
Alexandru IONIȚĂ (ed.), *Imnografia liturgică bizantină. Perspective critice*, Presa Universitară Clujeană Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2019, pp. 347. [Studia Oecumenica 13]

The work edited by Alexandru Ioniță, namely anume *Imnografia liturgică bizantină. Perspective critice* (Byzantine Liturgical Hymnography. Critical Perspectives) is published within the research project funded by UEFISCDI: "Jewish-Christian dialogue in the twentieth century between tolerance and anti-Semitism: documents, interpretations and perspectives for the Orthodox Christian context" and appeared in the collection *Studia Oecumenica 13*, edited by Sibiu Ecumenical Research Center, "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu, ed. Prof. Dr. Aurel Pavel.

The volume includes a Foreword by Fr. Prof Constantin Oancea and fully-documented parts, the first entitled *Orthodox Hymnography and Anti-Judaism*, which includes the following contributions: Michael Azar, Prophetic Matrix and Theological Paradox: Jews and Judaism in the Holy Week and Easter Rituals in the Orthodox Church; Ioannis Mourtzios, The Phenomenon

of Anti-Semitism and the Orthodox Church. The liturgical texts of the Holy Week; Bogdan G. Bucur, Anti-Jewish Rhetoric in Byzantine Hymnography: Exegetical and Theological Contextualization; Éliane Poirot, The permanence of the covenant and the Byzantine liturgical texts; Alexandru Ioniță, Old wine in new bellows: Romans 9-11 as a source of inspiration for new hymnographic creations. The second part is entitled *Bible and Liturgy*, and includes the following studies: Derek Krueger, The Penitential Bible and the Grand Canon of Andrew of Crete, Doru Costache, Byzantine Understandings: The Book of Genesis, Theology and Spirituality in the Grand Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete; Alexandru Prelipcean, The image of Moses in the kondakions of Saint Romanus the Melodist. Brief comments; Andrew Mellas, Liturgical Emotions in the Byzantine Hymns: *On the Victory of the Cross* by Romanus the Melodist; Alexandru Prelipcean, The references to Christ in the Text of

the Lord's Burial; Cosmin Pricop, The reception of the Scripture in Liturgical Texts. A case study: the Orthodox service of Betrothal; Stelian Pașca-Tușa, Psalm 119 [118] - the lyrical praise of the Torah: from Scripture to Liturgy.

All these remarkable works address various current issues, focusing on the research of liturgical sources, on the one hand, and on knowing texts specific to Orthodoxy, on the other hand. An important part is dedicated to the Great Canon of Andrew the Crete, the Byzantine hymns, but also the reception of the texts of the Holy Scripture in the liturgical texts. It is well known that the Holy Fathers, through their exegesis to sacred texts, occupy an important place in Orthodox theology, in the church, but hymns and prayers are other means of making biblical texts more accessible. Likewise, the sacred chanting, through the invitation to experience godly emotions, leads us to the more insightful state of prayer. Andrew Mellas argues that “in hymnography, desires or emotions were not suspended, but united with the otherness of the holiness and were invited to an ever intensifying and passionate participation with the «Creator of the ages» who, taking human shape, He Himself united with human nature. (p. 268).

The presented volume also arouses interest by publishing texts with anti-Jewish content in the Orthodox liturgical hymnography. In this context, we emphasize the position of Fr. Oancea who highlights that “the appearance of these texts at a certain point in history is accountable” (p. 8) and that “the lack of a serious and objective debate on anti-Semitism in Romania in the first half of the twentieth century” (p. 8) overlaps with poor knowledge of church life during communism.

We welcome the appearance of this remarkable work for liturgical research and propose it for a thorough reading, in order to get familiar with and understand the arguments of those who noticed the presence of some texts with anti-Jewish content in the Orthodox liturgical hymnography. Such a debate aroused the interest of theologians as well as the negative reactions of those who consider these texts intangible. As Fr. Oancea asserts, the volume addresses “both categories: equally those who support the censorship of anti-Jewish texts and those who flirt with the anti-Jewish clichés of Romanian interwar anti-Semitism” (p. 8).

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