

Mark Edwards/Dimitrios Pallis/Georgios Steiris (eds.): *The Oxford Handbook of Dionysius the Areopagite*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press 2022 (Oxford Handbooks). XIII, 729 p. £ 110.00/ \$ 145.00. ISBN: 978-0-19-881079-7.

The Handbook gathers forty contributions, mostly on aspects of the reception of Dionysius the Areopagite.¹ As the editors state in their introduction [1] (pp. 1–10), “the papers which form the nucleus of this volume were delivered at a conference” (p. 1) organised in July 2016 in Oxford and entitled “*Corpus Dionysiacum Areopagiticum: Ancient and Modern Readers*”. This explains why only Part I (“The Corpus in its Historical Setting”) is concerned with the *CD* and its sources, while the other three parts are dealing with the reception of Dionysius’s oeuvre “in the East” (Part II), “in the West” (Part III), and “after the Western European Reformation” (Part IV). Even in the field of the reception history of the *CD* some important aspects or actors are missing or mentioned only in passing, such as Hilduin, the first translator of the *Corpus* into Latin² and the first promoter of the Parisian legend of Dionysius.³ Another element that is totally missing is the figure of Dionysius in visual art.

The editors decided to drop the “cautionary prefix” (p. 1) usually attached to Dionysius’s pen name, i.e. ‘pseudo-’. There might be good reasons for that, but the one put forward, “to preserve the unwary reader from deception” (p. 1), is puzzling. Since there is no attempt in this Handbook to identify the real person behind the pseudonym of Dionysius – and wisely

- 1 The numbers between squared brackets refer to the chapter numbers listed in the table of contents below. The following abbreviations are used: *CD* = *Corpus Dionysiacum*; *CH* = *De caelesti hierarchia*; *DN* = *De divinis nominibus*; *EH* = *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*; *Ep.* = *Epistula(e)*; *MT* = *De mystica theologia*.
- 2 Mark Edwards [21] (“John Sarracenus and his Influence”, pp. 328–342) states that this first translation was made “from an oral rendition into the vernacular by some dragoman to whom the original Greek was read aloud” (p. 330).
- 3 On the development of this Parisian legend, confusing Dionysius the Areopagite and Denys of Paris, see E. Mühlberg: *Der Pariser Märtyrerbischof Dionysius und Dionysius Areopagita. Die Geschichte einer Beziehung*. In: C. Macé/E. Mühlberg/M. Muthreich/C. Wulf (eds.): *Corpus Dionysiacum III/1: Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita, Epistula ad Timotheum de morte apostolorum Petri et Pauli. Homilia* (BHL 2187). Berlin/Boston 2021 (Patristische Texte und Studien 79), pp. 537–615.

so⁴ – the editors logically abstain from providing a biography of the author but offer a “brief history of the name” (p. 1) instead. Strangely enough this history starts with a summary of the *Life of Dionysius* (BHG 556) by Michael Synkellos (ninth century)⁵ and its metaphrastic reworking (BHG 555). Without any accompanying commentary and historical contextualisation this summary may be misleading to “the unwary reader” (p. 1) mentioned above, because these Byzantine *Lives* aggregate pieces of information coming from different sources: the *CD* and its scholia, but also the Parisian legend elaborated by Hilduin. The identification of Michael Synkellos’s sources would be of prime importance in this respect, but is totally neglected.⁶ The only allusion to Hilduin’s *Passio Dionysii* in the Handbook is found in Denis Robichaud’s article [31], p. 492: “[...] Valla and Erasmus helped tear apart the apostolic vestments holding together the three persons of St Denis, which were first stitched together into a hagiography in the West by Hilduinus in the ninth century and gilded in the East by Georgios Pachymeres in the thirteenth century”. This is true as far as Hilduin is concerned, but it was Synkellos in the ninth century, and not Pachymeres in the thirteenth, who disseminated this legend in the East.⁷ The opinion that Georgios Pachymeres was the first to write “una vera e propria biografia” of Dionysius had been expressed by Claudio Moreschini in 2002 (referred to in Robichaud’s article),

- 4 See a short summary of this debated question by Beate Regina Suchla [2], pp. 17–19, as well as note 18 on pp. 7–8 in the introduction [1].
- 5 This is the only mention of Michael Synkellos in the Handbook, except note 22 on p. 510 in connection with Lorenzo Valla [31]. On the words attributed to Dionysius in the Roman breviary (*Aut Deus naturae patitur, aut mundi machina dissolvitur*) and in Lorenzo Valla’s commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, and perhaps influenced by Michael Synkellos, see C. Macé: The Lives and Deaths of Dionysius the Areopagite. In: *Muséon* 135, 2022, pp. 143–207, here pp. 175–177; and C. Macé: *Deus naturae patitur*. Once again on Dionysius the Areopagite and the Eclipse. In: *Muséon* 135, 2022, pp. 357–372.
- 6 Except for a reference to Michael Lapidge’s 2017 edition of Hilduin’s *Passio Dionysii* (Hilduin of Saint-Denis: The *Passio S. Dionysii* in Prose and Verse. Leiden/Boston 2017 [Mittellateinische Studien und Texte 51]) and some related materials in note 6 on p. 7. Several contributions of a special issue of the BECh 172, 2014, published in 2019, entitled “Écrire pour Saint Denis. Productions hagiographiques et documentaires médiévales” (edited by O. Guyotjeannin and A.-M. Helvétius), are devoted to this question.
- 7 See Macé: *Lives* (note 5), pp. 162–164.

but without any reference or supportive evidence.⁸ In the prologue to his paraphrase, dedicated to Athanasius II [III], patriarch of Alexandria, then in Constantinople (c. 1275),⁹ Pachymeres provided a short summary of John of Scythopolis's introduction to his commentary on the *CD*, including the scholion *de operibus deperditis* and the one stating that pagan philosophers, and first of all Proclus, had used Dionysius's writings.¹⁰ In his prologue, Pachymeres did not echo in any way the French legend concerning Dionysius, although he could have known it through various sources: Synkellos's *Encomium*, the *Suda*, the metaphrastic *Vita Dionysii*, or the *Synaxarium of Constantinople*.¹¹ Pachymeres, who was no partisan of the union of the Churches, may have had his reasons for passing over this in silence. In the same 2002 article, Moreschini also claims that Pachymeres is the source for the information about Dionysius gathered in the prologue attributed to Ambrogio Traversari by Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples,¹² but this prologue is, again, a Latin summary of John of Scythopolis's introduction. In any event Pachymeres would have deserved a more thorough treatment in the Handbook, since his paraphrase of the entire corpus has been transmitted in a rather large number of manuscripts and is, as Antonio Rigo [17] observes, a sign of Dionysius's popularity at the beginning of the thirteenth century (p. 273). However, Pachymeres is almost totally absent from the Handbook, and so is Michael Psellos, although he knew and used the *CD* intensively.¹³

- 8 C. Moreschini: L'autenticità del *Corpus Dionysianum*: contestazioni e difese. In: M. Cortesi (ed.): *I padri sotto il torchio. Le edizioni dell'antichità cristiana nei secoli XV–XVI. Atti del Convegno di studi, Certosa del Galluzzo, Firenze, 25–26 giugno 1999. Firenze 2002 (Millennio medievale 35)*, pp. 189–216, here p. 190.
- 9 See M. Aubineau: *Georges Hiéromnêmôn ou Georges Pachymérès, commentateur du Pseudo-Denys?* In: *JThS* 22, 1971, pp. 541–544; A. Failler: *Le séjour d'Athanase II d'Alexandrie à Constantinople*. In: *REByz* 35, 1977, pp. 43–71.
- 10 *Patrologia Graeca* 4, col. 113–115. About these two scholia see Suchla [2], pp. 15, 22–23, 24–25, and [13], p. 207.
- 11 On the Dionysian legend in the *Synaxarium of Constantinople* see Macé: *Lives* (note 5), pp. 172–173 and 185–186.
- 12 Moreschini: L'autenticità (note 8), p. 198.
- 13 There is only one mention of Psellos in the Handbook, p. 103 (and note 50 on p. 106): Ilaria L. E. Ramelli [7] claims that Psellos is quoting the *Θεολογικά ὑποτυπώσεις*, an allegedly lost work of Dionysius – this quotation is far from certain however.

The introduction concludes with the following words, intended to justify the title and scope of the Handbook: “The name of Dionysius is synonymous with a single body of literature, just as the name of Homer is synonymous with the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. [...] And just as it would have been slighting to call him pseudo-Dionysius, so it would have been needlessly pedantic to call this a volume on the reception of his writings: it is indeed so, for the most part, but this is surely a case in which the reception is the man” (p. 6). The first point can easily be taken, as there is indeed no need to insist on the fact that the author of the *CD* is not the Dionysius mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles (although he clearly pretended to be him). As Beate Regina Suchla [2] puts it, it is probably more correct to view this question in terms of “implicit authorship” (p. 17) than in terms of pseudonymity or forgery, although other interpretations are possible. As to the second point, however, calling the present book, e.g., a ‘Handbook of the Reception of the *CD*’ would not have been “pedantic” (p. 6) but rather honest, since it is exactly what the present Handbook is about. Honesty is naturally no selling argument, and at least three edited volumes already exist on the reception history of the *CD*.¹⁴ Especially, the volume published in 2009, entirely in English, has a focus that is very similar to that of the Handbook and the articles (although not written by the same authors as the Handbook, with a few exceptions) are often overlapping.¹⁵

14 (1) Y. de Andia (ed.): *Denys l’Aréopagite et sa postérité en orient et en occident. Actes du colloque international, Paris, 21–24 septembre 1994*. Paris 1997 (Collection des Études augustinienne. Série Antiquité 151); (2) T. Boiadjev/G. Kapriev/A. Speer (eds.): *Die Dionysius-Rezeption im Mittelalter. Internationales Kolloquium in Sofia vom 8. bis 11. April 1999*. Turnhout 2000 (Rencontres de philosophie médiévale 9); (3) S. Coakley/Ch. M. Stang (eds.): *Re-Thinking Dionysius the Areopagite*. Malden, MA/Oxford/Chichester 2009 (Directions in Modern Theology).

15 Here is a list of the articles in Coakley/Stang (note 14), so that the reader can compare it with the Handbook: (1) Charles M. Stang: *Dionysius, Paul, and the Significance of the Pseudonym*; (2) István Perczel: *The Earliest Syriac Reception of Dionysius*; (3) Andrew Louth: *The Reception of Dionysius up to Maximus the Confessor*; (4) Andrew Louth: *The Reception of Dionysius in the Byzantine World: Maximus to Palamas*; (5) Paul Rorem: *The Early Latin Dionysius: Eriugena and Hugh of St. Victor*; (6) Boyd Taylor Coolman: *The Medieval Affective Dionysian Tradition*; (7) David Burrell/Isabelle Moulin: *Albert, Aquinas, and Dionysius*; (8) Denys Turner: *Dionysius and some Late Medieval Mystical Theologians of Northern Europe*; (9) Peter Casarella: *Cusanus on Dionysius: The Turn to Speculative Theology*; (10) Piotr J. Malysz: *Luther and Dionysius: Beyond Mere Negations*; (11) Luis M. Girón-Negrón: *Dionysian Thought in 16th Century Spanish Mystical Theology*; (12) Paul L. Gavriluk: *The Reception of Dionysius in 20th Century Eastern Orthodoxy*;

Part I (“The Corpus in its Historical Setting”) begins with an essay by Beate Regina Suchla [2] (“The Dionysian Corpus”, pp. 13–32) on the formation, delineation and early history of the *CD*. To a great extent this essay is a summary of Suchla’s popularising book published in German in 2008,¹⁶ without any real update¹⁷ or wish to engage with divergent views on the tradition of the *CD*. The contributions by Salvatore Lilla on the manuscript tradition of the *CD* are not mentioned,¹⁸ nor is the important article by Chiara Faraggiana on a palimpsest which may well be the oldest Greek manuscript containing the *CD*.¹⁹ Suchla does not consider either Moreno Morani’s edition of *DN* published in 2010, in which Morani extensively used the Armenian translation, dated to 710–720 and edited by Robert W. Thomson in 1987.²⁰ Now that the oldest Syriac translation has been edited as well, at least partially, by Emiliano Fiori in 2014 (see below), it would be time to re-examine the question of the history of the tradition, taking all witnesses into account.²¹ At the beginning of her essay, Suchla states: “The hypothesis,

(13) Mary-Jane Rubenstein: *Dionysius, Derrida, and the Critique of ‘Ontotheology’*;

(14) Tamsin Jones: *Dionysius in Hans Urs von Balthasar and Jean-Luc Marion*.

- 16 B. R. Suchla: *Dionysius Areopagita. Leben – Werk – Wirkung*. Freiburg im Breisgau/Basel/Wien 2008.
- 17 Except the use of the 2011 edition by Suchla of John of Scythopolis’ scholia (*Corpus Dionysiacum IV/1: Ioannis Scythopolitani prologus et scholia in Dionysii Areopagitae librum De divinis nominibus cum additamentis interpretum aliorum*. Berlin/Boston 2011 [Patristische Texte und Studien 62]) and of the 2012 second edition of *CD II* (G. Heil/A. M. Ritter (eds.): *Corpus Dionysiacum II: De coelesti hierarchia, De ecclesiastica hierarchia, De mystica theologia, Epistulae*. 2. edition Berlin/Boston 2012 [Patristische Texte und Studien 36]).
- 18 *Dionysii Areopagitae De divinis nominibus*. Praefationem, textum, apparatus, Anglicam versionem instruxit S. Lilla (†), edenda curavit C. Moreschini. Alessandria 2018 (*Hellenica* 71). In his preface to the posthumous edition by Lilla, Moreschini quotes the major articles published by Lilla about the textual tradition of the *CD*.
- 19 C. Faraggiana di Sarzana: *Il Nomocanon Par. gr. 1330, ‘horride rescriptus’ su pergamene in maiuscola contenenti un antico commentario ad Aristotele, il Corpus Dionysiacum e testi patristici*. In: *Nea Rhome* 6, 2009, pp. 191–225.
- 20 *Dionigi: I nomi divini/De divinis nominibus*. Introduzione e testo critico M. Morani, traduzione e note G. Regoliosi, commento G. Barzagli. Roma/Bologna 2010 (*I talenti* 6).
- 21 As Fiori points out, “No exhaustive stemmatic presentation of the textual tradition of the Corpus is available yet: Beate Regina Suchla promised a volume entirely devoted to this issue, but it has not yet appeared” (p. 159 in the present volume [11]).

revived by Brons, that *De div. nom.*, *De eccl. Hier.*, and *epistulae 6–10* contain later interpolations has been refuted by the Göttingen *Editio critica maior* of these writings” (p. 13). However, Ernesto Sergio Mainoldi recently (2018) published a book in which, on the basis of Bernhard Brons’s work, he offered a new (and daring) interpretation of the *CD* as a multi-layered and perhaps multi-authored set of works.²² This interpretation may prove to be wrong but will need to be addressed. In any case, this book, being a new and well-informed synthesis on many aspects of the *CD*, would have deserved to be mentioned, not only in Suchla’s article but also in other contributions of the Handbook.²³

Suchla provides a list of “Other Works Circulating under the Name of Dionysius Areopagita” (p. 25)²⁴ and notes that “not all of these works are authentic” (p. 25). The validity of this assertion is difficult to evaluate, however, because for the Greek ‘fragments’ Suchla does not mention, neither here nor in her 2008 book, where she found them.²⁵ About the *Epistula de morte apostolorum Petri et Pauli* (CPG 6631),²⁶ Suchla notes that it “has been of great historical importance” (p. 25), but how and why is not explained.²⁷ Suchla still claims that “the letter is quoted as early as in the seventh century” (note 99 on p. 28), although it has been demonstrated that this is not the case: the oldest known (Syriac) manuscript dates to the ninth century and no earlier

22 E. S. Mainoldi: *Dietro ‘Dionigi l’Areopagita’. La genesi e gli scopi del Corpus Dionysiacum*. Roma 2018 (Institutiones 6).

23 It is mentioned, as far as I could see, only by Robichaud [31], note 11 on p. 509.

24 See also Suchla: *Dionysius* (note 16), Anhang 9, pp. 211–212.

25 They are “contained in some manuscripts of the Greek Dionysius tradition”: notes 102–103 on p. 28.

26 Recently edited: Macé/Mühlenberg/Muthreich/Wulf (note 3).

27 The *Epistula de morte apostolorum* indeed enjoyed some success in the Latin West during the late Middle Ages and Early Modern Period. This text, translated from Georgian, did not appear in Latin before the end of the twelfth century: see my article *A Medieval Translation from Georgian into Latin: The Epistola ad Timotheum de morte apostolorum Petri et Pauli* Attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite. In: *AB* 140, 2022, pp. 67–89.

citation is known.²⁸ According to Suchla the letter “can be authentic” (p. 25), but we have showed that it cannot have the same author as the *CD*.²⁹

Tim Riggs [3] (“Content of the Dionysian Corpus”, pp. 33–47) provides a short summary of the four treatises and ten letters contained in the *CD*, and intends to show how Dionysius “puts Neoplatonism”, especially Proclean causality, “at the service of Christian revelation” (p. 34).

The other contributions in Part I deal with possible sources and predecessors of Dionysius. Two chapters found in Part IV, [39] by Ysabel de Andia about “Dionysius as a Mystic” (pp. 653–669) and [40] by György Geréby “On the Theology of Dionysius” (pp. 670–685), would have been better placed here. Several elements in these two contributions overlap with that by Maximos Constatas about “Dionysius the Areopagite and the New Testament” (pp. 48–63) [4]. Constatas’s chapter does not provide any list of passages from the New Testament quoted by Dionysius, nor does it survey the way Dionysius uses the New Testament in his works or the type of text he is quoting. Rather, it shows how central the figure of Paul and his letters are in Dionysius’s theology, using the same passages as in [39] about the “mystical experience of Paul” (pp. 57–58; compare p. 665 in [39]), or as in [40] about the canon of scriptures in Dionysius (pp. 52–53; compare pp. 675–676 in [40]).

The article by Mark Edwards [5], on “Christian Apophaticism before Dionysius” (pp. 64–76), is of little utility since the following chapters take up in more detail the question of the influence of the authors discussed in Edwards’s chapter, sometimes with slightly different conclusions: Bogdan Bucur [6] on “Philo and Clement of Alexandria” (pp. 77–93), Ilaria Ramelli [7] on “Origen, Evagrius, and Dionysius” (pp. 94–108), Michael Motia [8] on “Dionysius and Gregory of Nyssa” (pp. 109–121), Charles M. Stang [9] on “Dionysius, Iamblichus, and Proclus” (pp. 122–135), and

28 See C. Macé/M. Muthreich: Latin and Oriental Translations of the *Epistola ad Timotheum de morte apostolorum* Attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite. In: M. Toca/D. Batovici (eds.): *Caught in Translation. Studies on Versions of Late-Antique Christian Literature*. Leiden/Boston 2020 (Texts and Studies in Eastern Christianity 17), pp. 9–34, here p. 14.

29 See C. Macé: La lettre de Denys l’Aréopagite à Timothée sur la mort des apôtres Pierre et Paul: l’apport de la version géorgienne. In: *Apocrypha* 31, 2020 [2021], pp. 61–104.

Mark Edwards and John Dillon [10] on “God in Dionysius and the Later Neoplatonists” (pp. 136–152).

Part II (“Dionysius in the East”) only deals with one of the two Syriac translations, whereas the Armenian, Georgian, Arabic, and Slavonic translations are totally neglected. It is true that they are not as old as the Syriac translations, but they were influential in their respective traditions and they would have deserved at least a mention.

Two articles, by Emiliano Fiori [11] (“Dionysius the Areopagite in Syriac: The Translation of Sergius of Resh‘ayna (Sixth Century)”, pp. 155–171) and István Perczel [12] (“Notes on the Earliest Greco-Syriac Reception of the Dionysian Corpus”, pp. 172–204), offer opposing views on Sergius of Resh‘ayna’s translation (before 536). Fiori [11], who edited the first part of Sergius’s translation (*DN*, *MT* and *Ep.*), presents the few elements that are known about Sergius of Resh‘ayna’s life, as well as the manuscripts containing his translation, and the indirect tradition. Then Fiori demonstrates, against Perczel, that Sergius’s translation is not “Origenist” (p. 160) (by contrast to the *Book of the Holy Hierotheus*, a Syriac work slightly contemporary to the *CD*) and that the peculiarities of Sergius’s translation must be taken into account when trying to assess the Greek *Vorlage* of that translation. In his article, Perczel [12] aims “to trace the earliest known reception of the Dionysian Corpus in a bilingual, Greek- and Syriac-speaking environment” (p. 172): Severus of Antioch, John bar Aphthonia, Sergius of Resh‘ayna, and the *Apology for the Faith*, a miaphysite treatise produced at the “colloquium” (p. 173) in Constantinople in 532, composed originally in Greek, but preserved only in Syriac, and containing citations from the *CD*. Perczel compares a passage of *EH* in Greek and in Sergius’s translation with what he supposes to be a parallel in the *Apology for the Faith* and argues that only Sergius’s translation provides the original meaning of the text. Even without knowing Syriac, and therefore being unable to check the Syriac text (which is not provided by Perczel who gives only his English translation of the text he reads in the manuscript Sinai syr. 52), I find Perczel’s argumentation philologically flawed. First he claims that the Greek text is “almost incomprehensible” (p. 181), whereas it is only elliptic (and not more incomprehensible than most of Dionysius’s prose). Then he argues that the word $\theta\epsilon\omicron\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\sigma\iota\alpha$ is a mistake in the Greek text, whereas the Syriac (which is slightly paraphrastic here) correctly translated $\theta\epsilon\omicron\gamma\omega\sigma\iota\alpha$ (also “at least in two other loci”, p. 182).

But the Syriac translation has, according to Perczel, “baptism” (p. 180), which is the meaning of *θεογενεσία*, and not of *θεογνωσία*. The word *θεογενεσία* and its meaning are typically Dionysian (seventeen occurrences in the *CD* out of thirty-eight in the *TLG* online) and very rare elsewhere (it is found in lexa and in works influenced by Dionysius), whereas *θεογνωσία* is relatively banal (and not often used in the *CD*: four occurrences). There is no reason to postulate that *θεογνωσία* is necessary in the passage in question: it is not needed to explain why baptism is an enlightenment (*φώτισμα*), since *φωτισμός* is a synonym of ‘baptism’ at least since the fourth century (see Geoffrey W. H. Lampe’s “Patristic Greek Lexicon”, *s. v.* *φωτισμός*). The parallel with the *Apology for the Faith* is weak and proves nothing, since it concerns only the expression “primordial light of the knowledge of God”: even if “the vocabulary is Dionysian”, as I. Perczel argues (p. 180), this is not an exact quotation, at the most an allusion. Nevertheless, Perczel claims: “As this essay demonstrates, the two-redactions thesis [one, original, reflected by Sergius’s translation; the other, a ‘(neo-)Chalcedonian’ edition of the text by John of Scythopolis] stands to reason” (p. 183). But there is no demonstration in this essay. In the final section of his article, Perczel analyses a “Christological passage” (*DNI* 4, p. 186) in Greek and its different Syriac renderings.

In a second contribution to the volume Beate Regina Suchla [13] treats “John of Scythopolis and the Dionysian Corpus” (pp. 205–221), the earliest scholiast of the *CD*, already mentioned in her other article in the Handbook [2] (pp. 15–16). It is a summary of her previous publications on that topic, and as she states in note 60 (on p. 218), she could not use Alberto Nigra’s book, “Il pensiero cristologico-trinitario di Giovanni di Scitopoli”, published in 2019.³⁰ According to Suchla, “John’s exemplar” (i.e. his ‘critical edition’ with marginal scholia and prologue) “can be reconstructed from two reconstructable *hyparchetypē*” (p. 208), called “codex merus” and “codex mixtus”. The former “is represented by seven Greek and four Syriac manuscripts” (p. 208) – but Suchla explains nowhere that these Syriac manuscripts (for which she refers only to her own publications) are manuscripts of the Syriac translation of the *CD* by Phocas around 685; she does not speak either about the other translations of the *CD* with scholia, in Armenian (around 715 in

30 A. Nigra: *Il pensiero cristologico-trinitario di Giovanni di Scitopoli. Tra neocalcedonismo e prima recezione del Corpus Dionysiacum*. Roma/Mendrisio 2019 (*Studia ephemeridis Augustinianum* 156).

Constantinople) and in Latin (by Anastasius Bibliothecarius in the ninth century). In an article published in 2013 (not mentioned by Suchla), Sergio La Porta showed that the Armenian and Syriac versions of the scholia shared some features (especially omissions) which may come from a ‘miaphysite redaction’ of the scholia produced in a Greek monastic community of Constantinople around the middle of the sixth century.³¹ This discovery may change our view on the history of the tradition of the scholia. Furthermore Suchla is convinced that even the “layout of the critical edition” (p. 207) by John can be partly reconstructed and that the scholia were originally marginal (p. 208), although the word *σχόλιον* in itself does not imply a marginal setting and there are early manuscripts of the *CD* presenting the scholia on the main page and not in the margin (especially the palimpsest mentioned above). The analysis of the doctrinal contents of the scholia is not always accurate. The discussion about John’s Trinitarian theology intends to show that John’s “concept of the Trinity is not only precise, but also orthodox” (p. 215). It is unclear, however, to what extent John offers his own vision rather than that of Dionysius, and since the text of the scholia is never quoted in Greek, and in this case is not translated but paraphrased, it is difficult to assess the ‘precision’ of John’s concepts. Suchla claims that, according to John, “Son and Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father as generation” and that “the attribute *as generation* is an illegitimate addition” (*ibidem*) – but an “illegitimate addition” to what? to the *CD*? to the orthodox creeds (quoted through Heinrich Denzinger’s “Kompendium der Glaubensbekenntnisse”)? The problem is that the “attribute *as generation*” discussed by Suchla is not really found in John’s scholia referred to in notes 66 and 73 (these two notes being identical). The first passage³² is as follows: “he calls fecundity (*γονιμότητα*) the paternal procession towards the manifestation of the Son and the Holy Spirit”; and the second³³: “he names the Father hyperessential generation of God (*θεογονίαν*) and source”; in both passages John simply reuses Dionysius’s vocabulary.

31 S. La Porta: Purging John of Scythopolis: A Miaphysite Redaction of the Scholia on the Corpus Dionysiacum and its Armenian Version. In: *Muséon* 126, 2013, pp. 45–82.

32 Suchla: *Corpus Dionysiacum* IV/1 (note 17), p. 134.1–2.

33 *Ibidem*, p. 177.3.

Maximos Conostas [14] begins his article on “Maximus the Confessor and the Reception of Dionysius the Areopagite” (pp. 222–240) with some comments on John of Scythopolis’s scholia, because these scholia were for a long time attributed to Maximus the Confessor. These comments are puzzling, for on the one hand Conostas states that Suchla

[...] demonstrated that the vast majority of the *scholia* were produced, not by Maximus the Confessor, but a century earlier by John of Scythopolis. Maximus did indeed write a number of scholia on the *CD*, but after the work of Suchla [...] [it has been] assum[ed] that the Confessor’s engagement with Dionysius was minimal. Such an assumption, however, is premature, since the majority of Maximus’ scholia remain unedited, are difficult of access, and have not been the subject of proper scholarly study (p. 224).

Immediately after this, however, Conostas claims that “in 2011, a critical edition of the *scholia* on the *DN* was published, which allows for a partial assessment of the Confessor’s work as a scholiast. The results are not unpromising. In the first place, Maximus’ *scholia* are significant both in terms of their content and length” (p. 224). This 2011 edition being Suchla’s edition of John of Scythopolis’s scholia, it is very difficult to understand how this concerns Maximus (“MaxConf” as a siglum in Suchla’s edition indicates the reconstructed ‘hyparchetype’ of the tradition of John of Scythopolis’s scholia that was supposedly used by Maximus). The examples of Maximus’s interpretation of the *DN* given by Conostas in what follows (pp. 224–225) are in fact taken from John of Scythopolis’s scholia. Even if the rest of the chapter deals with Maximus’s other works, the scholia remain an important source. When looking at the reasons why Maximus, in the *Mystagogia*, distances himself from Dionysius’s *EH*, Conostas invokes a scholion on the *EH* speaking of “an eschatological movement from ‘shadows to images to truth’” (p. 231). Conostas argues that Maximus may be the author of the scholion, because he makes “the same argument in *Amb.* 21” with the same reference to Hebr. 10.1 and the same addition of “the truth” (p. 231 and note 79 on p. 237). However, this scholion is found in the Syriac translation by Phocas³⁴ and is therefore most probably by John of Scythopolis (see [13]). It is therefore another case of Maximus reading Dionysius “through the interpretive lens of John of Scythopolis’ *scholia*” (p. 224).

34 Nigra (note 30), p. 441.

Mark Edwards and Dimitrios Pallis [15] examine the influence of the *CD* on John of Damascus' writings ("Dionysius and John of Damascus", pp. 241–255).

George Arabatzis's chapter [16] on "Theodore the Studite and Dionysius" (pp. 256–268) is disturbing in many ways. Not only because it has little to do with Theodore the Studite and even less with the reception of the *CD* in the Studite monasteries between the end of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth century, but even more so because many of the assertions made in this article are not really substantiated by primary sources. Much of this article, which is very confused and disorganised, is based on secondary literature, in a way that can be seen as plagiarism, or, to say the least, in a way that students should be discouraged to imitate. One striking example is found on p. 258. This passage (which is not put in quotation marks) is in fact a translation from an article by Jean Gouillard³⁵ (mentioned in the article, but not for this specific passage; see p. 259: "all the relevant information about Hypatius in Gouillard 1961"), here p. 73 (note the poor rendering of "aux fonctions complexes" by "with a complex function", and of "une telle conception" by "a similar conception"); see the following synoptical Table:

Gouillard 1961

Denys connaît deux classes de symboles, les uns scripturaires, les autres liturgiques, aux fonctions complexes.
[...]

Le pseudo-Aréopagite se cantonne dans l'image verbale, il fuit la représentation matérielle.

En outre, ce symbole scripturaire opère paradoxalement en proportion de sa dissemblance même avec la réalité symbolisée.

Arabatzis 2022

Dionysius acknowledges two kinds of symbols, the scriptural and the liturgical ones with a complex function.

He does not seem to move beyond verbal images and evades the question of material representation.

The scriptural symbol is also marked by a strange dissemblance in regard to the symbolized reality.

35 J. Gouillard: Hypatios d'Ephèse ou du Pseudo-Denys à Théodore Studite. In: REByz 19, 1961, pp. 63–75.

Les symboles liturgiques, pourtant plus positifs, voilent eux-mêmes la réalité sacrée aux ordres inférieurs de la hiérarchie.

The liturgical symbols that are more positive have a function of veiling what they supposedly disclose; they veil in order to hide the truth from the inferior hierarchies.

Une telle conception est à l’opposé de la notion de l’image peinte conçue comme le livre de tous. [...]

A similar conception is at odds with the idea of the iconophiles about the figurative images of the holy, which are accessible to everyone (see *Des Places* 1981; *Gouillard* 1977–1978).

Mais abstraction faite de cet ésotérisme, le *corpus dionysiacum* foisonne de thèmes et de formules suggestifs qui devaient séduire les apologistes des images et dont Hypatios paraît avoir été le premier à s’emparer.

Yet, beyond the symbolic esotericism, there is a plethora of Dionysian notions and themes that could be extremely useful to an iconophile apologist. Thus, Theodore the Studite writes [...].

The borrowing is evident, although *Gouillard* speaks here about Hypatius of Ephesus, whereas *Arabatzis* uses the same words about Theodore. And indeed, Hypatius conveniently comes into the picture just a paragraph later (p. 258): “As to the context, one must probably begin with Hypatius of Ephesus”. The references to the fragment of Hypatius are vague (p. 259: “Theodore the Studite refuted Hypatius’ work in a letter to a certain Niketas”, without any reference) and only of second-hand, again plagiarising *Gouillard*: “Ernst Kitzinger [not mentioned in the bibliography] has observed that Hypatius introduced a Dionysian terminology in the treated subject; Jean Gouillard in his analysis of Hypatius’ fragment takes some distance from this interpretation”, without any reference; compare with *Gouillard*: Hypatios d’Ephèse (note 35, above), p. 72: “Ernst Kitzinger avait justement observé qu’Hypatios introduit dans l’iconologie des notions et une terminologie dionysiennes” (note that *Gouillard* considers this opinion to be correct: “justement”). The beginning of the following paragraph (p. 259) is again a translation of a passage in *Gouillard*’s article, without quotation marks.³⁶

36 *Gouillard*: Hypatios d’Ephèse (note 35), p. 73: “Ces thèmes, ce sont avant tout le rattachement des symboles à une condescendance divine manifestée dans l’Écriture, leur adaptation ou leur proportionnalité aux capacités des sujets, leur vertu anagogique, c’est-à-dire d’élévation du sensible à l’intelligible, la hiérarchie des intelligences

In exactly the same way, Arabatzis uses Paul Magdalino's book, "L'Orthodoxie des astrologues",³⁷ translating large passages which, by the way, have nothing to do with Theodore the Studite, forgetting the quotation marks, and only referring vaguely to Magdalino's book (pp. 259–261).³⁸ This indelicate way of using previous scholars' work renders Arabatzis's article unusable, all the more because it is nothing but a clumsy patchwork of badly digested scholarship, often misunderstood and copied and pasted together without much thinking. The text on p. 264 is a case in point. It starts with a sentence which to me makes no sense (and for once does not seem to be translated from someone else): "To the above [= the idea of the spiritual

suivant leur degré d'initiation"; Arabatzis, p. 259: "What is of question here is the relation of the symbols to the divine condescendence manifested in the Bible, the adaptation of this latter to the capacities of the perceiving subject, the capacity of the symbols to elevate one towards the divine, from the sensible to the intelligible, through the intermediate hierarchies and according to initiation".

37 P. Magdalino: *L'Orthodoxie des astrologues. La science entre le dogme et la divination à Byzance (VIIe–XIVe siècle)*. Paris 2006 (Réalités byzantines 12).

38 A reference is given at the beginning of the last paragraph on p. 259 to "Magdalino 2006, 70–82", but curiously what follows on pp. 259–260 is a translation of entire passages from pp. 68–69 of Magdalino's book (pp. 260–261 are indeed very much 'inspired' by "Magdalino 2006, 70–82"). As in the case of Gouillard's article one could perfectly align the French text and its English rendering, sometimes presenting inaccuracies, such as on p. 259 when the *ikonodouloi* are equalised with the iconoclasts. Another example of mistranslation is found on p. 260: "Dionysius was a thinker who, for Magdalino, could serve both the iconoclasts and the iconophiles. According to the apocrypha, he converted to Christianity because of, and not in spite of, his scientific knowledge. For the iconophiles, Dionysius can provide the theoretical argument about the icons as an intermediary in the ascendance towards God. To the iconoclasts, the work of Dionysius gave the idea of sacred symbolism provided to the humans who are dissimilar to God". Compare with Magdalino: *L'Orthodoxie* (note 37), p. 69: "Or, Denys était un des rares Pères de l'Église qui se prêtait également à l'iconoclasme et à l'iconodoulie; il était aussi le seul qui se serait converti, d'après certains apocryphes, en raison de ses connaissances scientifiques. Si les iconodoules pouvaient s'en réclamer pour démontrer la nécessité de l'image comme intermédiaire dans l'émanation du divin, Denys offrait aux iconoclastes la doctrine de la valeur cognitive des images symboliques et dissemblables, qui ne faussaient pas l'incompréhensibilité de Dieu". The point is not that "humans [...] are dissimilar to God" but that symbolic images are dissimilar. As to "the apocrypha" according to which Dionysius "converted to Christianity", contrary to Arabatzis, Magdalino says "certain apocryphes", and provides references – in fact the main source for this story is the so-called 'Autobiography' of Dionysius: see Macé: *Lives* (note 5), pp. 146–151.

ladder?], the anthropomorphic naturalism of Theodore adds the idea of figuration. Yet, despite this difference [to what?], the Studite monks contributed to the diffusion of the Dionysian text and to its influence on Western thought and art” (followed by one of the very few footnotes of this article, referring to Leslie Brubaker’s book³⁹ “underscor[ing] the political-theological force of the Studite monks” [note 13 on p. 267]). Then comes what is supposed to be the substantiation of this point: “What are the comparisons to be made between the Constantinopolitan scholasticism and the Latin scholasticism?” – one may wonder indeed but the only answer is: “There is the hypothesis that the famous manuscript [...] offered to the king of the Franks [...] was made by Studite monks” (p. 264). Is that a “comparison” between two “scholasticisms”? A large bibliography exists on the indeed famous manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, gr. 437 (Diktyon 50011, the shelf mark of the manuscript is not given by Arabatzis), but Arabatzis simply summarises two pages from Paul Lemerle’s book on the first Byzantine humanism,⁴⁰ referring to Raymond-Joseph Loenertz and Julien Leroy (of course not mentioned in Arabatzis’ bibliography). The only two lines in this summary that are not from Lemerle but, presumably, from Arabatzis are very strange. The first one is as follows: “Another hypothesis is that the Dionysian corpus was copied in order to be offered to the Frankish monarch from a great florilegium composed by Theodore”. Where does this “hypothesis” come from? How can one imagine that the whole corpus was part of a florilegium? In fact Leroy’s suggestion that Paris gr. 437 could have been copied in the Stoudios monastery is weak (this kind of majuscule is very difficult to date and localise) and should be taken with caution, but Arabatzis takes it for granted and concludes this first paragraph on p. 264 by the second line that is not directly taken from Lemerle: “The manner of taking the manuscript out of the Studite scriptorium with an iconoclast purpose is problematic but different possibilities have been proposed up to now (Lemerle 1986, 6–7)” – one would be eager to learn more about these “possibilities” (which are not found in Lemerle’s pages), but Arabatzis goes on from this premise to the second point (and second paragraph) on p. 264,

39 L. Brubaker: *Inventing Byzantine Iconoclasm*. London 2012 (Studies in Early Medieval History).

40 P. Lemerle: *Byzantine Humanism: The First Phase. Notes and Remarks on Education and Culture in Byzantium from its Origins to the 10th Century*. Canberra 1986 (Byzantina Australiensia 3) [French original: 1971].

i.e. the supposed influence of the *CD* on Western medieval art, through the mediation of the Studites. The second paragraph is again heavily dependent upon someone else's work, viz. Bruno Reudenbach's 1994 article on Suger and Panofsky⁴¹ – and again the reference to that article is noted only once and exactly where the opinion expressed is not that of Reudenbach. The paragraph starts by mentioning Georges Duby's proposition that there was "a relationship between the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the theology of Dionysius and the feudal hierarchy in the West, a relationship that is found in Suger, his principal theorist" (p. 264) – Duby is mentioned neither in the bibliography of this chapter nor in Reudenbach's article, so it remains unclear where this assertion comes from. Of whom or what exactly Suger⁴² is the "principal theorist" is unknown – "his" can grammatically only refer to Dionysius, but it is probably a (translation?) mistake for 'its'. Then Arabatzis again translates passages from Reudenbach's article (§ 12, 13–15 of the online edition),⁴³ but without the final sentence of Reudenbach's § 15, "Quant

41 B. Reudenbach: Panofsky et Suger de Saint-Denis (translated by D. Meur). In: *Revue germanique internationale* (série PUF) 2, 1994, pp. 137–150, available online at URL: <https://doi.org/10.4000/rgi.462>.

42 Otherwise Suger of Saint-Denis (c. 1081–1151) is remarkably absent from the Handbook, except two mentions in passing in Edwards's chapter on John Sarracenus [21], pp. 329 and 330 (the index indicates that Suger's name is found as well on pp. 331–333, but I was no able to identify these mentions). On Suger and Dionysius (who was apparently less influential on Suger as a philosopher than as a saint-martyr), see S. Linscheid-Burdich: *Suger von Saint-Denis. Untersuchungen zu seinen Schriften Ordinatio – De consecratione – De administratione*. München/Leipzig 2004 (Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 200).

43 Reudenbach (note 41), § 12, 14–15: "Ce modèle stipule que l'architecture gothique serait une transposition de la métaphysique néo-platonicienne de la lumière, une architecture de la lumière, dans laquelle la divine lumière céleste se reflète dans la matérialité terrestre, et qui permet à l'intellect humain de s'élever à la connaissance de Dieu. [...] ce modèle [...] relève désormais du répertoire canonique de l'histoire de l'art, ainsi que des disciplines voisines. [Panofsky] décrit Suger comme un théologien qui se serait activement penché sur la philosophie néo-platonicienne du « Pseudo-Denys ». La tradition médiévale avait confondu ce philosophe chrétien d'expression grecque, vivant au VI^e siècle, avec Denys l'Aréopagite, disciple de Saint-Paul, lui-même confondu avec le martyr Denis, patron de l'église de Suger. Suite à cette inextricable fusion de trois personnes en une seule, le manuscrit conservé à Saint-Denis de l'œuvre majeure du Pseudo-Denys, *De caelesti hierarchia*, fut attribué au martyr inhumé à Saint-Denis. [...] Or, Panofsky voit dans les textes de Suger des passages inspirés de la métaphysique de la lumière du Pseudo-Denys, et y relève à maintes reprises une « orgie de métaphysique néo-platonicienne de la lumière ». [...] nulle part il n'affirme explicitement que cette philosophie et la forme architecturale spécifique

à prouver l'influence formelle de cette philosophie, ce à quoi von Simson échoue, Panofsky ne s'y essaie même pas". By this "omission" Arabatzis thus suggests that the opinion that Dionysius's philosophy formally influenced the birth of Gothic architecture is still valid, from which he concludes: "The difference of styles, the Byzantine and the Gothic, thus suggests the divergence of the reception of Dionysian system and yet the communication between the two worlds is strongly evidenced (see Reudenbach 1994)" (p. 264) – this sole mention of an article that was plagiarised all along in the preceding lines is supposed to support an assertion that is not found in that article. And the conclusion of the whole page is: "The intermediary role of the Studite monks shows that they acknowledged the instrumental value of the Dionysian text" – whatever this sentence means, it is simply false.

Perhaps the chapter on Theodore the Studite should have been given to Torstein Theodor Tollefsen, who wrote a book on Theodore, but Tollefsen authored instead the chapter [18] on "Gregory Palamas and Dionysius" (pp. 288–298), in which Rigo's pertinent article is not even mentioned: "Il Corpus Pseudo-Dionisiano negli scritti di Gregorio Palamas (e di Barlaam) del 1336–1341".⁴⁴ Antonio Rigo [17], in turn, wrote the article about the reception of "Dionysius" in the eleventh century "from Niketas Stethatos to Gregory the Sinaite (and Gregory Palamas)" (pp. 269–287). The

du gothique seraient des phénomènes analogues, ni même qu'elles entretiendraient un lien de cause à effet. [...] C'est seulement plus tard que Otto von Simson [...] devait poser l'assertion que sans la philosophie du Pseudo-Denys l'architecture gothique ne serait pas née"; Arabatzis, p. 264: "Panofsky's interpretative model posits that Gothic architecture must be a transposition of the Neoplatonic metaphysics of light, where the celestial divine light is reflected on the terrestrial materiality, and thus the human intellect may be elevated to the knowledge of God. This is a model met with great echoes in the history of art and neighbouring disciplines. According to Panofsky, Suger was particularly influenced by the Neoplatonic philosophy of Dionysius in the midst of a confusion concerning the identities of the disciple of Saint-Paul [sic] and the patron of the Church of Saint-Denis. Thus the manuscript of the *Celestial Hierarchy* was attributed to this last patron saint. Panofsky distinguishes many references of Suger to Dionysius in a sort of 'orgy of Neoplatonic metaphysics of light'. Yet Panofsky never establishes a causal link between this metaphysics and Gothic architecture as posterity often thought. Later, it was Otto von Simson who claimed that without the Dionysian metaphysics there would be no such architecture as the Gothic".

44 A. Rigo: Il Corpus Pseudo-Dionisiano negli scritti di Gregorio Palamas (e di Barlaam) del 1336–1341. In: de Andia (ed.): Denys (note 14), pp. 519–534.

final chapter in Part II [19] is by Georgios Steiris (“Pletho and Dionysius”, pp. 299–311), on Pletho’s use of the *CD* to elaborate “his political ontotheology” (p. 299).

Part III (“Dionysius in the West”)

The coverage of Dionysius’s reception in the West, from Eriugena written by Deirdre Carabine (“Occulti Manifestatio: the Journey to God in Dionysius and Eriugena”, pp. 315–327) [20] to Marsilio Ficino authored by Mark Edwards with the assistance of Michael Allen (“Marsilio Ficino and the Dionysian Corpus”, pp. 476–488) [30], is of course not complete, but offers useful snapshots. I could not devote enough time to this part and I can therefore only refer to the list of chapters below. It is regrettable that the contributions on the same or related topics in the collective volume “Die Dionysius-Rezeption im Mittelalter” (cf. note 14), published in 2000, have been systematically ignored.

Part IV (“Dionysius after the Western European Reformation”)

Part IV contains several interesting papers on the reception of the *CD* in modern times, from Valla and Erasmus [31] to Luther and the Lutheran Tradition [32–33], in the English-speaking world [34], and in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, both in academic milieus ([35] Hugo Koch and Josef Stiglmayr; [36] Dean Inge, Vladimir Lossky, and Hans Urs von Balthasar) and in contemporary French philosophy [38] (Jacques Derrida and Jean-Luc Marion). Dimitrios Pallis offers a very interesting overview of the understanding of the Dionysian heritage in Modern Greek theology and scholarship, especially in the works of Emmanouel Karpathios, Christos Yannaras, and John Zizioulas [37] (“The Reception of Dionysius in Modern Greek Theology and Scholarship”, pp. 604–637). A study of Balthasar Cordier’s edition of the *CD* (1634), its predecessors and its intellectual milieu, would have been a desideratum, as it is missing as well in other volumes on the reception of the *CD* even though this edition was influential and is still important (several contributions in the Handbook still refer to it despite the critical work done at the Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen).

The first article in Part IV, by Denis J.-J. Robichaud [31], entitled “Valla and Erasmus on the Dionysian Question” (pp. 491–515) provides an overview of the “Dionysian question”, which is of general interest and was lacking in the introduction to the Handbook. This overview is indeed very welcome, and, as the author says, the historical (or philological) details are “more complicated and more interesting than the broad narrative” (p. 492). Two small inaccuracies should be noted. Firstly, I have already stated above that it is Michael Synkellos in the ninth and not Georgios Pachymeres in the thirteenth century who should be credited with the dissemination of the Parisian legend of Dionysius (p. 492). The refutation of arguments against the authenticity of the *CD* by a priest named Theodorus is found not in the *Suda* (p. 493), but in Photius’s *Library*, of which Theodorus’s lost work is the first book. On p. 494 Robichaud sketches a history of the scholion on the *CD* concerned with the authenticity question in Latin in the fifteenth century, this history casting such important figures as Bessarion and Nicolaus Cusanus. As to the Greek scholia (p. 493), a cross-reference to Suchla’s article in the Handbook [13] could have replaced a long footnote, but this is a general editorial problem in the Handbook, and certainly not the author’s fault. The presentation and discussion of Valla’s and Erasmus’s texts are interesting. Georgios Makris’s article “Zwischen Hypatios von Ephesos und Lorenzo Valla. Die areopagitische Echtheitsfrage im Mittelalter”⁴⁵ could have been mentioned and usefully consulted, but, as I said above, the volume in which that article is published seems to have been systematically ignored in the Handbook.

Andrew Louth’s article [34] (“Dionysius’ Reception in the English-Speaking World”, pp. 553–567) starts with the reception in the English-speaking world of the fourteenth-century *Cloud of Unknowing*, already dealt with by Peter Tyler [28] (“The Carthusians and the *Cloud of Unknowing*”, pp. 428–453) and a little bit, as far as it is a translation from John Sarracenus, by Edwards [21].⁴⁶ Then it goes to “another strand in the English reception of the Areopagite: his reception in the sixteenth and seventeenth century” (p. 555);

45 G. Makris: Zwischen Hypatios von Ephesos und Lorenzo Valla. Die areopagitische Echtheitsfrage im Mittelalter. In: Boiadjiev/Kapriev/Speer (eds.): *Dionysius-Rezeption* (note 14), pp. 3–39.

46 A cross-reference to Edwards’ article is given here, but not to Tyler’s. It is a general regret that not much effort was done in order to avoid overlaps and provide cross-references in this Handbook.

as the author admits, “this strand will be very selective, led by the vagaries of this author’s reading” (p. 555). The dates and historical contexts of the different authors are almost never mentioned, so it is difficult to really follow if one is not well acquainted with the English literature of that period. The third section of the article is concerned with the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century, including a few notes on Dean W. R. Inge (who is the subject of Edward’s article [36]).

Why the last two contributions, by Ysabel de Andia (translated by Edwards) [39] about “Dionysius as a Mystic” (pp. 653–669) and by György Geréby [40] “On the Theology of Dionysius” (pp. 670–685), belong to Part IV is unclear (see above). The article by de Andia [39] is not very well written, nor illuminating, and it might be that it was not correctly translated.⁴⁷ There are also more formal shortcomings in this article than in others.⁴⁸ Towards the end of the article there is something wrong with the notes: notes 33, 34 and 35 on p. 668 are in fact referred to as notes 34, 35 and 36 in the text on p. 665. Note 31 mentions “Thomas Aquinas, *In Trinitate Boethii* [...]: S.T. [...]”, which should in fact be *In Boethii De Trinitate* (on Boethius’s commentary on Augustine’s treatise). The only ‘primary text’ mentioned in the bibliography of this article is the *CD* (quoted according to the Sources chrétiennes edition but using not very precise *Patrologia Graeca* column numbers) and neither Thomas Aquinas’s treatise nor Proclus’s *In Alcibiadem* (mentioned in note 35, which should be 36 on p. 668) are listed in the “Bibliography of Ancient Texts” (pp. 687–693) at the end of the volume (see below). At the end of the article, one still does not understand what “be mystical” meant for Dionysius, which was the first question at the beginning of the article (p. 653).

As to formal aspects of the book in general, one can deplore a lack of coherence, understandable in view of the large number of contributions, but damageable to the ‘handbookish’ character of this volume, especially concerning quotations of Greek texts and the way bibliographical references are made. There is no common bibliography, except for a deficient list of primary sources; each article has its own way of citing Dionysius’s works (even

47 E.g. p. 665: “Ecstasy has a Christological reference in Dionysius”, with “reference” translating, I suppose, something like ‘connotation’; p. 666 the “justice” of the “mystical experience” sounds strange, something else might be meant here.

48 For example, p. 653: “pj654erson”, “Areopagte”; p. 654: “opposition”; p. 658: “epopotic”; p. 661: “mystcial”, “Dsrkness”; p. 664: “Thomas Aquians”; p. 665: “tis ecstatic”, etc.

its own abbreviations to indicate the works) and primary sources in general. The list of primary sources (“Bibliography of Ancient Texts”) is messy. The strange statement at the beginning (p. 687: “Any texts can **probably** be found in *Patrologia Graeca* and *Patrologia Latina*” etc., my emphasis) may account for the fact that every contributor in the Handbook has quoted primary sources in his/her own way, and not always according to the most reliable critical edition. Why Maximus Confessor is not present in this list is a mystery. The list contains many typos: “Corpus Christianorum Series Latin” (p. 687) should of course be corrected into “[...] Christianorum” and “[...] Latina” (curiously, the Corpus Christianorum Series Graeca is not mentioned here, perhaps because Maximus Confessor, published in that series, is missing); “Editions Budé” (p. 687) should be understood as “Collection des Universités de France”; “Enseignement des Doctriens de Platon” (p. 687) into “[...] Doctrines[...]”; why is the title of Cyril of Alexandria’s work published in *Patrologia Graeca* 76 in English (“Against Julian”, p. 688)?; “Gregory of Nazianzus (Nazianzen), many works may be quoted from *Patrologia Graeca*, 35–38” (p. 689) to be corrected in “[...] Graeca”, and one does not really understand why the, still incomplete but existing, edition in *Sources chrétiennes* is not mentioned at all, whereas the edition of the “Five Theological Orations” by Mason (1899) is; “Poemeta Arcana” (p. 689), of course “Poemata [...]”; “Oratio Catechetiac” (p. 689) for “[...] Catechetica”, etc. These mistakes are too trivial to hamper the understanding, but so numerous that they are annoying.

Typos and formal shortcomings often occur in the book, on some pages they are more numerous than on others, for example on p. 335: “moperations”, “must abandon” (the subject ‘you’ is missing), “the noun *contritiois* is related”.

The index (pp. 695–729) contains names and concepts, no *index locorum*. The entries are often subdivided into sub-categories, which are too detailed to be useful. For example, the entry “affirmation” (different from “affirmative theology”) is divided into nine subcategories corresponding to different medieval and modern authors. Subtitles used by authors in their contributions are regularly used as subentries, for example “affirmation of negative theology” (s.v. “affirmation”), “blessed darkness” (s.v. “Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas”); it also appears as a separate entry and under “darkness”), “flux: creation as emanation” (ibidem), “quasi-biblical Dionysius matched with complete philosophical *Corpus*” (ibidem), etc. For those readers who

look at indexes for a comforting feeling of soberness and order, the strangeness and the profusion of the entries will rather have an alienating effect. I did not systematically check the index, only noted a few omissions in passing. The following entries are surprisingly missing (although the terms do occur in the Handbook): ‘angel’ (but “angelic hierarchy” and “angelification”), ‘archangel’ (neither is there an entry for the archangel ‘Michael’, although he is mentioned e.g. on p. 85 and p. 676), ‘Bible’ or ‘Old Testament’ (but only “New Testament”), ‘Jewish’ or ‘Judaism’ (only “Jewish tradition”, referring to pp. 84–85 and 87, but the word “Jewish” appears only on p. 84). There is an entry “Testamentum Naphthali”, referring to p. 677, but no entry ‘Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs’, although it is mentioned on p. 676 and the *Testamentum Naphthali* is a part of it.

In conclusion, many of the articles in this “Handbook of Dionysius the Areopagite” will be used with profit by students and scholars interested in the reception of the *CD*, but not all are equally up-to-date and some are not free of inaccuracies or even mistakes. Such a reference book would have deserved to be more carefully edited and a clear case of plagiarism should have been detected and avoided.

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