

The Apostle Paul's Discourse in Areopagus or the First Confrontation between the Heathen Philosophy and the Word of God in the European World

The Apostle Paul's discourse in Areopagus (Acts 17,15-34) means the start of the fight between the worlds of the first Christian century: the Christian world, formally represented at that time by a single man – Paul, and the heathen culture, supported not only by the financial and moral authority of the state, but also by two main philosophical directions, the Stoicism and the Epicureism. Among all the discourses of the Apostle Paul, marked in the Book of Acts (13:16-41; 20:18-35; 22:1-21; 24:10-21; 26:2-33), the discourse from Athens is a missionary one, specially addressed to the heathen Athenians, to citizens of Greek language and not to the Jews and having a more theological than Christological message, but with an indirect reference to Christ in its final part (v 31). Due to the lack of kerygmatic elements, which are present in the other missionary discourses of Saint Peter or Paul, the Athenian discourse expresses rather the reaction of a Jewish-Christian intermediary placed in front of the Greek-Roman culture, the intellectual curiosity of Greeks and the heathen devotion.