

Kariofilis Mitsakis, *Byzantine Hymnography*, v. 1, *From the New Testament to the Iconoclast Controversy*, Thessaloniki, Patriarchal Institute of Patristic Studies, 1971, pp. 588, [History of Christian Literature Series, No. 1].

This illustrious volume is the first in the «History of Christian Literature Series», published by the Patriarchal Institute of Patristic Studies in Thessaloniki. I must say outright that it is a magnificent and truly valuable work, a work of great calibre which honours the author, the Patriarchal Institute, and Byzantine studies in general.

As he points out in the Prologue, Prof. Mitsakis spent almost ten years writing the first volume of *Byzantine Hymnography*. During his years as Professor of Byzantine and Modern Greek Literature, in Europe and the U.S.A., he devoted his time researching into Byzantine hymnography and topics related to it, and it was in a spirit of love and tenderness that he wrote and rewrote the book, in Washington, Oxford and Thessaloniki, until shaping it into its final form. Furthermore, having been blessed with access to some of the world's finest libraries, he has managed to build a monument to Byzantine hymnography, a work where one might find whatever of importance has been written on this subject in the basic languages used by Byzantinists. However, what is possibly of more importance is that Prof. Mitsakis treats the problems of the authors and the texts he examines objectively by providing relevant quotations from the texts, and from the opinions of other scholars, even when he is not in agreement with them; he gives the reader the opportunity to place himself critically before the problems that arise out of scholarly research.

The author is well-known in Byzantinist circles on account of a large number of longer and shorter publications, on Byzantine and Modern Greek subjects, which have been published in book form or as articles in esteemed Greek and foreign scholarly journals. I shall restrict myself to one example only: it is impossible to talk about the language and the style of Romanos the Melodist, without reference to the famous book the author devoted to the subject. One feels certain that this will be the case with his new book which is in no way reminiscent of student guides, or of the old introduction manuals.

Naturally, in scholarship as in life, nothing escapes the dues of time; still, there are books that have to be rewritten every year to avoid becoming outdated, and others that may stand matchless for one or two generations. In contrast to the author, I am of the opinion that Prof. Mitsakis' book will not become outdated, and that it will be an enlightened guide and a valuable advisor to those who «love and study *Byzantine Hymnography*».

I shall start with a brief outline of the contents of the book which is divided into three large sections:

1. Greek Christian Hymnography from the Years of the New Testament to the End of the Fifth Century (pp. 39-168).
2. The First Great Blossoming of Byzantine Hymnography: the Poetry of the Kontakia (pp. 171-353).
3. The Poets and Hymnographers in the Heyday of the Kontakion (pp. 357-530).

Before the first section there is the short author's Prologue, and the Introduction; in between them are the tables of abbreviations of a) Festschriften, publications, periodicals and acts, b) books and articles, c) texts, d) scholarly terms. The second set of tables—books and articles—is the longest (pp. 15-31), and gives the basic bibliography on the general and more specific topics examined in the book.

Similarly, there are two most useful appendices after the third section. In the first of these, the author provides us with an «Analytical bibliography of the kontakia of Romanos». The book closes with three tables of indices: of persons, of objects, of texts.

The book is also subdivided into six parts, independent of the aforesaid sections. Thus the first, second, and third parts come in section 1; the fourth part in section 2; the fifth and sixth parts in section 3. Obviously, these parts are further divided into chapters, paragraphs, etc. so that the examination of the material might be more systematic.

In the first part, the author examines the early liturgical hymns written in rhythmic prose and stress meters. It is one of the finest parts of the book, and forms the foundation upon which the reader will build with the knowledge derived from *Byzantine Hymnography*. Needless to say, what is treated here is not Byzantine hymnography but the hymnography of the early Christian Church; still, it is not out-of-place, as it forms the roots and the beginnings of the Byzantine one, and as the book forms a mainly historical and critical introduction to the subject. In this way, we have the opportunity to see the problems involved in the hymns of the early Church, in the hymns written in quantitative and stress metres, along with the fine contribution to the heretical hymnography of the early Christian centuries.

In the second part, he examines the religious non-ecclesiastical or liturgical hymns written in quantitative and stress metres. Here, too, we encounter an extremely thorough search of the sources combined with the author's honesty in the objective exposé; but the author goes further and supplies his personal estimates, his own comments on persons and texts.

In the third part, the author examines, in as brief a manner as possible, the themes of the heretical hymnography of the early Christian centuries, and supplies quotations from the relevant texts. Quite correctly, the author stresses, at the end of the sixth chapter, that *«despite the fact that heretical hymnography will be driven to oblivion by the anathema of the Church and will disappear leaving practically no traces behind, it will give the first major impetus to Orthodox hymnography which will blossom and bear fruit in the centuries to come and will constitute, together with ecclesiastical architecture and painting, the most genuine expression of Byzantine piety, spirituality, and esthetics»*.

Section 2 contains only one part (part four), which is probably the most important in the book as it concerns the first major blossoming of Byzantine hymnography, the poetry of the kontakia. It thoroughly examines the history and morphology of the kontakion in the following seven chapters: 1) The Genesis of the Kontakion, 2) The Music and the Musical Recitation of the Kontakion, 3) The Prooimium, 4) The Strophes, 5) The Refrain, 6) The Acrostics, 7) The Metrics of the Kontakion.

A very interesting chapter entitled «The kontakion and religious theatre», appears as an appendix to the fourth part. Despite all the rough ground, the author moves with surprising ease, systematically explaining the researches and conclusions of various scholars concerned with Byzantine hymnography. He does this with such honesty that he occasionally provides, out of objectivity, the contradicting opinions and theories of one and the same scholar. In the first chapter, the author appears to swing towards the theories of Emereau, Maas, and Wellesz concerning the roots and the beginnings of the kontakion, and he meticulously supplies the relevant arguments.

For the benefit of the non-specialist, one could, at this point, include a definition of the term «kontakion»: *«The term 'kontakion', coined later, signifying a religious hymn, is first encountered in the ninth and tenth centuries and must be related to the corresponding*

technical term in *Diplomatic*, where it originally referred to the book where copies of official documents were held. The *kontakia*, therefore, must have originally been the ecclesiastical books where various hymns were collected for liturgical use. Later, through the process of synecdoche, the term *kontakion* came to refer to the hymns themselves, whereas the books were named '*kontakaria*' (similarly there are the '*Theotokaria*'—liturgical books containing hymns of praise to the *Theotokos*). The manuscript collections of *kontakia*, as we now know them, appear to continue a very long tradition though their use has remained rather enigmatic, and support this theory of evolution of the *kontakion*. Thus the various *kontakaria* that have reached our days are relics of collections originally composed for a more general liturgical use and later, when the *kontakion* fell into disuse, for private use, though it cannot be certain that they were not employed in later times (on a limited scale) for liturgical purposes».

In the second chapter the author examines one of the most difficult and thorny problems, that of the music of the *kontakion*. Naturally, «any correlation with the old musical tradition is problematic» since the earliest surviving pieces of music, scarce as they are, do not go beyond the thirteenth century. The author informs us that the singing of the *kontakion* by a chorus is out of the question, as is the existence of cantative music. He comes, in agreement with Maas, Emereau, Fytrakis, Wellesz, and Werner, to the probable conclusion that «the *kontakion* must have been sung by one person only, in a manner resembling musical recitation (*recitativo*)».

In the third chapter, he examines in detail topics concerned with the prooemia, along with the problems of *kontakia* with more than one prooemium.

In the fourth chapter he examines the historical and critical problems of the strophes of the *kontakion*, their relation to the *eirmos* and each other. In the fifth, he exhaustively treats the problems relating to the refrain, and in the sixth those, by no means few, relating to the acrostic.

The seventh chapter could well have been presented as a self-sufficient original study; it is concerned with the metrical patterns of *kontakia* (pp. 266-329) which each scholar interprets in his own way if he does not find a previous theory to his liking. The author examines the theories and opinions of all scholars, and the reader can see in perspective whatever has been written on Byzantine metrics, and especially on the metrics of the *kontakion*. In a way, therefore, what we have is a codification of all these opinions and theories. Naturally most scholars start with Romanos and do not go any further, a fact which is inescapable as the works of other *kontakion*-writers are as yet unpublished and hence unknown.

What the reader will thoroughly enjoy, in this chapter, is the ease with which the author moves in this most difficult field; even if one does not agree with the author he has to appreciate the solemnity of his thoughts and the objectivity of his presentation of complex problems such as those of stress, isosyllaby, homotony etc., which brings them to life.

The eighth chapter, entitled «The *kontakion* and religious theatre» (pp.330-333), comes as an appendix to the fourth part. Prof. Mitsakis surveys the history of the topic, and presents the postulations and misunderstandings of various scholars. Most of these misunderstandings arise out of the books by Sathas and Cottas. The author will here permit me to hold some of my reservations on whether «*Christus Patiens*» is a genuine work of St. Gregory of Nazianzos; Tuilier's work is admittedly good but not absolutely convincing. The author seems to insist on this point, to facilitate the correction of misunderstandings and misconceptions concerning the probability that *kontakia* that have a dramatic element might have

been acted in a theatre or written to be staged, misconceptions that have frequently found official advocates.

Section 3, the last large section of the book, is devoted to the melodists and poets of the heyday of the kontakion, and contains the fifth and sixth parts.

Of these two, the fifth part extends over more than 150 pages (357-509) and is, without any exaggeration, the fullest and most systematic study on Romanos that has been written up to now. The titles of the individual chapters are the following: 1. A Biographical Sketch of Romanos, 2. Romanos' Works, 3. Romanos' Sources, 4. The Doctrines of Romanos, 5. Romanos and the Ancient World, 6. Romanos' Art, 7. The Language of Romanos. Finally, as an appendix, there follows a chapter entitled: Romanos and the Akathistos Hymn.

In the chapter under the very modest title «Biographical Sketch» we find a very successful attempt at writing the biography of Romanos, drawing upon the various synaxaria, upon hymnographical texts concerning the poet, and upon internal evidence born out of systematic examination of the kontakia. The opinions of all scholars are treated objectively and in the end, the author gives us an outline of Romanos' life, in his own manner.

The second chapter is concerned with the problems related to the amount and the genuineness of Romanos' work. Naturally, the number of up to a thousand kontakia supplied by the various synaxaria must be considered as one of those frequent exaggerations that can only indicate that Romanos wrote a large number of poems. In reality, it is doubtful that his kontakia amount up to a hundred; still, scholars quite naturally suspect that some of the works attributed to Romanos were, in fact, written by younger poets who for various reasons signed them with his name. This happens especially with kontakia concerning figures of saints.

The author, then, focuses on the issues of the style, diction, acrostic, refrain, metrics, and doctrine of the so-called hagiological kontakia, and in the end he says; «*In spite of all we have said in this chapter concerning the criteria of genuineness, the conclusion is that the distinction between the dubious and the genuine kontakia is problematic*». He goes on to state that «*the tradition of Romanos' kontakia appears particularly confused and mixed. This is essentially on two accounts; on one hand, the changes that took place in poetry, music, the festal digest, the typikon of the liturgy, during later times, imposed various versions whose result was the distortion of the original nature of Romanos' works; on the other hand, the name of the great hymnographer was used, also in later times, either because of chauvinism (to honour a local saint, a city, a temple), or because of a wish for 'immortality' (so that the works of minor poets might survive even under a different name). It is in this gradual and inevitable decay that one may see the resistance Romanos' works offer to the external conditions that constantly change and threaten to obscure them. When, in the end, the changes become so radical that his work can no longer cope, it will be almost totally abandoned and buried in the dust of monastery libraries*».

In the third chapter of the same section, the author examines the sources for Romanos. He disagrees with the scholars who doubt the use of such a study for, as he says, «*there are serious arguments, both philological and historical, beyond the viewpoint of literary criticism, which support the systematic study of the sources. Such a study enables us to form a picture of the personality of the poet, of the kind and quality of his erudition, of the influences on his work, and, above all, of the way in which he exploited a material restricted and defined by tradition to attain a 'personal' expression*».

In the fourth chapter, the author briefly surveys any points of doctrine in Romanos'

works. The title «The Doctrines of Romanos» appears to me as a trifle too serious, but this chapter has the virtue of brevity and clarity, and I appreciate it. Despite the author's wish to leave the theological examination of the doctrines of Romanos to the theologians, I do not think that there are such elements in Romanos' works to merit a study.

In the fifth chapter of the *Byzantine Hymnography*, Prof. Mitsakis writes on the subject of «Romanos and the Ancient World». It is worth quoting here the concluding paragraph of this chapter: *«From what his actual work allows us to see, Romanos does not appear to ignore the grandeur of the ancient world, yet he seems to have only a very superficial knowledge of it. He was, after all, a Syrian nobleman and not a Greek by origin which would have enabled him to become, even if unconsciously, the bearer of the classical tradition that survives in many indirect ways in daily life of the Greeks. Nevertheless, he does not hate the Greeks, as Alexis Solomos recently claimed. His negative stand towards the ancient world was dictated by the particular nature of his works, as well as by Justinian's ecclesiastical policy which tried to obliterate the last pagan remnants. It has to be remembered that the great hymnographer wrote and composed kontakia which were then read out from the pulpit of the churches; they were not so to speak mere poetical or musical compositions but a constructive sermon that demanded the expositions of the spiritual and moral values of Christianity rather than those of ancient philosophy».*

The sixth chapter, «Romanos' Art», is relatively short, and could, in my opinion be largely expanded. The author is not content with generalities and approaches certain, unfortunately few, kontakia, discussing their poetic merit and thus opening for us the marvellous world of Byzantine Romanos.

The seventh chapter, «The Language of Romanos», is also short. Prof. Mitsakis is the authority on the subject as he has studied more than anyone the problems of language in the kontakia, and published a book on the subject some years ago. The chapter here is confined to the neologisms in grammar and syntax.

The eighth chapter appears as an appendix to the part concerned with Romanos, and is fairly long; it is entitled «Romanos and the Akathistos». The bibliography on the Akathistos Hymn is already extensive, and the problems relating to it have been viewed from every angle. The most paradoxical theories regarding its value, genuinity, date, or authorship have appeared. The Orthodox faithful accept it as a masterpiece and flock into the churches to listen to it during the weeks of the so-called «Salutations». No problems here. The problems are born out of academic research. The author examines systematically all the known theories, far too well known for us to mention here. The author clarifies, by arguing on philological grounds, the theories both for and against the hypothesis that Romanos was the author of the Akathistos. Prof. Mitsakis sees the need to *«examine all the common points between the Akathistos and the works of Romanos, for this is the only way that the identification of the author of the Hymn with Romanos will cease to be a mere hypothesis based on historical coincidence, and will appear as a possible and very probable argument reinforced by internal evidence».*

The author goes on to discuss this internal evidence in six of Romanos' hymns, along with the liturgical position of the Akathistos—about which few solid facts are known—and concludes: *«Thus, it is not only the historical coincidence that favours the identification of Romanos with the poet of the Akathistos; to this should be added the numerous pieces of internal evidence which make the proposition very probable».*

The sixth part is entitled «Other Hymnographers of the Heyday of the Kontakion»,

and is divided into two chapters: 1) Hymnographers of Romanos' Era, and 2) The Decline of the Kontakion.

In the first of these chapters, the author is concerned with the hymnographers Anastasios, George, Gregory, Domitios (though there are many doubts about his real existence), Elias, Job(ius), Cosmas, Coucoulos (regarded as non-existent by scholars), and Cyriacos. In the beginning of the chapter, he informs us that *«the hymnographers for whom there is concrete evidence (e.g. Theodore the Studite or Joseph the Hymnographer), or simply many indications (e.g. 'Abbas', Arsenios, Gabriel, Ioannes, Ioannicios, Leon, Orestes, Paul, Stephen, and Symeon), belong to a later era, the era of the decline of the kontakion, and will, therefore, be examined in the second volume of the Byzantine Hymnography»*.

In the second chapter, which is also the Epilogue of the whole volume, the author gives us a broad outline of the various theories that try to explain the decline of the kontakion. He distinguishes three eras in the development of the genre: a) The heyday period (6th-7th cent.), b) the period of decline (8th-11th cent.), and c) the period of survival (10th-14th cent.). The whole of this chapter evokes sad thoughts; it is as if the author were performing the burial service for the kontakion. He writes: *«it is with sorrow that one realises, when looking through the various ecclesiastical books, that only relics (usually the prooimium and the first strophe) from the once so rich poetry of the kontakia have survived and are used as interludes, that is to say as interpolated troparia between the sixth and the seventh ode of the Canons»*. The author then continues with the problem that has as yet been unanswered: *«Despite the many attempts at solving it, the question of the decline and banishment of the kontakia from the liturgies of the Church, still remains a puzzle for researchers in Byzantine hymnography»*. The author follows the many opinions and theories, and states his own at the end of the chapter: *«Most scholars attribute the decline of the kontakion to the appearance of a new hymnographical genre, of a musically more flexible and rich genre which responded in a better way to the spirit of an era that demanded the more doctrinal poetry of the canons, after the essentially christological turmoil of the iconoclast controversy. It is not known when this new hymnographical genre developed. In the Rylands Papyrus No. 466 which dates in the later half of the seventh century (after 642), and constitutes our earliest testimony, the canon appears with all its characteristics intact. Nevertheless, the existence of a new literary genre does not necessarily imply the banishment of the earlier ones. Indeed, we find that, in our case, the two major genres of Byzantine hymnography, which have certain affinities concerning their form, co-exist side by side. Their respective nature and liturgical position are different, and the only major difference between them is in their music. The canon, with its nine different tunes of the odes, presents a greater musical variety and by far surpasses the kontakion. In the latter, the focus was on the poetry and the music, which was very simple, had an auxiliary quality. In the canon, the terms are reversed in favour of the musical element. Thus the kontakion lacks in terms of music and consequently loses ground to the canon. Still, the kontakion had its liturgical place and its survival was guaranteed even if obscured by the canon, as long as it retained its particular nature of the poetical homily. Its position became precarious from the moment it became simply a hagiological encomium (and this happened fairly early, as we have said) because, on the one hand the kontakion thus lost its support, and on the other it more or less coincided with the canon. The fact that the kontakion endured the competition with the canon for so long must be attributed to the conservative stand of the Church towards any liturgical innovations. All the same, the kontakion gradually atrophied to the extent that, even in terms of form, it coincided with the canon; one of the very*

*short later-day kontakia, which consists of a prooimium and three strophes (the acrostic being ὠδή) does not differ in any way from an ode of an hagiological canon. When it reached this corrupt state, the disappearance of the kontakion was virtually unavoidable. Thus only relics and fragments have survived from the earlier poetry of the kontakion, because they were given a new liturgical place as inter-ode interludes. So, a poetical genre that started with such magnificence and produced a poet as great as Romanos the Melodist, survived for many centuries within the protective framework of the Church, but dwindled and disappeared in the end, because it lacked the necessary qualities for any renovation».*

The first volume of Prof. Mitsakis' *Byzantine Hymnography* is a work of research and experience. Happily enough, the author is still very young and thus we can not only wish for, but also expect, the second volume of this opus which will be devoted to the poetry of the canons. This expectation brings great joy to us, but should evoke, in the author, a sense of duty, of the duty to complete this monumental work on the Byzantine Hymnography of the Orthodox Church.

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Robin Alison Remington, *The Warsaw Pact, Case Studies in Communist Conflict Resolution*, Cambridge, Mass., The MIT Press, 1971, pp. 198 + Documents.

Professor Remington opens her book on the Warsaw Pact with a selection from Cavafy's poem «Expecting the Barbarians», noting that «Those people» were not, in fact, a solution. She goes on to elaborate upon the ambivalence in the minds of the Soviet leadership regarding the purpose of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, offering examples in which it is clear that warding off external threats was at the center of the founders' intentions, and others in which ideological or communitarian considerations are paramount. This ambiguity of intention, Remington observes, has contributed to the apparent schizophrenia of the WTO members, particularly of the Soviet Union, in attempting to cope with the successive challenges which the organization has faced. Complicating these two motivations, Remington adds, were divisions in the Soviet leadership and the reciprocal influences of one or another vision of the role of the WTO and the standing of its spokesman in Moscow.

As Remington demonstrates in great detail, it is not only the senior partner which has set the tone of the organization. A content analysis of speeches and position papers of all member states reveals considerable differences in the relative weight which each has given to the variety of issues facing the alliance (pp. 42-46). The importance of the WTO to the Soviet Union is illuminated in the successive attempts which the superpower has made to link the Pact with the Chinese threat. Its failure to do so indicates the strength of East European interpretations of the Pact's geographical limitations (pp. 77, 137-140). In separate analyses of the conflicts to which these differences gave rise, that is, of the Hungarian crisis of 1956, the break with Albania, the Rumanian challenge to Soviet authority in foreign policy, the invasion of Czechoslovakia, and wider matters of détente, especially those concerning normalization of relations with West Germany, Remington seeks to establish, in effect, whether the Pact had taken on a meaning beyond its temporary and convenient use as an instrument of Soviet policy and whether its role and the members' perceptions of that role changed from one challenge to the next. These analyses are exceptionally thorough. Armed with the impressive resources of MIT's Center for International Studies, Remington surveyed WTO documents, newspapers and radio broadcasts of the mem-