 1), while the second finished the rest of the text and had written the marginalia.⁶³

Generally speaking the manuscript tradition of the *Corpus dionysiacum slavicum* is very widespread. Almost a hundred of various manuscripts of the *CD* in Church Slavonic are now found, but *Gilf.* #46 or – it will be much safer to say⁶⁴ – its protograph seems to influence almost the entire Russian manuscript tradition. Except to the above-mentioned oldest known manuscript, the most important are two manuscripts of Serbian origin from ГИМ, собрание Воскресенского новоиерусалимского монастыря (*Voskr.* # 75 and *Voskr.* # 76), manuscripts from РГБ, собрание Московской духовной академии № 144, ГИМ, собрание Уварова № 264-1 and some others. Two Slavonic manuscripts of the *CD* are kept in Novosibirsk (the Department of Rare Books and

⁵⁶We know this from the letter of bishop of Novgorod, Gennady, to the archbishop of Rostov, Ioasaf, in which the former begs the latter to send him some books to oppose the arguments of 'freethinkers', and lists Dionysius among the books involved in this polemic. Cf.: H. Goltz, 'Zur Traditionsgeschichte des Corpus areopagiticum slavicum', S. 142.

⁵⁷«Царево государево послание на крестопреступников его, князя Андрея Курбского с товарищи об их измене», *Послания Ивана Грозного* (М.-Л., 1951). Cf.: H. Goltz, id., S. 144.

⁵⁸ See a number of passages from various places of the *CD* and the whole section in *Ep.* 9.

⁵⁹For the history of these possible contacts cf.: Бетин В.Л. «Митрополит Киприян и Феофан Грек», *Études Balkaniques* 13 (1977) pp. 109-115; Прохоров Г.М. Памятники переводной и русской литературы XIV - XV веков. Л., 1987, с. 20-27 (on the iconography of Sophia); H. Goltz, id. S. 142 and idem, *Zur Ikonosophie des Kreises: Teodorus Pediasimos und der Symbolismus der Rublevschen Troica, Byzantinischer Kunst Export*. Hrsg von H.L. Nickel. Halle (Saale), 1978, S. 289-300.

⁶⁰ *Великие минеи чети*, собрание митрополита Макария. Под редакцией С. Палаузова. СПб., 1870. Т. 3. С. 263-786 (the last reprint).

⁶¹ On the manuscript tradition of this edition see: Прохоров Г.М. Памятники переводной и русской литературы XIV - XV веков, с.53.

⁶² An international team (headed by H. Goltz and G.M. Prokhorov) is now working upon an edition of this manuscript.

⁶³ В.В. Иткин, О некоторых особенностях структуры древнейшего славянского списка корпуса сочинений Дионисия Ареопита (К вопросу о формировании структуры памятника) – Novosibirsk, 1998 (unpublished).

⁶⁴ Simply because this manuscript was quite unexpectedly discovered by A.F. Gilferding in Serbia in the nineteenth century it could not possibly influence Russian tradition.

Manuscripts, State Public Scientific Library, Krasnoyarsk collection F. I.12 and F. VI.6), dated respectively to the end of the 17th and the end of the 15th centuries. Vladimir Itkin has described the latter of these manuscripts in details.⁶⁵

The edition of Metropolitan Makary constitutes an important, but in no means final step in the history of the Slavonic *Dionysiaca*. This very difficult text continued to be copied and re-edited many times, more or less successfully. The theology of Dionysius played a great role in Russian ecclesiastical and even political controversies that made it necessary for theologians to attempt an exact understanding of the text. But they had to face at least two serious problems that made the proper understanding of the text difficult. On the one hand, the changes in the Church Slavonic made some expressions of the old translation incomprehensible and, on the other hand, careless copying made it almost impossible to distinguish the text from the commentaries. The accumulation of the mistakes as well as new interest in the *CD* in seventeenth century induced the monk Evfimy Chudovsky to undertake a new redaction of Isaiah's translation. This translation, still unpublished, was finished in about 1675.

The next step in the history of the Slavonic translations of Dionysius is connected with the work of the Moldavian monk, (Saint) Paisy Velichkovsky from the eighteenth century. For his translation of the *CD* into Church Slavonic he already used the *printed* Corderius' edition of the Greek text of Dionysius and shortened most of the commentaries. Some of them he excluded completely, but at the same time added selections taken from the paraphrases by George Pachymeres (13th century) from the edition of Corderius.⁶⁶

Monk Moisej made the last translation of the *CD* into Church Slavonic already at the beginning of the nineteenth century (and this translation was already a kind of a scholarly exercise).⁶⁷ Since this time the *CD* has been several times translated into modern Russian.⁶⁸

Finally Gelian M. Prokhorov, who, in his book on the Slavonic translation of the *CD* mentioned above, talked about the importance of reconstructing the whole document, that is to say the Slavonic text of Dionysius with all the commentaries added to it in the course of centuries, has begun this task, having published in 1995 in St. Petersburg the first volume of his edition of the Greek text of the *CD* and all the commentaries with a new Russian translation. Now the publication is complete and a second (corrected) edition with a new preface has appeared in the *Aletheia* Publishing house (St. Petersburg, 2003). Despite certain criticism of this new translation by the classicists⁶⁹, I think the publication is a valuable tool both for researchers and more general reader and is accomplished with great care and dedication, notwithstanding many technical constraints the editor had to overcome.

⁶⁵ В.В. Иткин, «Корпус сочинений Дионисия Ареопагита по списку красноярского собрания ГПНТБ СО РАН», *Книга и литература* (Новосибирск, 1997), с. 107-121. Interestingly enough that this manuscript combines features typical to different groups of manuscripts and therefore was copied from several protographs.

⁶⁶Cf. The first publication: *Opera sancti Dionysii Areopagitae cum scholies sancti Maximi et paraphrasi Pachymerae*, a Balthasare Corderio Soc. Jesus Doct. Theol. latine interpretata et notis theologicis illustrata (Antuerpiae, ex officina Plantiniana Balthasaris Moreti, M.DC.XXXIII) and reprints: Paris (1644, 1655, 1702), Lyon (1677), Cologne (1684), Venice (1755), Augsburg (1780), and finally *PG*, t. 3 (Paris, 1857).

⁶⁷See: G.M. Prokhorov, id, pp. 57-59.

⁶⁸In 1787 D.I. Dmitrievsky translated *The Mystical Theology* with some of the commentaries of Corderius and paraphrases of Pachymeres. For this work he used Corderius' edition of the *CD*. There are two (unpublished) translations of *The Divine Names* at the beginning of the nineteenth century - see: Prokhorov, p. 59. There are as well several published modern Russian translations of the *CD*. *The Celestial Hierarchy* and *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* were published in 1786 in Moscow translated by the Hieromonach Moise (Gumilevsky). The *Mystical Theology* and the *Letters* in translation of Gavriil Voskresensky were published in 1825 and in 1839 in the review *Христианское чтение*. The *Divine Names* were translated and published by the Abbot Gennady (Ejkalovich) in Buenos Aires in 1957. This treatise was also published in translation of L.N. Lutkovsky (Moscow, 1990). The *Mystical Theology* in two different translations by L.N. Lutkovsky, on the one hand, and V.V. Bibikhin, on the other hand, was published in: *Историко-философский ежегодник*, 89 (Moscow, 1990, с. 221-232).

⁶⁹ Cf. a review by Yu.A. Schichalin in: *Museum Graeco-Latinum 2* (Moscow, 1999).

FINAL REMARKS

To conclude this short outline I shall note that, as it appears the future research could go in two directions.

First, from a general historical prospective, it will be extremely interesting to trace the ways the CD was used (and misused) in train of theological polemics. Was the Corpus really a “sharp sword» directed against the heretics as Constantine the Philosopher put it or it was rather a “double-sided knife’, a controversial peace of writings which is equally ready at hand and potentially dangerous for both camps?

Secondly, as far as the Church Slavonic translation is concerned, the endless possibilities of comparative research are open, and first of all it will be interesting to trace the ways of adaptation of Greek philosophic terminology of the CD, not only in this particular translation of it, but also in other writings of later times it had influenced.