

## THE MEANING TRANSFORMATION OF ANTIQUE REMINISCENCES IN THE TRAGEDY “ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΠΑΣΧΩΝ” (“SUFFERING CHRIST”).

An Italian investigator Francesco Trisoglio records the tragedy «Χριστὸς πάσχω»<sup>1</sup> (Latin version – «*Christus patiens*», English translation – «*Suffering Christ*») to be an exceptional phenomenon, where scientists have achieved no consent on its disputed topics and in no point for the whole period of the Christian literature existence<sup>2</sup>. From XVI century till now the date and authorship of the work have been permanently discussed in scientific circles, actively involving philosophers, historians and antique byzantine drama experts but mostly theologians<sup>3</sup>. Attribution attempts of the Christian drama have brought to life various decisions. The manuscript tradition undoubtedly ascribes this tragedy to the famous bishop of the fourth century and the greatest of the theologians of the Christian Church – St. Gregory of Nazianzos (the Theologian)<sup>4</sup>.

But in 1588 Tzsesar (Caesar) Barony made a supposition the work had belonged to Apollinarios, bishop of Laodikeia (IV c.)<sup>5</sup>. The tragedy has also been attributed to Gregory of Antioch (VI century)<sup>6</sup>, to John Tzsetzes (XII century)<sup>7</sup>, Theodore Prodromos (XII century)<sup>8</sup>, to Constantine Manasses (XII century)<sup>9</sup>, to the circle of Eustathios of Thessalonike (XII century)<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This name has been given to the tragedy by its first publisher, Antony Bladus. See: *Bladus A.* Τοῦ ἁγίου Γρηγορίου Ναζιανζηνοῦ τραγωδία Χριστὸς πάσχω. Sancti Gregori Nazianzeni ... tragoedia Christus Patiens / Impressum per A. Bladus. Rome, 1542.

<sup>2</sup> *Trisoglio F.* Il Christus patiens. Rassegna delle attribuzioni // *Rivista di Studi Classici*. Torino, 1974. № 22. P. 351.

<sup>3</sup> See: *Gregoire de Nazianze.* La passion du Christ. Tragedie, introduction, texte critique, traduction notes et index de *Andre Tuilier* // *Sources Chrétiennes*. Paris, 1969, № 149. P. 11-18.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* P. 75-116. The last critical work at this opinion is article: *Most G. W.* On the Authorship of the Christus Patiens // *Studien zu den geistesgeschichtlichen Beziehungen zwischen Antike und Christentum. Dankesgabe für Albrecht Dihle zum 85 / Eds. A. Jördens, H. A. Gärtner, H. Görgemanns, A. M. Ritter.* Hamburg, 2008. P. 229-240. (*Studien zur Kirchengeschichte*, 8).

<sup>5</sup> *Baronius C.* *Annales ecclesiastici*. Roma, 1588. P. 129. About an accessory of this work of Apollinarios (Younger) see also: *Dräseke J.* Über die dem Gregorios Thaumaturgos zugeschriebenen vier Homilien und den ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΠΑΣΧΩΝ // *Jahrbücher für protestantische Theologie*. 1884. № 10. S. 657-704; *Grande C.* ΤΡΑΓΩΔΙΑ, essenza e genesi della tragedia. 2a ed. Milano; Napoli, 1962. P. 253-262; 385-386; *Cataudella Q.* Cronologia e attribuzione del Christus Patiens // *Dioniso*. 1969. № 43. P. 405-412.

<sup>6</sup> *Patrologiae cursus completus omnium ss. patrum, doctorum scriptorumque ecclesiasticorum sive graecorum: in 162 t. / Accurante J.-P. Migne.* Turnholti (Belgium): Brepols Editores Pontificii, 1978. T. 38. Col. 131-132. See also: *Rousseliere M.* Une tragedie antique sur la Passion avec etudes litteraires et critiques. Paris, 1895.

<sup>7</sup> *Dübner F.* Christus patiens. Ezechieli et christianorum poetarum reliquiae dramaticae. Parisiis, 1846; *Döring A.* De tragoedia christiana, quae inscribitur ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΠΑΣΧΩΝ // *Particula I, Jahresbericht über die Realschule I. O. und das Progymnasium zu Barmen*, 1864. S. 1-25.

<sup>8</sup> *Brambs J. G.* De auctoritate tragoediae christianae quae inscribi solet Χριστὸς πάσχω Gregorio Nazianzeno falso attributae. S. l.: Eichstadii, M. Daentler, 1883. P. 62-72; *Hilberg I.* Kann Theodoros Prodromos der Verfasser des Χριστὸς πάσχω sein? // *Wiener Studien*. 1886. № 8. S. 282-314.

<sup>9</sup> *Horna K.* Der Verfasser des Christus patiens // *Hermes Zeitschrift für klassische Philologie*. Wiesbaden, 1929. № 64. S. 429-431.

<sup>10</sup> *Dostalova S. R.* Die byzantinische Theorie des Dramas und die Tragödie Christos Paschon // *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*. Wien, 1982. № 32/3. S. 73-82. Eustathios entered into «a scientific circle» such known historic figures as Michael Choniates, his brother Niketas Choniates and Michael Italikos – the known philosopher and rhetor, the head of a philosophy-literary circle in which entered also Eustathios.

and even to St. Gregory of Nyssa (IV century)<sup>11</sup>, while scholar L. MacCoull dated it back to the late antiquity by hypothesizing its origin in the 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> century in Egypt<sup>12</sup>. The most of the contemporary investigators date the tragedy «*Suffering Christ*» to the XI-XII<sup>th</sup> centuries and attribute its creation to the unknown author<sup>13</sup>. Nevertheless the question of attribution and dating of this work remains open<sup>14</sup>.

Let's set aside the work identification issue, undoubtedly, deserving the most serious study, and focus upon another problem – regularity analysis of the archaic clichés, the author used creating it and to define the semantic scheme of this work in provided material<sup>15</sup>. The particular examples will illustrate the “bricks” of the antique drama forming the new “building” of the Christian tragedy.

The first appeal of the Saviour to his Mother (verses 727-737) where the first three stanzas of this speech bear no influence of Greek samples and represent the paraphrase of the Gospel

<sup>11</sup> This marginal, for the given problem, position belongs to the Greek scientist K. Mitsakisu. See: *Kochev N.* Antichnata literaturna traditsiya i vizantiyskite avtori. Sofia, 1982. P. 245 (in Bulgarian).

<sup>12</sup> MacCoull L. Egyptian elements in the Christus Patiens // *Bulletin de la Societe d'Archeologie Copte.* 1985. № 27. P. 45-51. See also: *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* / Ed. by A. P. Kazhdan, A.-M. Talbot, A. Cutler and others. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991. Vol. 1. P. 443.

<sup>13</sup> See: *Momigliano A.* Un termine «post quem» per il «Christus patiens» // *Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica.* 1932. Vol. 10. P. 47-51; *Irmischer J.* Antikes Drama in Byzanz // *Die gesellschaftliche Bedeutung des antiken Dramas für seine und unsere Zeit.* Berlin, 1973. S. 228-229; *Hunger H.* Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner. München, 1978. Bd. 2. 1978. S. 104; *Hörandner S. W.* Lexikalische Beobachtungen zum Christos Paschon // *Studien zur byzantinischen Lexikographie.* Wien, 1988. S. 183-202; *Averintsev S. S.* Ritorika i istoki evropeyskoy literaturnoy traditsii. M., 1996. P. 262 (in Russian); *Pollmann K.* Jesus Christus und Dionysos. Überlegungen zu dem Euripides-Cento Christus Patiens // *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik / Herausgegeben von Herbert Hunger und Wolfram Hörandner.* Wien: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der wissenschaften, 1997. Bd. 47. S. 93-94; *Pontani F.* Homer, the Bible and beyond: a note on Chr. Pat. 83-7 // *Classical Quarterly.* 2006. № 56. P. 661.

<sup>14</sup> There is, for example, a number of the researches which enough seriously express an opinion in favour of an accessory of the this play to St. Gregory of Nazianzos (See: *Klein J. L.* Geschichte des Dramas. Geschichte des ausseuropäische Dramas und der lateinischen Schauspiele nach Christus bis Ende des X. Jahrhunderts. Leipzig: T. O. Weigel, 1866. Vol. 3. S. 599-634; *Cottas V.* L'influence du drame “Christos Paschon” sur l'art chretien d'Orient / Pref. *De Charle Diehl.* Paris, 1931; *Cottas V.* Le drama de Gregoire de Nazianze “Christos Paschon” // *Le theatre a Byzance.* Paris, 1931. P. 197-249; *Dölger F. J.* Die Blutsalbung des Soldaten mit der Lanze im Passionsspiel Christus patiens. Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Longinus-Legende // *Antike und Christentum,* 1934. №4. S. 81-94). Especial interest in this respect represents last critical reprinting of the tragedy which has been carried out by the French expert in antique dramatic art of Andre Tuilier already quoted by us: *Gregoire de Nazianze.* La passion du Christ. Tragedie, introduction, texte critique, traduction notes et index de *Andre Tuilier* // *Sources Chrétiennes.* Paris, 1969, № 149 (See the critique at this work in article: *Grosdidier de Matons J.* A propos d'une edition recente du Χριστὸς πάσχων // *Travaux et memoires.* 1978. № 5. P. 363-372. In the personal letter to the author of this article the Italian professor Francesko Trisoglio noticed that, in its opinion, A. Tuilier's this work on all questions shined in it is absolutely comprehensible, and, hence, and on a question of attribution this work to St. Gregory of Nazianzos). And also his work: *Tuilier A.* Gregoire de Nazianze et le Christus patiens. A propos d'un ouvrage recent // *Revue des Etudes grecques.* 1997. № 110 (2). P. 632-647 and article: *Tuilier A.* La tradition textuelle du Christos Paschon et le texte d'Euripide // *Kentron.* 1997. Vol. 13. P. 119-131, in which the author in detail investigates antique texts of tragedies of Euripides taken as a principle centon's technician «Suffering Christ». Centuries deny dating of tragedy XI-XII centuries in the late works the known expert in this area professor Franchesko Trisoglio (See: *Trisoglio F.* San Gregorio di Nazianzo e il Christus patiens. Il problema dell'autenticita gregoriana del drama. Florence, 1996; *Trisoglio F.* Datazione del Christus patiens e titolazione bizantina della Vergine // *Memoria di Francesco Trisoglio presentata dal Socio nazionale residente Eugenio Corsini nell'adunanza dell'11 dicembre 2001.* Acc. Sc. Torino-Memorie Sc. Mor., 26, 2002. P. 161-256) and Russian scientist, bishop Hilarion (Alfeyev) (See: *Hilarion (Alfeyev).* Tema soshestviya vo ad u vostochnykh otsov Tserkvi IV-VIII vekov i v zapadnoy bogoslovskoy traditsii // *Tserkov' i vremya.* 2000. № 4 (13). P. 230-292 (in Russian)).

<sup>15</sup> For this the fragment of tragedy from verse 727 up to 842 is used.

according to John, where the theme of Saviour, dying for the sins of the humanity, adopting Apostle John the Theologian to All-holy Mother, (focusing on the beginning of the fragment) is revealed<sup>16</sup>. The reminiscences start from verse 730:

Verses of the tragedy «Suffering Christ»	The tragedy text «Suffering Christ» <sup>17</sup> .	Texts from Euripi's tragedies which have served by samples for creation of the tragedy «Suffering Christ» <sup>18</sup> .
730.	Τί γοῦν τί, γύναι, δακρύοις τέγγεις κόρας;	αὐτή, τί χλωροῖς δακρύοις τέγγεις κόρας <sup>19</sup>
731.	τί δ' αὖ κατηφεῖς ὄμμα καὶ δακρυροεῖς	τί δαὶ κατηφές ὄμμα καὶ δακρυροεῖς; <sup>20</sup>
732.	καὶ συγχυθεῖς ἔστηκας, ἠνίκ' εὐτυχεῖς,	τί συγχυθεῖς ἔστηκας ἠνίκ' εὐτυχεῖς; <sup>21</sup>
733.	κοῦκ ἀσμένη τόνδ' ἐξ ἐμοῦ δέχη τρόπον;	κοῦκ ἀσμένη τόνδ' ἐξ ἐμοῦ δέχη λόγον; <sup>22</sup>
734.	Ταῦτα ξυνωδὰ τοῖς προηγορευμένοις	τάδ' οὐ ξυνωιδὰ τοῖσιν ἐξηγγελμένοις. <sup>23</sup>

<sup>16</sup> See: Jn. 19, 25-27.

<sup>17</sup> The original Greek text of this play is given according to: TLG (Thesaurus Linguae Graecae's) 2022.003, line 727-842 (which accurately reproduces the text of the last critical edition by *Gregoire de Nazianze*. La passion du Christ. Tragedie, introduction, texte critique, traduction notes et index de *Andre Tuilier* // Sources Chrétiennes. Paris, 1969, № 149) also it is verified: Die Tragödie ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΠΑΣΧΩΝ angeblich vom heiligen Gregorius von Nazianz. Im Originaltext und zum ersten Mal in metrischer Verdeutschung, mit literar-historischer Einleitung und erläuternder Analyse / Hrsg. von *A. Ellissen, O. Wigand*. Leipzig: Verlag von Otto Migand, 1855. (Analekten der mittel- und neugriechischen Literatur, herausgegeben von *U. Ellissen*); Christus Patiens. Tragoedia christiana, quae inscribi solet ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΠΑΣΧΩΝ Gregorio Nazianzeno falso attributa / Recensuit *Dr. J. G. Brambs*. Lipsiae, 1885; Patrologiae cursus completus omnium ss. patrum, doctorum scriptorumque ecclesiasticorum sive graecorum: in 162 t. / Accurante *J.-P. Migne*. Turnholti (Belgium): Brepols Editores Pontificii, 1978. T. 38. Col. 131-338.

<sup>18</sup> The equivalence of fragments of tragedies by Euripides to the chosen fragments from "Suffering Christ" is given according to the critical device of the edition by *A. Tuilier*: *Gregoire de Nazianze*. La passion du Christ. Tragedie, introduction, texte critique, traduction notes et index de *Andre Tuilier* // Sources Chrétiennes. Paris, 1969, № 149 and on: TLG (Thesaurus Linguae Graecae's) [Electronic resource] / CD-ROM # E (ancient Greek texts) contains 1823 authors and collections from the 8th century BC to the 1453 AD + MUSAIOS 2002 Release A (Copyright © 1992-2002. By *Darl J. Dumont* and *Randall M Smith*).

<sup>19</sup> TLG 0006. 036, line 922.

<sup>20</sup> TLG 0006. 036, line 1012.

<sup>21</sup> TLG 0006. 036, line 1006.

<sup>22</sup> TLG 0006. 036, line 924.

<sup>23</sup> TLG 0006. 036, line 1009.

736.	Νῦν καιρὸς ἐχθρὸν γηγενῶν τίσειν δίκην.	νῦν ἐλπὶς ἐχθροὺς τοὺς ἐμούς τείσειν δίκην. <sup>24</sup>
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The first sight at this bright quotation mosaic from Euripides’ “Medea” brings an impression the author randomly chose for himself one or another sample from this drama classic. But is it all so trivially simple in our tragedy?

The consideration of quotation application by Euripides enables better understanding of the author’s motivation in quotation selection for Jesus Christ’s speech. The fragments are borrowed from two dialogues: Medea – Jason and Medea – the Teacher, and also from Medea’s speech. According to the plot of the Euripides’ tragedy, the main character Medea insulted by her husband Jason’s unfaithfulness, longing to kill his new bride, and then her own children.

The 736th verse borrows the quotation from Medea’s speech, conceiving her terrible deed and appealing to Zeus to endow her victory over the enemies (Jason and his new beloved).

The 730 and 733rd verses are taken from words of Jason who declares the offended, humiliated and crying Medea a logic explanation of his act and all its advantage for Medea and their children.

The 731 and 732nd verses are connected with the Teacher’s phrases who gladly informs Medea that the diadem (poisoned deadly) she gifted to the new Jason’s beloved, has been successfully delivered. The dramatic nature of the situation is obvious: Medea sees the successful execution of the first part of her terrible plan, and now she has to execute its second part. Thereafter doubts and tortures start to torment her, the second part of the plan is a murder of her own children. But nevertheless Medea executes her plan to reach the desired purpose – victory over her enemies.

In the tragedy «*Suffering Christ*» this Euripides’ dramatic nature is filled with the other, Christian, content: the Saviour explains to the Theotokos (Virgin Mary) that his torments and death are vital for vengeance to the enemy-devil and full deposition of the latter, and, hence for the salvation of all perishing mankind. This consolation is completely different from the false consolation given by Jason to Medea, it is filled with the new, deep, theological content.

Thus, we can clearly see the antique reminiscences from Euripides’ “Medea” bearing certain pagan sense, transforming to the Christian sense.

Let us consider the next example. The 738 verse is the starting point for the vast answer of the Mother of God to her Son. It almost completely contains various reminiscences. But to illustrate it let’s take just one verse – 738:

<sup>24</sup> TLG 0006. 036, line 767.

Οὐδέν λαοῦ τοῦδ' ἐννοουμένη πέρι	οὐδέν· τέκνων τῶνδ' ἐννοουμένη πέρι. <sup>25</sup>
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It is borrowed from Medea's answer to Jason in the mentioned dialogue. Jason motivates his unfaithfulness to Medea by his care for their children. Medea, determined to kill their children, shudders at Jason's mentioning about them. In answer to the Saviour's speech, the Theotokos, pronouncing the words of Euripides' Medea, also thinks about the children of Israeli people. Euripides' Medea, ready for the misdeed, grieves over the innocent children – in the tragedy «*Suffering Christ*» the Mother of God mourns for the children of the Israeli having crucified her Son.

Here is the next example of the maximum contrast in image providing and sense transformation in the pagan drama.

Let's have a look at Christ's answer to the words of the Theotokos:

761.	Θάρσησον· εὖ γὰρ τῶνδ' ἐγὼ θήσω πέρι,	ἕασον, ὦ παῖ· ταῦτ' ἐγὼ θήσω καλῶς. <sup>26</sup>
763.	εὕρημα δ' οὐκ οἶσθ' οἶον εὕρηκας τόδε.	εὕρημα δ' οὐκ οἶσθ' οἶον ἡύρηκας τόδε· παύσω γέ σ' ὄντ' ἄπαιδα καὶ παίδων γονὰς σπεῖραί σε θήσω· τοιάδ' οἶδα φάρμακα. <sup>27</sup>
764.	Θήσω γὰρ αὖ σοι δῶρ' ἃ καλλιστεύεται	
766.	Πολλῶν δ' ἕκατι τήνδε σοι δώσω χάριν.	πολλῶν ἕκατι τήνδε σοι δοῦναι χάριν <sup>28</sup>

The 761st verse is borrowed from the speech of the Wet-nurse in Euripides' tragedy "Hippolytus". The heroine tries to settle the affair of her ward Phaedra who is passionately in love with her stepson (Hippolytus). But she hasn't succeeded and the failure leads to suicide of Phaedra and tragical death of Hippolytus. Jesus Christ, saying the words of the Wet-nurse and inducing thereby the reader of the drama to certain associations, absolutely differently resolves

<sup>25</sup> TLG 0006. 036, line 925.

<sup>26</sup> TLG 0006. 038, line 521.

<sup>27</sup> TLG 0006. 036, line 716-718.

<sup>28</sup> TLG 0006. 036, line 719.

the tragedy of the Jewish people – by his death and resurrection he leads thousands of Israelis to faith and salvation<sup>29</sup>.

Verses 763 – 766 copy the dialogue of Medea and Aegeus, Medea’s friend and assistant. Aegeus wishes to help Medea, driven and left by her husband. In return Medea, knowing some witchery, promises to relieve him of issuelessness. Aegeus motivates his help by the care for the immortal, the children of Medea and Jason<sup>30</sup>. Here is the focus on the motherhood aspect. The Saviour promises to give the Mother a fine gift but to understand what it is the reader should consult the meaning of the corresponding Greek tragedy.

Thus here we have an example of a new testament’s allusion, and “Medea” serves the key to penetrating the sense. The context of the dialogue between Medea and Aegeus clearly displays the motherhood of the Theotokos as the gift, while Euripides puts it as a question of Aegeus’ paternity.

Happiness of St. Virgin Mary is not only in her God-motherhood, but also in her motherhood over all believers. The Lord bestows His Mother an absolute gift – to be the Defender and Advocate of all Christian sort, exactly those people who will reach the Deification in the Christ. Here again the thought of the reader, according to the author’s conception, should involuntarily return at the beginning of the dialogue of the Saviour and God’s Mother, exactly to the paraphrase of 19 chapter of the Gospel according to John. The 727 – 729 verses are the logic centre and the focus of the idea being developed and specified throughout the whole dialogue of the Theotokos and the Saviour. This idea is the new motherhood of the Theotokos, as new Eve – mother of the immortal and deified children of new Adam – Christ.

Hence, we can determine a quite steady semantic scheme of the tragedy: *a Greek dramatic art reminiscence with pagan content and sense → actual material of the tragedy with new sense providing evangelical and theological allusions → the evangelical paraphrase.*

For more detailed specification of the revealed semantic scheme, let’s address again to the text of «*Suffering Christ*». While answering the Son, the Mother of God says:

767.	Πέποιθα κοῦτι σοῖς ἀπιστῶ που λόγοις.	κάμοι τάδ' ἐστὶ λῶιστα, γιγνώσκω καλῶς <sup>31</sup>
768.	Κάμοι τάδ' ἐστὶ λῶιστα, γιγνώσκω καλῶς·	

<sup>29</sup> Cf.: Acts 2, 22-47.

<sup>30</sup> The children of Jason were called immortal because they were descendants of gods through the father – Jason who was the great-grandson of the god of winds Aeolus.

<sup>31</sup> TLG 0006. 036, line 935.

769.	ἔγώ σ' ἔτικτον, οἶδα δ' ὡς σ' ἐγεινάμην·	ἔτικτον αὐτούς· ζῆν δ' ὄτ' ἐξηύχου τέκνα <sup>32</sup>
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At first sight the ideas of texts is absolutely different<sup>33</sup>. Medea, while answering Jason's persuasions, promising to obey his will, actually has already been treacherously preparing the evil deed. The Theotokos emphasizes the God-motherhood as the main occurrence of all her life, which appeared her utter obedience to the will of God<sup>34</sup>. This obedience was the condition for our salvation. In this scene obedience and submissiveness of the Virgin to the will of the Creator is to go even further: the Theotokos is to resign herself to her Son's death and take up a cross of new motherhood over all believers. The text of the Greek tragedy helps to perceive the idea of the Christian tragedy, transforming the negative content to the positive. Medea's hypocrisy and false obedience is substituted by St. Mary's sincere obedience. The obedience brings visible results in the following verses of the tragedy filled with mercy and care:

790.	ἀλλ' οὐ γὰρ αὐτῶν φροντίδ' ὡς τέκνων ἔχω	ἀλλ' οὐ γὰρ αὐτῆς φροντίδ' ὡς τέκνων ἔχω. <sup>35</sup>
791.	μή πως πάθωσιν οἱ προσήκοντες σφίσι,	μή μοί τι δράσωσ' οἱ προσήκοντες γένει, μητρῶιον ἐκπράσσοντες ἀνόσιον φόνον. <sup>36</sup>
792.	πατρῶιον ἐκπράσσοντες ἀσεβῆ φόνον	
793.	ἀλλ' αὐτός, ᾧ σπλάγχνον, θηγενές φάος,	ᾧ φάος διογενές, κάτειργε κατάπαυσον ἔξελ' οἴκων τάλαιναν φονίαν τ' 'Ἐρινὺν τύπ' ἀλαστόρων. <sup>37</sup>
794.	κάτειργε, κατάπαυσον, ἔξελ' ἐκ φόνου	
795.	ἐγκατάλειμμα σπέρματος πεφιλμένου.	

The Theotokos says words of Jason who already knows Medea has murdered his new bride and he fears for the life of his children. In this case we can see the Greek drama semantics

<sup>32</sup> TLG 0006. 036, line 930.

<sup>33</sup> In general such state of affairs was considered quite normal for poetry of centon's genre. See: *Gasparov M. L., Ruzina E. G. Vergili i vergilianskie tsentony (Poetika formul i poetika reministsentsi) // Pamyatniki knizhnogo eposa. M., 1978. P. 204 (in Russian).*

<sup>34</sup> Cf.: Lk. 1, 38.

<sup>35</sup> TLG 0006. 036, line 1301.

<sup>36</sup> TLG 0006. 036, line 1304-1305.

<sup>37</sup> TLG 0006. 036, line 1258-1260.

transforms into the Christian work without any change. Jason's sincere anxiety corresponds to the same anxiety of the Theotokos. But if Jason worries about the destiny of his own children, the St. Virgin worries for children of the Jewish people who have crucified her Son.

The author of this play displays qualitatively new level of thinking and experiences of the Christian characters. The all-forgiving love of the Saviour and the Theotokos to their offenders and insulters – is something new that changes the sense of pagan reminiscences.

The grammatical form of the word-combination «Zeus's light» (φάος διογενές) changes in a very curious way. The more exact translation of this structure is «the light born by Zeus» or in a broader sense – «the light divine». In the tragedy the adjective «διογενές» is transformed by the author into «θεηγενές» – «born by God» and, thus, quite concrete pagan «Ζεύς» is substituted for quite concrete, personal «Θεός». In a pagan drama the light of Zeus must drive away Erinys – the goddess of vengeance, from the house of Medea, in the Christian tragedy the Light of God (i. e. Christ) must drive away the devil from hearts of the Jews wishing death of the God-man.

Two monologues of the Savior serve as the answer to the requests for the salvation of the descendants of Jews. Here is the first of them:

796.	Αἰνῶ, γύναι, τάδ', οὐδ' ἐκεῖνα μέμφομαι,	αἰνῶ, γύναι, τάδ', οὐδ' ἐκεῖνα μέμφομαι. <sup>38</sup>
797.	πολλῶν δ' ἔκητι τήνδε σοι δοῦναι χάριν	πολλῶν ἕκατι τήνδε σοι δοῦναι χάριν <sup>39</sup>
799.	Συλλήψομαι γὰρ τοῦδέ σοι πάμπαν σκοποῦ,	συλλήψομαι δὲ τοῦδέ σοι κάγῳ πόνου. <sup>40</sup>
800.	αὐτή τε γνοίης ζημίας ἀντιστροφῆν,	γνώσει γὰρ αὐτή ζημίας ἐπιστροφῆν. <sup>41</sup>
801.	ἀπαλλαγεῖσα τῆσδε τῆς ἀθυμίας.	

Christ praises the Mother of God for her mercy to the Jewish people in the same way as Jason praises Medea for her promise to serve his bride, but the deeds of both heroines are

<sup>38</sup> TLG 0006. 036, line 908.

<sup>39</sup> TLG 0006. 036, line 719.

<sup>40</sup> TLG 0006. 036, line 946.

<sup>41</sup> TLG 0006. 036, line 1223.



absolutely opposite. The Saviour promises his Mother to help to gain her purpose – salvation of her new children and everyone she petitions for. Medea, on the contrary, treacherously offers assistance which will result into death of those to whom it will be rendered. But the Mother of God in her human weakness wishes punishment to the men, who have crucified her Son. And to this Christ tells her the words of the Herald from the same “Medea” who predicts to the main character, who has committed the terrible murder of her children, all horrors of her condition.

The second monologue is verses 820 – 828:

820.	Στέγουσα νῦν ἄπιθι, μητέρα παρθένε	χαίρουσα καὶ σὺ στεῖχε, παρθέν' ὀλβία μακρὰν δὲ λείπεις ῥαϊδίως ὀμιλίαν. <sup>42</sup>
821.	λύω δὲ Πέτρῳ σφάλμα, χρηζούσης σέθεν	λύω δὲ νεῖκος πατρὶ χρηζούσης σέθεν καὶ γὰρ πάροιθε σοῖς ἐπειθόμην λόγοις. <sup>43</sup>
822.	καὶ γὰρ πάροιθεν σοῖς ἐπειθόμην λόγοις	
823.	σῆς εὐσεβείας κάγαθῆς φρενὸς χάριν.	ὄργαι κατασκήψουσιν ἔς τὸ σὸν δέμας, σῆς εὐσεβείας κάγαθῆς φρενὸς χάριν. <sup>44</sup>
825.	ἔλκει δὲ καὶ δάκρυα πολλὴν μου χάριν	καὶ σοὶ παραινῶ πατέρα μὴ στυγεῖν σέθεν, 'Ἰππόλυτ' ἔχεις γὰρ μοῖραν ἢ διεφθάρης. καὶ χαῖρ' ἐμοὶ γὰρ οὐ θέμις φθιτοὺς ὄρᾶν <sup>45</sup>
826.	καὶ πάντα λύει δεσμὸν ἀμπλακημάτων.	

<sup>42</sup> TLG 0006. 038, line 1440-1441.

<sup>43</sup> TLG 0006. 038, line 1442-1443.

<sup>44</sup> TLG 0006. 038, line 1418-1419.

<sup>45</sup> TLG 0006. 038, line 1435-1437.

827.	Σοί τ' αὖ παραινῶ, μηδένα βροτῶν στύγει,	
828.	μηδ' οἱ μ' ἀπηώρησαν ἀνόμως ξύλω.	

And here for the better understanding of the tragedy text the antique reminiscences help us. This Saviour's speech is borrowed from the dialogue of Hippolytus' dying of the unfair execution and his patroness and defender goddess Artemis. Hippolytus names Artemis "blessed" or more exactly "the blessed virgin" (παρθέν' ὀλβία). The author of the Christian tragedy uses this name in the other interpretation "The Virgin-Mother" (μῆτερ παρθένε). The analogy is obvious – the Saviour names the Theotokos using the same epithets, as Hippolytus for Artemis. Thereafter the Lord speaks about the forgiveness of Apostle Peter due to the protection, kind heart and piety of the Mother of God. Euripides' text for the 821st verse contrasts with the words of Hippolytus about the absolution of his father, Theseus, who ignorantly ruined his innocent son, Hippolytus. The semantic relation is straight: in the antique drama Theseus who sinned ignorantly, in the Christian drama – Apostle Peter, who infirmatively rejected Christ. But this semantic relation is possible for the certain reason: in the "Hippolytus" because of Artemis' application, in the tragedy – due to the prayers of the Theotokos. The last statement serves to connect by means of a certain allusion a reader's comprehension with the same 727-728 verses of the tragedy.

Apostle Peter who has rejected and faithful Apostle John, the child of the Mother of God, and her kind and pure heart (as well as the heart of innocent Hippolytus) is sorry for Peter and wishes him salvation. But one thing is to adopt Apostle Peter, and another – the men, who crucified the Saviour. Christ urges his Mother to give up hatred to the villains who have killed God. The Theotokos naturally in her maternity wishes vengeance on the murderers of her Son though she worries about their descendants. But her anger is not the anger of rage, but the anger of loving heart, and drama material underlying in the Saviour's words convinces us. The following answer of Hippolytus to Artemis' request for mercy for his father – Theseus shows the true character of this anger:

<...>λύω δὲ νεῖκος πατρὶ χρηιζούσης σέθεν

καὶ γὰρ πάροιθε σοῖς ἐπειθόμην λόγοις.

αἰαῖ, κατ' ὄσσω κιγχάνει μ' ἤδη σκότος

λαβοῦ πάτερ μου καὶ κατόρθωσον δέμας<sup>46</sup>.

<...>οὐ δῆτ', ἐπεὶ σε τοῦδ' ἐλευθερῶ φόνου<sup>47</sup>.

<...>ὦ χαῖρε καὶ σύ, χαῖρε πολλά μοι, πάτερ<sup>48</sup>.

It is really a typical example affectionate heart's anger, anger which arises for instance and soon after dissolves and vanishes in the sea of love. According to the author of the Christian tragedy, the Theotokos suffered the similar anger while observing the terrible Sufferings of her Son. The feeling of bewilderment, indignation, and even misunderstanding overflows her heart. This is the anger of the maternal heart, suffering the tortures of her beloved Son. The hatred of mother deprived of her child and the love for the insane people, "this rest of the beloved tribe" are struggling in her soul<sup>49</sup>. The author compares the state of the Theotokos' heart with the heart of Hippolytus. The latter is angry with the gods, indignant with the injustice of his punishment, the Theotokos is angry with murderers, longing for the answers and enlightenment from God.

Artemis, who appeared dying Hippolytus, assures him he will be revenged (though, it's not clear how). Having seen The Death appearing, she leaves the dying hero. Christ does not leave his Mother, He adopts all the believers to her here on earth, and after His death tramples it and His Resurrection resolves all the bewilderment of the God's Mother.

Thus, the considered material makes obvious, deeper understanding of theological sense of the tragedy «*Suffering Christ*» urges persistent reference to the meaning of the antique reminiscences. The meaning transformation of the reminiscences from pagan to Christian shows overcoming and solution to the unsolved problems in the Greek tragedies in the qualitatively new Christian drama content, what is to determine the reader in the definite Gospel allusions. The semantic scheme of the drama here is enclosed, the classical (antique) reminiscences transformed in the Christian drama plot, result in the paraphrased Gospel narration.

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<sup>46</sup> TLG 0006. 038, line 1442-1445.

<sup>47</sup> TLG 0006. 038, line 1449.

<sup>48</sup> TLG 0006. 038, line 1453.

<sup>49</sup> *Gregoire de Nazianze. La passion du Christ. Tragedie, introduction, texte critique, traduction notes et index de Andre Tuilier // Sources Chrétiennes. Paris, 1969, № 149. P. 190.*

**The list of abbreviations:**

TLG – Thesaurus Linguae Graecae's [Electronic resource] / CD-ROM # E (ancient Greek texts) contains 1823 authors and collections from the 8th century BC to the 1453 AD + MUSAIOS 2002 Release A (Copyright © 1992-2002. By Darl J. Dumont and Randall M Smith)

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