

universe, and the natural cosmos indeed, is a dynamic universe in movement towards an infinite reality that is theurgically established and constantly fulfilled. Thus, nature and all material and natural symbols are not merely *synthēmata* to be intellectually conceived in order to facilitate a certain change of the psychological status; they are imprints of an ongoing ontological innovation and enrichment of the entire creation, of all particulars and universals. Dionysian theurgy aims precisely at the salvation of man and the entire creation. As such, it has “no parallel in the theurgy of Proclus or Late Neoplatonism in general.”¹²² This novelty certainly goes far beyond the (humanly governed) institutional capacities of any Church.¹²³ Besides, one should not forget that it was precisely the “institutional church” of those times that rejected and crucified Him Who is the source of the Church, the source of Dionysian theurgy.

Notes

- 1 Parts of this chapter were initially prepared for the International Workshop *Dionysius Areopagita Christianus: Approaches to the Reception and Reconstruction of the Christian “Tradition” in the Areopagitic Writings*, at the University of Athens (February 2017). An improved and enriched version was presented at the 15th Annual Conference of the International Society for Neoplatonic Studies, in Olomouc, Czech Republic (June 2017). I wish to thank the organisers of the Workshop in Athens, Georgios Arabatzis and Dimitrios Pallis, for the invitation. My gratitude extends in particular to John Finamore and the ISNS Conference Committee for accepting the final paper and offering a grant for its presentation. Lloyd P. Gerson commented on an earlier version of the chapter. With Dylan Burns and Crystal Addey we had fruitful discussions during the ISNS Conference. Dimitrios A. Vasilakis and Christian Bull offered me several valuable insights. The series editors, Mark Edwards and Lewis Ayres, supplied me with substantial comments. I am grateful to all of them. Finally, I wish to particularly express my gratitude to my co-editors and supervisors of my doctoral dissertation, Torstein Theodor Tollefsen and Eyjólfur Kjalar Emilsson, for their encouragement, continuous inspireful support and friendship, and to Lars Fredrik Janby for our intensive collaboration.
- 2 Dionysius, *EH* I.1; PG 3: 372a.
- 3 Cf. Vanneste 1959; Saffrey 1966; Saffrey 1982; Sorabji 1990; Shaw 1999; Dillon 2014. See also the famous *dictum* of Anders Nygren (*Agape and Eros*) who built upon Martin Luther and said about the Areopagite that “the fundamental Neoplatonism is but scantily covered with an exceedingly thin Christian veneer.” For this quotation from Nygren and other interesting remarks on his view of Dionysius as “platonising” rather than “christianising,” see Golitzin 1999: 131–133.
- 4 Indeed, the literature is growing. I simply refer, in a comparative mode, to the overall placement of Dionysian studies with regards to the sum of studies on Neoplatonism.
- 5 For instance, Dillon 2014: 111–112. For a collection of central studies on this issue, see Burns 2004: 111, n. 1. To my knowledge, the most recent work focusing on theurgy in the pagan world is the detailed study of Crystal Addey *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism: Oracles of the Gods*, cf. Addey 2014, which contains a rich bibliography on Neoplatonic theurgy.
- 6 Burns holds the view that “it is only by examining Proclus’ practice beyond his treatises, in their sociohistorical context, that Pseudo-Dionysius’ reasons for changing the Iamblich-Proclean theurgic model become clear,” cf. Burns 2004: 113.
- 7 Sorabji 1990: 11–12.
- 8 This reflects Shaw’s conclusive argument, in Shaw 1999: 598–599.

- 9 Andrew Louth has made some very clear points with regard to Dionysius' originality in relation to Neoplatonism, in Louth 1989: 84–87. See also Florovsky 1987: 204–229 and Golitzin 1999. Vasilakis espouses this view in his chapter *On the Meaning of Hierarchy in Dionysius the Areopagite*, in the present volume.
- 10 Dionysius, *Ep.* 9.1, Heil and Ritter 1991: 198.3–5; PG 3: 1108a. This is nothing other than the Last Supper offered by Christ to His disciples, shortly before the betrayal and the Passion.
- 11 Dionysius, *Ep.* 4, Heil and Ritter 1991: 161.5–10; PG 3: 1072c.
- 12 This has been noticed by the Dionysian scholarship more than a century ago, with the studies of Hugo Koch and Josef Stiglmayr, cf. Perczel 2000: 491. See also, Louth 1986: 432; Louth 1989: 81; Golitzin 1999: 133–134, and Dillon 2014: 112.
- 13 John Rist has something interesting to say about how Dionysius uses Neoplatonic language in a different conceptual orientation, in Rist 2010: 245–246.
- 14 Vladimir Lossky moves even further, when he notes that “we must not imagine that Christian and pagans lived in water-tight compartments, especially in Alexandria where both participated in the same culture, in the same intellectual life,” cf. Lossky 1983: 67. Lossky regards the community of language and the common methodology as two aspects of the natural kinship of the same cultural tradition shared by both the pagan and Christian contemplatives of Alexandria (*ibid.*: 68). So, by speaking of “different orientation of the use of a common language,” I refer to what Lossky points out as “different religious frameworks of the same them of Hellenistic spirituality,” (cf. *ibid.*: 67).
- 15 Cf. *ibid.*: 121–122.
- 16 1 Cor 9:20–22: “καὶ ἐγενόμην τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ὡς Ἰουδαῖος, ἵνα Ἰουδαίους κερδήσω· τοῖς ὑπὸ νόμον ὡς ὑπὸ νόμον, ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον κερδήσω· (. . .) τοῖς πᾶσι γέγονα τὰ πάντα, ἵνα πάντως τινὰς σώσω.” Most of the translations use the verb “win” to render “κερδήσω.” I think the “to bring with me” is a better rendition. I very much agree with Dimitrios A. Vasilakis, who comments, in this respect of the relation of the unknown author of the *CD* with St Paul that “historical fiction is different to spiritual indebtedness.” Cf. Vasilakis' chapter in this volume, n. 44.
- 17 Plato, *Epinomis* 987de: “λάβωμεν δὲ ὡς ὅτι περ ἂν οἱ Ἕλληνες βαρβάρων παραλάβωσι, κάλλιον τοῦτο εἰς τέλος ἀπεργάζονται.” Although *Epinomis* is labelled as a spurious work (Diogenes Laertius (Plato, III.37, and 46) registers that some people say that the author of the *Epinomis* was Plato's disciple Philippus of Opus). In any case, I find this passage perfectly illustrating Plato's own method and practice.
- 18 I personally prefer such an interpretative possibility for a productive *synthesis* in Dionysius; it goes beyond a rather superficial view and “comparison” of the Christian and Platonist tradition in terms of superiority of the former, as asserted in Wear and Dillon 2007: 12. Besides, this attitude is not exclusively Dionysian. It is already present in the thought and the works of St Basil the Great.
- 19 Acts 17:23: “(. . .) διερχόμενος γὰρ καὶ ἀναθεωρῶν τὰ σεβάσματα ὑμῶν εἶρον καὶ βωμὸν ἐν ᾧ ἐπεγέγραπτο, ἀγνώστω θεῷ. ὃν οὖν ἀγνοοῦντες εὐσεβεῖτε, τοῦτον ἐγὼ καταγγέλλω ὑμῖν.”
- 20 Cf. Dionysius, *CH* IV.1, Heil and Ritter 1991: 20.9–11; PG 3: 177c. Although one might have wished to have a more explicit statement by Dionysius on the *creatio ex nihilo* of the cosmos, I think it is safe to admit that, even in an implicit manner, the Areopagite adheres to the creation of the cosmos by God out of nothing. Louth (1989: 85), notes that Dionysius “never speaks of creation *ex nihilo*, even though by this time the idea of creation out of nothing had become the normal and accepted way in which Christians expressed their belief in creation.” For the possibility of maintaining a creationist view within the phenomenally emanationist Neoplatonic setting in the Areopagite's works, see Damian 2011: 96–97. On the possibility of taking *παραγωγή* in Dionysius as implying creation out of nothing, see Golitzin 2013: 105–113. For an inquiry into a Christian orthodox doctrine of

creation in the Areopagite, see Tollefsen 2008: 113 ff. The reader would greatly benefit from Tollefsen's chapter on *Proclus, Philoponus, and Maximus: The Paradigm of the World and Temporal Beginning*, in this volume, where Tollefsen compares Neoplatonic and Christian doctrines of creation. Following his argument that "the classical Christian doctrine of creation reached its completion in major thinkers of the fourth century," it is plausible to claim, I think, that the Areopagite could but have adhered to this doctrine, as well. This claim could also be supported by Brown Dewhurst's chapter in the present, where she argues for fundamental divergences between Proclus and St Maximus the Confessor in their views on the origin of the cosmos. The given agreement of Dionysius with St Maximus on the existence of one Triune God who creates without the aid of intermediate deities would be enough to conclude that the Areopagite adheres to *creation* rather, than to *emanation*. See also, *infra* n. 121.

- 21 Rorem admits, though, that the similarities between Iamblichus and Dionysius do not necessarily mean that the Areopagite read *De Mysteriis*. Cf. Burns 2004: 112.
- 22 Louth 1986: 432.
- 23 Struck 2001: 25–26. One could, for instance, think of St Gregory of Nyssa, who in many regards has been much influential to Dionysius, cf. Golitzin 1999: 136 and Florovsky 1987: 213. But as the *Lexicon Gregorianum* shows, there is no use of the term *θεουργία* by Gregory. However the case may be, I would agree with Rorem's conclusion that "Dionysius' ritual theory must be understood 'in general (. . .) in the context of basically patristic precedents'." Cf. Struck 2001: 26.
- 24 Cf. Burns 2004: 121.
- 25 Dillon 1973: 29.
- 26 Rorem 1984.
- 27 Shaw 1999: 582. The tripartite division of mankind and souls is also present in pre-Iamblichean traditions, such as Valentinians, Sethians and Hermetists. Dylan Burns has summed up the arguments of Rorem and Shaw about the aspects of Iamblichean theurgy that, according to them, are replicated by Dionysius, cf. Burns 2004: 112.
- 28 Note, for instance, the divergences between Proclus and Plotinus on the question of matter as badness, as it is specially treated in Emilsson's chapter *Plotinus' Doctrine of Badness as Matter in Ennead I.8.*, in this volume.
- 29 See passage T2 below.
- 30 Burns has some useful notes about the tendency of comparing Dionysius with Iamblichus, and not Proclus, on theurgy, in Burns 2004: 113 and n. 9. It would also be fruitful to explore other possible reasons for a closer relation of Dionysius to Iamblichus rather than to Plotinus, in the perspective of what Chlup calls Iamblichean 'eastern' Neoplatonism, cf. Chlup 2012: 18, that flourished in the 4th century Syria.
- 31 Louth 1986: 434.
- 32 See, for instance, *De Myst.* III.11, 125.4–5; III.24–25, 157.12–14; III.27, 165.7–10; IV.8, 192.1–3; V.10, 210.11–12; X.3, 287.15–288.1; Clarke *et al.* 2003: 146–147, 178–179, 186–187, 214–216, 240–241, 346–347. See also Shaw 1999: 596, and Shaw 1995: 86–87. Crystal Addey notes that *epitēdeiotēs* in Iamblichus summons "the ritual, intellectual and ethical qualities which were considered to be essential for the theurgist to develop," and she argues that the term accounts for the difference between theurgy and sorcery (*γοητεία*). Cf. Addey 2014: 27 and 35.
- 33 For an analysis of "ἐπιτηδεϊότης," a justification of the English specific rendition of the term, and insights on "aptitude" in Late Antique and Early Christian thought, see Pavlos 2017a and 2017b.
- 34 Cf. Emilsson and Strange 2015: 28. See also Schroeder 2014, an excellent piece on the influence of Alexander to Plotinus; although it does not treat *epitēdeiotēs* explicitly, the specific influence can be extracted as a corollary from Schroeder's analysis.

- 35 I investigate this further in my doctoral dissertation, “The concept of Aptitude (Ἐπιτηδεϊότης) in Late Antique and Early Christian Thought,” at the Department of Philosophy, University of Oslo. For sporadic but substantial remarks on *epitēdeiotēs* in the thought of St Maximus the Confessor, see Tollefsen 2008: 185 ff.
- 36 On *epitēdeiotēs* in a physical context, see Sambursky 1962: 104–109. For remarks on *epitēdeiotēs* in Philoponus’ cosmological account, see Tollefsen’s chapter in this volume.
- 37 Plotinus, *Enn.* VI.4.11, 3–4; VI.4.15, 1–6; 12–13. Cf. Emilsson and Strange 2015: 26–28.
- 38 Rarely, however, Iamblichus employs the term as associated to an agent rather than a patient. Cf. Clarke *et al.* 2003: 217.
- 39 Sambursky 1962: 106.
- 40 Iamblichus, *De Myst.* III.11, 124.14–125.6; Clarke *et al.* 146–147.
- 41 I am basically commenting on the last sentence of passage T1, which I have added in Greek. It is however possible to discern the “normal” Plotinian influence on Iamblichus’ understanding of *epitēdeiotēs*, when Iamblichus refers to prayer. He asserts that prayer is effective in that it “enlarges very greatly our soul’s receptivity to the gods, reveals to men the life of the gods, accustoms their eyes to the brightness of divine light, and gradually brings to perfection the capacity of our faculties for contact with the gods.” Cf. Wear and Dillon 2007: 63. Here we have the original Plotinian motive of a certain (innate) potency that is supported “internally” – not through material items – by *epitēdeiotēs*. This Iamblichean passage is interesting also because it illustrates the dynamic character of *epitēdeiotēs* that affects potency in two ways: it both leads it to actualisation and increases it.
- 42 Dionysius, *Ep.* 8.2, Heil and Ritter 1991: 180.12–16. Cf. Wear and Dillon 2007: 95. Interestingly, Iamblichus does not maintain the Plotinian picture that is apparently preserved by Dionysius when the latter asserts that there is an approximation with the divine not in spatial terms but according to the aptitude for receiving God. Plotinus originally illustrates this idea in *Enn.* VI.4.15.
- 43 Iamblichus, *De Myst.* V.23, 233.9–13; Clarke *et al.* 268–269.
- 44 Cf. Plotinus, *Enn.* II.9.
- 45 Dodds asserts that the term “theurgy” is not found anywhere in Plotinus’ *Enneads*, cf. Coughlin 2006: 150. Louth (1986: 432) notes that, “Plotinus had no time for theurgy: the world θεουργία is not used in the *Enneads*, he uses the older, derogatory word, γοητεία, ‘sorcery.’” See also Rist 2010: 244, and Mazur 2004.
- 46 Cf. Clarke *et al.* 2003: 269. My understanding is that Iamblichus qualifies the aforementioned material objects as sacred, perfect and divine already before, and apart from, their specific theurgic composition and transformation into a receptacle.
- 47 Shaw 1999: 596.
- 48 Iamblichus, *De Myst.* V.18–19, 225.1–4; Clarke *et al.* 2003: 256–259.
- 49 The integration of theurgy in Proclean Neoplatonism is perhaps the most fruitful evidence to this. Cf. Van den Berg 2014: 261.
- 50 Indeed, it would be somewhat oversimplifying to pose a radical distinction between theory (θεωρία), or theology (θεολογία) and theurgy. For Dionysius, who had seen *theourgia* as the consummation of *theologia*, this would have been impossible. This Iamblichean passage confirms Zeke Mazur, who argues that “*theōria* and *theurgia* are ambiguous categories that admit of some overlap.” Thus, contemplation cannot be understood as simple intellection, just as theurgy does not merely designate external or material ritual practices, cf. Coughlin 2006: 151. At the same time, Iamblichus is well aware of the distinct roles of theology, theurgy and philosophy, when he promises that he shall provide explanations to Porphyry’s attacks in a manner proper to the respective question, cf. Coughlin 2006: 151.

- 51 Iamblichus, *De Myst.* VI.6, 246.12–247.2; Clarke *et al.* 2003: 286–287. I add the Greek text here because it bears similarities with a significant Dionysian extract we examine in passage T6: “Ο θεουργός διὰ τὴν δύναμιν τῶν ἀπορρήτων συνθημάτων, οὐκέτι ὡς ἄνθρωπος οὐδ’ ὡς ἀνθρωπίνη ψυχῇ χρώμενος ἐπιτάττει τοῖς κοσμικοῖς, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἐν τῇ τῶν θεῶν τάξει προϋπάρχων μείζοσι τῆς καθ’ ἑαυτὸν οὐσίας ἐπανατάσσει χρεῖται (. . .).”
- 52 Needless to mention the enthusiasm I experienced when in my first reading of *De Mysteriis* I realised how much of pagan reality is preserved in the series of comics “Astérix,” by René Goscinny and Albert Uderzo. There, the equivalent to the Colophonian oracle’s water mentioned by Iamblichus in *De Mysteriis*, is the magic broth made by the druid with an arcane recipe that only he knows.
- 53 Two remarks here. The first is that such a being, perfect God and perfectly man, would sound to Iamblichean ears at least as strange as it would sound to Plotinus’ the inclusion and identification of the absolute Universal, the One, to an absolute particular, a man, and this made of without the aid of any mystical ascent. Secondly, the reader should not think that I use – arbitrarily, one might say – the Council of Chalcedon as a means to heal what has been admitted by Georges Florovsky as “a certain vagueness of Dionysius’ christological ideas,” cf. Florovsky 1987: 225. Rather, I do wish to stress in this way the permanence of theurgic identity in Areopagite’s *theourgia* against the temporality of theurgic properties in Iamblichus’.
- 54 Dionysius, *EH* III, Heil and Ritter 1991: 79.1–94.22. Cf. Louth 1989: 60.
- 55 *Ibid.*
- 56 Louth 1986: 434.
- 57 On the relation of this initial status of sacraments to the later tradition of the Church, see Louth 1989: 57–58.
- 58 Indicatively, see Florovsky 1987: 225.
- 59 Cf. for instance, Grillmeier and Hainthaler 2013: 311–342.
- 60 Dionysius, *EH* I.1, Heil and Ritter 1991: 63.12–64.4; PG 3: 372a; Parker 1897: 168.
- 61 Dionysian theology stems from the Scriptural truth that is tirelessly repeated throughout the Corpus. The Areopagite acknowledges one Triune God. In *EH* he affirms the triadic in unity blessedness of the beyond all Godhead as the singular cause of beings, the source of life, the principle of hierarchy and the essence of goodness: “ταύτης ἀρχῆς τῆς ἱεραρχίας ἢ πηγῆς τῆς ζωῆς ἢ οὐσίας τῆς ἀγαθότητος ἢ μία τῶν ὄντων αἰτία, τριάς, (. . .) ταύτη δὲ τῇ πάντων ἐπέκεινα θεαρχικωτάτη μακαριότητι τῇ τρισσῇ τῇ μονάδι (. . .).” Cf. Dionysius, *EH* I.3, Heil and Ritter 1991: 66.6–9; PG 3: 373cd.
- 62 Dionysius, *Ep.* 4, Heil and Ritter 1991: 161.5–10; PG 3: 1072bc; Parker 1897: 95: “Καὶ γὰρ, ἵνα συνελόντες εἴπωμεν, οὐδὲ ἄνθρωπος ἦν, οὐχ ὡς μὴ ἄνθρωπος, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀνθρώπων ἐπέκεινα καὶ ὑπὲρ ἄνθρωπον ἀληθῶς ἄνθρωπος γεγινώς, καὶ τὸ λουπὸν οὐ κατὰ θεὸν τὰ θεῖα δράσας, οὐ τὰ ἀνθρώπεια κατὰ ἄνθρωπον, ἀλλ’ ἀνδρωθέντος θεοῦ, καινήν τινα τὴν θεανδρικὴν ἐνέργειαν ἡμῖν πεπολιτευμένος.” Note the dialectics of affirmations and negations with regard to the nature(s) of Christ, in this passage: they demonstrate an understanding of “theurgist” by the Areopagite radically contrasting the Iamblichean theurgist who “commands cosmic entities no longer as a human being or employing a human soul (. . .),” in passage T4.
- 63 Saffrey 1966: 98.
- 64 Dionysius, *CH* IV, Heil and Ritter 1991: 22.25–23.5; PG 3: 181b; Parker 1897: 158.
- 65 Dionysius, *EH* III, *θεωρία* 5, Heil and Ritter 1991: 84.18–21; PG 3: 432b. I use the translation of the passage made by Struck, in Struck 2001: 31. Notably, the term *τελεσιουργία* is employed by Iamblichus in several places in the *De Mysteriis*.
- 66 Louth 1986: 434. Louth’s claim has been given a solid grounding after the work on Dionysian Christology by Grillmeier and Hainthaler 2013.
- 67 Florovsky 1987: 211. I am very grateful to fr. Johannes Johansen, rector of the Norwegian Orthodox Church of St Nicholas in Oslo and Christ’s Transfiguration Parish

- in Rogaland, and to Torleif Thomas Grønnestad, for granting me access to the Stavanger Orthodox Library, whereby I borrowed a copy of the otherwise hardly accessible Collected Works of fr. Georges Florovsky.
- 68 I found the analysis of this subject in Emilsson 1999 very illuminating.
- 69 For the time being, I am happy to leave this claim in its present form without further justification.
- 70 See respective lemmas, in Nasta 2013: 3.
- 71 Florovsky 1987: 211.
- 72 See relevant remarks on “synergy” in Vasilakis’ chapter in this volume, nn. 45 and 96.
- 73 Florovsky 1987: 216.
- 74 *Ibid.*
- 75 Dionysius, *DN* XI.5, Suchla 1990: 221.5–10; PG 3: 953a.
- 76 See also the section on *Theourgia* – *Hierourgia* (Chapter 7), in Wear and Dillon 2007: 99–115.
- 77 Dionysius, *EH* III, Θεωρία 4, Heil and Ritter 1991: 84.1–6; PG 3: 429d; Parker 1897: 202.
- 78 Dionysius, *Ep.* 9.1, Heil and Ritter 1991: 198.3–5; PG 3: 1108a.
- 79 Gontikakis 1984: 61–62.
- 80 *Ibid.* A modern “theurgist” would also claim the same about the revival of Iamblican theurgy nowadays. The difference lies on what exactly is acted.
- 81 John 14:19: “ἔτι μικρὸν καὶ ὁ κόσμος με οὐκέτι θεωρεῖ, ὑμεῖς δὲ θεωρεῖτέ με, ὅτι ἐγὼ ζῶ καὶ ὑμεῖς ζήσετε.” I use the text from *Novum Testamentum Graece*, edited by Nestle-Aland.
- 82 Louth 1986: 435.
- 83 I would partially agree with Burns, who argues that “when he [Dionysius] argues that ‘theurgy is the consummation of theology,’ he refers to a systems of ritual liturgics in which the priest not only needs to be saved through theurgic symbols, but needs to save others by using them properly, as prescribed.” The terms “save others” and “using” that Burns employs, assign the Dionysian priest with a task that I do not think it is prescribed by the Areopagite. Cf. Burns 2004: 122 and n. 49.
- 84 Cf. Russell 2006: 258.
- 85 Cf. Iamblichus, *De Myst.* I.21, 14: “οἷς καὶ τὰ μὲν ἄφθεγκτα διὰ συμβόλων ἀπορρήτων ἐκφωνεῖται.”
- 86 Wear and Dillon 2007: 102.
- 87 Dionysius, *EH* III.10, Heil and Ritter 1991: 90.9–10; PG 3: 440b: “Οὕτω τοῖς θείοις ὁ ἐπάρχης ἐνοῦται καὶ τὰς ἐπάς θεουργίας ὑμνήσας ἱερουργεῖ τὰ θειώτατα καὶ ὑπ’ ὄψιν ἄγει τὰ ὑμνημένα.”
- 88 John Finamore notes further that, for Iamblichus, “the largest segment of humanity is held down by nature, is subject to fate, and never rises. Other human beings can and do make progress through theurgical ascent.” Cf. Finamore 2014: 289. By “kata symbebēkos” I refer to the minority of humans identified above by Finamore.
- 89 Louth 1986: 434.
- 90 Cf. the excellent illustration of this cosmic freedom, in Florovsky 1987: 218.
- 91 One may reasonably think that, in such a cosmic setting, the Neoplatonic generalisation of Stoic *sympatheia*, that applies to the entire cosmos and opens room to Iamblican theurgy, needs a radical revision.
- 92 Cf. Ivanovic 2017: 150.
- 93 It is a central conviction of the Areopagite, shared by St Maximus the Confessor as well, that synergy between God and man is the foundation for deification of the latter, cf. Ivanovic 2019: 210.
- 94 Shaw 1999: 589.
- 95 *Ibid.*: 587–590.
- 96 This is the meaning of the Dionysian predicate “θεουργικός” referring to the deification of the human being. See also Wear and Dillon 2007: 102.

- 97 This does not contradict my previous claim that for Dionysius the only theurgist is Christ. For deification of the human being amounts to likeness to Christ in His complete Glory (as far as possible), a glimpse of which was offered to few disciples, the day of Transfiguration. And so long human beings become Christlike they become theurgists.
- 98 Shaw 1999: 595.
- 99 *Ibid.*: 573.
- 100 I very much suspect that *apologetics* are to be found on both sides of the river, both on the Neoplatonist and the Christian shore. In general, the apologetics, though often under attack, are neither bad people nor inaccurate with regard to the evidence. Socrates, for instance, was such a person, as Plato reminds us in his *Apology of Socrates*.
- 101 Shaw 1999: 595–596.
- 102 In the tendency of the literature to bring together Dionysius and Proclus (and Iamblichus) on theurgy, Christ is regarded as a Dionysian symbol, cf. Burns 2004: 125. But this raises the question whether Christ is a symbol, and, if yes, of what. For the Areopagite Christ is a being, perfect God and man. A symbol refers by definition to something beyond itself. But is there anything beyond, or apart from, Christ to be symbolised by Him? I think Dionysius' answer, as it comes out from his Corpus, is no. If that is the case, then Christ could be taken as a symbol only on the basis of being a symbol of Himself. But, then, are we not far way from Neoplatonism? Perhaps the reasons that prompt one to think of Christ as a symbol in a Neoplatonic manner, could be understood on the basis of the Dionysian method of paraphrasing respective passages from Proclus' *Platonic Theology*, in which the role of Jesus is analogous to that of Plato. But, again, these analogies hide fundamental divergences that lead me to the view I presented above. István Perczel's analysis is very fruitful and I shall only borrow one point to support my claim: "In other words, he [Jesus] is not only the principal Revelator as is Plato in Proclus' system, but also the Revealed and the Revelation itself." Cf. Perczel 2000: 501–502. Perczel concludes his comparative reading by noting that "instead of [Jesus] being a messenger of the higher beings [as Plato is], he [Jesus] is their principle", in *ibid.*
- 103 Shaw 1999: 595.
- 104 One may check the instances where the author of the *CD* employs the term $\sigma\acute{\omicron}\mu\alpha$. But what I find sufficiently arguing for the Dionysian anticipation of the body's inclusion in deification – which also implies resurrection of the dead – is the eschatological passage from the *DN* that connects deification with Christ's Transfiguration, in *DN* I.4, Suchla 1990: 114.7–115.5; PG 3: 592c.
- 105 Shaw 1999: 595.
- 106 *Ibid.*: 596.
- 107 See n. 78 in Vasilakis' chapter in this volume, for details about the disputed label of the *EH* treatise.
- 108 Florovsky 1987: 217.
- 109 See also Vasilakis' chapter in this volume and especially n. 24.
- 110 There is no passage in the *CD* where Dionysius employs theurgy dissociated from Christ. Cf. Burns 2004: 125 and n. 66.
- 111 Armstrong 1973: 11.
- 112 Shaw 1999: 598.
- 113 Cf. Burns 2004: 127, who builds upon Shaw. The latter has a very interesting reference to St Maximus' the Confessor's *Mystagogia*, a work that, indeed, can be seen as a commentary on Dionysius' *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*. There Maximus refers to the church as an "image of the sensible world" and he says that "the world can be thought of as a church," cf. Shaw 1999: 598, n. 105. Although I could not supply myself with

- the translation of *Mystagogia* Shaw had at his disposal, I believe the renditions above, apart from being selective, do not perfectly reflect the Greek text, where Maximus says precisely the following (bold phrases are made intentionally to correspond to the phrases Shaw refers to, as above): “**Ὅτι καὶ μόνου τοῦ αἰσθητοῦ κόσμου ἐστὶν εἰκὼν, ἡ ἀγία τοῦ Θεοῦ Ἐκκλησία.** Καὶ αὐθις μόνου τοῦ αἰσθητοῦ κόσμου καθ’ ἑαυτὸν τὴν ἀγίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ Ἐκκλησίαν εἶναι σύμβολον ἔφασκεν· ὡς οὐρανὸν μὲν τὸ θεῖον ἱερατεῖον ἔχουσαν· γῆν δὲ τὴν εὐπρέπειαν τοῦ ναοῦ κεκτημένην. Ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ τὸν κόσμον ὑπάρχειν Ἐκκλησίαν· ἱερατεῖω μὲν εὐκότα τὸν οὐρανὸν ἔχοντα, ναῶ δὲ τὴν κατὰ γῆν διακόσμησιν.” (*Myst.* Ch. 3, PG 91: 672a). The reader might discern certain concealments that allow Shaw to conclude, by means of a selective reading of this Maximian passage that “the world as church or temple is perfectly consistent with the principles of Iamblican theurgy, so long as *our* church is not the *only* church.” I fully align myself with Shaw, however, in his objection about the church; I agree with him, since for both Dionysius and Maximus, the church is definitely not the one he rightly feels allergic about.
- 114 The epistemic implications of this identification are enormous, but this would need a separate study.
- 115 For instance, Shaw’s introductory wonder, in Shaw 1999, is “why are Christian theologians reluctant to admit that Dionysius was a theurgist.” By “theurgist” Shaw refers to the Iamblican definition of a theurgist as a man who performs theurgic rituals.
- 116 Iamblichus, *De Myst.* V.18–19, 225.1–4; Clarke *et al.* 2003: 256–259.
- 117 Dodds 1963: 283. On the origins and the meaning of the term “μαγεία,” see Bull 2018: 398–404. Bull builds on the definition of “religion” as “an institution consisting of culturally patterned interaction with culturally postulated superhuman beings,” by Melford Spiro, and provides the following definition of “magic”: “then magic should be considered a subgroup of religion, since it consists of a specific form of interaction with the culturally postulated beings. If religion is ‘institution’, then magic is specific rituals performed within or – perhaps more commonly – on the fringes of said institution.” I do not mean to say that Iamblichus considers theurgy as magic. He is quite clear in that theurgy goes far beyond magic or “sorcery” (γοητεία, the term Plotinus uses in his *Enneads*), the latter relying on sympathies within the material world; for him, theurgy requires the involvement of the divine will of gods. I simply mean that, from a Christian point of view, Iamblican theurgy is about magic so long as it does not acknowledge a single divine activity of one God; a singular activity that is, the more, not dependent on an evocation of a manifold of deities. For the relationship between theurgy, magic and religious practices in Late Antiquity, see Addey 2014: 32–38.
- 118 Stock 2013: 14.
- 119 Unlike the *Timaus*, and the entire Neoplatonic tradition, Dionysius has a creator god who brings the universe into being theurgically, without the aid of subordinate gods, cf. Lossky 1983: 124–125.
- 120 See nn. 20 and 121.
- 121 I fully agree with István Perczel who argues that in “Dionysius’ Christian Platonist system (. . .) the creating activity is not distributed among different divine entities or hypostases like in Proclus, but is attributed to the highest and universal cause of all things. Proclus’ Demiurge is a subordinate deity occupying a rather modest rank in the Diadochus’ sophisticated pantheon. But Dionysius’ “Producer (ὄπισσάτης) of all things” is the supreme Godhead (. . .).” Cf. Perczel 2000: 494.
- 122 I think here Burns is absolutely right. Cf. Burns 2004: 127.
- 123 I very much agree with Shaw’s criticism of the “institutional church,” cf. Shaw 1999: 599.

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