

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])*

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Abstract

The theological theme of the second kontakion dedicated by Saint Romanos the Melodist to the righteous Joseph of the Old Testament may be approached from several perspectives. The contemporary studies dedicated to this kontakion have worked off directly either the philological problem of the sources or the person of Joseph as an "athlete" of patience, or they have focused on the wife of Potiphar and her actions related to Joseph. Therefore, in this study we are concerned with the manner in which evil and temptation are in a continuous "ambiance" and how Joseph opposes this problem, becoming a typos of the Christian ascetic or chastity.

Keywords: Romanos the Melodist, On the Temptation of Joseph, temptation, evil, kontakion, Byzantine hymnography

Status quaestionis

Kontakion 44(VI) by Saint Romanos the Melodist¹ is especially dedicated to a dramatic dialogue² which has as prota-

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¹ We maintain the numbering according to the edition: Paul Maas/ C.A. Trypanis (ed.), *Sancti Romani Melodi Cantica*, vol. I: *Cantica genuina*, At The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1963, pp. 354-367 [after this numbering, we introduced in brackets and using Romn figures the edition of José Grosdidier de Matons (*Romanos le Mélode. Hymnes*, vol. I, col. „Sources Chrétiennes”, 99, Les Éditions du Cerf, Paris, 1964, pp. 258-293)]. For other critical editions of the same kontakion, see (in diachronic order): Joannes Baptista Pitra, *Analecta sacra spicilegio solemnensi parata*, tom. I, X, A. Jouby et Roger, Bibliopolis, Paris, 1876, pp. 67-77; Νικολάου