

## HISTORY OF THE LITURGICAL LIFE AND OF THE CHURCH WORSHIP – CHRISTIAN HYMNOGRAPHY, HYMNOLOGY, HYMNOGRAPHERS AND CHURCH CHANTERS

Hans-Joachim Schultz, in his treatise on the "Byzantine Liturgy", connects the iconography of the Church with the prayers of the Divine Liturgy and their interpretation by its great interpreters<sup>1</sup>. Robert Taft reinforces these words by stating that the order of celebration of the Divine Liturgy is in accord with the iconographic decoration, architecture and mystagogy of ritual elements, together forming the Byzantine liturgical system or Byzantine synthesis<sup>2</sup>. The liturgy is the body of Christ, from the architecture of the church to the iconographic scenes that put the life of the Savior in images, from the text of the Gospel spoken in worship to the hymnography that has the role of translating Scripture into the minds of believers, and from the preparation of earthly gifts of bread and wine to their transformation into the Body and Blood of the Savior as heavenly gifts. The liturgy gathers all the saving events eternized through the feasts and expresses them through iconography and the text of its prayers.

The great patristic period of the fourth century was the peak of the organization and development of public worship of the Church. The celebration of Christian worship was influenced by the writings of the Church Fathers. These patristic creations constitute the thematic common ground amidst the liturgical diversity of that time. Patristic thought, which has succeeded in

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<sup>1</sup> Hans-Joachim Schultz, *The Byzantine Liturgy. Symbolic Structure and Faith Expression*, translated by Matthew J. O'Connell, english edition introduced and reviewed by Robert Taft, S.J. Pueblo Publishing Company, New York, 1986, pp. 85-87.

<sup>2</sup> Robert F. Taft, *The Byzantine Rite. A Short History*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville Minnesota, 1993, p. 18.

influencing the unitary development of liturgical worship, is itself closely linked.

Thus, byzantine anaphoras are clothed with the correct Christological and Trinitarian teaching. Divine worship sings the doctrine of the Church through the voice of the creations of the great hymnographers. The Homilies of the Fathers composed for the great Christian feasts are, at the same time, commentaries on biblical texts that relate or foreshadow the event, but also readings or songs recited during the service of a feast or, at least, texts that managed to influence its hymnography. The homilies of the Fathers gave rise to the hymnography of the feast, between these two forms of praise to a feast, there being a close connection of language. Andrew Louth says that the hymnography of a feast is a homily in verse.

All these forms of divine worship have offered and continue to offer new perspectives and interpretations laid out by researchers in the field in the pages of their concerns. Taking into account some analyses from this branch of theology, the Journal "Theology and Life" dedicates in issue 9-12 for 2023 a thematic issue with studies in English and French that have at their center forms of liturgical life and divine worship, such as hymnography, hymnology, hymnographers and singers of the Church. This concern follows the proclamation by the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church of the year 2023 as *Commemorative Year of Hymnographers and Church Chanters*.

Taking this opportunity to thank all researchers who contributed with valuable studies to the achievement of this issue, we come to meet the reader with the presentation of the main ideas developed by them in the scientific studies included in the following pages.

Thus, Stefan Munteanu, in his study *Le Grand-Pretre, Figure Centrale du Judaïsme Pendant la Periode du Second Temple*, emphasizes the importance of the High Priest in the Old Testament, proposing the analysis of "three points: 1) the vocabulary of the «High Priest» in the OT; 2) the role of the «High Priest» during the Second Temple period (516 BCE-70 CE); 3) the expectation of a «High Priest» of the messianic times".

Lucian Farcașiu, in his study *The Theology of the Hymnography of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple Feast*, analyzes

the hymnographic themes arising from the proposed feast, highlighting the richness and beauty of the hymns sung on the occasion of this feast.

Serhii Shumylo, in *The Venerable Paisius Velychkovsky and the Fate of the Skete of the Prophet Elijah on Mount Athos in the Second Half of The XVIII Century – First Half of the XIX Century*, proposes an analysis of the Athonite monastic center and liturgical life at St. Elijah, a hermitage founded by St. Paisius Velychkovsky.

In his contribution, *The Pre-Festal Iambic Katavasiai of Sunday Before Christmas, Χριστὸς ἐν Πολεῖ... Palaeographical Musical Comments on the Composition of Petros Bereketis and the Interpretation of Grigorios Protopsaltis. Comparison with the Composition of Antonios Priest and Economos*, Ioannis Liakos brings to light the musical and compositional evolution of *Katavasiai Χριστὸς ἐν Πολεῖ... .*

Alexandru Prelipcean, in his study, *The Matter of Evil and Temptation in the Kontakion of Romanos the Melodist on the Temptation of Joseph (ΕΙΣ ΤΟΝ ΠΕΙΡΑΣΜΟΝ ΤΟΥ ΙΩΣΗΦ, 44[VI])*, explores, in a inedit way, two themes from a Roman Kontakion, analyzing the figure of Joseph as the prototype of the Saviour.

Panteleimon Champidis, through the study *The Participation of the Laity in the Ecclesiastical and Liturgical Life According to the Late Archimandrite Elias Mastrogiannopoulos (1919-2020)*, looks at the personality and liturgical thinking of an important figure of the Orthodox Church in Greece.

Romanos (Rabih) Joubran, in his study *Andraos Mouaikel: The First Cantor of the Saint George Cathedral in Beirut (1890-1964)*, leads us into the Syrian world of church singing and introduces us to a great church singer from that area.

The following study, *A Unique Hymnographical Work of a Moldavian Metropolitan and one of the Last Byzantine Kanones on the Dormition: Κανὼν εἰς τὴν κοιμήσιν τῆς θεοτόκου τοῦ μητροπολίτου Μολδοβλαχίας Ἰωακείμ (text edition)*, signed by Ilarion M Argatu, gives us a Canon inedit text "of the single Greek hymnographical composition of a Moldavian Metropolitan", Joachim of Moldovlahia.

Bogdan Andrei, through *Missiological Dimensions in Orthodox Christian Hymnography*, gives us a general perspective of the "missiological dimensions embedded within Orthodox hymns,

revealing their profound role in transmitting theological truths and fostering a sense of mission”.

Through his study, *The Liturgical Book of Pentecostarion. Evolution and Synthesis*, Gherasim Soca manages to introduce us to the contents of “The Pentecostarion, one of the most beautiful liturgical books in the Orthodox Church”, appellation offered because of the hymnographic richness that sings in liturgical tone the days after the Feast of the Resurrection and prepares us for the reception of the Holy Spirit.

Zoe Tsiami, in *Saintly Naming the Role of Christian Saints in Late Antique Naming Practices in Asia Minor*, proposes an analysis of the importance of the names of saints in antiquity and their adoption as names given to newborns in Christian families, from a liturgical perspective.

Marian Bota, through *The Eucharistic Liturgies of the Anglo-Roman Rite in the Eastern Orthodox Church. Historical, Structural and Doctrinal-Mystagogical Overview*, leads us into the liturgical tradition of the Western Rite, analyzing origin and evolution of the Anglo-Roman Rite.

The volume concludes with a hearty review of the newly published book of liturgical and pastoral studies writes by Rev. Prof. PhD Viorel Sava, *Priestly Service in a Contemporary Context. Studies of Liturgical and Pastoral Theology*, Crimca Publishing House, Suceava, 2023, review by Lucian Farcașiu.

With the hope that the studies presented in this issue will succeed in fitting into the treasury of liturgical analyses carried out by researchers in the field, we offer the interested public a new contribution from this area that always seems inexhaustible, given that the forms of divine worship, whether lived in prayer or studied in the library, embellish the liturgical life of every christian.

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