Dionysius from Niketas Stethatos to Gregory the Sinaite (and Gregory Palamas)

Antonio Rigo

The Oxford Handbook of Dionysius the Areopagite
Edited by Mark Edwards, Dimitrios Pallis, and Georgios Steiris

Print Publication Date: Feb 2022
Subject: Religion, Christianity, History of Religion, Theology and Philosophy of Religion
Online Publication Date: Mar 2022 DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198810797.013.17

Abstract and Keywords

In demonstrating that the influence of Dionysius did not expire with the early Byzantine period, this essay will examine the correlation of divine and ecclesiastical hierarchies in Niketas Stethatos, the correlation of different hierarchies with the elements of the Eucharist in Gregory the Sinaite, the efforts of eleventh-century monks to reconcile the ecclesiology of the Dionysian corpus with their own belief in the superiority of monks to priests, and the influence in the later Byzantine world of the Areopagite's image of the circular movement of the soul. In other words, the *Corpus Dionysiacum* did not influence Byzantine mysticism in all of its historical phases. On the contrary, prior to Niketas Stethatos (eleventh century) and Gregory the Sinaite (fourteenth century) the presence of Dionysius in the spiritual authors was either indirect (through Maximus the Confessor) or absent (as in the case of John Climacus).

Keywords: Byzantine mysticism, Symeon the New Theologian, Niketas Stethatos, Gregory the Sinaite, Gregory Palamas, Byzantine monasticism, Ecclesiastical hierarchy

RESEARCH on Byzantine mysticism has been often biased by the idea that Dionysius did not play any relevant role on Eastern spirituality. First expressed by Irénée Hausherr in a lecture in 1935,[1] and later endorsed by eminent scholars such as John Meyendorff,[2] this view considers Dionysius's contributions to have come too late to have an impact on Eastern theological tradition.

Recent studies of texts long ignored by scholars,[3] along with critical editions on hitertho unedited texts,[4] suggest that, on the contrary, Dionysius played an important role in the development of Byzantine mysticism and urged students of Eastern spirituality to question the preceding interpretative scheme.

After the early formative period (the fourth through to the seventh century), with authors such as Evagrius Ponticus (*d*. 399), pseudo-Macarius the Egyptian, Maximus the Confessor (*d*. 662), John Climacus (6th–7th-century), and others, and after the 'dark age' in

PRINTED FROM OXFORD HANDBOOKS ONLINE (www.oxfordhandbooks.com). © Oxford University Press, 2022. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a title in Oxford Handbooks Online for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).

Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 22 March 2022

Byzantine history, Byzantine mysticism underwent two transformations: the first dating from the mid-tenth to the mid-twelfth century; the second, shorter period, dating from the mid-thirteenth century to the end of the fourteenth century.[5]

Both these stages include different and at times conflicting trends, which makes it challenging to forcibly reduce all material to a few schemes. In this respect this essay maintains that the genealogical approach based on the distinction between different 'schools of spirituality' proves largely unsatisfactory for reconstructing the rich variety of Byzantine spirituality. In contrast, this essay suggests adopting a different perspective based on text transmission and the study of the manifold, and sometimes divergent, outcomes of the circulation of texts. In both these stages the impact of earlier authors is evident, but the presence and varying interpretations of one and the same text determine (p. 270) the historical evolution of the different stages. In fact, the fortune of the Church Fathers suggests that their influence on later authors often lead to unpredictable outcomes. In this respect it is noteworthy that the influence of Dionysius the Areopagite reappears in the eleventh century with Niketas Stethatos after having been absent in the earlier period.

The Hierarchies from Niketas Stethatos to Gregory the Sinaite

To start with we will describe the eleventh-century fortunes of Dionysius. During this period there are important witnesses suggesting that the *Corpus Dionysiacum* was recirculated. These include philosophical texts, such as John Italos' scholia on *Celestial Hierarchy*.[6] But the most relevant figure in this process is Niketas Stethatos (*d. c.* 1090)[7], a disciple of the great Byzantine mystic Symeon the New Theologian (*d.* 1022). As a polemicist Niketas composed treatises against the Armenians, the Jews, and the Latins and took part in the events that led to the Schism of 1054. In the following decades Niketas became the head of the Monastery of Stoudios and composed key works in the history of Eastern spirituality: three *centuriae* of chapters and a trilogy of opuscles devoted to the celestial and ecclesiastic hierarchy, the heaven and the soul.

At the beginning of his career, starting in 1035, Niketas edited the work of his master, Symeon the New Theologian. For the purpose of this paper, Niketas' edition of Symeon's *Hymns* is particularly relevant. Starting with the title (likely chosen by Niketas himself), *Hymns of Divine Eros*, which echoes one of Dionysius' fictitious works (or possibly a lost one), namely, *On the Divine Hymns*, and the work attributed to Dionysius' master, Hierotheus, namely, the *Erotic Hymns*. Niketas' prologue to the hymns exposes the author's dependence on Dionysius. Here Niketas excerpts from the *Divine Names*[8] in order to defend his master, whom he compares to Dionysius himself, from critics. According to Niketas, Symeon had spiritual experiences of the kind described by Dionysius in the *Corpus Areopagiticum*. This interpretation of Symeon's mystical experience, along with Niketas' presentation of Symeon as the 'second Dionysius', is apparent in Niketas' scholia to the *Hymns* as well. Yet, the analysis of this Symeon text shows that the latter knew the *Cor-*

PRINTED FROM OXFORD HANDBOOKS ONLINE (www.oxfordhandbooks.com). © Oxford University Press, 2022. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a title in Oxford Handbooks Online for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).

Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 22 March 2022

pus Areopagiticum well, but did not stick closely to the literal interpretation of the text. It is rather that Niketas is the one to highlight Symeon's connection to Dionysius.[9]

Among Niketas' ascetical writings the most important, the ones which had an enduring impact on later authors, are surely the *Practical, Physical and Gnostic Chapters*, composed by Niketas late in life.[10] Not only does Niketas incorporate Dionysius' vocabolary in his description of the divine nature, but he also allows Dionysian theology to penetrate deeply into his work. Concerning for instance the description of the spiritual life, Niketas accepted the traditional distinction between novices, intermediates, and perfects, but interprets it through the prism of the Dionysian distinction between the different functions in the celestial and ecclesiastical hierarchies: the purificative, (p. 271) the illuminating, and the perfective. Niketas, however, appropriates this Dionysian distinction among different functions in the hierarchies as a model for describing the different stages in the monks' spiritual life: 'The purgative stage pertains to those newly engaged in spiritual warfare'; 'the illuminative stage pertains to those who as a result of their struggles have attained the first level of dispassion'; 'the mystical and perfective stage pertains to those who have already passed through all things and have come to 'the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ'.[11]

As a matter of fact Ps-Dionysius the Areopagite is the source of other themes in Niketas' work, like the reversion of the soul and its powers, the restoration of men's primitive perfection that was lost because of sin, and finally the restoration of men's similitude with God. With regard to this latter theme, Niketas often quotes the following passage from the *Ecclesiastic Hierarchy*: 'Deification is assimilation to God as far as possible'.[12] Furthermore, Dionysius is Niketas' source in his description of the mind's passage from dispersion to unity, the latter being the peak of the spiritual path: 'the highest goal of hesychia, a condition of rest and eternal circular movement, the assimilation to the Seraphym and Cherubins' orders'.[13]

The trilogy *On the Soul*, *On Heaven*, and *On Hierarchy*[14] belongs to Stethatos' late career. Even in these later works the influence of Dionysius the Areopagite is vast. The treatise *On Hierarchy* exposes Stetathos' dependence on Dionysius more than the other works. A short treatise with a limited circulation, the text is built on citations from the *Celestial* and *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*. Stetathos divided the material into nine chapters (nine like the angelic orders) and aiming to prove that 'the ecclesiastical hierarchy belongs to the same rank as the celestial one, as demonstrated by Dionysius'.[15] Taking a cue from *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 7, Niketas remarked that the aim of the hierarchy is to assimilate and unite with God and that 'our hierarchy is of the same kind as the coelestial one', insofar as both are divided into three triads of orders.[16] To be honest, such correspondence is not evident in Dionysius. In fact, according to Dionysius, the celestial hierarchy consists of nine orders in three triads, whereas the ecclesiastical one has six orders and two triads. This apparent contradiction can be explained easily if one bears in mind that in his *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* Dionysius described the actual structure of the Church of his time.

DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE

PRINTED FROM OXFORD HANDBOOKS ONLINE (www.oxfordhandbooks.com). © Oxford University Press, 2022. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a title in Oxford Handbooks Online for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).

Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 22 March 2022

CELESTIAL HIERARCHY

Angels

Archangels

Principalities

Dominions

Virtues

Powers

Thrones

Cherubim

Seraphim (p. 272)

ECCLESIASTICAL HIERARCHY	
	Purified orders
Initiated	Laity
	Monks
	Ministers
Initiators	Priests
	Bishops

Since there is not perfect symmetry between the two hierarchies, the Byzantine commentators of Dionysius attempted to restore a balance between celestial and ecclesiastical hierarchy and a perfect symmetry between heaven and earth. Because of this Niketas' *On Hierarchy* established the following equivalence:

PRINTED FROM OXFORD HANDBOOKS ONLINE (www.oxfordhandbooks.com). © Oxford University Press, 2022. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a title in Oxford Handbooks Online for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).

Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 22 March 2022

NIKETAS STETHATOS	
ECCLESIASTIC HIERARCHY	CELESTIAL HIERARCHY
Monks	Angels
Readers	Archangels
Subdeacons	Principalities
Deacons	Powers
Priests	Virtues
Bishops	Dominions
Archbishops	Seraphim
Metropolites	Cherubim
Patriarchs	Thrones

A few decades after Niketas, around the middle of the twelfth century, Peter Damascenus[17] reached similar conclusions. Writes Peter: ‘there are nine orders in heaven just as in the Church’.[18] Yet, while being similar in general to Stetathos’ hierarchies, at times Peter’s analogy between the two orders differs.

PRINTED FROM OXFORD HANDBOOKS ONLINE (www.oxfordhandbooks.com). © Oxford University Press, 2022. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a title in Oxford Handbooks Online for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).

Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 22 March 2022

PETER DAMASCENUS	
ECCLESIASTICAL HIERARCHY	CELESTIAL HIERARCHY
Monks	Angels
Cantors	Archangels
Readers	Principalities
Subdeacons	Powers
Deacons	Virtues
Priests	Dominions
Bishops	Seraphim
Metropolites	Cherubim
Patriarchs	Thrones

(p. 273) Let us go back to Niketas' text and the hierarchical scheme proposed there. Just like his master, Symeon the New Theologian, Niketas believed that one truly becomes a bishop only on receiving the illumination of the Spirit.[19] This assumption would seem to compromise the whole scheme. Furthermore, in those very same pages Niketas proposes an alternative interpretation of the celestial hierarchy that establishes a parallel with the stages of the spiritual journey. In this regard Niketas adapted some hints found in the *Chapters* into a different context. According to him there exists a correspondence between Thrones, Cherubim and Seraphim, on the one hand, and Apostles, Prophets, Fathers, Theophors, ecumenical masters, on the others. The latters are those 'who entered mystical theology taking the cue from natural contemplation'. In the same vein Niketas establishes a correspondence between Powers, Dominions, Virtues, and confessors and ascetics, namely those 'who moved from practical philosophy to the height of contemplation'. Finally, Niketas draws a parallel between Principalities, Archangels, and Angels, on the one hand, and Chiefs, Hegumens, and laymen who excelled in 'practical philosophy and their observance of the divine commands'.[20]

Niketas Stethatus' works reveal the strong dependence of their author upon Dionysius the Areopagite and his *Divine Names*, *Celestial Hierarchy*, and *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*. Not only does Niketas depend on Dionysius in terms of vocabulary, but also concerning the description of the spiritual journey, the mind's reconversion and union with God, and

PRINTED FROM OXFORD HANDBOOKS ONLINE (www.oxfordhandbooks.com). © Oxford University Press, 2022. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a title in Oxford Handbooks Online for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).

Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 22 March 2022

its state in the mystical experience. Furthermore, as indicated earlier, Niketas adapted the Dionysian hierarchies with special emphasis on their spiritual significance.

The second phase in Byzantine mysticism starts with and is dominated by Gregory the Sinaite (*d. c.* 1346), a pivotal figure in the history of Greek and Slavonic (Serbian and Bulgarian) spirituality.[21] At this time the popularity of Dionysius' work was massive: George Pachymeres (*c.* 1242–1310), for instance, paraphrased the entire *Corpus*.[22] Around 1330, at the time of his stay in Constantinople, Barlaam the Calabrian received the title of master in theology of 'the divine Dionysius' from the megas domestikos (supreme military commander) John Cantacuzenus.[23] In fact, Barlaam was a controversial figure because of his involvement in the most important fourteenth-century polemics. For those involved in the Palamite controversy, the *Corpus Dionysiacum* played an important role right from the beginning (we think during the discussion between Barlaam the Calabrian, Gregory Palamas, and Gregory Akindynos), and continued to be influential on those who took part in these controversies at a later stage as well (Isaac Argyrus, John Kyparissiotes, Manuel Calecas). Furthermore, on the Mount Athos, Isaija of Serres completed in 1371 his Slavonic translation of the *Corpus Dionysiacum*. Isaija was heavily influenced by the teachings of Gregory the Sinaite and his school. A similar interest in Dionysius is evident in Bulgaria as well.[24]

Gregory the Sinaite was first a monk on Mount Sinai and then moved to the Holy Mountain. Afterwards he founded a monastery in Bulgaria, at Paroria, where he established a school that included both Greek and Slavic disciples such as Callistus I, Isidorus I, Theodosius of Trnovo, and Athanasius of Meteora. Gregory's works had a tremendous impact on spiritual authors both then and in later generations, from Nil (p. 274) Sorskij, in fifteenth-century Russia, to Basil of Poiana Mărului and Paisij Veličkovski, during the eighteenth century, on Mount Athos and in Moldavia.

Gregory's series of *Chapters* published in the *Philokalia* belong almost entirely to the early stage of his career, when Gregory was a monk on Mount Athos. They are basically short memories addressed to his disciples and to Athonite monks concerning interior praying, daily ascetical life, the discernment of spirits, the passions, and finally obedience. Among the most important works of Gregory, the *Acrostic Chapters* surely shine as the work in which the author touches on a wider variety of themes. Among other spiritual authors, this work contains several influences taken from the *Corpus Dionysiacum*.[25] Dionysius is also present in a number of Gregory's other writings (chapters and hymns), which are extant only in the Slavonic translation prepared by Gregory's disciples in the monastery of Paroria. They probably belong to Gregory's later career (between 1331 and 1334) and include thirteen chapters preserved both in Greek and Slavonic, known as *On the Four Hierarchies*.[26] These chapters consist almost exclusively of notes taken from Gregory's disciples and may be divided into three sections, the first being devoted to the hierarchies, the second to monastic life, and the third to divine liturgy. Among the most important sources of these chapters, Dionysius' *Celestial* and *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* play a decisive role in the description of the interior life of the monk and his spiritual journey.

PRINTED FROM OXFORD HANDBOOKS ONLINE (www.oxfordhandbooks.com). © Oxford University Press, 2022. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a title in Oxford Handbooks Online for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).

Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 22 March 2022

Gregory's starting point is the aim and activity proper to each hierarchy. In this respect he cites the very same passage that attracted Niketas Stetathus' attention three centuries earlier.

> In general a hierarchy stems from the participation and distribution of the sacred gift, spiritual and bodily; alternatively, hierarchy is the principle, sacrament and distribution of the saints who live a saint life; or the distributive science according to virtue; or, to quote from the great Dionysius, 'the assimilation and union with God'. 'Assimilation' to God means participating in the divine and human goods within the related operation and participation, whereas 'union' with God means to become God-like through the divine communion, insofar as possible to human beings.[27]

Just like Niketas Stethatos, Gregory the Sinaite too aimed to establish a perfect correspondence between celestial and ecclesiastical hierarchies. In so doing he introduced a further hierarchy, the monastic one. In this way he managed to preserve Dionysius' triadic structure within a quaternary structure. At the very beginning of his *Chapters* Gregory writes:

> The Trinity causes everything in the intellectual hierarchy; the intellectual hierarchy causes everything in the rational one, namely the monastic hierarchy; the latter causes everything in the symbolic one and the symbolic one causes eveything in the legal one. They all receive the first fruits of season and tithes. The latter two bestow material gifts, whereas the formers bestow immaterial and divine gifts: the legal hierarchy bestows the lamb; the symbolic one bestows bread; the monastic one (p. 275) bestows Christ in the Spirit; the intellectual one sacrifices and participates in the Word made flesh and communicates to everything else its very name, Israel, that is to say the mind that sees God. However, in the first two hierarchies God is named in an improper manner, whereas in the latter He is named appropriately. According to the first the temple is the tent, according to others the temple is the material altar, according to others the temple is the creation, beings and soul, whereas for the intellectual ones temple is the intellectual realities, immaterial and divine.[28]

One of the reasons for adopting a quaternary structure is Gregory's intention to preserve monasticism as an autonomous hierarchy different than the ecclesiastical; or, alternatively, he did so because of the symbolism in number four. Four are the Gospels, four the sacramental and liturgical practices, four the cardinal virtues. Furthermore, this number symbolizes the celestial realities. As a matter of fact, in the earlier *Homily on the Transfiguration*, composed in the 1330s during his stay on the Holy Mountain, Gregory speaks of the fourfold significance of this feast.[29] This passage is the key for understanding the quaternary structure of Gregory's hierarchy. The first level is described using vocabulary related to the Law, which, as like a shadow, symbolizes the truth (here Gregory thinks of Elias the prophet on Mount Oreb). For obvious reasons it corresponds to the legal hierarchy. The second level is described as a truthful and sign-bearer figure and corresponds to

PRINTED FROM OXFORD HANDBOOKS ONLINE (www.oxfordhandbooks.com). © Oxford University Press, 2022. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a title in Oxford Handbooks Online for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).

Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 22 March 2022

the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The monastic hierarchy is described as the image and glory of the Christ. Finally, the angelical hierarchy corresponds to the divine illumination. The references to illumination and glory are reminiscent of monastic spirituality, while the notions of ‘shadow’ and ‘figure’ hark back to biblical exegesis and mystagogic literature. At the very core of Gregory’s attention lay the sacrifice and the temple. To the latter he devoted the last part of the *Homily*. From what has been said earlier, it is possible to draw the following parallels:

Lamb	Legal Hierarchy	Tend
Bread (Eucharistic)	Symbolical Hierarchy (ecclesiastical)	Altar
Christ in the Spirit	Rational Hierarchy (monastic)	Creation, being, soul
Word made Flesh	Intellectual Hierarchy (angelical)	Immaterial Realities

When seen under this light the many obscure passages found in Gregory’s earlier works become clearer. In fact, in the *Acrostic Chapters* Gregory had already elaborated at length on Moses’ tent, the lamb, and the temple using Dionysius’ vocabulary.[30]

In the *Chapters on the Four Hierarchies* Gregory further develops the triadic structure of the four hierarchies. When describing the qualities and features of each order he quoted from Dionysius almost literally. In this regard Gregory extends the existing harmony between the celestial and ecclesiastical hierarchies to the whole universe and argues that the fourfold structure of the hierarchies is based on the balance in the different triads and orders. (p. 276)

PRINTED FROM OXFORD HANDBOOKS ONLINE (www.oxfordhandbooks.com). © Oxford University Press, 2022. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a title in Oxford Handbooks Online for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).

Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 22 March 2022

LEGAL	ECCLESIASTICAL	MONASTIC	ANGELICAL
			HIERARCHY
	HIERARCHY (SYMBOLIC)	HIERARCHY	
HIERARCHY			(INTELLECTUAL)
		(RATIONAL)	
Levites		SUBORDINATES	
	Deacons	Deacons	Angels
	Subdeacons	Subdeacons	Archangels
	Hierodeacons	Hierodeacons	Principalities
Scribes		PRATICALS	
	Priests	Cantors	Virtues
	Bishops	Singers	Powers
	Archbishops	Ministers	Dominions
Hierarchs	Patriarchs	CONTEMPLATIVES	Seraphim
			Cherubim
			Thrones

This fourfold structure can be explained in light of Gregory's inclusion of the monastic hierarchy in the list of hierarchies, i.e. the legal, the ecclesiastical, and the angelical. The autonomy granted by Gregory to the monastic hierarchy is extremely relevant insofar as the author implies that the monastic order is more important than the ecclesiastical. In this respect Gregory agrees with the earlier Symeon the New Theologian,[31] a well-respected authority in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Byzantine monasticism, that the spiritual is more important than the earthly hierarchy. Tellingly, Byzantine monks are

PRINTED FROM OXFORD HANDBOOKS ONLINE (www.oxfordhandbooks.com). © Oxford University Press, 2022. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a title in Oxford Handbooks Online for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).

Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 22 March 2022

known for often taking sides against the hierarchy, as in the case of the Lyon Synod planned by Michael VIII in 1274 for the union of the Western and Eastern Churches; or such as the case of the *Tome of the Holy Mountain*[32] issued before the Synod of Contantinople in 1341 etc.

Gregory argued in favour of the monks' primacy over the ecclesiastical hierarchy on the basis of Dionysius' *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 6, 1, 3, where the author described the monks as the highest ordered among the initiated. Writes Gregory: 'It must be said that discourse judged and pointed out that the monastic virtuous life is higher than the ecclesiastical hierarchy'. Nonetheless, Gregory also acknowledged that the monastic order is subordinated to the ecclesiastical hierarchy 'according to the divine decrees' and that the latter hierarchy is like a mother 'in regenerating the virtue and the grace'.[33]

Gregory also cribbed from Dionysius when elaborating on the inner structures of the hierarchies. In this regard he wrote that 'also the monastic order is divided into three kinds, namely that of the subordinates, that of the practical and that of the contemplative ones'.[34] This division into three classes matches another division, namely that into the (p. 277) beginners, the intermediates, and the perfected. In the *Chapters on the Four Hierarchies* Gregory further elaborated on this division under the influence of Dionysius' threefold division in the hierarchic activities (purifying, illuminating, perfecting).

> The monastic hierarchy has three distributive sciences: the introductive, the practical and the contemplative. In these the hierarchy gets purified, enlightened and perfected. For the beginners the hierarchic and distributive operation consists of obedience as purification by decrease of the passions. For the practical ones [the hierarchic and distributive operation] are the practice, the ascesis, the continuous salmody and the vigil, through which the hierarchy is illuminated by rejecting the darkness due to the passions. For the contemplative [the hierarchic and distributive operation] is the contemplation that purifies, illuminates and makes perfect the hesychia. Within this hierarchy the contemplatives become perfect and become mystic hierarchs God-alike and acquire their perfection.[35]

According to Gregory the intermediate state of the 'practical' monks (which he equates to Virtues, Powers, and Dominion) belongs to those who practise the liturgical chant and salmody. The third state in the monastic order is not a tripartite one, but is rather Unitarian. It corresponds to the highest triad in the celestial hierarchy that includes Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones. The monks who share this condition, namely the hesychast and contemplative monks, are characterized with having the same properties as the first angelic order. 'Igneous, seraphic and God-like, they have a purificative power proper to their *hesychia*'. These monks are 'igneous' just like 'the Thrones are made of fire'; 'the most elevated Seraphim are incandescent beings', for 'fire is typical of the God-like celestial intelligences'. Thus they are 'seraphic', 'God-alike', 'cherubic insofar as they possess the illuminative, gnostic and sapiential faculty, and an operation proper to their condition'. Writes Gregory:

PRINTED FROM OXFORD HANDBOOKS ONLINE (www.oxfordhandbooks.com). © Oxford University Press, 2022. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a title in Oxford Handbooks Online for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).

Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 22 March 2022

> Quiet Thrones are the complaisant, the simple, sincere and unknown, those who have been enriched by the good negative knowledge proper to the perfect ekstasis towards God, namely they do not know any of the beings, for they only know He who is who he is and have been regarded as resting in God. If the souls are truly simple—it has been said—they are thrones in the spiritual sense.[36]

In the *Chapters on the Four Hierarchies* the highest triad in the angelical hierarchy corresponds to the peak of the monks' spiritual journey. In this respect Gregory is consistent with what he had previously stated in the *Acrostic Chapters*, namely that there are three steps in the prayer:

> Noetic prayer is an activity initiated by the cleansing power of the Spirit and the mystical rites celebrated by the intellect. Similarly, stillness is initiated by attentive waiting upon God, its intermediate stage is characterized by illuminative power and contemplation, and its final goal is ecstasy and the enraptured flight of the intellect towards God.[37]

(p. 278) When writing the *Chapters on the Four Hierarchies*, Gregory appears to be a Dionysius commentator in every respect.[38] In this work he constantly appeals to Dionysius to describe the monastic condition and its different stages. He adapts the angelical hierarchy to the stages in the spiritual life and believes that the features proper to the highest celestial orders are proper to the monks as well, when these have reached the peak of contemplation. In this regard Gregory made explicit that which Niketas Stethatos had merely insinuated. It should be noted that Gregory even invited his disciples to read Niketas' *Chapters*, while he used his treatise *On Hierarchy* for his work on the same subject. However, while appropriating Stethatos, Gregory still read and elaborated on Dionysius directly.

Monasticism. The *Letter to Demophilus* and *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 6: from Methodius I to Gregory the Sinaite and beyond

As shown above Gregory's *Chapters* describe monasticism as an independent hierarchy different from the ecclesiastical one. Not only is the monastic hierarchy independent from the ecclesiastical, but to a certain extent it is even superior. From the liturgical and sacramental perspective, the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* is associated with the Eucharistic bread and the altar, whereas monastic sacrifice is associated with Christ in the Spirit and the altar corresponds to the entire creation and the soul.[39] While the ecclesiastical hierarchy supervises the symbols alone, the monastic hierarchy supervises both the symbols and the very truth itself.[40] In one of the chapters mentioned earlier, Gregory discusses this issue at length.

PRINTED FROM OXFORD HANDBOOKS ONLINE (www.oxfordhandbooks.com). © Oxford University Press, 2022. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a title in Oxford Handbooks Online for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).

Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 22 March 2022

> It must be said that discourse judged and pointed out that the monastic virtuous life is higher than the ecclesiastical hierarchy. In fact the latter is subordinated to the former because of the divine decrees. And it possesses a mother with respect to its birth and to the regeneration of habit and grace, even though they differ with regard to the position and ascent. And we maintain that just as the ecclesiastical hierarchy is alike the angelical one with regard to the theophoric condition … so also the monastic hierarchy, beloved of God and virtuous, when it is immaterial and pure is alike the intellectual hierarchy with regard to poverty, celibacy and the erotic striving to God.[41]

In this chapter Gregory again follows Dionysius closely.[42] The latter discusses monasticism in *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 6 and more specifically in *Letter 8 to Demophilus*. Here monasticism is discussed from the point of view of the division within the ecclesiastical hierarchy between initiators and initiated. The former are (from the higher to the lower) the bishops, the priests, and the ministers; the latter are the monks, the holy people, and the purified orders. According to this distinction the monk occupies an intermediate position and plays no role in the Church's initiating power, even though (p. 279) monks imitate the priestly orders in their perfect life. The monk lives a perfect life superior to that of the simple believers and in this they resemble priests.[43] Dionysius recalled that the order of the monks:

> by reason of an entirely purified purification, through complete power and perfect chastity of its own operations, has attained to intellectual contemplation and communion in every ministration which it is lawful for it to contemplate, and is conducted by the most perfecting powers of the hierarchs, and taught by their inspired illuminations and hierarchical traditions the ministrations of the mystic rites, contemplated, according to its capacity.[44]

In the *Letter to Demophilus* Dionysius invited his addressee to give up his pretence to judge the sinner among the priests, for within the ecclesiastical hierarchy the order of the monks is lower than that of the priests.[45] Accordingly, while revisiting the Platonic tripartite division in the soul, he outlined a series from the higher to the lower including apostles, bishops, priests, ministers, monks. Dionysius was pretty clear that this series should not be overturned and that each member must act according to their position.[46]

Both in the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* and in the *Letter to Demophilus* Dionysius insisted on the very same idea: monasticism is a particular condition for those who chose to live this condition, but its position within the hierarchy is far from been privileged, for monks occupy a lower rank than priests and ministers. Thus Gregory the Sinaite's reassessment of the monastic life differs to a great extent from Dionysius' intention. Curiously, Gregory established the primacy of the monks within the ecclesiastical hierarchy by referring to Dionysius' vocabulary, but in this way he betrayed the text of the Areopagite.

The Byzantine reception (and transformation) of Dionysius' view on the status of monks vis-à-vis that of priests within the ecclesiastical reception is extremely interesting. The first witness dates to the ninth century. In the immediate aftermath of the iconoclastic

PRINTED FROM OXFORD HANDBOOKS ONLINE (www.oxfordhandbooks.com). © Oxford University Press, 2022. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a title in Oxford Handbooks Online for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).

Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 22 March 2022

controversy, patriarch Methodius condemned the radical insubordination among the monks at the Stoudios monastery in a letter written in 845–846. Here the patriarch stated once again that monks are not supposed to judge priests, for the formers are subordinated to the latters. After citing the canons of Chalcedon 4, 8, Antioch 5, and of the Apostles 55, 31, Methodius quoted a passage from Dionysius' *Letter to Demophilus*. In Methodius' intention this text worked as an admonition to preserve the hierarchical order of Apostles—Bishops—Priests—Ministers—Monks and forbade monks from criticizing or contesting the authority of priests and bishops on the basis that they occupied a higher position within the hierarchy.[47] This very same concern animates the *Pandektai* composed by Nikon of the Black Mountain (eleventh to twelfth century)[48] and is at the very core of the controversies surrounding the union of the Churches at the Council of Lyon in 1274.[49] All this evidence suggests Dionysius' *Letter to Demophilus* was an essential text for discussing the proper sequence in the ecclesiastical hierarchy: in this sequence monks were inferior to priests and bishops and were supposed to obey them.

By contrast, taking the cue from Dionysius as well, Gregory the Sinaite reached different conclusions than those elaborated by his predecessors on the basis of the *Letter* (p. 280) *to Demophilus*. Gregory was not the only one reading Dionysius this way. The later Symeon of Thessalonica (*d.* 1429) answered the question 'are priests superior to monks?' in the following way:

> With regard to the sequence priests are by far superior to monks. In fact, their works are God's works insofar as no-one could be Christian without priesthood, nor can he receive the sacraments or be akin to God. However, the monastic order is superior to priesthood, not with regard to its function (for, as we have said, this is God's work), but with regard to life. Through priesthood the priest always blesses and sanctifies the monks as well, who are superior with regard to life. For this reason even Anthony bowed not only to bishops, but to clergy. In light of his great dignity, each priest must live in a saintly manner and must strive to live like monks, or— even better—he must try to become a monk himself.[50]

In this way Symeon had few reservations in supporting the monks' superiority over the priests on the basis that the holy life is that of the monks. In so doing he proposed a dialectics between priesthood and life according to which the former stands out over the rest because its works are divine, but can only be perfected in the monastic condition. Consequently, Symeon suggests that all priests should become monks. Interestingly, Symeon defends the monks' superior state on the basis of Dionysius' *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 6, even though his text never really defended such a thesis. In this respect he clearly depends on Gregory the Sinaite's reading of this very Dionysian text. However, being aware of the dramatic consequences of this assumption, both Gregory and Symeon agreed that the monks' superiority over the other members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy could not be absolute. Thus Symeon remarked that 'within the sequence' priesthood is superior to the monastic condition insofar as the former is a divine work, while Gregory remarked that the monastic condition 'according to the divine decrees' is subordinated

PRINTED FROM OXFORD HANDBOOKS ONLINE (www.oxfordhandbooks.com). © Oxford University Press, 2022. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a title in Oxford Handbooks Online for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).

Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 22 March 2022

within the ecclesiastical hierarchy, being like a mother allowing 'the regeneration of this condition and grace'.

In sum, while interpreting Dionysius, both Gregory and Symeon did so in a way reminiscent of the eleventh-century idea that monks were more important than priests insofar as the former exemplify a superior spiritual authority. Proof of this tension is found in the many official reprimands issued by canonists of simple monks who went beyond the limit of their condition. The latter were not priests, and yet they acted as spiritual fathers who 'receive the believers' thought' and can 'bind and solve'.[51]

The Mind's Circular Movement in the Divine Names and the Prayer

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (and beyond) one particular passage of Dionysius' *On the Divine Names* gained prominence among Byzantine monks with (p. 281) regard to the interpretation of the different types of prayer. Dionysius' text runs as follows:

> [The soul] moves in a circle, that is, turns within itself and away from what is outside and there is an inner concentration of its intellectual powers. A sort of fixed revolution causes it to return from the multiplicity of externals, to gather in upon itself and then, in this undispersed condition, to join those who are themselves in a powerful union. From there the revolution brings the soul to the Beautiful and the Good, which is beyond all things, is one and the same, and has neither beginning nor end.[52]

This Dionysian text on the soul's circular movement and on the difference between the latter and the linear motion is transmitted in a florilegium containing spiritual and ascetical texts nowadays preserved in its earliest version in MS Haghion Oros, Mone Batopediou 57, along with other excerpts from Dionysius, Evagrius Ponticus, Maximus the Confessor, Isaac the Syrian, Diadocus of Photike, pseudo-Macarius the Egyptian, and the *Method of the holy prayer and attention* etc.[53]

But the earlier Niketas Stetathus had already mentioned the soul's circular movement in his *Chapters*. Here Niketas writes that he who reaches the peak in the spiritual path and becomes unified is like an angel, fixed in God in a condition of rest, but also in eternal circular movement: 'they revolve incessantly around around God inasmuch as He is the centre and the cause of their circular movement.'[54] Furthermore, several fourteenth-century spiritual authors had elaborated on this same notion, such as Patriarch Callistus I (*d.* 1364), who was Gregory the Sinaite's disciple.[55] In his homily *On the Four Cardinal Virtues and on the Monastic Institution* Callistus describes the mind's ascent from the material world to contemplation by cribbing imagery found in the Bible and in the Church Fathers (in particular John Climacus). In this regard Callistus refers to the image of birds' flight and, more importantly, to that of bees. In so doing he distinguishes between the

PRINTED FROM OXFORD HANDBOOKS ONLINE (www.oxfordhandbooks.com). © Oxford University Press, 2022. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a title in Oxford Handbooks Online for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).

Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 22 March 2022

mind's linear movement, on the one hand, and the more authentic circular movement, on the other, proper to spiritual contemplation.

> The heart of a man always devoted to God is regarded as a field and a land. Consider the grapes that turn dark at the movement of his mind, as Solomon says 'Thy cheeks are as a piece of a pomegranate'(Ct. 4.3; 6.7) or as the same bed of straw of the virtues. Just as the bees collect honeycomb and honey from the flowers and, when sated, do not fly in a straight line because of the weight of the food, but fly a bit like in a circle until they reach the summit, then they proceed towards the beehive in a straight light, so it happens to those who cultivate the practical virtue: since they also collected the bed of straw of the virtues, they ascend somehow in a circle up to the peak of contemplation.[56]

A different reading of this Dionysian passage is found in Gregory Palamas (*d.* 1357).[57] In his early *Chapters on prayer and purity of heart* Gregory elaborates on Dionysius' vocabulary with regard to the reversion of the psychic powers and the mind's unification.[58] In the later *Triads* Gregory defended the prayers performed by the hesychast monks (p. 282) from the attack of Barlaam the Calabrian and appealed to this Dionysian passage for supporting the prayer techniques elaborated by Nicephorus the Athonite and by the anonymous author of the *Method of the holy prayer and attention*.[59] Writes Palamas:

> The mind operates in part according to its function of external observation: This is what the great Denys calls the movement of the mind 'along a straight line'; and on the other hand, it returns upon itself, when it beholds itself; this movement the same Father calls 'circular'. This last is the most excellent and most appropriate activity of the mind, by which it comes to transcend itself and be united to God.[60]

> Palamas elaborated once more on the mind's circular movement of self-reversion when discussing psychic and somatic prayer techniques. He noted that such movement of the mind is reflected in the curved shape of the monk's body during prayer:

> Thus, the man who seeks to make his mind return to itself needs to propel it not only in a straight line but also in the circular motion that is infallible. How should such a one not gain great profit if, instead of letting his eye roam hither and thither, he should fix it on his breast or on his navel, as a point of concentration? For in this way, he will not only gather himself together externally, conforming as far as possible to the inner movement he seeks for his mind; he will also, by disposing his body in such a position, recall into the interior of the heart a power which is ever flowing outwards through the faculty of sight.[61]

Thus in a purely psychological fashion Gregory understood the soul's circular motion in the *Divine Names* as a basis for his own doctrine of prayer. As such, the circular motion does not concern the mind's unification alone, but refers to the actual prayer techniques involving the body.

PRINTED FROM OXFORD HANDBOOKS ONLINE (www.oxfordhandbooks.com). © Oxford University Press, 2022. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a title in Oxford Handbooks Online for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).

Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 22 March 2022

This doctrine had quite a resonance among late Byzantine and early modern spiritual authors. At the end of the fourteenth century Callistus and Ignatius Xanthopouloi[62] composed their chapters on prayer cited the previously mentioned passage from the Divine Names and accepted Gregory Palamas' early interpretation of it:

> This work is the circular movement, that is, the return of the mind to itself, conversion and union, and through itself with God. This is the only movement that is truly without error and that does not make mistakes, because it is free of ties and mediation and is a superior union to intellection and superior vision to vision.[63]

In around 1800 Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain, the distinguished editor of the *Philokalia*, accepted Gregory Palamas' theory of prayer and Dionysius' circular motion of the mind discussed in the *Divine Names*. One of the chapters in his *Handbook of Spiritual Counsel* is devoted to *the mind's perfect descent into the heart*. Here Nicodemus wrote:

> The spiritual meditation is referred to by St Dionysius Areopagites, who mentions three forms: the direct, the spiral, and finally the circular, which alone is certain and (p. 283) without deception. It is referred to as circular meditation because as to the periphery of the circle returns to itself and is united, so also in this circular movement the mind returns to itself and becomes one. St Dionysius noted: the movement of the soul is circular; leaving the externals, it enters into itself and unites its spiritual powers in a circular movement that provides a gift of truth.[64]

The two most important phases in Byzantine mysticism (tenth to eleventh century and thirteenth to fourteenth century) bear witness to Dionysius' profound impact on the Byzantine spiritual authors. Some themes were clearly more influential than others. Whereas the presence of the *Divine Names* and the *Celestial* and *Ecclesiastical Hierarchies* is evident in Byzantine spirituality, the *Mystical Theology* is entirely absent from the spiritual works written between the tenth and fourteenth centuries.[65] The cases of Niketas Stethatos and Gregory the Sinaite demonstrate that Dionysius' works were regarded as highly important insofar as they describe the process of psychic reversion, the inner union of the soul, the different stages in the spiritual life, the nature of the highest contemplation, and the monks' status within the Church. Dionysius plays a central role in the development of the fourteenth-century theological vocabulary also with regard to more specific issues such as the mind's circular motion and the psychic and bodily prayer techniques.

Interestingly, the *Corpus Dionysiacum* did not influence Byzantine mysticism in all of its historical phases. On the contrary, prior to Niketas Stethatos (eleventh century) the presence of Dionysius in the spiritual authors was either indirect (through Maximus the Confessor) or absent (as in the case of John Climacus). Nevertheless, even in considering Stethatos it must be said that his rediscovery of Dionysius should be seen against the more general background of the reception of earlier spiritual authors such as Isaac the Syrian and pseudo-Macarius the Egyptian. In other words, the renewed interest in the *Corpus Dionysiacum* in eleventh-century Byzantium reflects a more general process of rediscovery of the canon of ascetical and spiritual literature. At first, the impact of Diony-

PRINTED FROM OXFORD HANDBOOKS ONLINE (www.oxfordhandbooks.com). © Oxford University Press, 2022. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a title in Oxford Handbooks Online for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).

Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 22 March 2022

sius was tremendous, but in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries it became less evident and was restricted to specific themes. Finally, we must remember that these authors did not simply read Dionysius through the looking glasses of their predecessors; on the contrary, they accessed the *Corpus Areopagiticum* directly and developed autonomous strategies for understanding the text.

Abbreviations

PG
Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca, ed. J.-P. Migne, Lutetia Parisiorum 1857–1866.
PS
Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμᾶ συγγράμματα, I-VI, ed. P. K. Chrestou and others, Thessaloniki 1962–2016.
Φιλοκαλία
Φιλοκαλία τῶν ἱερῶν νηπτικῶν, I–V, Athens 1974–1976.

Bibliography

Balfour, D. (1982), S*aint Gregory the Sinaïte: Discourse on the Transfiguration* (Athens: Offprint from *Theologia*).

Darrouzès, J. (1961), *Nicétas Stéthatos. Opuscles et lettres*, Sources Chrétiennes, 81 (Paris: Cerf).

Darrouzès, J. (1966), *Documents inédits d'ecclésiologie byzantine*, Archives de l'Orient chrétien, 10 (Paris: Institut francais d'etudes byzantines).

Darrouzès, J. (1987), 'Le patriarche Méthode contre les Iconoclastes et les Stoudites', *Revue des études byzantines* 45: 15–57.

(p. 286) Denkova, L., P. Yaneva, and K. Ivanova (2000), 'The Reception of Pseudo-Dionysius in Medieval Bulgaria', in *Die Dionysius-Rezeption im Mittelalter*, eds T. Boiadjiev, G. Kapriev, and A. Speer, Rencontres de Philosophie Médiévale, 9 (Turnhout: Brepols), 87–103.

Golitzin, A. (1990), 'On the Other Hand', *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 34: 305–323.

Golitzin, A. (1994), 'Hierarchy versus Anarchy? Dionysius Areopagita, Symeon the New Theologian, Nicetas Stethatos and Their Common Roots in Ascetical Tradition', *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 38: 131–179.

Goltz, H. and G. M. Prochorov (2010–2013), *Dionisiĭ Areopagit v slavĭanskom perevode Starĭsa̋ Isaii* (**XIV** vek), 1–5, Monumenta linguae Slavicae dialecti veteris, 55–57, 59, 61 (Freiburg i. B.).

PRINTED FROM OXFORD HANDBOOKS ONLINE (www.oxfordhandbooks.com). © Oxford University Press, 2022. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a title in Oxford Handbooks Online for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).

Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 22 March 2022

Gouillard, J. (1939), ‘Un auteur spirituel byzantin du **XIIE** siècle: Pierre Damascène’, *Échos d’Orient* 38: 257–278.

Hausherr, I. (1936), ‘Les grands courants de la spiritualité orientale’, *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 1: 114–138.

Horujy, S. S. (2004) *Isihasm. Annotirovannaja bibliografija* (Moscow: Institute of Human Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences).

Knežević, M. (2012), *Gregory Palamas (1296–1357): Bibliography*, Bibliographia serbica theologica, 7 (Belgrade: Institute for Theological Research).

Koder, J. and J. Paramelle (1969), *Syméon le Nouveau Théologien, Hymnes*, i, Sources Chretiennes, 156 (Paris: Cerf).

Lamberz, E. (2006), *Katalog der griechischen Handschriften des Athosklosters Vatopedi*, Band 1, Codices 1–102 (Thessaloniki: Patriarchal Institute for Patristic Studies).

Meyendorff, J. (1959), *Introduction à l’étude de Grégoire Palamas*, Patristica Sorbonensia, 3 (Paris: Seuil).

Meyendorff, J. (1959a), *Saint Grégoire Palamas et la mystique orthodoxe* (Paris: Seuil).

Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain (1801), *Συμβουλευτικὸν ἐγχειρίδιον* (Vienna).

Paidas, C. (2013), *Οι Κατὰ Γρηγορᾶ ομιλίες του πατριάρχη Κωνσταντινουπόλεως Καλλίστου Α’, Βυζαντινή φιλοσοφία και θεολογία* (Athens: Grigori).

Paidas, C. (2016), ‘An unedited discourse on the four cardinal virtues and on the monastic institution by Kallistos I, patriarch of Constantinople’, *Byzantion* 86: 337–347.

Peters, G. (2011), *Peter of Damascus, Byzantine Monk and Spiritual Theologian*, Studies and Texts 75 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval *Studies*).

PG *Patrologiae cursus completus* (1857–1866), Series graeca, ed. J.-P. Migne (Lutetia Parisiorum: Imprimerie catholique)

PS *Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμᾶ συγγράμματα* (1962–2016) **I–VI**, ed. P. K. Chrestou and others (Thessaloniki: Kyromanos)

Rigo, A. (2002), *Gregorio il Sinaita, in La théologie byzantine et sa tradition*, **II**, eds C. G. Conticello and V. Conticello (Turnhout: Brepols), 35–130.

Rigo, A. (2004), ‘La spiritualità monastica bizantina e lo Pseudo-Dionigi l’Areopagita’, in *Il monachesimo tra eredità e aperture*, eds M. Bielawski and D. Hombergen, Studia Anselmiana, 140 (Roma: Pontificio Ateneo Sant'Anselmo), 379–418.

Rigo, A. (2005), *Il monaco, la Chiesa e la liturgia. I Capitoli sulle gerarchie di Gregorio il Sinaita*, La mistica cristiana tra Oriente e Occidente, 4 (Firenze: Edizioni del Galluzzo).

PRINTED FROM OXFORD HANDBOOKS ONLINE (www.oxfordhandbooks.com). © Oxford University Press, 2022. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a title in Oxford Handbooks Online for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).

Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 22 March 2022

Rigo, A. (2006), ‘Giovanni Italos commentatore della Gerarchia celeste dello pseudo-Dionigi l’Areopagita’, *Νέα Ῥώμη* 3: 223–232.

Rigo, A. (2008), *Mistici bizantini* (Torino: Einaudi).

Rigo, A. (2011), ‘Une summa ou un florilège commenté pour la vie spirituelle? L’oeuvre ΜΕΘΟΔΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΚΑΝΩΝ de Calliste et Ignace Xanthopouloi’, in *Encyclopedic Trends* (p. 287) *in Byzantium?*, eds. P. Van Deun and C. Macé, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, 212 (Leuven: Peeters), 387–436.

Rigo, A. (2021), *Gregorio Palamas, Tomo aghioritico. La storia, il testo e la dottrina*, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, 298 (Leuven: Peeters).

Roques, R. (1961), ‘Éléments pour une théologie de l’état monastique selon Denys l’Aréopagite’, in *Théologie de la vie monastique. Études sur la tradition patristique*, Théologie, 49 (Paris: Aubier), 283–314.

Roques, R. (1954), *L’univers dionysien. Structure hiéerarchique du monde selon le pseudo-Denys*, Théologie, 29 (Paris: Aubier).

Sinkewicz, R. E. (2002), *Gregory Palamas, in La théologie byzantine et sa tradition*, **II**, ed. C. G. Conticello and V. Conticello (Turnhout: Brepols), 131–188.

Sykoutris, I. (1930), Περὶ τὸ σχίσμα τῶν Ἀρσενιατῶν. **III**. Ἐπιστολὴ Καλλίστου πρὸς τὸν Θεσσαλονίκης Μανουὴλ Δισύπατον, *Ἑλληνικά* 3: 15–44.

Notes:

(1.) Hausherr 1936.

(2.) Meyendorff 1959, 195–200; Meyendorff 1959a, 18–24, 29.

(3.) Golitzin 1990; Golitzin 1994; Rigo 2004.

(4.) Rigo 2005.

(5.) Rigo 2008, XI–CVI.

(6.) Cf. the scholia of John Italus on the *Celestial Hierarchy*, Rigo 2006.

(7.) Horujy 2004, 319–322; http://www.danuvius.orthodoxy.ru/Nic_Step.htm.

(8.) J. Koder in Koder, Paramelle 1969, 53–64.

(9.) Rigo 2004, 386–390.

(10.) Φιλοκαλία, III, 273–355.

(11.) Chapters, III, 42–44: 336–337.

PRINTED FROM OXFORD HANDBOOKS ONLINE (www.oxfordhandbooks.com). © Oxford University Press, 2022. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a title in Oxford Handbooks Online for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).

Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 22 March 2022

(12.) Chapters, III, 34, 35: 334.

(13.) Chapters, III, 16–18, 26, 29, 32, 48: 330, 332–333, 338.

(14.) Darrouzès 1961.

(15.) 6, ll. 8–9: 306.

(16.) 7, ll. 2–3; 15, ll. 9–10; 21: 308, 318, 324.

(17.) Gouillard 1939; Peters 2011.

(18.) Book I: Φιλοκαλία, III, 110, ll. 23–27.

(19.) Niketas Stethatos, On hierarchy, 36, 38: 338, 340.

(20.) Niketas Stethatos, On hierarchy, 17–18: 320–322.

(21.) Cf. Rigo 2002.

(22.) PG 3–4, with the Dionysius' works.

(23.) Nicephorus Gregoras, Byzantine History, 19, 1: ed. Schopen, Bonn, II, 923.

(24.) Cf. Denkova, Yaneva, Ivanova 2000.

(25.) Cf. e.g. Acrostic chapters, 42, 127: Φιλοκαλία, IV, 37, 58.

(26.) Rigo 2005, 2–18.

(27.) Chapters on the four hierarchies, 5: Rigo 2005, 6.

(28.) Chapters on the four hierarchies, 1: Rigo 2005, 2.

(29.) Homily on the Transfiguration, 3-4: Balfour 1982, 22.

(30.) Acrostic chapters, 43: Φιλοκαλία, IV, 37; cf. 112: 51; 7: 31–32.

(31.) Rigo 2005, LXX–LXXIII.

(32.) Rigo 2021.

(33.) Chapters on the four hierarchies, 7: Rigo 2005, 8-10.

(34.) Chapters on the four hierarchies, 2: Rigo 2005, 2-4.

(35.) Chapters on the four hierarchies, 6: Rigo 2005, 8.

(36.) Chapters on the four hierarchies, 7: Rigo 2005, 8-10.

(37.) Acrostic chapters, 111: Φιλοκαλία, IV, 51.

(38.) Rigo 2005, XLIII–XLVIII etc.

PRINTED FROM OXFORD HANDBOOKS ONLINE (www.oxfordhandbooks.com). © Oxford University Press, 2022. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a title in Oxford Handbooks Online for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).

Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 22 March 2022

(39.) Chapters on the four hierarchies, 1: Rigo 2005, 2.

(40.) Chapters on the four hierarchies, 10: Rigo 2005, 12.

(41.) Chapters on the four hierarchies, 7: Rigo 2005, 8-10.

(42.) On Dionysius' view on monasticism, see Roques 1954, 187–191, 284–286; Roques 1961.

(43.) EH VI, 2, 5: 117–118, 119.

(44.) EH VI, 1: p. 117; cf. 116.

(45.) Ep. VIII, 1: 175–176 and 176–177.

(46.) Ep. VIII, 4: 183–184.

(47.) Darrouzès 1987.

(48.) PG 106, 1373c.

(49.) Sykoutris 1930, 25; Darrouzès 1966, 371, 384, 390.

(50.) Answers to Gabriel of Pentapolis, 33: PG 155, 881C–884A.

(51.) Rigo 2005, LXX.

(52.) DN IV, 9: *CD*, II, 153, ll. 10–16 (trans. Rorem)

(53.) Cf. Lamberz 2006, 248–276.

(54.) Chapters, III, 29: Φιλοκαλία, III, 332–333.

(55.) Paidas 2013, 13–29.

(56.) On the Four Cardinal Virtues and on the Monastic Institution, 7: Paidas 2016, 345.

(57.) Sinkewicz 2002; Knežević 2012.

(58.) PS V, 157–159.

(59.) On the psychosomatic methods Rigo 2002, 92–116.

(60.) Triads I, 2, 5: PS I, 398.

(61.) Triads, I, 2, 8: PS I, 400–401; cf. also I, 2, 7: 399–400.

(62.) Rigo 2011.

(63.) Method and canon, 70: Φιλοκαλία, IV, 265–266.

(64.) Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain 1801, 158–160 (trans. P. A. Chamberas).

PRINTED FROM OXFORD HANDBOOKS ONLINE (www.oxfordhandbooks.com). © Oxford University Press, 2022. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a title in Oxford Handbooks Online for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).

Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 22 March 2022

(65.) As far as we know, the only use of mystical theology in an ascetic–spiritual context is that of the aforementioned Callistus and Ignatius Xanthopouloi, in a passage where they also quote *Letter* 5: “This spiritual, supernatural pleasure and gushing source of life is mystically called enhypostatic enlightenment, super-bright darkness, extraordinary beauty, summit of desires, vision, vision of God and deification. It remains inexpressible even after being expressed in some way, remains unknown after being known, remains inconceivable after being thought of. The great Dionysius says: ‘In this way we pray that super-bright darkness comes and that we, through blindness and ignorance, see and know the One who is above vision and knowledge, the One who in truth is not seen and is not known, and whom we extol in a supra-substantial way, that is, by the stripping of all entities, the One who is supra-substantial’. Again: ‘Divine darkness is the inaccessible light in which, it is said, God dwells. Invisible for its supra-eminent splendour and inaccessible for its excessive outpouring of supra-substantial light. In this darkness is found whoever is made worthy to know and see God, and with this not seeing and not knowing finds himself above vision and knowledge, knowing this: that He is after all things sensitive and intelligible’’, Method and canon, 76: Φιλοκαλία, IV, 271–272; for the sources of the chapter on Dionysius cf. Rigo 2011, 417.

Antonio Rigo

Antonio Rigo is Professor of Byzantine Philology and History of Byzantine Christianity at the Ca’ Foscari University of Venice. His research engages with the literature and religious history of the Byzantine and post-Byzantine periods, and in particular with the ascetic–spiritual texts, heretical and dissident movements, and theological controversies of the fourteenth century.

PRINTED FROM OXFORD HANDBOOKS ONLINE (www.oxfordhandbooks.com). © Oxford University Press, 2022. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a title in Oxford Handbooks Online for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice).

Subscriber: OUP-Reference Gratis Access; date: 22 March 2022