



Université d'Ottawa • University of Ottawa



# Université d'Ottawa - University of Ottawa

FACULTÉ DES ÉTUDES SUPÉRIEURES  
ET POSTDOCTORALES

FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND  
POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

**Brian Anastasi BUTCHER**

AUTEUR DE LA THÈSE - AUTHOR OF THESIS

**M.A. (Theology)**

GRADE - DEGREE

**Faculty of Theology - University Saint-Paul**

FACULTÉ, ÉCOLE, DÉPARTEMENT - FACULTY, SCHOOL, DEPARTMENT

TITRE DE LA THÈSE - TITLE OF THE THESIS

**Convolutd Conjugalitd  
Hymnographic Repression, Transference and Co-optation in the  
Byzantine Sanctoral's Commemoration of Married Saints**

**P. Galadza**

DIRECTEUR DE LA THÈSE - THESIS SUPERVISOR

CO-DIRECTEUR DE LA THÈSE - THESIS CO-SUPERVISOR

EXAMINATEURS DE LA THÈSE - THESIS EXAMINERS

**K. Coyle**

**J. Gibaut**

**J.-M. De Koninck, Ph.D.**

LE DOYEN DE LA FACULTÉ DES ÉTUDES  
SUPÉRIEURES ET POSTDOCTORALES

SIGNATURE

DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE  
AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

**Convoluted Conjugality**

*Hymnographic Repression, Transference and Co-optation in the  
Byzantine Sanctoral's Commemoration of Married Saints*

by

Brian Anastasi Butcher

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Theology, Saint Paul University, in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Theology.

Ottawa, Canada

April 30, 2003



National Library  
of Canada

Bibliothèque nationale  
du Canada

Acquisitions and  
Bibliographic Services

Acquisitons et  
services bibliographiques

395 Wellington Street  
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4  
Canada

395, rue Wellington  
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4  
Canada

*Your file* *Votre référence*  
*ISBN: 0-612-90039-8*  
*Our file* *Notre référence*  
*ISBN: 0-612-90039-8*

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

---

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this dissertation.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de ce manuscrit.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the dissertation.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.

**Canada**

## SUMMARY

### **Convolutd Conjugalit:**

#### ***Hymnographic Repression, Transference and Co-optation in the***

#### ***Byzantine Sanctoral's Commemoration of Married Saints***

Brian Anastasi Butcher

*A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Theology, Saint Paul University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Theology. Ottawa, Canada. April 30, 2003.*

This thesis examines the hymnography of the services for married saints in the Byzantine-Rite *Menaion* ("Book of Months"), with a view to identifying the theology of marriage that it presents. It is an exercise in liturgical theology, as conceived of by Alexander Schmemmann. The first part of the paper introduces the topic, its contemporary relevance and the methodology that will be employed in the study. The second surveys the thought of representative Eastern Orthodox and Byzantine-Rite Catholic theologians regarding marriage, in order to establish a theological reference point for the liturgical analysis of the hymnography. The third part provides a historical contextualization of the theory and practice of marriage in Middle Byzantium and of the development and codification of the *Menaion*. The hymnographic texts themselves are categorized and critiqued in the fourth part. The thesis concludes with an evaluation of the theology of marriage that obtains in the *Menaion*, a consideration of its discrepancy with the thought of the theologians surveyed in Part II, and a reflection upon the consequent pastoral implications.

To Fr. Peter Galadza, whose intellectual passion, love for the Church and integrity,  
not only as a professor and priest, but as a husband and father,  
have been a constant source of inspiration to me.

And to my wife Jean, my “wonder woman,” without whom I would not be who I am.  
May the Lord “receive [our] crowns into [His] kingdom,  
preserving them spotless, blameless, and without reproach, unto ages of ages.”

## **Table of Contents**

### **I. Introduction**

- i. Orientation
- ii. Contemporary Relevance
- iii. Methodology

### **II. Modern Eastern Christian Theology of Marriage - the *point de départ***

- i. *Status Quaestione*
- ii. Sacramental/Liturgical Perspectives: Schmemmann, Fotiou, Zion, Petras, M. Evdokimov
- iii. Historical/Doctrinal Perspectives: Meyendorff, Ware, L'Huilier
- iv. Philosophical/Psychological Perspectives: P. Evdokimov, Chryssavgis, Ugolnik
- v. Summary

### **III. Historical Background to Theory and Praxis of Marriage in Middle Byzantium**

- i. Significance
- ii. Nuptial Mores and Customs
- iii. Discipline and Theology of Marriage
- iv. Relevance of a Monastic *Weltanschauung*
- v. Sexuality and Spirituality
- vi. Origins of the *Menaion*

### **IV. The Liturgical Theology of Marriage in the *Menaion's* Services for Married Saints**

- i. Sources
- ii. Initial Observations
- iii. *Modus Operandi*
- iv. Nomenclature and Definitions
- v. Righteous Israelites
- vi. Martyrs
- vii. Celibate Spouses
- viii. Absentee Husbands
- ix. Monastic Widows
- x. Wonder Women

### **V. Evaluation and Conclusion**

### **VI. Bibliography**

*“Haven't you read,” Jesus replied,  
“that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said,  
‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife,  
and the two will become one flesh’ ? So they are no longer two, but one.  
Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.”<sup>1</sup>*

*“The charisms and privileges of virginity are heavenly and superior,  
and have no comparison with marriage...”  
The contrast between [them] is the same as the comparison of  
“honey with bile, wine with mud, and Jerusalem with Samaria.”<sup>2</sup>*

## **I. Introduction**

### ***i. Orientation***

A *topos* in Eastern Christian theology is the principle *legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi*, “let the law of prayer establish the law of belief.”<sup>3</sup> Upon examination, however, it becomes questionable as to whether the liturgical theology of the Byzantine Tradition can indeed be credited with the vision of marriage espoused by modern Orthodox theologians. While the *lex orandi* is by no means to be identified exclusively with hymnography, it is nonetheless true that the Byzantine tradition gives overwhelming pride of place to the singing of hymns in Church (often to the detriment of the reading of Scripture). This preponderance is expressed in the Liturgy of the Hours whose services, particularly Vespers and Matins, abide as elemental to the public worship of the Byzantine Churches. Thus it is appropriate to identify this hymnographic corpus as a primary

---

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 19:4-6 (New International Version)

<sup>2</sup> Nikodemos the Hagiorite, cited in Patrick Viscuso, “The Theology of Marriage in the *Rudder* of Nikodemos the Hagiorite,” in *Ostkirchliche Studien*, 41, No. 2/3 (1992), 187-287.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Rober Taft, *Beyond East and West: Problems in Liturgical Understanding* (Rome: Pontifical Oriental Institute, 2001), 189.

catechetical source for Byzantine Christians, a constitutive part of the *lex supplicandi*, and to use it as a litmus test for determining to what extent the *lex credendi* of marriage taught by modern Orthodox theologians is reflective of the texts that they and their communities pray.

The study of the Byzantine hymnographic tradition by scholars writing in English or French is of recent origin and suffers *lacunae* both in textual and philological criticism as well as in liturgico-theological exegesis and hermeneutics.<sup>4</sup> One opinion is that “the study of this complex and important subject [i.e., hymnography] is, it can be said, still at the beginning. Much remains to be done. Among other things, important texts need to be established, published in critical editions and then studied. Furthermore, *scholars still face the challenging task of interpreting Byzantine hymns.*”<sup>5</sup>

The principle of *lex supplicandi*, *lex credendi* is more often invoked than demonstrated, and there is to my knowledge no full-length treatment of the hymnographic corpus’s plurivocality concerning gender and sexuality, for example, nor indeed any general, thematic liturgico-theological analysis of the hymnographic corpus *per se*. Individual studies of particular hymns have been done,<sup>6</sup> as well as musicological-historical introductions to the tradition.<sup>7</sup> On the other side, there are numerous monographs and

---

<sup>4</sup> For an itemized agenda for further research, see Taft, *Beyond East and West: Problems in Liturgical Understanding*, 292-295.

<sup>5</sup> Eva Catafygiotu Topping, *Sacred Songs: Studies in Byzantine Hymnography* (Minneapolis: Light and Life Publishing Company, 1997), 3 [emphasis mine].

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*; Oliver Strunk, *Essays on Music in the Byzantine World* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1977).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Egon Wellesz, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949).

articles relating to marriage,<sup>8</sup> but few refer to the hymnographic corpus or display a liturgico-theological method. There is, therefore, a paucity if not a total lack (at least in English and French) of attempts to relate the ancient patrimony of Byzantine liturgical poetry to contemporary reflection on marriage -- a reality currently susceptible of innumerable radical reinterpretations.

This is so, despite the fact that liturgical theology (particularly as conceived by Alexander Schmemmann) is *de rigueur* in contemporary Eastern Christian theological discourse. It denotes primarily that “knowledge of God” attained through liturgical experience itself, as well as the subsequent probing of the liturgical tradition for the terms proper to an authentic articulation of that experience. Liturgical theology, in general parlance, also refers to what David Fagerberg distinguishes as “theology from worship,” the exercise of “trying to unify liturgy and doctrine by showing that the worship of the Church has influenced doctrine and the doctrine of the Church has influenced worship.” These second and third endeavours constitute the substance of liturgically theological literature, since liturgical theology as such “actually happens in liturgies and not on paper.”<sup>9</sup>

Modern Orthodox treatment of the Trinity, Christology or ecclesiology, for

---

<sup>8</sup> Cf. the bibliography of the present work.

<sup>9</sup> David Fagerberg, *What is Liturgical Theology?: A Study in Methodology* (Collegeville, MI: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 12. Fagerberg identifies his own observations about liturgical theology as “secondary reflections upon [its] meaning and method,” and distinguishes these also from actual liturgical theology. While he credits Alexander Schmemmann and the Orthodox tradition at large with a proclivity for the latter, he notes that Schmemmann wrote “secondary reflections” as well. Given Fagerberg’s nuances, it is fair to add that certain of Schmemmann’s works may be better termed “theology from worship” than “liturgical theology.”

example, is likely to include extensive quotations from liturgical texts in support of the positions espoused, and liturgico-theological methodology is likely to be counterposed to “scholastic,” this latter perceived as foreign to the Church’s actual prayer life. Discussion of marriage, however, rarely if ever receives such support, aside from references to the Crowning itself.<sup>10</sup> As this rite is celebrated only once in a couple’s life, while the liturgical cycle of worship recurs annually, the question arises as to whether the contents of this cycle speak to the mystery of marriage in a direct way, or whether they address the Christian life only in general, leaving individuals to draw their own conclusions regarding their specific state in life.

The salience of this question can be demonstrated by considering the way in which the monastic vocation is theologized. The liturgical tradition contains a rite for monastic tonsure,<sup>11</sup> but it goes further and provides innumerable services in honour of monastic saints, which flesh out a vision of what the monastic life is intended to become beyond the moment of tonsure itself. The Church’s theology of monastic life is personalist in that it is directly related to her experience of real monks and nuns. This is true to such an extent that one need not read the rite of tonsure to grasp something of the Eastern Church’s convictions regarding this state of life; one need only attend to the way in which it is fêted on a given day of the year, in the life of a given monastic saint.

Does this epistemology also obtain for marriage? Does the daily prayer of the

---

<sup>10</sup> The common term for the Byzantine rite of marriage proper.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. John Glen King, *The Rites and Ceremonies of the Greek Church, in Russia* (London: AMS Press, 1970), 369-381.

Church also celebrate married saints, thereby illustrating on a regular basis, through the particularity of a given couple, the luminous theology of the sacrament that the wedding rite so clearly propounds? Does the Church provide pointers in the lives of her heroes, to the mode of sanctity to which most of her faithful are called? Simply put, is her understanding of marriage truly incarnate in her liturgy? If not, what are the consequent theological conclusions? This paper will endeavour to respond to these questions.

## *ii. Contemporary Relevance*

By way of brief comparison with Western developments, we can consider the post-Vatican II adaptation of the sanctoral of the Roman Rite. This development, building on the earlier work of the Bollandist Fathers, expresses two important trends. On the one hand, it responds to the modern concern for a “usable history,” for a liturgy which embodies -- to paraphrase a felicitous epigram -- the living faith of the dead, rather than the dead faith of the living.<sup>12</sup> Saints whose existence was considered dubious, or whose lives were recounted in insufficient detail, were removed or demoted despite the devotional popularity they might have enjoyed in the past. Historicity has been deemed to validate cult, and not vice-versa.

On the other hand, an emphasis discernible in the current Roman sanctoral is that of lay holiness, particularly as regards the marital vocation. Witness the recent beatification of Luigi and Maria Beltrame Quatrocci, or the present cause for Georges and Pauline Vanier.

---

<sup>12</sup> Cited in Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Melody of Theology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 252.

It is only natural that the faithful, most of whom are married, should desire that exemplars of their own vocation be held out for honour and emulation. It is likewise an organic development, if somewhat belated, for the Church to mirror in her devotion what she has taught in her doctrine regarding marriage.

By contrast, the Byzantine calendar of saints, codified in the services of the *Menaion*, the “Books of the Months,” has not undergone a thorough scrutiny and reform. It remains weighted with centuries of cult, and every day of the year is given over to a saint, if not more than one. Given the tradition of the Eastern Church regarding what she has always considered, if not defined, as one of her “mysteries,” one might expect to find among the roster of her saints some examples of how this particular mode of holiness has been lived.<sup>13</sup>

Indeed there are some, but as in the Western sanctoral, far fewer than would seem appropriate. The services for the married saints of the *Menaion*, moreover, exhibit an often diffident, frequently ambivalent, and sometimes downright contemptuous view of matrimony. Such a discrepancy compels a critique, since it is ever pastorally imperative for the Church to correlate her heritage with her actual ecclesial life. Indeed, inasmuch as the

---

<sup>13</sup> Concerning marriage as *mysterion*, John Meyendorff makes this dramatic claim: “Never, in her entire history, did the Christian Church show more clearly that she was bringing into the world a new and unprecedented divine reality and presence. And the New Testament texts quoted above show that this new reality also implied a completely new attitude towards marriage, different from both the Judaic and the Roman concepts. This new reality was not originally expressed in any specific and independent marriage ritual...What mattered, therefore, was not the particular ceremony used to conclude the marriage, but *who* was accepting the marriage contract. If the parties were Christian, their marriage was a Christian marriage, involving Christian responsibility and Christian experience. For them, marriage was a sacrament, not simply a legal agreement.” *Marriage: An Orthodox Perspective* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1984), 17-18.

services of the *Menaion* continue to be celebrated, they concern the present as much as the past. Thus, it seems prudent, for the sake of theological integrity, to engage these texts in the light of their contexts, both original and modern, since they still “live” within the communities which pray them.

Of course, these communities, the Byzantine-Rite Churches, act upon their tradition even as it acts upon them. And it is this dialectic which results in the theological enterprise being undertaken afresh in every generation. Interpreting the hymnography of the sanctoral is only the corollary of praying it: the natural reaction to its reception, and the necessary response to its evident incongruencies with the other relevant “clause” of the *lex supplicandi*, the Crowning – the interpretation of which is the *raison d’être* of most contemporary Orthodox theologizing on marriage.

### *iii. Methodology*

The present paper attempts to explore the cross-currents in the Byzantine Church’s theology of marriage through an analysis of the hymnography germane to it, i.e., the services for married saints. I first survey Orthodox authors whose thought on marriage can be taken as representative of the tradition. Having distilled a *consensus fidei*, as it were, which can provide a scope for my examination of the liturgical texts themselves (by defining the gamut of relevant nuptial terms, concepts and images), I outline the historical background to the composition of the sanctoral’s hymnography. This begins with a review of the Byzantine *milieu* as it relates to the development of marital theory and practice, and concludes with a summary of the processes that led to the collation of the *textus receptus* of

the *Menaion*. Such a contextualization, together with the preceding theological orientation, provides the necessary foundation for the liturgical critique which follows, wherein I probe the hymnographic material itself to determine how it interfaces with theology and history.<sup>14</sup>

In doing so, I come to identify the liturgical theology of marriage which obtains in the *Menaion*, and the manner in which the liturgy itself alternately confirms and undercuts the formal theology which has grown up alongside it. My engagement reveals a latent pattern of dichotomies which I have termed repression, transference and co-optation. The *quod est demonstrandum*, therefore, is the ambivalence of the *Menaion* towards marriage, and its inconsistency with what is typically considered by Orthodox as “correct teaching” concerning the sacrament.

It is worth responding, before proceeding further, to a potential criticism: it *would* be fatuous and anachronistic to judge, according to (post)modern standards, the moral “value” of these ancient texts, *if* they were simply literary artifacts of a culture as historically contingent as our own. I do not pretend to assess, from my own ethical vantage point, the “meaning” of the *Menaion* for the proverbial “man in the pew.” What I do intend, is to take the sanctoral’s hymnography seriously as a *locus theologicus*, as a mediator of

---

<sup>14</sup> Our critique is “canonical” rather than “textual.” Raymond Brown (in reference to Scriptural scholarship) defines textual criticism as the “comparison of the diversities in Greek copies” existing as a result of “copyists’ mistakes and changes” (*An Introduction to the New Testament* New York: Doubleday, 1997, 21, 24). This is certainly a valid and useful avenue of research in Byzantine liturgical studies as well, but since the “canonization” of the *Menaion* (as far as present day Byzantine-Rite usage is concerned) is coterminous with its codification in printed volumes, such discrepancies as exist are less numerous and relevant than those in the manuscripts of Scripture. While the manner in which Greek liturgical texts were translated into Slavonic is frequently of interest, analyses in this regard are beyond the scope of this paper. Our concern is to consider the *Menaion* as an operative component in contemporary Byzantine-Rite praxis. Thus we are examining, to again quote Brown, the “final product,” the *Menaion* as one of several texts in the Byzantine liturgical “canon.”

revelation, for -- to speak phenomenologically -- this is how the Church has received, experienced and transmitted it.

The services in question are not only poems, but prayer; not only literature, but a kind of language. Moreover, they are the pre-eminent means, in the Byzantine tradition, by which the saints' memory is perpetuated, their intercession invoked, and their example of sanctity impressed upon the faithful. Given this significant role (which they will continue to play, all things being equal), it is no more acceptable to treat the *Menaion*'s texts as sacrosanct, than it is to exempt the Scriptures from scrutiny.<sup>15</sup> Such "reverence" would actually constitute ideology, if not idolatry; Christ's exhortation, "*Noli me tangere*," applies to him alone.<sup>16</sup> The discrepancies between the *Menaion* and the equally ancient texts of the Crowning simply must be accounted for, if the contemporary Orthodox theology of marriage is to be believed. Hopefully, the present work will serve as a contribution to this reckoning.

## II. Modern Eastern Christian Theology of Marriage - the *point de départ*

### *i. Status Quaestione*

Numerous articles and books have been published in recent decades on marriage in the Orthodox (Byzantine Church) tradition,<sup>17</sup> no doubt in response to the dramatic changes

---

<sup>15</sup> Indeed, it is even less acceptable, since the Scriptures have always possessed a *sine qua non* character for Christian theology, while the hymnography is a late, and originally tangential, element of the tradition.

<sup>16</sup> John 20:16

<sup>17</sup> Throughout this work, the terms Orthodox, Eastern Christian, and Byzantine will be used interchangeably, it being understood that there are some "Orthodox" who are not Eastern at all, and many

that have taken place in Western society in the spheres of sexuality, marriage and family life. These works, however, are not simply restatements of past presuppositions. They manifest conceptual development, as many of the animating concerns of these authors are sociological and cultural phenomena foreign to traditional Eastern Christian environments. The Eastern Church, like the Western, has taught officially but little in respect to marriage. In his endeavour to alter the *status quo*, Pope John Paul II has in fact written more on the subject than all of the other popes combined.<sup>18</sup> Similarly the cadre of Eastern theologians I am about to present have -- taken together -- written more in three decades than all the Eastern theologians of the past two millennia combined.

It will be helpful to organize this corpus according to the basic perspectives adopted by the authors in their approach to marriage. Several make use of a methodology recognizable as liturgical theology, or according to David Fagerberg's nuanced distinction, "theology from liturgy": eliciting from the actual text of the Crowning their theological conclusions regarding the sacrament or explaining the Orthodox theology of the nuptial mystery in terms of the Crowning. Others proceed from the doctrinal and canonical tradition, and attempt to discern the mind of the Church as expressed through her historical vicissitudes. Still others, finally, attempt to frame the teaching and praxis of the Church, as culled from various sources, in terms of modern philosophy and psychology.

---

who are not Byzantine-Rite. "Eastern Christian," while susceptible of referring to all the Churches of the East, in our context signifies Eastern (Byzantine) Orthodox as well as Byzantine-Rite Catholics.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Pope John Paul II, *The Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan* (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1997).

*ii. Sacramental/Liturgical Perspectives***Alexander Schmemmann**

Alexander Schmemmann treats marriage principally in his monograph on the sacraments, *For the Life of the World*.<sup>19</sup> He puts forward the thesis that marriage, like all the other “mysteries” of the Church, can only be understood in reference to “the Kingdom,” the eschatological reality of God’s ultimate consummation of all things in Christ, of which the Church herself is a sign and proleptic presence. It is in the light of the coming Kingdom that natural realities become transfigured and revealed for what they were originally intended to be, and may through the Holy Spirit actually become. “For a sacrament...implies necessarily the idea of transformation, refers to the ultimate event of Christ’s death and resurrection, and is always a sacrament of the Kingdom.”<sup>20</sup>

Schmemmann emphasizes the agency of the Church, particularly her self-realization in the Liturgy, in transforming natural realities. Although he uses the word transformation, he intends a process more aptly described as transfiguration, since he does not wish to abrogate the continuity between the mundane and sacramental planes by distinguishing natural from supernatural. Juxtaposed to the Crowning, the rite of Betrothal serves as “nothing else than the Christianized form of the marriage as it existed always and everywhere, i.e. as a public contract sealed before God and men by those entering the state

---

<sup>19</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1995).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

of marriage,”<sup>21</sup> while the “transformation” of marriage is effected in the second part of the service wherein, “the ‘natural’ marriage is taken now into the dimensions of the Church and, this means, into the dimensions of the Kingdom.”<sup>22</sup>

Nuptiality is considered by the author as a phenomenon which establishes the referent for the primary analogy of God’s relationship with the cosmos, with humanity at large and with the Church in particular. Within marriage, husband and wife image forth the dynamics of this polyvalent relationship in their complementary but distinct roles. Rather than simply a sanction of a natural, bilateral relationship, Christian marriage is a concern of the entire ecclesial community as a sacrament of divine love: “This is a double analogy. On the one hand we understand God’s love for the world and Christ’s love for the Church because we have the experience of marital love, but on the other hand marital love has its roots, its depth and real fulfilment in the great mystery of Christ and his Church.”<sup>23</sup>

Priesthood, for Schmemmann, is profoundly related to marriage, exhibiting in dissimilar fashion the same reality of divine-human love. Salient in this connection is his understanding of Christian marriage as establishing and presiding over an *ecclesiola*, an event heralded by the actual coronation of the Crowning. Husband and wife recapitulate Adam and Eve within the new creation of their home, and have the opportunity to build a kingdom that in some way mirrors the Kingdom. *Mutatis mutandis*, marriage also appropriates the vocation of martyrdom. The crowns signify not only regal authority, but

---

<sup>21</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, “The Indissolubility of Marriage: The Theological Tradition of the East” in William W. Bassett, ed., *The Bond of Marriage* (Notre Dame, IL: Notre Dame Press, 1968), 100.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>23</sup> Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World*, 84.

the ascetic victory of spiritual athletes. The troparion sung to the martyrs in the course of the rite makes this connotation explicit.<sup>24</sup>

The liturgical theology of the Crowning is clearly Schmemmann's start and end point. He regards the rite as both containing and conferring the meaning of the sacrament of marriage, superseding that which originates from other theological sources. The Orthodox doctrine of marriage is "expressed more often in liturgical rites rather than canonical texts."<sup>25</sup> He asserts that the former, moreover, complement the *consensus patrum*. It is the later, post-patristic theology manuals which contradict, in their systemization, the "earlier and more normative tradition, that of the Fathers and of the liturgy,"<sup>26</sup> Schmemmann insists that "the fundamental doctrine, or better to say, *theoria*, vision of marriage, as still expressed in the liturgy, belongs to the early, maximalistic and eschatological period of the Church."<sup>27</sup> However, he does not specify the parameters of this period.

### Stavros S. Fotiou

In "Water into Wine, and Eros in Agape: Marriage in the Orthodox Church," Stavros Fotiou, a professor of Christian education at the University of Cyprus, provides an

---

<sup>24</sup> "O holy martyrs, who fought the good fight and have received your crowns: Entreat ye the Lord, that He will have mercy on our souls." Cited in John Meyendorff, *Marriage: An Orthodox Perspective* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984), 129.

<sup>25</sup> Schmemmann, in Bassett, *The Bond of Marriage*, 98.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

exegesis of the gospel appointed for the Crowning.<sup>28</sup> This text, he contends, presages the liturgical tradition's bipartite wedding service: the water Jesus transforms represents the natural marriage concluded in the Betrothal, while the wine is in turn the sacramental reality inaugurated by the Crowning. The former reveals creation, the latter, re-creation.

Marriage also emulates the Trinitarian co-being, wherein abide a Lover, a Beloved and a Co-beloved. It typifies furthermore the vocation of all persons to spousal union with God through the experience of self-transcendence, self sacrifice and continuous personal *kenôsis*.

The author quotes Irenaeus of Lyons to the effect that the creation of Eve from Adam's side was intended to reveal the unity and identity, through grace, that was going to exist between Christ and the Church.<sup>29</sup> God intended from the beginning to become bone of bone and flesh of flesh with humanity. Participants in marital love "iconify" this union brought about through the Incarnation, and recall as well the human race's proto-history; their physical love opens onto an eternal, spiritual love and simultaneously hearkens back to the original androgynous unity of the human person.

Fotiou equates the attainment of complete psychosomatic union between the spouses, and their subduing of the natural inclination to instrumentalize each other, with *agape*. The wine of Cana represents this perfect love, the preservation of which is only possible through ascetic struggle, even though it is in one sense bestowed *in toto* through

---

<sup>28</sup> Stavros S. Fotiou, "Water into Wine, and Eros in Agape: Marriage in the Orthodox Church," in Adrian Thatcher, *Celebrating Christian Marriage* (Edinburgh and New York: T&T Clark, 2001), 89-96.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

the very celebration of the sacrament.<sup>30</sup> By means of this given and yet ever-to-be-appropriated *agape*, Christ restores man and woman to prelapsarian purity and splendour.

The number of stone jars in the Gospel is six, one less than the perfect number. This, says the author, symbolizes the inability of the law to provide life in its fullness, since the jars were empty until Jesus filled them. The Gospel also witnesses progression from good to better, inasmuch as the wine Jesus provides surpasses what was already being served; Christian marriage likewise reflects an amelioration of natural love, even a growth unto perfection.

Virginity in marriage is an essential concern, but its connotation is different from that which obtains in celibacy. Here it signifies the integrity of spirit which prevents the reduction of the other to a body. Fotiou considers *eros* to be an inappropriate term for Christian marital love, since erotic love implies this kind of objectification. Such “love,” he argues, was crucified on the Cross. Through Christ, we are enabled to love with a similar self-sacrifice that extends even to death, although unlike the divine love, ours remains limited by our finitude.

Finally, the wine of Cana serves as an image of the Eucharist, and a sign that marriage is incorporated into the sacramental economy of the Lord. In the Eucharist, Christian spousal love experiences the Pentecost which can render it capable of building a domestic church, marked in its own way by unity, sanctity, universality and apostolicity. This grace can well lead to the deification of the persons implicated in it, and such is in fact

---

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

the divine plan -- to transform the world through love, a process in which marriage is a primary agent.

### **William Basil Zion**

The monograph of William Basil Zion, before his death a professor at Queen's University in Kingston, attempts to tackle the problematics of marriage from several angles.<sup>31</sup> The chapter "Marriage in the Liturgical Tradition" is particularly relevant to our study. This author, like others, equates a liturgical theology of marriage with an analysis of the marriage rite.

The Pauline idea of the Church as bride was, in Zion's opinion, more appreciated in the East than in the West, and this recognition of the *henôsis*, or communion between Christ and the Church, was accompanied by a consequent lack of pessimism towards sexuality. He observes that marriage was always considered sacramental, although its solemnization took different forms throughout history. The *stephanoma*, or crowning, while in use from at least the fourth century onwards, was not made mandatory for all until the twelfth century.<sup>32</sup> A blessed betrothal and/or reception of the Eucharist was considered sufficient to solemnize the marriage of two Christians. Zion concludes that it is the priestly blessing, imparted in one way or another, which confects the sacrament.<sup>33</sup>

Unlike Schmemmann, this author sees the bipartite structure of the present Byzantine

---

<sup>31</sup> William Basil Zion, *Eros and Transformation: Sexuality and Marriage, An Eastern Orthodox Perspective* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1992).

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

wedding rite as redundant; while originally discriminate, the two services have been gradually assimilated to the point that their theology is duplicated. He finds Schmemmann's distinction between natural and eschatological marriage to be tenuous, observing that the entrance of the bridal party from the narthex into the church proper for the Crowning (an action which Schmemmann regards as portentous of the entry of natural marriage into the Kingdom) is only practiced among the Slavs, whereas the Greeks celebrate the Betrothal as well as the Crowning in the nave. The prayers of the two rites are also, according to Zion, substantially the same.

He does find significant, however, the notion of betrothal as a pledge of what is to come. This was its original meaning, when the rite was concluded apart from the Crowning and still possessed simply a civil, legal character. Zion traces the use of the term *arrabon* in Scripture and Patristic writings, particularly as it refers to the giving of the Holy Spirit as a pledge of the eschatological consummation of Christ's spousal love for the Church.<sup>34</sup>

### **David Petras**

David Petras, a professor of liturgy at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary in Pittsburgh, also takes the Crowning to be a summary of the Church's theology of marriage.<sup>35</sup> Unlike Schmemmann, he acknowledges the ambivalence of Patristic thought concerning the sacrament. "For many of the earlier Fathers, marriage was clearly an

---

<sup>34</sup> Zion, *Eros and Transformation: Sexuality and Marriage, An Eastern Orthodox Perspective*, 107.

<sup>35</sup> David M. Petras, "The Liturgical Theology of Marriage," in *Diakonia*, Vol. XVI, No.3 (1981), 225-237.

inferior vocation to virginity...[their qualms] were not over the institution of marriage itself, but over the powerful passions involved in the physical union of man and woman.”<sup>36</sup>

Nevertheless, since the advent of Christ, and the concomitant dignity bestowed on human flesh, the nuptial bond contracted in faith is acknowledged as different. In marriage, spouses recapitulate the death and resurrection of Christ, and this Paschal content is elemental to the sacrament’s status as such. The Christianization of wedding rites was impelled by the new, Christological significance the Church wished to attach to marriage: “the mutual love of the husband and wife becomes an incarnation of Christ’s ‘love of mankind’ (*philanthropia*)...sanctifying those who share in it.”<sup>37</sup> Petras recounts the Scriptural basis of marriage as presented in the Crowning; its history is traced from the Garden of Eden, through the lives of the Old Testament patriarchs, to Christ’s presence at Cana and St. Paul’s identification of the institution with the love of Christ and the Church.

Like Zion, this author is aware of the connection between the rite of Betrothal and the idea of a pledge. Quoting Gennadios Scholarios, he remarks:

The spouses give themselves to each other by the *arrha* of marriage...this is the portion, the charism of the Spirit, who is the pledge (*arrabon*) of our inheritance.” The connotation here is that the couple promising themselves to a future marriage -- through the Betrothal -- image the pledge of the Holy Spirit given to the Church, which still awaits the fullness of the Kingdom.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 225-226.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 231.

### Michel Evdokimov

Michel Evdokimov, son of the eminent Russian émigré theologian Paul Evdokimov (treated below), follows in his father's steps in stressing the eschatological context of the sacrament of marriage. He asserts that Orthodoxy recognizes its paradoxical character: what begins in the temporal may only be fulfilled in the eternal. Rather than an externally imposed contract, he argues that Christian marriage consists in "la grâce demandée à Dieu, un élan qui sourd de l'intérieur du couple."<sup>39</sup> Even death does not dissolve the bond of marriage, since it has been lived *sub specie aeternitatis* from the beginning. To live in Christ is to live in the light of the Kingdom, and the sacrament of marriage is ideally from its inception oriented to this end.

Nonetheless, the Orthodox Church can allow for divorce and remarriage since those in the Church are under grace rather than the law. While Christ has fulfilled the law, rather than abolishing it, and set the standard higher, the Church must still live with the ambiguities of belonging to a Kingdom of heaven, on earth. Indissolubility, therefore, is not unique among other apparently impossible dominical injunctions, and cannot be considered from within a legalistic framework. Pastoral solicitude condescends to mitigate it under certain conditions, impelling the faithful through appropriate penance to a restoration of communion and a subsequent *modus vivendi*.

Evdokimov -- paraphrasing Alexander Schmemmann -- intends by "sacrament" a locus of the Presence of the Spirit and an announcement of the advent of the Kingdom. The

---

<sup>39</sup> Michel Evdokimov, "Les époux du Royaume: un point de vue orthodoxe," in Xavier Lacroix, *Oser dire le mariage indissoluble* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2001), 145-149.

grace conferred in the Crowning is that which enables the couple to live that prophetic ministry the Gospel grants to them, by its frequent description of heaven in nuptial imagery. This ministry is signified by what Evdokimov calls the “nuptial Pentecost” of the Crowning, the invocation of the Holy Spirit upon the couple analogous to the epiclesis of the Eucharistic liturgy. Corroboration of marriage’s eschatological *telos* is given in the rite’s prayer: “Reçois leurs couronnes dans ton Royaume,” which Evdokimov understands to connote: “Fais de ce mariage une croissance continue de cet amour parfait dont toi seul es le terme et la plénitude.”<sup>40</sup>

This author’s thought is representative of those who wish to contrast the perceived contractual character of the Western Church’s tradition regarding marriage with a more mystical, personalist and dynamic Eastern Christian counterpart. The Crowning, a rich and evocative rite, becomes the reference point for this contrast, although no actual citation of corresponding Western liturgical sources is provided.

### *iii. Doctrinal/Canonical Perspectives*

#### **John Meyendorff**

John Meyendorff was an historical theologian who approached marriage through the evidence of conciliar decisions, canonical precedents and liturgical formulae. He was less inclined to lyricism than other writers, and sought to situate Orthodox doctrine on the sacrament squarely in its context within the tradition.

---

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

Meyendorff posits that historically, “All Byzantine Christians were offered a choice between celibate asceticism and married life, but in either case they were called to anticipate in their lives the eschatological Kingdom of God.”<sup>41</sup> The Byzantine Church rejected ascetic extremes that condemned marriage (Manichean, Encratite, Messalian etc.), with the council of Gangra (ca. 340) even anathematizing those who chose celibacy out of disdain for marriage. This proscription was reiterated by the Council in Trullo (692).<sup>42</sup> The author admits, however, “that numerous hagiographic texts continued to glorify at least some individuals who seemed to fall under Gangra’s anathemas, by leaving their consorts for the sake of asceticism.”<sup>43</sup> Despite the preferential honour given to monasticism by the Byzantines, Meyendorff argues that they were compelled to consider marriage an eschatological reality because of the prominence of nuptial metaphors in the Gospels (e.g., Matt 22:2-12, 25:10; Luke 12:36).

Meyendorff states that the Orthodox tradition has, in general, considered only a first marriage to be chaste, because only absolute monogamy can exemplify the icon of Christ’s love for the Church. The Eastern Church’s conviction has been that even death does not end a marriage, due to its eschatological character. Despite this, however, the Great Church of Constantinople retained into the late Byzantine period the custom of crowning second marriages, thereby seemingly honouring them as a first union. Meyendorff explains:

The Byzantine Church, though proclaiming and cherishing the principle of the

---

<sup>41</sup> John Meyendorff, “Christian Marriage in Byzantium: The Canonical and Liturgical Tradition,” in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 44 (1990), 99.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Meyendorff, *Marriage: An Orthodox Perspective*, 103-110 (Appendix III, “Canon Law”).

<sup>43</sup> Meyendorff, “Christian Marriage in Byzantium: The Canonical and Liturgical Tradition,” 100.

indissolubility of marriage...never understood indissolubility to be a legal absolute. It condoned the famous exception, found in Matt. 19:9...and recognized adultery as a legitimate cause of divorce, covering other situations where the mystical union of husband and wife had, in reality, ceased to exist, that is situations practically equivalent to the death of one of the partners (disappearance, insanity, violence).<sup>44</sup>

Church blessing only became a legal alternative to contract in the eighth century, and only mandatory in the ninth, with Emperor Leo VI's Novel 89. Prior to this Orthodox Christianity apparently accepted the consensual basis of marriage inherited from antiquity. Until then, the Eucharist had remained a means of solemnizing matrimony, as well as a means of distinguishing, through temporary or permanent excommunication, illegitimate marriage from legitimate. The author notes that for the influential monk Theodore of Studios, communion was in fact the essence of the wedding, that which made it Christian. "The principal and goal of the wedding is the holy and unique body and blood of Christ," For Theodore there is no marriage in Christ apart from the Eucharist.<sup>45</sup>

### **Kallistos Ware**

The famous English convert to Orthodoxy, Bishop of Diokleia and Oxford professor has written on many subjects, but little on marriage. His article "The Sacrament of Love: The Orthodox Understanding of Marriage and Its Breakdown," however, presents quite lucidly the basic Orthodox doctrine of the sacrament.<sup>46</sup>

In as much as the *imago dei* was granted to man and woman together, the one only

---

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 102-103.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 105-106.

<sup>46</sup> Kallistos Ware, "The Sacrament of Love: The Orthodox Understanding of Marriage and Its Breakdown," in *Downside Review*, 109 (April, 1991), 79-93.

discovers true fulfillment in relation to the other. This prevails to such an extent that “monastics and lay people not called to matrimony, if they are to be authentically human, need to realize in some other way the capacity for mutual love which finds its primary expression through the man-woman relationship within marriage.”<sup>47</sup>

Ware acknowledges with Meyendorff and others that while the Crowning began to be a form of the nuptial blessing in the East by the end of the fourth century, the Eucharist was the initial mode of Christian matrimonial solemnization. Since the Eucharist implies the mediation of a priest, it anticipated the later emphasis on the sacerdotal blessing of the Crowning. The original centrality of the Eucharist illustrates that, “The sacrament of marriage is therefore much more than a contract between two humans, of which the Church takes cognizance. Primarily it is an action performed by God himself, operating through the person of the officiating priest.”<sup>48</sup>

Modern Orthodox theology, according to Ware, tends not to stress the notion of marriage as a remedy for sin, and there is no mention of such an end in the Crowning. Rather, the Church affirms the co-significance of mutual love and procreation: “The aim of marriage is the mutual sanctification of husband and wife, their transfiguration through the reciprocal gift and union of their two lives.”<sup>49</sup> Again we hear that the crowns are symbols of both martyrdom and its victory, since no true marriage can obtain without sacrifice and suffering. The prayer of the wedding rite that the Lord “take up their crowns into [his]

---

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

kingdom,” shows marriage to be a reality fulfilled only in the *eschaton*, a process rather than a state, of which the Crowning is but the beginning.

While Ware maintains that subsequent marriages have not and should not be regarded in the same light as a first, he concedes that the Church has in fact often allowed the celebration of the Crowning, rather than the penitential services prescribed for second and third unions. “The marriage bond, while in principle for eternity and not just for life, is considered by Canon Law to be terminated by death.” In turn, spiritual death came to be considered a condition in marriage analogous to physical death. The Church sees herself as competent to recognize when a marriage has “died,” and to not insist on the prolongation of a “lifeless outward form.” Indeed, “If each sacrament is a divine action, effected by Christ within the Church, then the Church, as steward of the sacraments and by virtue of the authority to bind and loose conferred upon it by Christ himself...has the right to release the couple from the marriage bond and to permit a remarriage.”<sup>50</sup>

The author concludes by contending that divine compassion is the ultimate ground of the Church’s marital praxis. As Christ offered new life, forgiveness and a “second chance” to the fallen, the Church can do no less. In granting divorces, she allows the faithful to begin again. Christ’s strictness with marriage, that is, parallels his resoluteness with regard to poverty, pacifism and numerous other concerns, which the Church does not and cannot try to enforce legalistically. Ideals must be embraced rather than imposed.

---

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

**Peter L'Huillier**

Peter L'Huillier, another convert Orthodox bishop, has written an article examining the doctrinal and canonical history of the sacrament of marriage in Orthodoxy.<sup>51</sup> He begins by an examination of the New Testament evidence concerning marriage. This he finds to create as many problems as it solves, inasmuch as it witnesses to conflicting views and practices. The discrepancies within Scripture led subsequently to a diversity of practices in the early Church, both East and West, neither of which developed matrimonial law very quickly.

Nonetheless, divorce and remarriage were uncommon in the pre-Constantinian period, due to the overall stringency of the New Testament exhortations. Origen attests to the practice of divorce and remarriage in the church, and demonstrates that the specifics of each case were subject to the jurisdiction of the local bishop. Episcopal permission for divorce was sought prior to civil action, a custom that exhibits the primacy of spiritual authority, and the power of *economia* that was attributed to it.<sup>52</sup>

Excommunication, with penance before restoration, was deemed an appropriate discipline for those who divorced and remarried. Many of the Fathers, however, exhorted against any remarriage after divorce, considering continence or reconciliation as the proper course of action. On the other hand, the author also quotes such authorities as Cyril of Alexandria and Chrysostom who declare that marriage is soluble in the case of adultery or

---

<sup>51</sup> Peter L'Huillier, "The Indissolubility of Marriage in Orthodox Law and Practice," in Pierre Hégy and Joseph Martos, *Catholic Divorce: The Deception of Annulments* (New York: Continuum, 2000), 108-126.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

fornication.<sup>53</sup>

Unlike Schmemmann, L'Huillier does not suggest that there was any eschatological significance attached to the marital vocation. Eschatology appears rather as the province of monasticism. Certain Fathers of the Church promoted permanent continence even between spouses, and discouraged remarriage after the death of a spouse. The author argues that this is not attributable to any expectation of an imminent *parousia* -- such as obtained in the New Testament church -- but to the gradual monasticization of spirituality in the Byzantine tradition. As we shall see, the hymnographic corpus witnesses to this in regard to the equivalencies it draws between chastity and continence.

Contrary to Schmemmann again, L'Huillier posits that the significance of marriage in the first millenium was ambiguous, recognized by and large as a natural rather than a sacramental phenomenon. For it was only "during the thirteenth century [that] the Orthodox Churches accepted the sevenfold sacraments, including marriage...The inclusion of marriage in the list of the seven sacraments had little ensuing effect on ecclesiastical practice."<sup>54</sup>

There would seem to be a disjuncture between the theological norm regarding marriage and the practice of local Churches, each competent to legislate its own rationales for legitimate divorce, and hence to define in praxis the character of the nuptial bond. The author considers the Orthodox to have eschewed doctrinal debates regarding marriage. Instead, the Churches have tolerated a situation in which the universal promotion of a

---

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

“norm” has been vitiated by the local formulation of ever-increasing rationales and categories which contradict it.

For example, L’Huillier notes that the Greeks, under the Turkish domination, retained a rather conservative view of marriage; it was rarely dissolved, and then only in cases of adultery. While the influential late eighteenth century *Pedalion* also granted that heresy or homicidal violence could justify divorce, remarriage was still difficult and only possible for the innocent party. The Russians were more lenient, granting divorce on numerous grounds, occasionally even that of mutual consent. While legislation was tightened under the Holy Synod (1720-1917), the Synod retained the prerogative to arbitrate cases which did not fit the usual categories. Such categories continued to multiply, moreover, even in this period.

Like Ware, L’Huillier believes that taken together, the imposition of penance prior to remarriage, the strict conditions for obtaining it, and the use of a somber, penitential rite in solemnizing it adequately express the mind of the Church that subsequent unions are not on equal footing with a first. Orthodox theology concerning the sacrament thus abides in and through the vicissitudes of its application. He concludes: “In the first place, Orthodox churches must proclaim the holiness and the unity of marriage between Christians...[But] the church does not think that, in the domain of marriage as in many others, it is necessary to exclude compassion systematically, as long as the pastoral tendency does not lead to official laxity.”<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

*iv. Philosophical/Psychological Perspectives*

**Paul Evdokimov**

Paul Evdokimov, the Russian emigré, lay theologian and professor at St. Sergius Theological Institute in Paris, was deeply concerned with the significance and state of marriage in the Church. His famous *magnum opus* on the nuptial mystery is *The Sacrament of Love*, wherein he seeks to discern a spirituality of marriage that is reciprocally connected to that of monasticism, grounded in an awareness of the ontological equality and eschatological orientation of both vocations. These two different modes of Christian witness should cross-pollinate and exist in symbiosis, since both marital chastity and monastic virginity function on the same level of *ascesis* of the absolute, albeit in distinct modalities.

Monks and spouses alike are called to renunciation, an act that Evdokimov argues is directed toward the positive embracing of another in love. “Nuptial chastity for the man,” for example, “means that there is but one being [i.e. his wife] in the world, that all femininity resides in her.”<sup>56</sup> “Chastity” (*sophrosynê*) is equivalent in this connection to “integrity” and “integration” rather than continence.<sup>57</sup> For spouses it signifies that faithful praxis of nuptial love which can actually protect them from “unclean flux” and prepare them for integration into eternity.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> Paul Evdokimov, *The Sacrament of Love* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1985), 115.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 168. Despite the absence of cults of St. Joseph and the Holy Family in the East, Evdokimov critiques the paradigm of nuptial chastity implied by them: “To take the marriage of St. Joseph and Mary is clearly insufficient for this task [of identifying the ‘archetype of the nuptial being’]. Abstinence from sex represses Eros without transfiguring it” (168).

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

The dying to self entailed by the spouses in marriage is also analogous to the mortification of the monk. The author contends to this effect that the ancient rite of monastic tonsure makes use of nuptial imagery, while early wedding services included a form of tonsure.<sup>59</sup> The two vocations are even to be considered as the two faces of Tabor;<sup>60</sup> presumably Evdokimov has in mind the transfiguration of both law (marriage) in Moses, and of prophecy (monasticism) in Elijah.

The distinct charisms of male and female are presented especially in terms of the iconic character of marriage (Trinitarian, ecclesial) and its sacramental potentialities (redemption, deification). Nuptiality reflects the original nature of man, for whom it was “not good to be alone.” Their inclination to co-being, their spousal consubstantiality, renders husband and wife a “nuptial icon” of the Trinity. Since he participates in the mystery of two joined together in a third, it is “nuptial man who is in the image of the triune God.”<sup>61</sup> This image is dynamic, marriage being called to realize the likeness of its prototype. It is an androgynous image, moreover, since it recalls the preternatural creation of the human being before sexual differentiation into Adam and Eve. Nuptial love thus reveals, and is ordered toward, the prelapsarian state.<sup>62</sup>

Fatherhood is a category of divine life, and the man is to be spiritually identified

---

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 68. Unfortunately Evdokimov does not provide evidence of either of these instances which, if true, would be highly significant.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

with Christ, while motherhood is a category of human life, and the woman, the Spirit.<sup>63</sup>

This type of inversion is common to Evdokimov's dialogism; every phenomenon contains an orientation to its respective antitype, in relation to which it is constituted. Every phenomenon also has inner and outer manifestations, which provide for its assimilation by that which is ostensibly dissimilar. Every woman, for example, is a mother, a "source of life"-- even if not biologically so -- for she possess an interior maternity, a vocation of protection, nurture, care and fulfillment of need.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, woman personifies human spiritual receptivity, and every person is called in a sense to be a mother by giving birth to Christ.

Throughout his presentation, Evdokimov endeavours to present marriage in positive, fecund terms as a phenomenon essential to the self-understanding and welfare of the Church at large. Spouses are like Christ, who in joining himself to the Church, becoming flesh of flesh and bone of bone with her, did not diminish his unity with God. Their personal hypostases similarly mediate those of God, the love of whom is acquired through love of another person. The nuptial community thus establishes a "domestic church" to which it provides "undivided service," modeling in its own way the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. The notion of the *ecclesiola* coincides with Evdokimov's vision of the "liturgical vocation of man," his call to not only pray but through the indwelling Holy Spirit become "prayer incarnate." By the doxological character of his life, a person may "[lead] the entire created family to God," beginning,

---

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

presumably, with those in his own household.<sup>65</sup>

As Aidan Nichols has observed, eschatology is the primary context for Evdokimov's theology, and his vision of marriage reflects this. For, "the Christian affirms the world in such a way as to open it to the eternity beyond."<sup>66</sup> That is, he affirms it, paradoxically, by inviting it to self-transcendence. This process is possible because of the analogical character of reality, which for Evdokimov means that "earthly culture," including marriage, "is the icon of the heavenly kingdom."<sup>67</sup>

### **John Chryssavgis**

John Chryssavgis, a deacon and former dean of Holy Cross Orthodox Theological School, proceeds in the first section of his monograph, *Love, Sexuality and the Sacrament of Marriage*, by means of sociological and psychological reflection. His concern is existential, directed toward the elaboration of a marital spirituality in terms of a positive appraisal of erotic love. Without reference to any particular Eastern theological locus, he asserts that nuptial union cannot be separated from the mystery of such love. *Eros* is construed as a positive energy animating our relationship with God and each other, and even the relation between God and the cosmos. Marriage, in virtue of its erotic character, may thus be regarded as an image of divine love. Sexual love, moreover, "in the Christian sacrament, [is] an event imparting saving grace and a pledge of a covenant relationship

---

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 61-63.

<sup>66</sup> Aidan Nichols, *Light from the East: Authors and Themes in Orthodox Theology* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1995), 199.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

with the sacred order.”<sup>68</sup> The author also refers to monasticism as a sacrament and posits an equivalency between married and monastic life as two modes of experiencing and purifying *eros*.

The sacramental potential in marriage is related to its capacity to realize within the participants, through the exercise of authentic *eros*, an awareness of their own identity as created *imago dei*. The objectification of sexual desire as an expression of passion, abstracted from its interpersonal context, fails to do it justice. “It cannot be stressed too much that the omission of the sense of person-to-person relationship in the love between man and woman leads to a defective understanding of it.”<sup>69</sup>

Chryssavgis associates such a functional approach to the sacrament and its use with the Western Christian tradition, asserting that this is a phenomenon to which the East has been by and large impervious. The “Augustinian view” of the “mind-body dichotomy...on the whole was quite alien to the Eastern patristic tradition.” Instead, according to the author, the affirmation holds that “everything which God created is essentially good, including gender and sexuality...[This] is a fundamental principle of Patristic thought and of Orthodox spirituality.”<sup>70</sup>

The second part of this work approaches marriage from the prism of pastoral

---

<sup>68</sup> John Chryssavgis, *Love, Sexuality and the Sacrament of Marriage* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1998), 5.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 8. Chryssavgis does not qualify this assertion, however, with actual reference to Eastern sources. He usually refers to “the Fathers” in general terms, and understands by “liturgical tradition” simply the Crowning. A lengthy appendix in his book does provide a patristic miscellany concerning marriage. He does not endeavour, however, to incorporate the disparate views of the Fathers contained therein into his own theology. It is left to the reader to make the comparison.

theology, engaging issues related to the sacrament such as mixed marriages, divorce and chastity; the author makes frequent reference to the texts of the Crowning, but does not intend an exegesis of the rite *per se*.

Chryssavgis insists that marriage is a union of not two, but three persons: husband, wife and Christ.<sup>71</sup> “Hence the permanence of the vows: ‘I marry’ signifies that ‘I belong to Christ forever.’”<sup>72</sup> It is not acceptable to regard marriage as simply a secular institution or even a religious one, since it is not a by-product of the Church but a phenomenon coterminous with that Eucharistic mystery which constitutes the Church. “The sacrament of love for a Christian, therefore, is not a state but a stage in the development of life in Christ; it is not a sign of settlement (*apokatastasis*) but rather an essential way of salvation.”<sup>73</sup>

Like Evdokimov, Chryssavgis affirms the Church’s positive appraisal of marital sexuality. Spousal love implies a transformation of *eros* which cannot be equated with “carnal” sin. Such sin is rather the deprecation of the flesh, the denial of the salutary potential imparted to sexuality by the Incarnation. The need to struggle ascetically against impurity is balanced by the Crowning’s invocation of the archangel Michael’s assistance in preparing the marital chamber.

Chryssavgis concludes with the significance of the historically Eucharistic context of marriage, and its abiding Eucharistic character. As in the Divine Liturgy, there is

---

<sup>71</sup> Chryssavgis considers the troparion, “Dance Isaiah,” which extols the mystery of the Incarnation, to affirm this nuptial three-in-oneness.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 21. This statement reads as somewhat odd, coming from a Greek theologian, since the Greek recensions of the Crowning do not actually include any vows as such.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

“offering” (of the bridal couple to each other), “*anamnesis*” (of the holy exemplars of marriage, from the Old Testament to the New), “*epiclesis*” (for the Holy Spirit upon the couple) and communion (from the erstwhile Eucharistic chalice, the cup of blessed wine). Marriage does not only recapitulate the Eucharist, according to the author; the Crowning summarizes, through its prayers, the entirety of salvation history. “There is surely a close connection and interrelationship between creation, crucifixion, Baptism, Eucharist, and Marriage,” the latter being a “mysterious icon of the Church.”<sup>74</sup>

### *Anthony Ugolnik*

This Orthodox priest and professor of literature is widely acquainted with the Christian tradition at large, and in one his articles he explores the Orthodox view of nuptial sexuality in the light of both its similarities and dissimilarities with Roman Catholic and Protestant models.<sup>75</sup> He is one of the few Eastern Christian writers who give currency to the discrepancies within the Byzantine Church tradition concerning marriage, but he remains convinced of its fundamental optimism.

Ugolnik argues that inherent in Orthodox theology is a psychological privilege of the feminine. It is woman who serves as the primary metaphor for human identity vis-à-vis the divine. “[The female body] is the frame, the context, within which we receive the Incarnate Word; and from childhood Eastern Orthodox Christians connect the

---

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 33-34.

<sup>75</sup> Anthony Ugolnik, “Living in Skin: Sex, Spirituality and the Christian Male,” in Jaroslav Z. Skira and Myroslaw I. Tataryn, eds., *Windows to the East: Eastern Christians in a Dialogue of Charity* (Ottawa: Novalis, Saint Paul University, 2001), 283-316.

manifestation of God among us with the enclosing, nurturing ‘enwombment’ of the female body.”<sup>76</sup> This is certainly evident in the typology of the spiritual marriage, common throughout the hymnographic corpus. Generally it is the ascetic woman or martyr who becomes a “bride of God,” but occasionally a male saint will also be qualified as such. The ascription of “bride” to the latter illustrates how “the Church has [given] the bodies of women a rich sacramental dimension, a dimension denied to men.”<sup>77</sup> This preference expresses a disjuncture in piety between voice and persona. Even when men speak in the tradition, it is with a feminine voice.

The other pertinent observation that Ugolnik puts forward concerns the Orthodox understanding of sexual love as *synousia* (“consubstantiality”). He identifies in Adam’s recognition of Eve as flesh of his own flesh the origin of the Eastern tradition’s positive appraisal of sexuality: “The [Orthodox] reading of the Creation account...emphasizes the mutual completion of each gender in the other. That mutuality is itself a sign of its likeness to God.” The “union of being” in sacred marriage images forth the interpenetrating life of the three divine persons who share one essence, and as such it is a mode of spiritual life *par excellence*. The author concludes that “in its Edenic theology, marriage is ‘ameliorative’; in co-operation with the saving grace of Christ, marriage is intended to ‘knit up’ creation, and through repentance and mutual love, to put to death that enmity which destroys our links to each other.”<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 284.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 291.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 312-313.

### v. *Summary*

Through this survey of contemporary Orthodox attitudes toward marriage, we have been able to acquire the hermeneutical apparatus necessary for a critique of the hymnography's characterization of the sacrament. Our next task will be to discern to what extent this modern outlook corresponds to its medieval precursor by situating the hymnographic corpus in its original frame of reference. If such contextualization is imperative even for pastoral theology, it is *a fortiori* the case for liturgical theology. Because, according to Robert Taft, the liturgy (including the sanctoral) is "part of tradition, and tradition is not the past, but the present insofar as it is in continuity with the past," we turn now to the past. For indeed, "History is essential to a the formation of a 'moving point of view,' a sense of relativity, of seeing the present as always in dynamic tension between past and future, and not as a static 'given.'"<sup>79</sup>

## II. Historical Background to the Theory and Praxis of Marriage in Middle Byzantium

### i. *Significance*

In order to place the phenomena that surface in the *Menaion* in their context, it will be useful to review the historical background of marital theory and praxis in Byzantine culture. The hymnography of the Byzantine rite is product of this culture, and its characteristics are traceable in the main to patterns of belief and behaviour which crystallized in the period generally known as Middle Byzantium (circa. 800-1204). It was

---

<sup>79</sup> Taft, *Beyond East and West: Problems in Liturgical Understanding*, 236.

then, particularly during the tenth century that the *Menaion* was composed and compiled, although it was not codified definitively until the sixteenth century. The explosion of hymnography which accompanied the monasticization of the Byzantine liturgy during this period naturally reflects a monastic perspective. In what follows we shall explore the extent to which this perspective was congruent with those of the Byzantine Church and society at large.

### *ii. Nuptial Mores and Customs*

Byzantine culture was conservative in regard to the decorum and interactions of the sexes. Women generally wore veils outside the home, and both male and female dress exposed as little of the body as possible. Tamara Talbot Rice has researched the celebration of nuptials and identified its basic elements.<sup>80</sup> The bridegroom would come to fetch his bride at her family's house, with a consort of singers. Together with torch-bearers, musicians, family and friends, the couple would walk to church while bystanders showered them with rose petals and violets. In church, rings would be exchanged during the betrothal, a second, special ring later given to the bride in the bridal chamber by the groom. In return, the groom was given a dowry by his bride's family. During the Crowning, the spouses' godparents would hold the crowns over their heads. Following the service was the banquet, after or during which the couple retired for their wedding night. In the morning

---

<sup>80</sup> Tamara Talbot Rice, *Everyday Life in Byzantium* (New York: Dorset Press, 1967).

they would be awoken to the singing of their family members.<sup>81</sup>

In addition to her ring, the bride would often also receive a belt made of metal discs. Inscribed on the central panel of either of these would be a scene of the man and woman on either side of Christ or the Cross, with or without their crowns, frequently encircled by such salutations as “concord,” “grace” or “health.”<sup>82</sup> This custom would seem to celebrate the iconic role of the married couple in Byzantine society as “a miniature of civic order.”<sup>83</sup> It also is suggestive of St. John Chrysostom’s theology of the *ecclesiola* (and one wonders to what extent his conception was based on an originally secular model).<sup>84</sup>

Despite these positive connotations, however, marriage in Middle Byzantium was generally understood in utilitarian terms, as one means (others included adoption, god parenthood and “the making of brothers” [*adelphopoiesis*]) of extending a family’s kinship ties and influence throughout society. A complex taxonomy of degrees of relation was developed to circumscribe the parameters of lawful marriage, which served to alleviate Byzantines’ “obsessive fear of ‘mixing of the blood’ which is to say, incest, whether in

---

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 159. Many of these customs had Greek and/or Roman antecedents going back more than a thousand years. Classical Athens knew a verbal betrothal, binding under legal and financial penalty and a wedding feast to which the bride was transported in procession, preceded by lights and singing. Roman betrothals involved the giving of a ring to the bride-to-be by her fiancé, Roman weddings, the ritual joining of the bridal pair’s hands. Cf. Marilyn Yalom, *A History of the Wife* (New York: Harper Collins, 2001), 21-2, 28-9.

<sup>82</sup> Rice, *Everyday Life in Byzantium*, 160.

<sup>83</sup> Peter Brown, “Late Antiquity,” in Paul Veyne, ed., *A History of Private Life, Vol. 1: From Pagan Rome to Byzantium* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987), 235-312, 248.

<sup>84</sup> “Instruct your wife, and the whole of your household will be in *order and harmony* [emphasis mine]...If we regulate our households in this manner, we will also be fit for the management of the Church. For indeed the household is a little Church.” John Chrysostom, cited in Meyendorff, *Marriage: An Orthodox Perspective*, 87.

marriage or not.”<sup>85</sup>

Arranged marriage was the norm, inasmuch as the parents were legally obliged to find spouses for their children. Solemn betrothal, after the eleventh century necessarily including a sacerdotal blessing, possessed the same force of law as marriage, and could be concluded for a girl at age 12, a boy, age 14. An engagement, which could be celebrated at the age of reason (age seven and up) had almost the same status as a betrothal, distinguished from it only by the absence of the blessing. Both rites involved a contractual arrangement, usually verbal, which was sometimes formalized in yet another rite. The “cross bonds” (*staurikoi desmoi*) -- named after its solemnization through the sign of the Cross -- provided for the consent of the fiancés to be committed to writing in the presence of their parents. This rite bound them to each other under legal penalty. In some cases, moreover, it was of itself a legitimate means of effecting matrimony, not necessarily being followed by a Betrothal or a Crowning.

Consent was considered an integral element in a valid marriage at least in Late Byzantium, and most probably in the Middle Byzantine period as well, given the manner in which it is taken for granted by later writers like Matthew Blastares and Symeon of Thessalonika.<sup>86</sup> Nonetheless, the Byzantine Church seems to not have elaborated a distinct theology of consent pertinent to matrimony, which would interpret the vicissitudes of canonical legislation and critique the practice of forced marriage. This is all the more

---

<sup>85</sup> Evelyne Patalagean, “Byzantium in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries,” in Veyne, *A History of Private Life*, 551-644, 596.

<sup>86</sup> Patrick Viscuso, “The Formation of Marriage in Late Byzantium,” in *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly*, 35, No. 4 (1991), 309-325.

surprising given the strong emphasis on the freedom of the will which typically animates Byzantine theological anthropology and soteriology.

While the details and interrelationship of the various stages of the marital solemnization are an ongoing subject of debate, it is clear that there was a diversity of practices. This is also the case for the times and locations of cohabitation and consummation, the factors admissible in deciding cases of divorce and remarriage, and the ritual used in not only first but subsequent celebrations of the sacrament.

### *iii. Discipline and Theology of Marriage*

John Meyendorff argues that the Byzantine tradition always regarded marriage as a unique sacramental state, given its significance in Scripture as an image of the bond between Israel and Yahweh, and the Church and Christ.<sup>87</sup> Indissolubility was certainly a characteristic of the Orthodox ideal concerning matrimony, albeit one susceptible of dispensation; for certain specified causes, marriages could be dissolved. Nonetheless, it was only in the tenth century that subsequent marriages began to be blessed in church. Second and third marriages were hitherto considered civil realities which the Church wished to wash her hands of, even if she could not disallow them. Remarriage was religiously taboo, entailing penance before readmission to Eucharistic communion. Meyendorff states that such a union was thereafter still regarded as only civil, rather than sacramental, but he does not explain how remarried spouses were indeed recognized as full

---

<sup>87</sup> Cf. John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1974), 196-197.

participants in ecclesial life, able to raise Christian children and partake in all the sacraments (save ordination). It would thus seem that the Church recognized subsequent marriages as *de facto* sacraments, if not *de jure*.

The author compares marriage to baptism, observing how grace lost may be restored through penance. The analogy is awkward, however, since no one is ever re-baptized, if baptized truly, while the Byzantines believed that truly married persons could, under certain circumstances, contract new marriages.<sup>88</sup> Byzantine tradition thus manifested what might be termed a sacramental pragmatism, when faced with what seemed to be an irreversible *fait accompli*. It “accept[ed] the possibility of an initial mistake, as well as the fact that single life, in cases of death or the simple absence of the partner, is a greater evil than remarriage for those who cannot bear it.”<sup>89</sup>

According to Patrick Viscuso, Theodore Balsamon (c.1140- c 1195) provides an articulate and authoritative index of the theological significance of marriage in Middle Byzantium. Theodore’s views presage those of the modern theologians cited in the first part of our study. While Eastern Christianity has always displayed a certain continuity of the Old Testamental models of purity and defilement in regards to connubial sexuality, viewing marriage as a consequence of the Fall, Theodore represents an alternative tradition that emphasizes the salutary effects of the Incarnation and the uniqueness of the Christian sacrament vis-à-vis its natural counterpart:

---

<sup>88</sup> It is true, however, that penance and confession were often understood by the Fathers as a kind of “second baptism.”

<sup>89</sup> Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*, 197.

Balsamon believed that the nuptial union was a Divinely-created [*sic*] image of the Trinity that pre-existed the sin of the foreparents. He held that the sin of Adam and Eve was transmitted through marital relations and resulted in the hereditary corruption of human nature. By Christ's fulfillment of human nature, marital relations no longer took place in sin, but were chaste and undefiling by nature and thus recovered their original goodness.<sup>90</sup>

As we shall see, however, such a perspective does not obtain in the hymnographic corpus, which tends to preserve the predominant patristic hermeneutic (enshrined in the eighteenth century *Pedalion*, the influential canonical anthology of Nikodemos the Hagiorite) that even within marriage sexual relations are intrinsically polluted.<sup>91</sup> It is surprising that Balsamon's "dissenting" voice was so esteemed in his day and thereafter, yet without observable liturgical analogues, other than perhaps the optimistic cast of the prayers of the Crowning. The monastic composers of the *Menaion* apparently continued to march to the beat of their own theological drum, despite the contemporaneous resonance of contrary rhythms.

#### *iv. Relevance of the Monastic Weltanschauung*

It is a truism that the popularity of monasticism gave a distinct colouration to Byzantine society. Monasteries were ubiquitous and implicated in many aspects of the lives of non-monastics. They were involved in the education of children, usually as a propaedeutic introduction to monastic life; they provided hospitality for travelers and care

---

<sup>90</sup> Patrick Viscuso, "Marital Relations in the Theology of the Byzantine Canonist Theodore Balsamon," in *Ostkirchliche Studien*, 39 (1990), 288.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. Patrick Viscuso, "The Theology of Marriage in the *Rudder* of Nikodemos the Hagiorite," in *Ostkirchliche Studien*, 41, No. 2/3 (1992), 187-287.

for the poor and sick; they exemplified an alternative vocation to the young and a second career possibility for adults; and, in general, served by their eschatological orientation to critique and relativize the world outside their confines, particularly the significance of marital and familial ties and the value of work and wealth.

Alice-Mary Talbot credits this critique for the “ambivalence of Byzantines, torn between the desire to embrace monastic life and the desire to continue the family lineage.”<sup>92</sup> Hagiography -- and in turn hymnography -- reflects this tension, and usually resolves it in favour of monasticism: “There are cases of husbands leaving their wives...of middle-aged couples separating to enter different monasteries...these actions are normally viewed as virtuous and praiseworthy deeds; the value of the life dedicated to God is so great that it outweighs any obligations to one’s family.”<sup>93</sup>

Moreover, “the gist of the hagiographical message is that the body and its ‘impure’ desires should be suppressed and the sexual drive eliminated.”<sup>94</sup> Alexander Kazhdan argues, however, that this ascetic disdain eventually gave way to a mild affirmation of the nuptial embrace, and that hagiography began to incorporate saints who had lived in the world and participated in the sacrament.

Marriage was a blessed union, and we can probably observe gradually growing respect toward it. The earlier concept that the ideal marriage is the one without consummation was contrasted with the ideal of the ‘middle way’ [of infrequent and restricted nuptial union]...or even of a normal family...[But sexuality] in

---

<sup>92</sup> Alice-Mary Talbot, “The Byzantine Family and the Monastery,” in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, No. 44, (1990), 120.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>94</sup> Alexander Kazhdan, “Byzantine Hagiography and Sex in the Fifth to Twelfth Centuries,” in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 44 (1990), 131.

hagiography is never coupled with love. Love is placed on a different level -- as Christian devotion or Christian philanthropy. Marriage is concluded not by interested parties but by their parents. It is seen as necessary for procreation, for the very existence of human kind; it prescribes marital fidelity and requires self-sacrifice when the material well-being of the family is threatened. But never was hagiographical marriage based on the joys of the flesh, on sexual love.<sup>95</sup>

A few observations are in order here. While it is true that the *Synnarion* acquired married saints, these saints seem to have only rarely had services composed for them, and have in most cases not become the saints fêted by the Church on a given date. In other words, the *Menaion* only provides propers for one or two of the several saints commemorated on each day of the sanctoral, and most of the individuals to whom Kazhdan refers in his article do not appear in this regard. Even when they do, for example, in the case of Konon of Isauria, references to their marriages are typically token if not absent.

The norm of arranged marriage, moreover, seems in many instances to have vitiated the status of the sacrament, since some who were monastically inclined were indeed compelled to practice the “way of obedience between filial obedience and pious chastity -- the non-consummated marriage.”<sup>96</sup> The prayers and gestures of the wedding rite are suggestive of the need for willing co-operation with divine grace in attaining the ends of marriage (indissolubility, sexual purity, procreation etc.); the consent that conditions such co-operation, however, was evidently frequently absent. Marriage thus serves in many saints’ *vitae* as a scandal, a cause for stumbling that they are in one way or another able to

---

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 132. The Church has canonized some who had “indicated that they would have preferred not to be married,” as well as some who were forced into marriage. Cf. David and Mary Ford, *Marriage as a Path to Holiness: Lives of Married Saints* (South Canaan, PA: St. Tikhon’s Seminary Press, 1994), xvi.

heroically overcome.

Monastic life would seem to have further reinforced its superiority to marriage by co-opting its positive images and customs. For in the Byzantine world-view, “virginity was considered a type of marriage, the virgin (or nun) being proclaimed Christ’s bride.”<sup>97</sup> The abbess assumed the quasi-parental role of betrothing and presenting her daughters to Christ as pure virgins. In this vein, a nun’s family would provide her convent, in lieu of her groom, with a dowry. A monk was also said to be “‘entering the bridal chamber’ when he donned the monastic habit.”<sup>98</sup>

The hymnography reveals an inconsistent theology in this regard. At times monastics are presented as “brides” upon their tonsure, at others, upon their entrance into heaven. Perhaps this ambiguity reflects the distinction between betrothal and marriage common to Byzantine culture, wherein the nuptial union was initiated in one rite and fulfilled in another. Such a correlation fits with what is known of the contemporary practice of betrothal vis-à-vis marriage.<sup>99</sup> The former was indissoluble except for the conditions recognized for the dissolution of the latter, because of the blessing which elevated the human contract to a divine bond. One might then ask: as the betrothed were required to be faithful while not enjoying the privileges of cohabitation and sexual union, were the monastics understood to be awaiting the consummation of their union with Christ, in His dwelling place, which would only obtain after death? The hymnography certainly suggests

---

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>98</sup> Talbot, “The Byzantine Family and the Monastery,” 121.

<sup>99</sup> Viscuso, “The Formation of Marriage in Late Byzantium,” 312.

this.

In addition to the aura of marriage, monasticism also appropriated the ambience of the Byzantine home. *Hesychia* as “repose” was a state originally associated with the security of the domestic sphere. For those called to the angelic life, it came to express that spiritual rest which they so ardently sought, and anticipated by their entry into the household (*oikos*) of a monastic “family.”<sup>100</sup> This *iter animae dei* is an almost constant theme of the *Menaion*, wherein a saint, through either actual or “white” martyrdom, poises his soul for its return to the heavenly homeland, the Eden from which Adam was expelled in the beginning.

Lest one should think that the Church’s hymnography is an inaccurate indicator of contemporary attitudes and behaviour, it bears noting that hagiography, on which hymnography is based, is considered to have served as the popular literature of the Middle Byzantine period.<sup>101</sup> While the hymnographic corpus presents a more truncated selection of material than the lives of the saints, it was perhaps even more germane -- especially for those who could not read -- being all the more widely diffused through liturgical proclamation.

While Kazhdan argues that later revisions of saints’ lives endeavoured to reflect a growing belief that “sanctity could be achieved not only in the desert or in the monastery but in family life,” this trend is not corroborated by the hymnographic corpus. Perhaps it simply proved more conservative in this respect, preserving the services that already

---

<sup>100</sup> Patalagean, “Byzantium,” in Veyne, *A History of Private Life*, 568, 571.

<sup>101</sup> Kazhdan, “Byzantine Hagiography,” 131.

existed and not allowing the newer models of sanctity easy entry into its ranks.

#### *v. Sexuality and Spirituality*

Peter Brown posits that the monastic preoccupation with celibacy, chastity and sexual purity was a distinctive innovation of Christianity vis-à-vis the cultures of the ancient world. Particularly novel was the attention paid to the psychological aspects of moral praxis. Christian spirituality, he argues, interested itself in the connection between sexuality and the “passions,” and the way in which asceticism in regard to the former conditioned the dynamics of the latter. The monastic *milieu* provided for “sexually based imaginations, the manifestation of sexual drives in dreams and through night emissions [to be] examined with a sensitivity unheard of in previous traditions of introspection, and in a manner entirely independent of any opportunities for contact with the other sex.”<sup>102</sup>

Such an agenda, however, did not preclude the salutary use of marriage by those to whom it was due. The Church anathematized *tout court* sectarian movements which deemed nuptial love as incompatible with sacramental ministry or even authentic spiritual life, even if it was generally acknowledged that the full attainment of holiness usually devolved to those who had freed themselves of fleshly concerns. Brown concludes:

The marital and sexual morality of the early Byzantine Christian was dour; but little in it seemed problematic...In Eastern Christian morality the facts of sexuality were not communicated by the clergy as fraught with any particular sense of mystery. Either one lived with them, as a married person, in the world, or one abandoned them, in order to soak the body in the “sweet smell of the desert.”<sup>103</sup>

---

<sup>102</sup> Brown, in Veyne, *A History of Private Life*, 300.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 301-302.

This author remarks further that the Christian desert set the standard for the lay, Byzantine city, which was nonetheless appropriated only modestly, due to the survival of pagan practices such as the theatres, baths and public games. While the Church enjoined periodic sexual abstinence as an element of fasting, and upheld the ideal of celibacy, she maintained the lawfulness and use of marriage *per se*.

This is perhaps evinced in the Eastern practice of married secular clergy, who were always seen as appropriate pastors for those in the world. By the seventh century, however, celibate (that is, monastic) clergy came to be entrusted with the care of the Church as a whole, by being made bishops, in addition to their ministry within monastic communities. Sexuality and spirituality were thus only compatible in the city to a limited degree. The characteristic Byzantine orientation towards the *eschaton* is probably to be credited for this. The bishops, as the shepherds of the Church, were expected to exemplify the eschatological identity of the Church as rooted in the “not yet” even if living in the “now,” and who better could fulfill this role than those who were as “angels in the world,” as human beings had been in Paradise before the sexual differentiation of the Fall?<sup>104</sup>

---

<sup>104</sup> Apposite to this notion, Philip Sherrard makes the following observations: “Where the Eastern Tradition is concerned, two authors -- St (*sic*) Gregory of Nyssa and St Maximos the Confessor -- may be taken as representative. For both, their attitude to the sexual life derives from their anthropology, [rooted] in the text in Genesis (1.26): ‘Let us make man in our image and resemblance.’ ...In his original state...man comprehends what we call the intellectual life (the *nous*) and the spiritual life (the *pneuma*); and it is these two realities together which constitute the true and basic man. The animal or organic life has [been] superadded as a consequence of the ‘fall’....Two fundamental qualities distinguish this natural unfallen life: immortality and incorruptibility; and, St Gregory argues, the presence of these two qualities presupposes the absence of sexuality. In his original state as he is created ‘in the image’, man is free from sexuality. There is not even a division between the sexes. There is no man and woman. Sexuality is one of the consequences of a fall and of the loss of immortality and incorruptibility that goes with it...Virginity is a condition of man’s return to his original state...Only through monastic celibacy can man recover that natural -- and sexless -- state for which he was originally created ‘in the image’.” *Christianity and Eros: Essays on the Theme of Sexual Love* (Limni, Evia, Greece: Denise Harvey, 1995), 5-8.

The Church seems to have enshrined in her sanctoral the tendency evident in the early Church, viz., to make an “exceptional sexual discipline bear the full burden of expressing the difference between [Christianity] and the pagan world.” Even after the world became “Christian,” this same dynamic perdured not only in the elevation of the monastic vocation, but in the ubiquitous significance of chastity as an index even of lay holiness:

Sexuality became a highly charged symbolic marker precisely because its disappearance in the committed individual was considered possible, and because this disappearance was thought to register, more significantly than any other human transformation, the qualities necessary for leadership in the religious community. The removal of sexuality -- or, more humbly, removal from sexuality -- stood for a state of unhesitating availability to God and one’s fellows, associated with the ideal of the single-hearted person.<sup>105</sup>

While the retention of married clergy goes against this grain, it is also true that the many prescriptions and proscriptions associated with clerical sexuality confirm it as something tolerated rather than positively advocated. If monasticism reified lifestyle characteristics incipient in the New Testament and sub-apostolic Christianity, Byzantine hymnography enshrined them in its choice and description of saints. The unequivocal example of the *monachos* remained a constant critique of the mental, emotional and physical fragmentation entailed by married life.

#### *vi. Origins of the Menaion*

Although the cathedral office in Middle Byzantium had little hymnography, the

---

<sup>105</sup> Brown, in Veyne, *A History of Private Life*, 263.

popularity and availability of monastic worship, even in urban settings, and particularly the influential role of the Studite monks in the diffusion of Palestinian monastic practices, suggests that average Byzantines were exposed to the hymnography of the *Menaion*, more or less as it was composed. During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, moreover, the Studite synthesis gradually effected in Constantinople resulted in the modification of the rite of the Great Church itself, with the increased and enriched use of hymnography as one of its most salient features..

The initial codification of the *Menaion* was underway already in the tenth century.<sup>106</sup> Originating in the Sabaitic monasteries of the Holy Land, the hymnography was adapted and compiled in Constantinople for local use. Ultimately this local Byzantine *ordo* of sanctoral commemorations was diffused throughout the Empire by the influential *Diataxis* of the Athonite Patriarch of Constantinople, Philotheos (d. 1379), and enshrined in the first printed Byzantine liturgical books.

The first such *Menaion* was published in Venice, beginning in 1526, by the printer Jean Antoine Niccolini da Sabio and his brothers.<sup>107</sup> Other editions followed, from other Venetian printers, in various redactions. The da Sabios set the pace, however, and it was their version which became the standard for the *textus receptus* of the *Menaion*, because of its subsequent acceptance by not only the Greek but also the Slavic Churches. The da Sabios had to choose from the numerous extant manuscript traditions of the *Menaion*, and

---

<sup>106</sup> Robert Taft, *The Byzantine Rite: A Short History* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 58.

<sup>107</sup> Alphonse Raes, "Les livres liturgiques grecs publiés à Venise," in *Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Mélanges Eugène Tisserant, Vol.3: Orient Chretien* (Vatican City, 1964), 211.

decide on a definitive text and arrangement of the services.<sup>108</sup> While the details of the editorial process and the personages involved are somewhat obscure, it would seem that Greek clergy charged with the pastoral care of Venetian Orthodox were some of the main protagonists. Alphonse Raes describes how one such “editor,” Nicholas Malaxos, actually wrote his own hymns for the sanctoral and inserted them into his proof-texts, only some of which were ever expurgated!

The criteria for establishing the *Menaion* in what would come to be their definitive form appear, in any case, to have been incidental. No theological commission was set up to review the books that were published. Their wide acceptance suggests that they were more or less aligned to what was already in use in the Churches, and the addition, omission, elevation or demotion of particular saints -- necessary to the production of a critical edition -- does not seem to have elicited any demonstrable protest. Local churches continued to glorify their own saints and compose services for them, even if they availed themselves of a basic sanctoral, common after the 16th century at least, to almost the whole of the Byzantine Church (the notable exception being sectors of the Church in Magna Grecia). Whatever repression of married saints may have taken place, it was not sufficiently novel to impede the success of the Venetian redactions of the *Menaion*, and we can probably conclude that the sanctoral's *textus receptus* reflects by and large the ambivalences, adumbrated above, of the Byzantine *Sitz im Leben* in which the original services emerged.

---

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 212-13.

#### IV. The Liturgical Theology of Marriage in the *Menaion*'s Services for Married Saints

##### *i. Sources*

To my knowledge, there are only two editions of the 12-volume *Menaion* in English, that of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR) and that of the Melkite Church. Because it is fuller (including as it does the canons), I have made use of the ROCOR edition,<sup>109</sup> supplemented by the French *Menaion* of Diaconie Apostolique.<sup>110</sup> The former includes several modern Russian saints who are not found in Greek or other *Menaia*. For our purposes, however, this edition is perfectly suitable, since it is lucid, comprehensive and translated very accurately, and since, moreover, almost all the married saints of the Byzantine sanctoral are common to the various recensions of the *Menaion*. Selective use has been made of the Greek *Menaion* to clarify particular words and phrases.<sup>111</sup> In general, however, our critique does not turn on issues of semantics or translation.<sup>112</sup>

The texts selected for study were identified by means of two books whose goal is to summarize the *Synaxarion*, the traditional collection of the lives of the Byzantine saints.<sup>113</sup> The authors of these works claim to have identified all the saints in the sanctoral who were

---

<sup>109</sup> Isaac E. Lambertsen, tr., *The Menaion of the Orthodox Church* (Liberty, TN: The St. John of Kronstadt Press, 1996-).

<sup>110</sup> Denis Guillaume, tr., *Les Menées* (Rome: Diaconie Apostolique, 1982).

<sup>111</sup> Apostolike Diankonias tes Ekklesias tes Elliados, *Menaion* (Athens: Ekdosis tes Apostolikes Diakonias tes Ekklesias tes Elliados, 1991-1993).

<sup>112</sup> See note 14 above.

<sup>113</sup> Ford, *Marriage as a Path to Holiness*, and (Monk) Moses, *Married Saints of the Orthodox Church* (Wildwood, CA: St. Xenia Skete, 1991).

ever married, and they present resumés of their *vitae*. I cross-referenced the lists of married saints with the actual commemorations found in the *Menaion*, month by month, and discovered that most of the married saints of the Church receive no official cult. Of course, many non-married saints are also not fêted, simply because there are more saints in the *Synaxarion* than days in the year, and the Church typically only celebrates one or two saints, or groups of saints, at a time, even if nominally remembering several. What is striking, nonetheless, is the disproportionately small number of married saints in the *Menaion* compared to their number in the *Synaxarion*. Very few ended up receiving or retaining their feasts in the face of the numerous monastics who came to be commemorated by the Church.

Having narrowed the parameters of my study to those texts which commemorate married saints,<sup>114</sup> I further reduced the material for actual analysis by eliminating the texts

---

<sup>114</sup> **The following married saints are fêted in the *Menaion*:**

*September* 5 - Zachary & Elizabeth; 9 - Joachim & Anne; 11 - Theodora of Alexandria; 17 - Sophia; 20 - Eustathis & Theopista; 30 - Gregory the Illuminator

*October* 9 - Adronicus & Athanasia; 11 - Philip the Deacon; 28 - Terrence & Neonilla; 29 - Abramios

*November* 5 - Galacticon & Episteme; 12 - Nilus, John the Merciful; 14 - Philip the Apostle; 20 - Gregory; 22 - Philemon & Apphia; 27 - James the Persian

*December* 1 - Philaret; 12 - Spyridon; 16 - Theophania; 20 - John of Kronstadt; 21 - Juliana; 22 - Anastasia; 30/31 - Melania

*January* 2 - Juliana; 9 - Polyeuctus; 10 - Gregory of Nyssa, Dometian; 24 - Xenia; 26 - Xenophon & his wife & children

*February* 3 - Symeon

*March* 5 - Conon & Anna; 17 - Alexis; 19 - Chrysanthus & Daria; 31 - Innocent of Moscow

*April* 9 - Eupsychnus

of those saints whose marriage is never mentioned, i.e. of whose marital state we would not know except through the *Synaxarion*, or whose marriage receives such perfunctory acknowledgement as to provide no scope for meaningful discussion.<sup>115</sup> The service for James the Persian (Nov. 27), for example, contains only a single, passing reference to his

---

*May* 5 - Timothy & Maura; 10 - Simon the Zealot; 21 - Constantine, Helena; 17 - Andronicus & Junia; 18 - Theodutus of Ancyra

*June* 29 - Peter the Apostle

*July* 15 - Julitta; 25 - (Dormition of) Anne

*August* 3 - Dalmatus; 21 - Bassa; 26 - Adrian & Natalie

<sup>115</sup> **The following saints' marriages are given little or no treatment in the *Menaion*:**

*September* 30 - Gregory the Illuminator

*October* 11 - Philip the Deacon

*November* 12 - Nilus, John the Merciful; 14 - Philip the Apostle (no mention is made of his wife or daughters: this is especially surprising given the positive Scriptural account of the latter in Acts 21:8-9); 20 - Gregory; 22 - Philemon & Appia; 27 - James the Persian

*December* 1 - Philaret; 12 - Spyridon; 20 - John of Kronstadt; 21 - Juliana; 22 - Anastasia

*January* 9 - Polyeuctus; 10 - Gregory of Nyssa, Dometian

*February* 3 - Symeon

*March* 5 - Conon & Anna (the service actually honours Conon alone; there is no mention of Anna); 31 - Innocent of Moscow

*April* 9 - Eupychus

*May* 10 - Simon the Zealot; 21 - Constantine, Helena; 17 - Andronicus & Junia; 18 - Theodutus of Ancyra

*June* 29 - Peter the Apostle

*July* 15 - Julitta

*August* 3 - Dalmatus; 21 - Bassa (no mention of her marriage, but the service fêtes her children, and her motherhood)

wife; it has not been possible to tease out anything germane to the present work, other than the mere observation that there is not much there to observe! The services I have selected, arranged and interpreted in what follows, therefore, represent essentially all that the *Menaion* has to say concerning saints whose marriages are put forward as noteworthy.

Two disclaimers are *à propos*. Although there are ubiquitous references to the spousal nature of the relationship between Mary and God in the hymnographic corpus, such texts involve dogmatic and doctrinal considerations which are beyond the scope of this paper. The role of Mary as the unique “bride of God,” in my opinion, warrants its own study. Second, while the monastic saints’ services also invariably invoke the terms of spiritual marriage, it has proven superfluous to discuss their services *per se* in this regard. Abundant examples are to be found in the lives of married saints, since many of them eventually became monks, *and are honoured primarily as such*, rather than as married laity.

## *ii. Initial Observations*

A study of the married saints of the Byzantine sanctoral evinces the development of certain categories for heroes of the faith. In one sense this is a rather straight-forward development, based on the ecclesiastical status or manner of death of a saint. Witness the production of generic propers for various classes of saints, e.g. martyrs, virgins, bishops, etc. This pastorally pragmatic option, necessitated in the past by the frequent unavailability of complete texts for services, provided for the commemoration of a saint by the simple insertion of his name into a familiar liturgical template.

Certain stock themes and images recur, moreover, in the full texts of a given kind of married saint. The holiness that came to be recognized by the Church would seem in great measure to have been formed by the holiness she had already experienced. The *Menaion* exhibits conventions that while not eliminating the particularity of a person, do indeed, to some extent, mitigate it in order to subsume him into a pre-existing schema of sanctity.

The hymnography's vocabulary and phraseology, therefore, are quite consistent; one rarely finds an expression uniquely applied to a given saint. Rather, saints tend to be assimilated through the language of their services to previously established prototypes whom they in turn re-present and whose example they confirm. Perhaps this is an example of the Byzantine tendency to eschew innovation and present the new in a way that incorporates and refers back to the traditional. Indeed, such a predilection is evident in the influential *Menologion* (arrangement of the *Synnaxarion* according to the *Menaion*) of Symeon Metaphrastes (d. ca 1000), who "reworked most of the texts he used, to standardize and purify the language...and give it rhetorical embellishment."<sup>116</sup> The following presentation is organized around categories which reflect the similar "levelling" at work in the *Menaion*.

### *iii. Modus Operandi*

Alexander Schmemmann has judged there to be three essential steps in a given exercise of liturgical theology, and we shall employ this basic technique of observation,

---

<sup>116</sup> Alexander Kazhdan, "Symeon Metaphrastes," in *Dumbarton Oaks, The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 1983.

analysis and synthesis in discussing the texts at hand:<sup>117</sup>

a) “identification of the liturgical fact.” In our case, the liturgical fact is evident, since relevant discrepancies between versions of the *Menaion* are negligible. And because we are concerned with a synchronic study, i.e. with the *textus receptus* of the sanctoral, rather than a diachronic, i.e. the comparison of different manuscripts prior to the sixteenth century codification of the *Menaion* in printed volumes, such discrepancies as may exist between the services as they now stand and their original versions, or between the number and nature of now defunct feasts vis-à-vis those that made it into the sanctoral’s “canon,” are moot points.

b) “theological analysis of the relevant liturgical unit.” In our case, this consists of a scrutiny of the texts concerning the married saints of the Church. In order to avoid the pitfalls of imposing on the liturgy categories which are alien to it -- a tendency excoriated by Schmemmann -- we have chosen analytical criteria which derive from elsewhere in the liturgy, namely the Crowning. The Crowning has fortunately been the object of several liturgico-theological studies, as our treatment of modern Eastern Christian discourse on marriage above has indicated.

c) synthesis, “the release of the inherent theological meaning from the witness of the liturgical epiphany itself.” In our case, the meaning sought is the vision of marriage that emerges from the *Menaion*, characterized as it may be by repression, transference and co-

---

<sup>117</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, “Liturgical Theology: Remarks on Method,” in Thomas Fisch, ed., *Liturgy and Tradition: Theological Reflections of Alexander Schmemmann* (Crestwood, N.Y.: Saint Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1990), 144.

optation.

Schmemmann's methodology stresses the need to consider the liturgy as an integral phenomenon whose parts must be interpreted in reference to each other. What follows, therefore, aims to contribute to the completion of what is lacking in Orthodox liturgical theology as regards marriage, by enlarging the field of study from those liturgical data that directly concern marriage, i.e., the texts of the Crowning, to those which situate it in an enfolded, personal, context, i.e., the sanctoral. It is worth noting that the Crowning itself makes reference to particular saints as exemplars of the mystery it celebrates, although these saints are not specifically commemorated in the *Menaion*.<sup>118</sup> Here we shall proceed deductively from the particular to the general, from the married to the mystery of marriage. Rather than induce from its wedding service what Orthodox marital sanctity consists of, we look to the sanctoral to identify the way in which it has been exemplified.

#### *iv. Nomenclature and Definitions*

In order to refer to phrases from a given text, I have devised a simple schema by which relevant liturgical pericopes can be identified.<sup>119</sup> This has been done in a manner

---

<sup>118</sup> Cf. the first prayer of the Crowning, which mentions Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Rachel, Joseph and Aseneth; and the second, which includes Moses and Zipporah. (Meyendorff, *Marriage: An Orthodox Perspective*, 120-122)

<sup>119</sup> CXL, \_: denotes a sticheron (a hymnographic stanza, typically a few sentences in length) sung in between the verses of Psalms 140-141 at the lamp-lighting of Vespers.

\_, Dox or \_, Theo: denotes the sticheron sung after the "Glory be..." or the "Now and ever..." in a given set of stichera.

Apo, \_: denotes a sticheron sung in between the verses of the Aposticha of Vespers

such that verification of my observations does not require recourse to the specific edition of the *Menaion* I am using for my work. The notions of repression, transference and co-optation have been used in the title of this study to connote three identifiable motifs in the (dis)use of nuptial imagery by the sanctoral's texts. Repression is intended to express the absence of a married saint, or the treatment of that saint in terms which make no reference to his or her marriage. Transference is the device whereby nuptial imagery is employed to celebrate a celibate saint, particularly to the detriment of the natural referent of such imagery. Co-optation, in turn, describes the celebration of a married saint to the effect that he or she is appropriated as a model for celibates rather than for spouses. These three motifs, and their variations, will become more intelligible in the light of their relevant examples.

#### ***v. Righteous Israelites***

The first category that emerges in the *Menaion*, that of "Righteous Israelites," comprises married saints of the Scriptures who lived before the genesis of the New Testament Church. What is notable is that there are really only two couples in this

---

Sess \_\_: denotes a sticheron sung in between readings of the Psalter (kathismata) at Matins.

Ode \_\_: denotes an ode (a series of verses) of a canon (a long, stylized poetic form, divided into eight odes) at Matins, and the specific verse in it.

Can \_\_: denotes which canon, when more than one is prescribed.

Kont: denotes the kontakion, one of the "theme songs," of a given feast.

Ikos: denotes the sticheron sung at the beginning of an ode, or preceding a kontakion.

Praises \_\_: denotes a sticheron sung in between the verses of Psalms 148-150 at Matins.

category, and yet their feasts are of great significance. Conceivably there could be several more, and it is indeed surprising that there are not. Old Testament prophets, for example, are commemorated in the sanctoral, despite living before the Incarnation. One might similarly expect to find the patriarchs celebrated with their wives, especially because they are singled out in the Crowning.<sup>120</sup>

The first feast in the Byzantine liturgical year that commemorates a married couple is that of **Zacharias and Elizabeth** on September 5. On the twenty-third of the same month occurs the feast of the **Conception of the Forerunner**. The two services will be treated together, as their content is continuous.

A major theme in the first service is the honour that accrues to the parents as a result of the importance of their son, John the Forerunner. The fruit of the womb which is granted to the couple is miraculous, as they are aged and Elizabeth is barren. John's conception is presented as a reward for the faith and charity of Elizabeth in particular.<sup>121</sup> Her virtue elevates her even above the virginal state, as it is better to be a wife like her than to possess virginity *per se*.<sup>122</sup> Such a contention is based on St. Paul's claim to have betrothed the Church to Christ "as a pure virgin to one husband,"<sup>123</sup> a reference to II Cor. 11:2. The hymnographer explains that the apostle calls the married virginal, inasmuch as they are members of the Church, herself likened to a virgin. This example thus provides the

---

<sup>120</sup> See note 113 above.

<sup>121</sup> Apo, 2/3

<sup>122</sup> Ode IV, Can of E, 1

<sup>123</sup> Ode IV, Can of E, 2

rationale for placing Elizabeth, although a wife and mother, in the ranks of those who are praised in Christ's parable of the wise and foolish virgins (Matt. 25:1-13). Despite the fact that Elizabeth was married, she was actually greater than a virgin.

Zacharias is not mentioned in the previous context. The spouses are in fact usually lauded in separate stichera. Nonetheless, they are presented together in one instance as a "model" of how to please God. Their "walk[ing] in the commandments" is a means whereby God leads the Church, just as the pillar and cloud led Israel in the desert; this implies that the married can not only participate in, but exemplify holiness.<sup>124</sup> In the Conception, Zacharias is occasionally given an active role, as when Gabriel announces to him: "the Creator of Nature, the King of Angels, hath been well pleased that thou give birth unto the herald of his own coming."<sup>125</sup> Often, however, he remains on the sidelines. He is "upstaged" by his son, for example, who is portrayed as almost pre-existent and implicated in his own generation, the cause rather than the effect of his mother's miraculous fertility: "now having thrown wide the gate of the barren one, the great and divine Forerunner of Christ taketh up his abode within his mother's womb, as within royal chambers, that he may issue forth as a warrior."<sup>126</sup>

Striking in this regard are the parallels drawn between the pregnancies of Elizabeth and Mary. The hymnographer exclaims, "O God, Thou didst show forth Elizabeth's

---

<sup>124</sup> Ode IV, Can of E, 3

<sup>125</sup> Ode VI, 2

<sup>126</sup> Ode IX, 1

conceiving as an image of Thine own inconceivable birthgiving from the Virgin.”<sup>127</sup>

Elizabeth’s natural conception by means of her husband is thus co-opted to praise Mary’s virginal one. In the service of the Conception, Elizabeth is again compared to Mary, with the impression left that they conceived in a similar way: “Elizabeth hath been freed from barrenness; and the Virgin hath remained a virgin, even when she conceived in her womb at the cry of Gabriel.”<sup>128</sup>

Resonances of the beauty of the marital embrace do occur in the first sessional hymn of the former feast: “great is the love for mankind which the all-good God hath toward mortals, and which He showed forth upon thee, O Elizabeth, in that it was His will, in His ineffable goodness, that thou be with Zacharias.”<sup>129</sup> Similarly, the kontakion of the Conception exhorts: “rejoice with splendor, O great Zacharias and most glorious Elizabeth, his spouse, in conceiving John the Forerunner as is meet.” This service also introduces an awkward but charming astronomic metaphor which will recur in the feast of Joachim and Anne: “as radiant as the sun, Zacharias, cleaving unto Elizabeth, the moon, begat the light-bearing beacon of the Light, which shineth upon us.”<sup>130</sup> This is a rare example of a verse which carries a romantic overtone.

Alongside this positive appraisal of marriage and procreation, however, both services provide an alternative commentary. In the ikos of the kontakion for the holy

---

<sup>127</sup> Ode VI, Can of E, 3

<sup>128</sup> Sess I, 1

<sup>129</sup> Sess I, 1

<sup>130</sup> Ode VII, 2

couple, they are described as receiving John the Baptist “by the voice of an angel.” This conception is implied to be more miraculous than the Scriptural witness attests, by its dissociation from sexual union. We find a repression of Luke 1:23-25, wherein Zacharias returns home -- having received the promise of the angel -- and only subsequently (i.e., after being together with his wife again) is John conceived by Elizabeth.

In the feast of the Conception, this aberration from the gospel becomes explicit. John is the fruit of a miracle *per se*, not the fruit of the procreative synergy of his parents in the context of Elizabeth’s miraculously removed barrenness. John is said to have “come forth from a barren womb as an angel,”<sup>131</sup> without mention being made of Zacharias and Elizabeth coming together. Problematic also is the subsequent reference that depicts Elizabeth conceiving virginally at the time of the annunciation to her husband. Although Zacharias was away from Elizabeth at the temple when he received Gabriel’s message, the text exults: “The glorious forerunner...hath at the angel’s command sprung forth in his mother’s womb.”<sup>132</sup> Again, in Matins, we hear: “The Forerunner of the coming of the Lord, is now conceived at the angel’s announcement.”<sup>133</sup> Similar to the Scriptures, the hymnography regards infertility as a strictly feminine condition. The instrumentality of men is veiled by the *fiat* of the Lord which transforms barrenness into fecundity. This in turn would seem to effect a certain co-optation of the human agency in procreation and of its vital role in mediating the divine will and power.

---

<sup>131</sup> Apo, Dox

<sup>132</sup> Ode III, 3

<sup>133</sup> Praises, 3

An article of note in the feast of the holy couple is the way in which the Song of Songs is allegorized. In the eighth ode of the Canon of Elizabeth, this text is presented as typifying the relationship of God and the Church (Song of Songs 4:7). Elizabeth, in turn, is likened to the Church: “As God said of his Church: ‘Thou art all-comely, My beloved, and there is no blemish in thee,’ so art thou also blameless, O righteous Elizabeth.”

On September 9, the Church commemorates for the first time her other pre-New Covenant married couple, **Joachim and Anne**. This couple is also fêted in the service for the Nativity of the Theotokos (Sep. 8), as well as in that of the Dormition of St. Anne (July 25). The deaths and hence the lives of both saints are commemorated in this latter feast, despite the name of the celebration.<sup>134</sup>

A particular challenge of these services is the manner in which the frequent description of Anne as *sôphrôn* (“chaste, modest”) is to be interpreted. For the hymnographer, this adjective seems to be interchangeable with “barren.” On the other hand, both Joachim and Anne are called chaste,<sup>135</sup> as well as being elsewhere referred to in terms such as “the holy mates.”<sup>136</sup> Perhaps *sôphrôn* simply designates here the living out of a marital sexuality free from the concupiscence which so naturally defiles it. Fiona Bowie notes that chastity has had a dual connotation in Christian thought, referring both to “the purity of heart which enables the individual to see God (Matt. 5:8)...[and] the abstention from sexual intercourse, often associated with a denigration of marriage and a distaste for

---

<sup>134</sup> Cf. the feast’s CXL, Dox, where the holy couple are said to pass into heaven with their daughter, the immaculate virgin.

<sup>135</sup> Ode V, Can of J, 2

<sup>136</sup> CXL, Dox

the body.”<sup>137</sup> The hymnographer obviously intends the first of these meanings, but does seem to incline at times toward the second as well.

As in the service for Zachary and Elizabeth, the husband concerned here remains somewhat in the background as far as his child’s conception is concerned. Joachim is lauded, however, as one of the “honoured couple who gave birth to the Mother of God for us.”<sup>138</sup> The hymnographer also declares that he, “enriching his spouse with divine grace, was vouchsafed to beget the mediatrix of men’s salvation.”<sup>139</sup> There is thus a felicitous recognition of how God’s miraculous restoration of fertility in Mary’s mother co-operates with the procreative agency of her father; her life itself comes from God, but through Joachim.

A more convoluted metaphor occurs later on. “Entering into conjunction with Anne, like the sun with the luminous moon, Joachim gave rise to a ray of virginity.”<sup>140</sup> It is clear that the poet wishes to avoid any direct reference to the physical union of Joachim and Anne, and yet is at pains to affirm their marital intimacy. At times he vacillates and seems to propose God’s bringing forth Mary directly from Anne.<sup>141</sup> Even in the above example, he uses “divine grace” to describe Joachim’s procreative contribution to Mary’s generation, rather than a word as direct and as Scriptural as “seed.” This latter image is so strange

---

<sup>137</sup> Fiona Bowie, “Chastity,” in Adrian Hastings et al., eds., *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 108-109.

<sup>138</sup> CXL, 4

<sup>139</sup> Ode III, Can of J, 2

<sup>140</sup> Ode IX, Can of J, 3

<sup>141</sup> Ode V, Can of J, 4

precisely because the only time the sun and moon are seen to be together is during an eclipse -- during which time the sun's rays are not evident. And the two, of course, never actually touch each other! It is therefore a somewhat disembodied metaphor, more appropriate to describing the couple's coincidence of virtues in parenting Mary than their oneness in generating her.

"Seed" is referred to in the Canon for Anne's Dormition, but in such a way as to suggest again that Anne bore Mary without Joachim's assistance.<sup>142</sup> A further reference to her seemingly unilateral conception occurs in the first sticheron of the Aposticha, in which Joachim is not mentioned; the third, however, does affirm the co-dignity of the couple in bringing forth the Mother of Christ. The ambivalence here recalls that of the feasts of Zacharias and Elizabeth. Addressing matters of procreation seems to involve a breach of modesty for the hymnographer, who employs the supernatural deliverance from sterility almost as an excuse to neglect the synergy of the couple inherent in the natural processes through which the miracle was manifested.

Finally, it is significant that the only two conceptions of saints celebrated by the Church are those of John the Forerunner and Mary. Thomas Hopko considers their feasts to prove "that it is possible by the grace of God...for sexual union in marriage, even in the present condition of things, to be good, holy, beautiful, loving and pure." As we have seen, this may be claiming too much. The circumlocution and ambivalence of the services treated above send mixed signals at best, and do not lend themselves, as Hopko believes, to

---

<sup>142</sup> Ode I, 3

refuting the notion that “sexual union is in any sense sinful, or the cause in itself of any sinfulness or stain.”<sup>143</sup>

#### *vi. Martyrs*

The *Menaion* contain several services for couples or entire families who were martyred together.<sup>144</sup> Martyrdom is the phenomenon set in relief, and the personalities of the martyrs are thus frequently overshadowed by the attention given to their sufferings and death. Marriage and family serve at times to represent the worldly attachments which challenge the martyr’s determination to honour and serve Christ. Martyrdom is of course the archetypal mode of holiness in the Church, providing the frame of reference for monasticism itself, the so-called “white martyrdom.” While the *monachos* is one who lives alone for God,<sup>145</sup> the martyr lives (and dies) for God alone. Indeed, we encounter in the services for martyrs a willingness to sacrifice all for the sake of salvation. Marriage is often

---

<sup>143</sup> Thomas Hopko, *The Winter Pascha* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1984), 43.

<sup>144</sup> Interestingly, the martyr Prokopios (July 8), whose intercessions are invoked at the dismissal of the Crowning, is identified by Chryssavgis as having been married (*Love, Sexuality and the Sacrament of Marriage*, 21). I have not been able to substantiate this, however, and neither Monk Moses nor David and Mary Ford include him in their lists of married saints.

<sup>145</sup> While the original eremitic vocation has always remained an ideal in the Christian East, it is the cenobitic life that has, almost from the beginning of the monastic movement in the fourth century, been the normative form of monasticism. Pope John Paul II describes how monastic solitude is in fact, paradoxically, an expression of solidarity with others: “The various expressions of monastic life, from the strictly cenobitic, as conceived by Pachomius or Basil, to the rigorously eremitic, as with Anthony or Macarius of Egypt, correspond more to different stages of the spiritual journey than to the choice between different states of life...A monk’s way is not generally marked by personal effort alone. He turns to a spiritual father to whom he abandons himself with filial trust...Precisely because the spiritual father is the harmonizing link, monasticism is permitted the greatest variety of cenobitic and eremitical expressions...The monk is always essentially the man of communion, [which] is revealed first and foremost in service to one’s brothers in monastic life, but also to the Church community, in forms which vary in time and place, ranging from social assistance to itinerant preaching” ([www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/j...pl\\_02051995\\_orientale-lumen\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/j...pl_02051995_orientale-lumen_en.html), paragraphs 9, 13, 14).

high on the list of offerings, and if not marriage itself, then its natural comforts and blessings. Those saints whose spouses supported their vocation to martyrdom, however, are celebrated together with them.

An example of this is to be found in the first occurrence of a married couple to be martyred, the September 20 feast of **Eusthatus and Theopista**. These spouses, together with their children, are glorified for their common faith and sacrifice. Eusthatus maintains his courage even when separated from his household. In this respect he is likened to Job, who piously endured the loss of all that he held dear:

O thou who art as firm as adamant in soul, how can we praise thee as is meet? For, deprived of thy spouse, thou didst transcend nature, possessions and children, and didst utter the blessed and ever-memorable cry of Job: ‘The Lord hath given and the Lord hath taken away! As the Lord hath willed, so hath it been!’ But God Whom thou didst love and Whom thou didst fervently desire, again gave thee [thy] most cherished things, O thou who didst consider beforehand concerning those who suffered with thee. And having reached the end of divers torments with them, receiving them as thy fellow supplicants, O blessed Eusthatus, patient of soul, pray thou, that we be delivered from our iniquities.<sup>146</sup>

The saint’s wife and children are contrasted with “corruptible riches and pleasures” as the true source of his glory.<sup>147</sup> Our hymnographer exhibits a deep sympathy for the pain that Eusthatus underwent in the deprivation of his family. His example is compelling precisely because he had so much to relinquish. Consequently, what for a lesser man might have proven a temptation – the impulse to sacrifice Christian integrity for the security of one’s loved ones – becomes the occasion of the martyr’s victory. As a result the text exclaims: “Ye were beautifully united, O honored ones, having been separated before by providence

---

<sup>146</sup> Apo, Dox

<sup>147</sup> Ode I, 3

most great; and having dyed the purple robe of betrothal in your blood, ye hasten ardently to the heavenly bridal chamber.”<sup>148</sup>

On October 28 the feast of **Terrence and Neonilla** is kept. The familiar astronomical metaphor recurs: “Like a sun of surpassing brilliance thou didst join with the moon, Neonilla, and didst beget, O Terence, a choir of seven stars who were stained with the blood of martyrdom and emit splendid radiance, and who have made their abode in never-waning peace, where the team of all the athletes joineth chorus in splendour.”<sup>149</sup> Here we see a striking example of a distinctly positive view of marital life. One senses that the *koinoinia* of this domestic church was formative for the vocation of martyrdom to which they were all eventually called. While most of the texts praise the family as a whole, Terrence alone, or the children alone -- rather than the nuptial union of the parents -- there is nonetheless nothing derogatory in this feast in regard to marriage.

The married martyrs **Timothy and Maura** are remembered on May 3. Timothy is first instrumental in his wife’s conversion to Christ: “O divine Maura, thou didst listen lovingly to the luminous discourse of thy spouse.”<sup>150</sup> She then measures up to him -- exceeding what the hymnographer considers the natural limitations of her gender -- through her resilience in “manfully enduring unjust torture.”<sup>151</sup> The implication would seem to be that the union of this couple was effected not through marriage but martyrdom: union, that

---

<sup>148</sup> Ode VIII, 2

<sup>149</sup> CXL, 3

<sup>150</sup> Ode V, 1

<sup>151</sup> Ode V, 3

is, with each other in blood and in imitation of Christ. “Manifestly joined together in an excellent union, together ye took the easy yoke of the Lord upon your necks.”<sup>152</sup>

A final and more substantial example of this genre is provided by the August 26 commemoration of **Adrian and Natalia**. Here a happily married couple together undergo martyrdom, encouraging and strengthening each other on the way. Of note is the parallel drawn between Eve and Natalia, which highlights the esteem in which the hymnographer holds the latter: “The spouse of Adam caused him to be driven from Paradise through the counsel of the serpent; but Natalia all-wisely led Adrian to Paradise with her sacred conversations, spurring him on with her teachings to endure painful sufferings, being a mediator for him of heavenly rewards and everlasting glory.”<sup>153</sup> The reciprocity of the couple’s relationship is affirmed in the second allusion to Eve; here Adrian brings forth what is best in Natalia, and she in him:

The zeal of a pious man drew his God-loving wife to a splendid teaching; for the eminent Adrian was drawn on by the words of Natalia and finished the course of suffering. O the ways of the God-loving wife! For she did not bring her husband corruption as did Eve to Adam, but won never-ending life for him. Praising her with her husband, we cry out to Christ.<sup>154</sup>

Natalia is presented as the even greater woman standing behind a great man. Like Maura, she breaks the stereotype of the weaker sex by carrying both herself and her husband forward to their destiny, and by setting an example for him.

O holy couple, elect of the Lord! O eminent union blessed by God! Who doth not

---

<sup>152</sup> Ode VIII, 2

<sup>153</sup> CXL, 3

<sup>154</sup> Apo, Dox

marvel, hearing of their deeds! How did the female sex stand in manly manner against the arrogant tyrant and strengthen her husband, that he not give in to the wicked, but choose to die for the Faith rather than to live? O the divinely woven words of the all-wise Natalia! O the divine teachings which transcend the heavens and which set the glorious Adrian before the very throne of the great King Whom he acknowledged! O holy couple, pray to God for us who with love keep your memory.<sup>155</sup>

Against the backdrop of these accolades, however, a dissonance is perpetuated through the contrast of “carnal love” with love of Christ. It seems necessary for the hymnographer to clarify that the marriage of Adrian and Natalia is impelled purely by *agape*, that the two of them are not subject to a love which is connubial. Attraction, affection and concern for the bodily welfare of one’s spouse are presented as potentially detrimental to his or her spiritual welfare, and therefore to be expurgated. Love for God is thus at odds with the natural love of one’s spouse, a proper manifestation of the latter consisting in the redirection of his or her energies into the former, lest it be dissipated: “Who will not marvel at the wondrous woman’s love for God? For she disdained carnal desire and persuaded her spouse to honour and glorify Christ for all ages.”<sup>156</sup>

Although one might wish to interpret carnal desire as simply that instinct for preservation of self (and of another) that would ordinarily prevent one from willingly submitting to martyrdom, the phrase in question is used in the hymnography to connote the natural affection proper to marriage, or rather, to exclude it. There appears to be no middle ground between the *erôtes eis Christon* and the *erôtes sarxos*, “fleshly love,” for a kind of love for Christ which is mediated through the flesh of one’s spouse. The *erôtes sarxos* is

---

<sup>155</sup> CXL, Dox

<sup>156</sup> Ode VIII, 2

invariably considered deficient and inferior, and used interchangeably with, and thus made equivalent to, *pothos sarxos*, “fleshly desire.” No contrast is drawn in this connection between *erôtes sarxos* as an impure love within marriage and a potentially purified, but still distinctly nuptial “*erôtes somatos*.” Instead, there are only two kinds of love acknowledged: the higher love of Christ, expressed alternately through *erôs* and *agape*, and the baser, “carnal” kind, which seems to subsume the scope of possibilities unique to marriage.<sup>157</sup>

The issue is not, of course, that the couple in question do not love each other; it is that their love as spouses appears to possess no particular conjugal quality, at least no positive one. There is an evident fraternal charity between Adrian and Natalia, which nonetheless manifests itself as a mutual rejection of their spousal affection: “The dew of thy precious words was truly healing for the pangs of thy spouse, who tasted of the love of higher things, O divinely wise Natalia, consort of the martyrs,”<sup>158</sup> and again: “Utterly

---

<sup>157</sup> Cf. the actual use of these terms, which I have summarized, in our Greek text of the *Menaion*. Interpreting the meaning of both *sarx* and *sôma* and their derivatives is challenging, as each has multiple connotations even with the New Testament (cf. Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, eds., *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. III* [Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993], 230-233 and 321-325, respectively). Both these terms, however, seem to be somewhat “levelled” in the hymnography; the contrast between “flesh” and “body” is blurred, and what comes into relief instead is the contrast between flesh/body and spirit.

Of course, what was in the mind of the hymnographer, and his audience, can only be extrapolated by the kind of historico-theological contextualization that is the burden of much of this present work. Such contextualization is a *sine qua non* of any liturgical critique. Nonetheless, the hymnographic texts themselves suggest a theological retreat, deliberate or otherwise, from the genuinely positive view of nuptial corporeality that often obtained in early Christian orthodoxy. St. John Chrysostom, for example, stresses in his Homily XX on Ephesians, that husband and wife are to remember the dignity of their being one *sarx*, as the Lord affirms in Matthew 19:5-6 (cited in Meyendorff, *Marriage: An Orthodox Perspective*, 87. The question arises: how can two spouses know such a unity, without “fleshly love” of some kind? The *Menaion* does not ask this question, much less answer it.

<sup>158</sup> Ode V, 3

disdaining carnal love, O Natalia, with desire for Christ thou didst enflame the soul of thy husband which was kindled with the fire of divine love.”<sup>159</sup> Here we see a tendency to exalt one thing by debasing another. Martyrdom is defined over and against the *status quo*, the secular world of which marriage forms such an integral part.

The example of these saints is undoubtedly among the most inspiring, providing, on the one hand, a beautiful image of a couple whose mutual piety reinforces their marriage: “Natalia was given to Adrian by God as a helpmate united with him in soul, drawing him forth who was stuck fast in the abyss of deception and urging him to cry out: Blessed is the God of our fathers!”<sup>160</sup> Yet there are points of disconnection with the theological tradition regarding the notion that “carnal desire” of at least some kind might be a vehicle of grace. Karl-Heinz Uthemann notes that in Byzantine anthropology *sarx* is only sometimes distinguished from *sôma*. This is indeed the case in the hymnography, where *sarxos* and *sômatos* are used at times indiscriminately, and where the salient contrast is between the sarxic or somatic love of spouses, and the spiritual love of God and neighbour which transcends it.<sup>161</sup> Uthemann makes this cogent observation:

A major problem for Byz.[sic] theology was determining an appropriate moral or soteriological role for the body. The Byz. rejected the Stoic image of the body as the cage or prison of the soul as well as the Manichean vision of the body as the embodiment of evil. The body, created by God himself, was conceived of as ethically irrelevant, an instrument through which the soul could sin.”<sup>162</sup>

---

<sup>159</sup> Ode III, 3

<sup>160</sup> Ode VII, 2

<sup>161</sup> See for example the service for March 19, Chrysanthus and Daria (discussed below), Ode IV, 3: “With courage of heart thou didst shake off carnal (i.e., *sômatos*) pleasures.” Later in the service they avoid *ten tes sarxos*, “the things of the flesh” (Ode VIII, 3).

<sup>162</sup> Karl-Heinz Uthemann, “Body,” in Dumbarton Oaks, *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 299.

Obviously the historical, and in this case highly dramatic, episode that underlies the service is the primary concern of the hymnographer. He is not trying to theologize about marriage *per se*, but rather to extol the almost incredible capacity of the saints to bear suffering for their Lord. Martyrdom is portrayed as a unique mode of sanctity, eclipsing in its raw intensity the erstwhile vocations of those called to it. The traditional interpretation of the marriage crowns as crowns of martyrdom, and of the monastic vocation as the “white martyrdom,” is surely salutary inasmuch as it spiritually correlates these states. Perhaps it risks, however, distorting the stark otherness, the *sui generis* character of the “baptism of blood,” which is the fount of inspiration for so much of the Church’s sanctoral, Adrian and Natalia being a case in point.

#### *vii. Celibate Spouses*

A third genre of married sanctity is to be found in the celebrations of saints who lived continence within their marriages, who were in effect celibate spouses or married “monks.” The hymnography expresses a two-fold admiration for this vocation, on the one hand praising the choice itself to abstain from sexual relations as a sign of spiritual fervour and self-discipline; on the other, extolling the fruit that was borne by that choice in terms of Christian witness and service.

On October 9 the Church commemorates **Andronicus and Athanasia**. Initially Andronicus leaves his wife in order to seek out his path to holiness, but she later joins him in his quest, accepting that they live together in continence. The hymnographer finds

ostensible justification for the former's prior abandonment of his spouse -- a practice that in Orthodox canon law would later legitimate divorce -- in Gen. 12:1-9. "Submitting to the Master's commands as the patriarch Abraham did of old, O father, thou didst leave thy country and didst forsake thy kinsfolk; and, far from wife and riches, thou didst dwell alone in the desert, O blessed one."<sup>163</sup> Oddly, the text glosses over the fact that Abraham took his wife along with him on this trek! This failure to distinguish between the parent-child relationship and the spousal one seems to indicate an indifference to the theology of the New Testament, not to mention the doctrinal teaching of the Church regarding the duties of spouses to each other.<sup>164</sup> In this instance a Scriptural example is co-opted to endorse something to which it simply does not correspond. Andronicus's actions are further

---

<sup>163</sup> Ode I, Can of And., 2

<sup>164</sup> See for example, David G. Hunter, *Marriage in the Early Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 20, where he notes that St. John Chrysostom speaks of "the desire (*erôs*) that draws two human beings together as the creation of God and as the highest form of human love (*Homily* 20.1)...the Christian couple can approach even the ascetic virtue of the monk." Regarding canonical discipline, Hunter cites St. Basil's Letter 188 to Amphilochius: "The decree of the Lord, that it is forbidden to withdraw from marriage except in the case of fornication [cf. Matt. 5:32; 19:9] applies equally to men and to women, at least according to the logic of the idea" (143).

Clement of Alexandria, for his part, has nothing but scorn for those who think that the eschewal of the nuptial bond is an expression of holiness: "To those who blaspheme both the creation and the holy Creator...through their supposedly sacred continence, and who teach that marriage and childbearing should be rejected and that one should not bring other unfortunate people into the the world....they can be refuted [here follows a catena of Scriptural references with exegesis which affirms the goodness of marriage and its rôle in the divine economy]...But if by agreement sexual relations are suspended for a time for the purpose of prayer [cf. 1 Cor. 7:5], this teaches self-control. But [St. Paul] adds the words *by agreement* to prevent anyone from dissolving the marriage...Just like celibacy, marriage has its own distinctive services and ministries for the Lord; I refer to the care of one's children and wife" (55).

The prayers for nuptial blessing found in various ancient euchologies provide further corroboration that the Church's tradition has intended to honour marriage, certain patristic opinions to the contrary notwithstanding. For examples of such prayers see the work cited above, 150-153, or the rites of Betrothal and Crowning themselves, cited *in toto* in Meyendorff, *Marriage: An Orthodox Perspective*, 113-131.

rationalized by reference to the counsel given by Christ to the rich, young man to sell all and follow him (Matt. 19:16-22). The putative relevance of this pericope is also a *non sequitur*, as there is no indication that the Gospel inquirer was married.

Athanasia later recognizes the validity of her husband's decision and follows him in taking up the ascetic life, initially posing as his disciple.<sup>165</sup> Her docility confirms his initiative, and the two pass on to a superior mode of marital co-existence. "Adam was driven from Eden because of the counsel of Eve, but thou, O wise one, believing the counsel of thy spouse, becomest within a garden of paradise, and with her dost ever rejoice."<sup>166</sup> Here, as so often in the texts of the sanctoral, there seems to be no consideration of marriage as a sacrament, or even as sacramental. Grace does not build on nature, nor for that matter is nature inherently graced. Instead, the one stands in contradistinction to the other.

The hymnographer draws such a strong dichotomy between marriage and monastic life that one wonders whether he considers those in the world to be capable of salvation. The entry into heaven of these saints is presented as the result of their abandoning conjugality for celibacy: "Putting aside fleeting and corruptible love and leaving it to those on earth, ye bound yourselves with spiritual love, O blessed ones; *wherefore* ye now abide where the habitations of the righteous are."<sup>167</sup>

A positive aspect of the service is its witness to the saints' patient and faithful

---

<sup>165</sup> Ode VI

<sup>166</sup> Ode III, 1

<sup>167</sup> Ode II, 3 [emphasis mine]

bearing of suffering. This is accomplished by a more tenable Scriptural allusion than the Abrahamic:

Ye were deprived of your children's loving companionship through your great struggle, remaining bereft of consolation in this life; and ye uttered the cry of the most valiant Job, exclaiming: 'The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away!' Wherefore, ye did opportunely accomplish the work ye desired and have been shown to have joyfully passed over to the most lovely holy places.<sup>168</sup>

The loss of their children thus served as an impetus for the saints to alter their vocation by becoming monastics.

Andronicus and Athanasia are commemorated as a couple, yet they are the kind of couple which would seem to serve as an example to almost no one. Monks and nuns, for example, already have scores of their own monastic saints; for their part, married lay people -- at least at large -- could scarcely be expected to emulate such an unusual example of "marriage."

Another example of a celibate couple is that of **Galacteon and Epistemis**, whose feast is kept on November 5. The rubrics for the matins service explain that its canon's acrostic reads: "It is fitting to hymn the unconjugal pair of athletes." What is esteemed in this pair is the manner in which they un-nuptialized their union, as it were. This process is equivalent to the pursuit of monastic life, undertaken together. They are lauded for "having set aside family, wealth and power for the sake of Christ,"<sup>169</sup> reflecting the traditional monastic disciplines of celibacy, poverty and obedience. There is no issue for the hymnographer, however, of the sacramental possibilities they have also set aside, such as

---

<sup>168</sup> CXL, 3

<sup>169</sup> Ode I, 3

the establishment of an *ecclesia domestica*.<sup>170</sup> Rather, marriage is again co-opted by monasticism, and deprived of significance in its own right: “[With] Thy spouse, thou didst struggle monastically.” Galacteon and Epistemis redeem their vocation by becoming monks.

Celibacy is the key aspect of this metamorphosis, and is praised in such a way as to suggest that it is not only appropriate but even ideal for those who are married: “Held fast by purity of love, thou didst teach thy spouse to live in virginity with thee.”<sup>171</sup> Purity here is made equivalent to virginity. In Ode VI,1 the hymnographer describes how baptism rendered the couple close to “those who wed not.” Monasticism, therefore, serves as the prototype to which baptism, as a kind of lowest common denominator, is ordered. In a common analogy, the avoidance of nuptial union is seen as an anticipation of the *eschaton*: “Desiring the life of the angels, ye maintained your union incorruptibly.”<sup>172</sup>

As the Theotokos, despite being married, was without corruption in virtue of her virginity, these two saints eschew the natural disintegration associated with their state in life by effectively living as if unwedded. In virtue of her celibacy, moreover, Epistemis in particular qualifies for the kind of transference usually reserved for female monastics or

---

<sup>170</sup> See note 70 above. An interesting connection in this regard is Clement of Alexandria’s commentary on 1 Tim. 3:4-5: “The special characteristic of the marital union, it seems, is that it gives the person who is committed to a perfect marriage the opportunity to show concern for everything that pertains to the household he shares with his wife. That is why the apostle says that bishops must be appointed who have learned how to supervise the whole church by supervising their own households...So, then, let each one complete his ministry by the work to which he was called [cf. 1 Cor. 7:24], so that he may be free in Christ and may receive the proper reward for his ministry [cf. 1 Cor. 7:22].” (Hunter, *Marriage in the Early Church*, 55-56)

<sup>171</sup> Ode III, 2

<sup>172</sup> Ode VIII, 2

martyrs. She is extolled for her spiritual marriage: “O Epistemis, who wast wedded to the Word of God.”<sup>173</sup> Later she is called a “virgin martyr of the Lord.”<sup>174</sup>

The commemoration of **Melania** on December 30/31 is a further example of the genre under consideration. Here only Melania is named, but her husband is fêted along with her. Once again, the characteristic virtue of the saint is her ability to maintain continence within marriage, and to persuade her husband to do likewise. Sexuality represents the experience of instability from which the saints are able to extricate themselves. “Thou didst bring Thy spouse to life, putting aside the fleeting and inconstant tumult of life.”<sup>175</sup> Not only change, but gratification is implied by nuptial union, and this latter seems to be equally incompatible with holiness. Melania is praised for turning away “from the pleasures of the flesh.”<sup>176</sup>

The saint is thus a “model for monastics,” rather than the married.<sup>177</sup> The hymnographer acclaims: “Thou dost gaze directly upon the beauty of God, which Thou had first acquired through chastity.”<sup>178</sup> Chastity is conflated with celibacy, which is in turn construed as the means of grace *par excellence*. There does not seem to be any room in this spiritual vision for marriage to possess grace *per se*, in light of its iconic character, as an image of the love of Christ and the Church. Marital chastity is presented not as a virtue in

---

<sup>173</sup> Ode VII, 1

<sup>174</sup> Ode IX, 2

<sup>175</sup> CXL, 4

<sup>176</sup> Ode I, 3

<sup>177</sup> Ode III, 3

<sup>178</sup> Ode IX, 2

itself, but only as the starting point for the saint to cultivate true chastity, i.e. celibacy. The association of celibacy with the angelic life virtually excludes the possibility for marital chastity to have any positive significance, since that which is mediated is seen as inferior to that which is immediate.

Passion is presented in hymnography as redeemable in the redirected *eros* of the monastics toward “spiritual” marriage, but not in the *eros* of Christian marriage. The physicality of the latter seems to draw it toward its aberrations, such as fornication or adultery, insofar as all are characterized by the ineluctable phenomenon of *pthora* (“corruption”).<sup>179</sup> The hymnographer seems to equate sexual activity with sin; if he does consider there to be a distinction between “carnal lust” and a holy erotic desire, it is not readily apparent. The celibacy of Melania, for example, is not simply an opting out of one good thing for the sake of another, or even a preference of a higher good over a lower; it is a choice of the good over the bad. For she attained spiritual life not by the exercise of that

---

<sup>179</sup> Balz and Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol.III* observe that in Scriptural usage this word signifies perishability, that inclination toward dissolution that is the property of all created things. It is counterposed to the *aphtharsia*, the permanence and indestructibility, of the spiritual realm. Marriage is not treated in the New Testament as corruptible *per se*, but rather as implicated in the general corruptibility, mortality and transience of the cosmos. Through baptism, Christians are understood to have escaped from the corruption that is in the world due to sin, and to have become partakers, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, in the divine nature.

By contrast, the hymnography tends to consider the threshold of incorruption as inhering in the praxis of sexuality rather than the sacraments of initiation. Thus celibacy and marriage are opposed, the one viewed as embodying *aphtharsia*, the other, *pthora*. It would seem that when “everyone” was baptized, as was the case in Middle Byzantium, it became necessary to raise the bar, as it were. For the early Church, the distinction between Christians and non-Christians obtained easily enough; centuries later, in a “Christian” empire, another discrimination was made to bear the burden of reifying the “antithesis [between] the radical otherness of the resurrection reality compared to the reality of earthly life” (423, of the work cited above).

chastity proper to marriage, but by “mortifying the carnal lusts with *abstinence*.”<sup>180</sup> Other references to this effect permeate the service.

There are some ostensible affirmations of the marital vocation in the text, for example: “bearing the yoke of Christ with thy husband, ye renewed your souls with the plough of prayers, and having cultivated the field of good works, ye delight,”<sup>181</sup> or, “with Thy husband, Thou didst faithfully follow after Christ.”<sup>182</sup> In the light of the quotes cited above, however, these few salutary references serve as exceptions to the rule. Alexander Kazhdan considers Melania’s story to illustrate how:

A conflict between marriage and chastity could evolve in the process of connubial life....After the death of her two sons she felt an aversion to marriage and told her husband that she would stay with him ‘as her lord and master’ only if he agreed to lead a life of chastity; if not, she would give him all her belongings and ‘liberate her body.’ In the later *Vita* of Melania, the sharpness of this anti-marital tendency was reduced, the ‘aversion’ disappeared, and only the call for chastity remained.<sup>183</sup>

The service in the *Menaion* for Melania has evidently built upon her earlier *vita*.

On January 26 the Church commemorates **Xenophon, his wife and their children**. Here we see find an example of a saint whose holiness obtained despite his non-celibate marriage. Although he fathered children, he and his whole family became monastics and eventually martyrs, redeeming thereby his initial status.

Ode III suggests that he received monastic tonsure while still attending to his children’s upbringing. The text does provide, however, a positive image of paternal love

---

<sup>180</sup> Ode IV, 1 [emphasis mine]

<sup>181</sup> Ode VII, 1

<sup>182</sup> Ode VIII, 4

<sup>183</sup> Kazhdan, “Byzantine Hagiography and Sex in the Fifth to Twelfth Centuries,” 133.

and responsibility: “With instruction and edification in the Law of the Lord didst thou teach thy children.”<sup>184</sup> The family excels in charity as well as faith. The hymnographer acclaims: “Having gladly distributed thy riches to the poor, O blessed one, with thy spouse and children thou wast vigilant in the commandments of the Lord.”<sup>185</sup>

Yet this salutary example is ultimately distinguished from normal marriage and co-opted to laud monastic life. The kontakion reads: “Strange is the path which with thy spouse thou didst tread in godly manner...for ye were not mindful of nature, and clearly showed yourselves to be as bodiless beings on earth. *Wherefore*, the portals of heaven have been opened unto you.”<sup>186</sup> Thus the saints have been saved, and are worthy of veneration, because of their rejection of the body and their espousal of monasticism. The enthusiasm with bodilessness here as elsewhere does not read as a simple rejection of *sarx* but rather as a manifestation of dis-incarnation, evincing a world-view in which the notion of marriage as sacramental seems impossible. The kontakion just quoted ends with an interesting reference to Christ as the “Bestower of crowns.” The hymnographer, however, precludes their potential interpretation as marriage crowns: Ode IX specifies that they signify the victory of asceticism. Xenophon and his family were crowned because they all pursued monastic life.

A final paragon of “married monasticism” is provided by **Chrysanthus and Daria**, commemorated on March 19. These two were also martyrs, but I have placed them in the

---

<sup>184</sup> Ode III, 3

<sup>185</sup> Kont

<sup>186</sup> Kont II, Ikos [emphasis mine]

present genre due to the reification of celibacy evident in their service. This service displays how together with *aphthartos* (“incorrupt”), *amômos* (“undefiled”) is employed as a characteristic term for “spiritual marriage” in the hymnography of the sanctoral.<sup>187</sup>

Transference is at work in two directions, through the assimilation of all positive nuptial attributes to this kind of union, and also through the lack of differentiation between marriage and its deviancies. Their marriage notwithstanding, the saints are lauded for “having gained control over the carnal passions” (that is for living as celibate spouses).<sup>188</sup> The passions are carnal *kat eksochein* (“by their very nature”), and marriage does nothing to sanctify or even legitimate them.

Certainly the life situation of these saints is somewhat different from others we have discussed, inasmuch as Daria was not a Christian at the time of her marriage to Chrysanthus. While the impugning of nuptial union as regards saints who were married as Christians is problematic in the light of the text of the Crowning and its status as a sacrament, the disdain for the consummation of marriage shown by Chrysanthus and here extolled by the hymnographer seems to stem primarily from what such a phenomenon represented in his particular situation. The saint is tempted by Daria, an unbeliever, to renounce his faith and receive her instead. Because of this, woman, marriage and the “pleasures of a woman” are vilified.<sup>189</sup> Marriage to Daria represents, for Chrysanthus, abandoning Christ for pagan philosophy.

---

<sup>187</sup> For example, CXL, 2

<sup>188</sup> Ode VIII, 4

<sup>189</sup> Ode I, 3

Nonetheless, after Daria has been converted by her husband, the two of them abide as married, although the circumstances of their prison “wedding” do not conform to a normal pattern. The hymnographer, however, resorts to transference as far as their marriage is concerned. Chrysanthus is likened to a friend of the bridegroom, in escorting his wife to Christ as “an undefiled bride.”<sup>190</sup> Jesus, in turn, “betroth[es] to Himself Daria.”<sup>191</sup> Despite her marriage to Chrysanthus, Daria is still susceptible of marriage to Christ in virtue of her continence. She thus makes within herself “a divine bridal chamber,” and becomes the “ornament of virgins.”<sup>192</sup> The marriage of the two saints seems to serve essentially as a temptation bringing into relief their holiness. Chrysanthus keeps himself “undefiled” by resisting Daria, and she does likewise by renouncing him.<sup>193</sup> The text exults: “With oneness of soul, ye avoided carnal relations and showed yourselves to be pure vessels of the Almighty.”<sup>194</sup> The goal of martyrdom appears to be the interpretive key to the extremes lyricized in this hymnography. The physicality of nuptial union is not obviated, but transposed into the martyrs’ suffering. Daria weds herself to Christ “by all manner of bodily pangs.”<sup>195</sup>

Martyrdom is obviously heroic and it is not surprising that such a couple as Chrysanthus and Daria were canonized. The question remains, however, as to the

---

<sup>190</sup> CXL, 2

<sup>191</sup> Ode III, Theo

<sup>192</sup> CXL, 3

<sup>193</sup> Ode IV, 2

<sup>194</sup> Ode VIII, 3

<sup>195</sup> Ode VI, 3

relationship between this kind of married sanctity and the norm. If the monasticism praised in the hymnographic corpus generally reflects that which the Church conceives the monastic vocation to be, the exemplars of marriage, *mutatis mutandis*, ought to include some who are “typical.” Instead, what presents itself is what can be termed exception after exception.

### *viii. Absentee Husbands*

Our next category, of saints who abandoned their spouses to become monks, is perhaps one of the most incongruous of those that concern marriage. Unlike the choice for celibacy instead of marriage, these saints decide to break the spousal bond *post factum*. On October 29 the Church commemorates **Abramios**. He appears to have been placed in an arranged marriage, which he forsook for monastic life. This is couched in the familiar terms of the dichotomy between the physical and the spiritual, of that which is of this world and that which is of the next. The hymnographer proclaims: “Disdaining the pleasures of the flesh, thou didst come to love purity from thy childhood, O wise one. Wherefore fleeing a worldly bridal-chamber, and rejecting a noble spouse and thy parents, thou didst manifestly desire the one, loving God.”<sup>196</sup> The service does not specify whether the saint’s marriage had already taken place, but his *vita* indicates that it had. Ascetic zeal is presented as such a virtue, in any case, that it justifies even the rejection of one’s spouse.

The feast of **Alexis**, on March 17, brings this phenomenon into greater relief.

---

<sup>196</sup> Kont, Ikos

Alexis' spouse is presented as almost chattel, a possession to be discarded for love of God. "Thou didst count Thy wife and fleeting wealth as but dust, desiring Christ alone Who is beloved of Thee."<sup>197</sup> Such desire is unabashedly held to be antithetical to the nuptial bond. The hymnography blusters on, extolling the saint's option for celibacy, without any evident sense that his abandonment of his spouse might be sinful, subverting what otherwise would have been an honourable vocational choice. "Thou didst exchange a bridal chamber on earth for one in heaven, and the love of a wife for an angelic habit most sweet." The rationale offered is that Alexis was "pierced with longing for purity."<sup>198</sup>

The typically female motif, of bride to the divine bridegroom, is here applied to a male saint, further sidelining his spouse. Thus Alexis emerges as both a husband and a wife: married to angelic purity, as well as to Christ himself. It is difficult not to regard such a commemoration as misogynist and deprecatory toward marriage; it bears witness to a theological current diametrically opposed to that embodied in the Crowning.

### *ix. Monastic Widows*

There are many saints who became monastics after the death of their spouses. They are remembered for their monastic sanctity and rarely is reference made to the married life they led before their tonsure. A few such saints' services are discussed here to illustrate the type of transference of nuptial imagery that is common in services for monastics.

On September 11 the Church commemorates the widow **Theodora**. The texts are

---

<sup>197</sup> CXL, Dox

<sup>198</sup> Ode III, 1

silent in regard to her previous life. That ubiquitous metaphor for the kingdom of heaven, the “bridal chamber,” is invoked to describe the state to which Theodora was summoned at death by her Bridegroom, who had prepared a home for her.<sup>199</sup>

A difference between Western and Eastern Christian approaches to monastic life comes to the fore in this connection. The *Menaion* usually presents nuns as becoming brides of God upon their entry into heaven, rather than at their monastic tonsure. Before death they are seen as betrothed, and the experience of dying becomes a kind of wedding day or night. It is only at death that Theodora “manifestly behold[s] [her] bridegroom in purity.”<sup>200</sup> Thus monasticism is understood to anticipate an eschatological union that cannot be fully consummated on earth. By contrast, the Western Church, since at least the Middle Ages, has conceived of nuns as already married to Christ in virtue of their “taking the veil.” This nuance is perhaps significant; while ubiquitous in both East and West, *Brautmystik* has clearly been susceptible of greater elaboration and heterogeneity in the latter.<sup>201</sup>

Another interesting feature of the *Menaion*’s use of spiritual marriage is the tendency for nuptial imagery to devolve around female saints, either monastics or martyrs. Thus the male-female dialectic is usually respected. Although there are exceptions, like Abramios or John of Kronstadt, one does not encounter in Byzantine hymnography the kind of gender-bending popularized in the West with Bernard of Clairvaux and developed

---

<sup>199</sup> Ode VIII, 1

<sup>200</sup> Ode IX, 3

<sup>201</sup> Cf. Jean Leclercq, “Virginité,” in *Dictionnaire encyclopédique du moyen âge, Tome II* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1997), 1594-1596; Valerie M. Lagorio, “Mysticism, Christian: Continental (Women),” in Joseph R. Strayer, *Dictionary of the Middle Ages, Vol. 9* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1987), 8-18.

by later mystics.<sup>202</sup>

On September 17 the feast of **Sophia and her daughters** is kept. The service actually gives short shrift to the mother, making no mention of her marriage, and focuses rather on the three virgin daughters. As a result of their martyrdom, this family also has “made their abode in the heavenly bridal chamber.”<sup>203</sup> They desired Christ, “the most comely Bridegroom, [and] united themselves to Him, having adorned themselves with the divine wounds.”<sup>204</sup> Although already pure through asceticism, they are only brought to Christ, the noetic Bridegroom, through their passing.<sup>205</sup>

The connotation here is that through suffering, granted in a martyrdom real or “white,” a true corporeal oneness with Christ is realized. The nuptiality of this union is imbued with the pain either of persecution or asceticism. This stress on pain as an inherent precondition of the bliss of true union seems to serve as an analogue to the “passion” and “corruption” entailed by love-making, so disparaged by the hymnographers. Affliction and death, which appear morbid to the natural eye, become luminous to the eye of faith: “Like a bride is the Church splendidly adorned with the water of grace and Thy blood, O Word.”<sup>206</sup> The body of Christ, however, is conjoined with the body of his bride, as his martyrs offer their own lives in emulation of him. The Church is adorned with Christ’s blood; the martyrs, with their own.

---

<sup>202</sup> Cf. Leclercq, “Virginité,” in *Dictionnaire encyclopédique du moyen âge, Tome II.*, 1594-1596.

<sup>203</sup> CXL, 4

<sup>204</sup> CXL, 6

<sup>205</sup> Ode I, Can of Martyrs, 4

<sup>206</sup> Apo, 1

A final example of this genre can be found in the feast of **Xenia of Petersburg** on January 24. She is a modern saint, commemorated only in the Russian Church, but her service is helpful in delineating the phenomenon of transference that obtains in the commemorations of monastics. This saint was moved to renounce the delusion of the world and a “fleshly bridegroom with most manly understanding, and to wed [her]self to the Lord in purity.”<sup>207</sup> This opposition between the love of Christ and spousal love is highlighted again in the following: “Betrothing thyself to Christ, the only Man comely in beauty as is written, thou didst piously acquire all manner of virtues...receiving the grace of healings as thy marriage portion.”<sup>208</sup> The reference here to the dowry, or “marriage portion” is surprisingly rare in the hymnography, despite the prominence attached to such a gift in Byzantine society.

Xenia emulates the passion of Christ by her ascetic *kenosis*, and thus also anticipates in her body the experience of heaven: “Delighting in the beauties of the immortal Betrothed, thou didst cause the beauty of the flesh to wither away...making thine abode in the divine bridal-chamber.”<sup>209</sup> In typical fashion, the use of the nuptial metaphor devolves solely around the wedding night itself; married love as an ongoing reality, as relevant to the birth of children, the domestic church or service to God in the world, is not envisaged.

The inter-penetration of married life with that of society at large is, for the

---

<sup>207</sup> Ode I, 2

<sup>208</sup> Ode VIII, 1

<sup>209</sup> Ode II, 2

hymnographer, a liability: “When thy husband died suddenly, the desire for a worldly life died within thee, and thou gavest thyself wholly over to Christ.”<sup>210</sup> This urge to polarize the world and Christ, marriage and monasticism, is an invariable feature of the *Menaion*’s vision of sanctity. The latter tend to be upheld through the denigration of the former.

#### *x. Wonder Women*

Several saints emerge in the sanctoral for whom marriage is incidental to sanctity. Their participation in the sacrament, which ordinarily would have mitigated their holiness, is neutralized in such a way as to allow their true vocaton to fulfill itself. The empress **Theophania**, commemorated on December 16, exemplifies this process. She was able to eschew the attendant temptations of her status, and the indifference of her husband, and become a quasi-monk. We learn, for instance, that God has taken Theophania to his “radiant bridal chamber” as a reward for her faith, “lovingly opening to [her] his fatherly embrace.”<sup>211</sup>

An article of note in this text is the ambiguous characterization of Theophania’s relationship to the different persons of the Trinity, an instance of transference with incestuous overtones. Byzantine hymnography tends to refer to Mary (and female martyrs or monastics) as “the bride of God,” without further specification. The discrepancies inherent in this ascription contrast with the Western habit of identifying Mary, for example, as the daughter of the Father, the Mother of the Son, and the bride of the Holy Spirit.

---

<sup>210</sup> Little Vespers, CXL, 2

<sup>211</sup> CXL, 3

Although she is married, Theophania is likened to a “wise virgin” because of her acquisition of the Holy Spirit.<sup>212</sup> She becomes an ascetic, “that with the wise virgins [she] might enter the heavenly bridal chamber.”<sup>213</sup> Theophania’s husband remains a spectator of her vocation. Although it is remarked that he perceived her sanctity,<sup>214</sup> there is no mention in the service of how this ultimately affected him or his marriage with the saint.

Ode V, Canon 1, 3 witnesses an interesting conflation of the garment-for-the-wedding-banquet motif with that of the bridal chamber. The former has a specific Gospel referent (Matt. 22:11-13), while the other, although common in the hymnography, seems to be an innovation, based on the parable of the wise virgins (Matt. 25:1-13), well-suited to the phenomenon of spiritual marriage. Here Theophania desires to be clothed with a garment of light, and led into the Lord’s “bridal chamber, whence all are cast out that have not a wedding garment.” What is strange about this, is that only a spouse enters into the chamber, while all of the guests at a wedding attend the banquet. The image of nuptial consummation is thus melded with the eucharistic image of the festive meal. This polyvalent eschatological scenario is reiterated several times in the text; upon her death, the saint enters the “chamber of the bridegroom to dine on immortal fare.”<sup>215</sup>

On January 2 the Church commemorates **Juliana**, included here because of the attention the hymnographer draws to her sanctity during marriage, as well as to her later

---

<sup>212</sup> Ode IV, Can 1, 1

<sup>213</sup> Ode IV, Can 1, 2

<sup>214</sup> Ode IV, Can 2, 1

<sup>215</sup> Ode IV, Can 1, 3

monasticized widowhood. Her married life is clearly presented as the inferior stage of her life: “Even though Juliana was not vouchsafed the monastic tonsure, yet because she did things worthy of monastics she hath therefore not been denied a place in the choir of Thy saints.”<sup>216</sup> The hymnographer appears to consider monasticism, rather than baptism, the basic category of Christian holiness. He all but suggests that only monastics can be saved; it is *despite* her state in life that Juliana was not denied a place in heaven. The possibility that her marriage could be the cause and not simply the locus of her sanctity is not countenanced.

This inability to recognize any distinct charism in the sacrament of marriage borders at times on the illogical. Hospitality, for example, is often more easily exercised by those in the world than those removed from it.<sup>217</sup> Nevertheless, the text proclaims: “*Even though* Juliana lived with her husband and begat children, *yet* did she bestow alms without number upon the poor and show love unfeigned for her neighbour; wherefore she hath been glorified by Thee.”<sup>218</sup> The service repeatedly praises the saint’s virtue, but nowhere alludes to any positive role her family may have had in its cultivation and blossoming. Rather, it is as if her holiness preceded her marriage, and was in no wise affected by it, much less enriched.

---

<sup>216</sup> CXL, 5

<sup>217</sup> “These two virtues [i.e., hospitality and almsgiving] are sometimes particularly associated with the married life - especially almsgiving, since presumably the married have more material goods to give to others than the monastics have. Saint John Chrysostom, in his Homily XIV on I Timothy, immediately speaks about the giving of hospitality after mentioning that marriage is a state “of much occupation.” (Ford, *Marriage as a Path to Holiness*, li.)

<sup>218</sup> CXL, 6 [emphasis mine]

The notion of physical union with Christ effected through asceticism is once again given voice in terms of Juliana's later monastic tonsure. Her natural marriage is superseded by a spiritual one: "Enlightened by a pure widowhood, O blessed of God, thou didst wed thyself to God by fasting, prayers and almsgiving."<sup>219</sup> The nuptial imagery is extended further in the first sessional hymn: "Adorned with fasting and prayer, and making God thy debtor through almsgiving, with Him thou hast entered the incorrupt bridal-chamber, where thou delightest in his beauty." While marriage is the constant metaphor for true spiritual life, it all but never coincides with natural marital life, and is usually presented as antithetical to it. "Thou didst exchange the corrupt world for life beyond the world...and by thy pure widowhood thou didst find a heavenly Bridegroom."<sup>220</sup>

We can also perceive that in the *Menaion* nuptiality typically serves as a highly individuated metaphor. There is scant treatment of the Church as bride vis-à-vis Christ; rather it is the Mother of God, or female saints (and the rare male saint) who are imaged in terms of a spousal relationship with God. Saints' marriages simply do not carry the significance one might expect, despite the logical primacy of actual marriage as a referent for metaphorical use. Although, therefore, nuptial imagery is only intelligible if marriage possesses an *a priori* value, it is precisely this value which is called into question by the denigration of actual marriages to which the *Menaion* is prone. There is a disjuncture between the metaphor and its referent, the latter repeatedly being emptied of that positive content which makes it relevant to the former.

---

<sup>219</sup> Ode I, 2

<sup>220</sup> Ode VII, 2

## V. Evaluation and Conclusion

Having completed our examination of the content of the *Menaion* as regards the treatment of nuptial realities in the feasts of married saints, it remains to interpret more generally the significance of what is and is not there, particularly in the light of the preceding considerations given to the theology and history of the sacrament of marriage in the Byzantine tradition.

Schememann's third step in liturgical theology, the "release of the inherent theological meaning" has proven in our case to yield ambiguous results. Firstly, while the Crowning does indeed reveal the eschatological character of marriage (hence its being the object of Schememann and others' reflections) the hymnography often undoes this by the anti-eschatological character it imputes to marriage, as that which hinders a saint's vocation as a monastic spouse of Christ. The corollary to Schememann's assertion that the liturgy has as its proper content eschatology, is to be found in a development of his insight that Byzantine liturgy "remains literally inundated with hymnography [and] often this is to the detriment of other essential elements...one finds in this material certain texts...whose rhetorical and artificial character obscures more than reveals."<sup>221</sup> Ostensibly he recognizes that textual analysis of a given rite *per se* cannot suffice as liturgical theology; what is necessary is a consideration of a given theme in the light of the liturgical corpus as a whole. Liturgy, like theology, is often inconsistent and may subvert itself at times. Generalizations regarding eschatology, therefore, are precarious. Only through an archaeology of the

---

<sup>221</sup> Schememann in Fisch, *Liturgy and Tradition*, 140.

liturgy, an uncovering of the various strata that have gone into its formation (theological, cultural, sociological etc.), can the liturgy itself be put into its proper context.

Second, it follows that Schmemmann's eschatological reading of the Crowning is problematic, albeit inspiring. The motif of the marriage wreaths as crowns of martyrdom, for example, is never even hinted at in our hymnography. Instead it is monasticism which garners the victory, and marriage only to the extent that it is monasticized. Nor is the notion of the correlation between marriage and priesthood, as fecund as it is, to be found in the *Menaion*, even in such obvious places as the feasts of married clergy.<sup>222</sup>

Third, the assertion of a "double analogy" regarding the interpretative reciprocity between marriage and the example of the spousal love of Christ and the Church does not seem to obtain -- because half of it is overlooked. While the sanctoral's texts see nuptiality as the proper metaphor for the relationship of God to humanity, they locate it not in human marriage but in monastic perfection or martyrdom. The natural referent is eclipsed in order to elevate its derivative. Marriage, that is, as a natural or fleshly reality is superseded by celibacy, a supernatural, spiritual one, in contradiction to the Church's sacramental praxis wherein the former is a *mysterion*.

Fourth, Schmemmann's remarks that the Orthodox doctrine of marriage is "expressed

---

<sup>222</sup> Cf. Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World*, 94: "This is why the sacrament of ordination is, in a sense, identical with the sacrament of matrimony. Both are manifestations of love. The priest is indeed married to the Church. But just as the human marriage is taken into the mystery of Christ and the Church and becomes the sacrament of the Kingdom, it is this marriage of the priest with the Church that makes him really priest, the true minister of that Love which alone transforms the world and reveals the Church as the immaculate bride of Christ." We note, however, that the service for John of Kronstadt, for example, has nothing to say about his marriage, and the feasts of other married clergy are similar.

more often in liturgical rites rather than canonical texts,”<sup>223</sup> needs careful qualification. By “rites” Schmemmann seems to intend simply the Crowning, as he makes no reference to any others. Such an approach is unsatisfactory, however, since it glosses over the inconsistencies in the liturgical tradition as a whole, and fails to appreciate the sometimes salutary, always important role canon law has played in the development of the theology of marriage. Moreover, Schmemmann sees the rites of the Church as complementing the *consensus patrum*, on the one hand, but conflicting with later, post-patristic theology manuals, on the other, which he believes contradict the “earlier and more normative tradition, that of the Fathers and of the liturgy.”<sup>224</sup> In fact, as we have seen, it is the liturgy which contradicts itself and Schmemmann, thus offering the “post-patristic manuals” ample liturgical ground on which to base their systems. In any case, a *consensus patrum* regarding marriage is non-existent, with such writings as there are not tending toward a valorization of the sacrament in a Schmemannesque vein.<sup>225</sup>

Finally, Schmemmann’s distinction between the Betrothal and the Crowning is

---

<sup>223</sup> Schmemmann, in Bassett, *The Bond of Marriage*, 98.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>225</sup> Such comments as the following seem simply naive: “The fundamental doctrine, or better to say, *theoria*, vision of marriage, as still expressed in the liturgy, belongs to the early, maximalistic and eschatological period of the Church...For it belongs to the very essence of the Eastern Orthodox tradition to keep together [antinomies]” (*Ibid.*, 103).

If there was an “eschatological period” in the Church, surely it was the pre-Constantinian, when the *parousia* seemed imminent. The marriage service as such only begins to develop from the fourth century on when eschatology is becoming the purview of monasticism. The hymnography of the Church does not reveal there to be a distinct eschatological character to the married state, despite what the Crowning says or implies -- and the Crowning was not even mandatory for weddings until the 11th century! Schmemmann is vague on when exactly the “early, maximalistic and eschatological period” began and ended, and rather tendentious in his historical and patristic references.

difficult to reconcile with the historical and liturgical data. He understands the former as “nothing else than the Christianized form of the marriage as it existed always and everywhere, i.e., as a public contract sealed before God and men by those entering the state of marriage.”<sup>226</sup> Yet it was equivalent to a Crowning, and sufficient for the solemnization of marriage during the Middle Byzantine period. What Schmemmann identifies as the *telos* of marriage, the Crowning wherein “the ‘natural’ marriage is taken now into the dimensions of the Church and, this means, into the dimensions of the Kingdom,”<sup>227</sup> is a phenomenon to which the sanctoral appears indifferent. There we find in the main only a worldly kind of marriage, an estate distinctly secular and carnal to be renounced for the sake of one’s salvation, irredeemable except through assimilation to monasticism. Our eminent liturgical theologian’s vision of a “sacramental transformation, whose content and goal now is not mere ‘happiness’ but the *martyria*, the witness, to the Kingdom of God [and] the power to be a service of Christ in the world and a special vocation within the Church... [to be] a sacrament of the Kingdom, for the family is one of the basic *antitypa* of the Kingdom,”<sup>228</sup> is eloquent and one hopes, true. Nonetheless, it is a vision not accessible through the prism of the *Menaion*.

With regard to the other modern theologians whose thought we surveyed, the following observations can be offered. Fotiou argues that participants in marital love iconify this union effected through the Incarnation, and recall as well the human race’s

---

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

proto-history, their physical love opening onto an eternal, spiritual love and simultaneously hearkening back to the original androgynous unity of the human person. The hymnographic tradition, however, sees the angelic life as exemplified in virginity rather than marriage. Likewise, the author's conviction that marriage is a prime locus of deification finds no support in the sanctoral, which virtually identifies *theôsis* with the monastic vocation. The theological support for deification within marriage is provided by the notion that the Christian home is an *ecclesiola*, a notion similarly absent in the hymnography, despite its antiquity.

Zion sees significance in the concept of betrothal as a pledge of what is to come. This certainly obtained early on, when the rite was concluded apart from the Crowning and still possessed simply a civil, legal character. As we have seen, however, the Betrothal eventually assimilated the sacerdotal blessing which enabled it to stand alone as a form of marital solemnization. The term *arrabon*, with its potential nuptial connotation of betrothal awaiting consummation,<sup>229</sup> turns out to be strangely absent from our texts, as is indeed the terminology of the Crowning. Also unsubstantiated by the *Menaion* is the author's assertion that the salience of Paul's theology of the Church as bride in the East, and its concomitant affirmation of *henôsis*, was accompanied by a lack of pessimism towards sexuality.

David Petras's position that the Christianization of wedding rites was in fact compelled by the new significance the Church wished to attach to marriage ("the mutual

---

<sup>229</sup> Zion, *Eros and Transformation*, 107.

love of the husband and wife becomes an incarnation of Christ's 'love of mankind' [*philanthropia*]...sanctifying those who share in it")<sup>230</sup> finds similarly sparse support in the sanctoral's texts. Concerning marriage, the Incarnation appears to have been somewhat ineffectual. One finds hardly any appreciation of the natural goods of marriage, not to mention any iconic, sacramental or ecclesial benefits. There is no juxtaposition of marriage "in the Lord" with any other kind.

Meyendorff noted that the Byzantine Church rejected ascetic extremes that condemned marriage. His admission, however, "that numerous hagiographic texts continued to glorify at least some individual who seemed to fall under Gangra's anathemas, by leaving their consorts for the sake of asceticism,"<sup>231</sup> is revelatory, since we have seen that such glorification was transferred into the hymnographic corpus. Meyendorff's stance on the original and abiding connection between the Eucharistic and marriage (shared by several of our theologians), while well-attested by history, cannot be adduced from the *Menaion's* treatment of the sacrament.

Paul Evdokimov's interesting speculations on the interrelationship of marriage and monasticism are likewise beyond the scope of the sanctoral, as is also Schmemmann's construal of the sacramental counterpoint played out between marriage and the other Mysteries. Evdokimov sees *sophrosyné* as equivalent to "integrity" and "integration" rather than continence,<sup>232</sup> implying in the marital context the faithful praxis of sexual love.

---

<sup>230</sup> Petras, "The Liturgical Theology of Marriage," 229.

<sup>231</sup> Meyendorff, "Christian Marriage in Byzantium," 100.

<sup>232</sup> Evdokimov, *The Sacrament of Love*, 168.

Contrastingly, the hymnographic texts understand the latter as all but antithetical to *sophrosynê*, interpreted usually as virginity or celibacy. Mortification too has a curtailed spectrum of meaning, relating only to that eschewal of carnal realities that monastic life facilitates. Notwithstanding any alleged inclusion of tonsure in ancient wedding rites, the sanctoral does not grant marriage any scope for asceticism. Nor does the estate enjoy the prerogative of representing the preternatural, androgynous creation of the human being. Evdokimov's claim that "nuptial love thus reveals, and is ordered toward the prelapsarian state,"<sup>233</sup> is countered by the opacity the *Menaion* attributes to it. Like Schmemmann, Evdokimov's beautiful theology is at odds to a significant degree with his liturgical tradition. It is not surprising, therefore, that he quotes from literature and patristics more than from the *lex supplicandi*.

In the light of the *Menaion*, Chryssavgis' theses that the "Augustinian view" of the "mind-body dichotomy...on the whole was quite alien to the Eastern patristic tradition," and that, "everything which God created is essentially good, including gender and sexuality...is a fundamental principle of Patristic thought and of Orthodox spirituality," read as irresponsible.<sup>234</sup> One may draw the conclusion that either the people responsible for the sanctoral's hymnography were not fathers, or else that it is not (in the broad sense) patristic literature, or else that such assertions as Chryssavgis's must be qualified. The author also refers to monasticism as a sacrament and posits an equivalency between married and monastic life as two modes of experiencing and purifying *eros*. Our texts

---

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>234</sup> Chryssavgis, *Love, Sexuality and the Sacrament of Marriage*, 8.

would not seem to support this notion. Despite its doctrinal status as a sacrament, marriage is presented as inferior to monasticism, and normally inimical to the latter's spiritual potential. The interpersonal context of marriage, which Chryssavgis regards as intrinsic to its sacramental potential, receives short shrift in the *Menaion. Eros*, in the Maximian sense of a holy energy directed toward true love of the other,<sup>235</sup> is not countenanced as a possibility for spouses, who are typically depicted as pressing each other down into the vortex of carnality.

If liturgy, as Alexander Schmemmann has said, "is the only genuine source of the Church's comprehending of her own nature and eschatological vocation,"<sup>236</sup> the question arises as to how to reconcile the conflicting claims of the liturgy in regard to marriage. Is it acceptable, as most modern Eastern Christian theologians have done, to simply bypass a source as significant as the *Menaion* in favour of the Crowning? To adopt a taxonomy of liturgical *loci* wherein some are considered as essential and others as peripheral? To make one element of the liturgical tradition, namely the Crowning, the standard by which the orthodoxy of other texts is measured? Clearly there is a problem to be resolved of conflicting *didascalía*.

The practical concern here is whether Byzantine hymnography communicates its distinction between the chosen few and the *hoi polloi* unto the latter's greater appropriation of the former's example, or unto the further secularization of the laity, fostering the perception of an existential gap between the marital vocation and the baptismal. In trying to

---

<sup>235</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>236</sup> Schmemmann in Fisch, *Liturgy and Tradition*, 143.

make sense of the mixed messages articulated by the liturgical tradition, is it perhaps possible to contextualize and relativize them in a way similar to the manner in which disconcerting aspects of Old Testament faith and practice are meshed with the revelation of the New Testament?

Surely it is necessary to identify a hierarchy within the liturgical tradition, in which certain sources trump others when hermeneutical coherence seems stymied. Can the criteria for this task be located, however, within the liturgy itself? As our discussion of marriage in the *Menaion* suggests, what may instead be necessary is the formulation of such criteria in “external” theological *loci*, i.e. in the dogma, doctrine and discipline of the Church. To say “external” is simply to identify them vis-à-vis the liturgy, not to suggest that they are somehow foreign to the praying tradition of the Church. For the frequent petitions on behalf of the bishops of the Church to be found in the litanies of the Byzantine rite, or indeed the prayer of the Divine Liturgy that the Lord remember the episcopacy and enable it to “rightly divide [‘divy up’ for distribution] the word of [His] truth,” suggest that the *lex supplicandi* is aware of its own limitations, as it were. In it abides the truth, which nonetheless needs to be rightly taught.

The ambivalence of the theology of marriage in the Byzantine sanctoral is, in my opinion, sufficient evidence that the Church needs a theology of liturgy as much as, if not more than, a liturgical theology. It is to this theology that future work on marriage among Eastern Christian authors must be oriented. Not to a theology of marriage *per se*, which I daresay is easy enough, nor to a liturgical theology of marriage in terms of specific ritual units, necessary but insufficient on its own. The task at hand, rather, is to identify the

relevant loose ends in the liturgical tapestry as a whole, and sew them up, repair *or even replace them*, so that what has been called the “icon of Christian reality”<sup>237</sup> might ever more resemble its prototype. And this is imperative, I believe, simply because the *status quo* begs the question of just what that prototype is.

---

<sup>237</sup> Cf. Peter Galadza, “Restoring the Icon: Reflections on the Reform of Byzantine Worship,” in *Worship*, 65, No. 3 (May 1991), 238-255.

## VI. Bibliography

- Apostolike Diankonia tes Ekklesias tes Elliados.  
*Menaion* (Athens: Ekdosis tes Apostolikes Diakonia tes Ekklesias tes Elliados, 1991-1993).
- Balz, Horst and Gerhard Schneider, eds.  
*Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol.III* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993).
- Bowie, Fiona. "Chastity," in Adrian Hastings et al., eds., *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 108-109.
- Brown, Peter. "Late Antiquity," in Paul Veyne, ed., *A History of Private Life, Vol. 1: From Pagan Rome to Byzantium* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987), 235-312.
- Brown, Raymond. *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997).
- Catafygiotu Topping, Eva.  
*Sacred Songs: Studies in Byzantine Hymnography* (Minneapolis: Light and Life Publishing Company, 1997).
- Chryssavgis, John. *Love, Sexuality and the Sacrament of Marriage* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1998).
- Evdokimov, Michel. "Les époux du Royaume. Un point de vue orthodoxe," in Xavier Lacroix, ed., *Oser dire le mariage indissoluble* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 2001).
- Evdokimov, Paul. *The Sacrament of Love* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985).
- Fagerberg, David. *What is Liturgical Theology?: A Study in Methodology* (Collegeville, MI: The Liturgical Press, 1992).
- Fisch, Thomas, ed. *Liturgy and Tradition: Theological Reflections of Alexander Schmemmann* (Crestwood, N.Y.: Saint Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1990).
- Ford, David & Mary. *Marriage as a Path to Holiness: Lives of Married Saints* (South

- Canaan, PA: St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 1994).
- Fotiou, Stavros S. "Water into Wine, and Eros in Agape: Marriage in the Orthodox Church," in Adrian Thatcher, *Celebrating Christian Marriage* (Edinburgh and New York: T&T Clark, 2001), 89-96.
- Galadza, Peter. "Restoring the Icon: Reflections on the Reform of Byzantine Worship," in *Worship*, 65, No. 3 (May 1991), 238-255.
- Guillaume, Denis, tr. *Les Menées* (Rome: Diaconie Apostolique, 1982).
- Hopko, Thomas. *The Winter Pascha* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984).
- Hunter, David G., tr. & ed. *Marriage in the Early Church* (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1992).
- John Paul II, Pope. *The Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan* (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1997).
- Karluin-Hayter, Patricia. "Further Notes on Byzantine Marriage: *Raptus - Arpage* or *Mnesteiai*," in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 44 (1990) (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection), 133-154.
- Kazhdan, Alexander. "Byzantine Hagiography and Sex in the Fifth to Twelfth Centuries," in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 44 (1990), 131-143.
- 
- "Symeon Metaphrastes," in Dumbarton Oaks, *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 1983.
- King, John Glen. *The Rites and Ceremonies of the Greek Church, in Russia* (London: AMS Press, 1970).
- Lagorio, Valerie M. "Mysticism, Christian: Continental (Women)," in Joseph R. Strayer, *Dictionary of the Middle Ages, Vol. 9* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1987), 8-18.
- Lambertsen, Isaac E., tr. *The Menaion of the Orthodox Church* (Liberty, TN: The St. John of Kronstadt Press, 1996-).

- Leclercq, Jean. "Virginité," in *Dictionnaire encyclopédique du moyen âge, Tome II* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1997), 1594-1596.
- L'Huillier, Peter. "The Indissolubility of Marriage in Orthodox Law and Practice," in Pierre Hégy and Joseph Martos, *Catholic Divorce: The Deception of Annulments* (New York: Continuum, 2000), 108-126.
- Meyendorff, John. *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1974).
- 
- Marriage: An Orthodox Perspective* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984).
- 
- "Christian Marriage in Byzantium: The Canonical and Liturgical Tradition," in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 44 (1990), 99-118.
- (Monk) Moses. *Married Saints of the Orthodox Church* (Wildwood, CA: St. Xenia Skete, 1991).
- Nichols, Aidan. *Light from the East: Authors and Themes in Orthodox Theology* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1995).
- Patalagean, Evelyne. "Byzantium in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries," in Paul Veyne, ed., *A History of Private Life, Vol. 1: From Pagan Rome to Byzantium* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987), 551-644.
- Petras, David M. "The Liturgical Theology of Marriage," in *Diakonia*, Vol. XVI, No.3 (1981), 225-237.
- Raes, Alphonse. "Les livres liturgiques grecs publiées à Venise," in *Mélanges Eugène Tisserant, vol.3: orient chretien* (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1964).
- Schememann, Alexander.
- "The Indissolubility of Marriage: The Theological Tradition of the East" in William W. Bassett, ed., *The Bond of Marriage* (Notre Dame, IL: Notre Dame Press, 1968), 97-105.
- 
- For the Life of the World* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995).

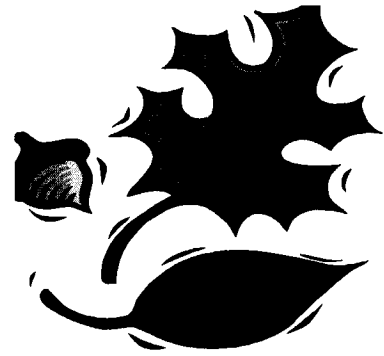
- Sherrard, Philip. *Christianity and Eros: Essays on the Theme of Sexual Love* (Limni, Evia, Greece: Denise Harvey, 1995).
- (The) Sisters of St. Basil the Great. *The Office of Vespers* (Uniontown, PA: The Sisters of St. Basil the Great, 1987).
- Strunk, Oliver. *Essays on Music in the Byzantine World* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1977).
- Taft, Robert. *The Byzantine Rite: A Short History* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992).
- 
- Beyond East and West: Problems in Liturgical Understanding* (Rome: Pontifical Oriental Institute, 2001).
- Talbot, Alice-Mary. "The Byzantine Family and the Monastery," in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 44 (1990), 119-126.
- Ugolnik, Anthony. "Living in Skin: Sex, Spirituality and the Christian Male" in *Windows to the East: Eastern Christians in a Dialogue of Charity*, Jaroslav Z. Skira and Myroslaw I. Tataryn, eds. (Ottawa: Novalis, 2001), 283-313.
- Uthemann, Karl-Heinz. "Body," in *Dumbarton Oaks, The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 299.
- Viscuso, Patrick. "Marital Relations in the Theology of the Byzantine Canonist Theodore Balsamon," in *Ostkirchliche Studien*, 39 (1990), 281-288.
- 
- "The Formation of Marriage in Late Byzantium," in *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, Vol.35, No. 4 (1991), 309-325.
- 
- "Purity and Sexual Defilement in Late Byzantine Theology," in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 57 (1991), 399-408.
- 
- "The Theology of Marriage in the *Rudder* of Nikodemos the Hagiorite," in *Ostkirchliche Studien*, 41, No. 2/3 (1992), 187-287.
- Wellesz, Egon. *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949).

Yalom, Marilyn. *A History of the Wife* (New York: Harper Collins, 2001).

Zion, William Basil. *Eros and Transformation: Sexuality and Marriage, An Eastern Orthodox Perspective* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1992).

# NOTE DE SERVICE

AUX: Administratrices et administrateurs scolaires  
DE: Sylvie Chénier  
Coordonnatrice, inscriptions (2<sup>e</sup> et 3<sup>e</sup> cycles)  
DATE: le 13 août 2003  
OBJET: Inscription - Automne 2003  
CC: Professeurs responsables des études supérieures



---

Veillez **ne pas monter de candidature** d'admission au SIS, **ni nous envoyer le dossier** scolaire de l'étudiant pour **ceux qui changent de la maîtrise avec thèse à la maîtrise sans thèse ou vice et versa ainsi que pour ceux qui transfèrent de la maîtrise au doctorat ou vice versa**. Tout ce que nous avons besoin est une lettre de la part de l'étudiant et l'approbation du professeur responsable. Dans le cas des transferts de la maîtrise au doctorat la lettre doit être envoyée à l'attention de Johanne Forgues. Pour tous les autres cas, veuillez les envoyer à mon attention.

---

## NOUVEAUTÉS

---

### Formulaires d'inscription pré-imprimés pour nouveaux étudiants

Dans votre matériel d'inscription, vous trouverez des formulaires d'inscription pré-imprimés seulement pour vos **nouveaux étudiants qui ont répondu OUI** à leur offre d'admission ainsi que pour vos anciens étudiants éligibles à s'inscrire pour l'automne 2003. Si vous recevez des formulaires pré-imprimés pour des étudiants non éligibles à s'inscrire, veuillez m'en informer.

### GSAÉD 2003-2004

Vous recevrez avec votre matériel d'inscription un dépliant de l'Association des étudiants diplômés renseignant les étudiants sur divers services ainsi que le régime d'assurances santé et dentaire. Veuillez en remettre une copie à tous les étudiants qui s'inscrivent.

### Document sur le plagiat

A la demande de plusieurs unités scolaires, nous vous acheminons des brochures (une version en français et l'autre en anglais) sur le plagiat. Veuillez la mettre à la disposition de vos étudiants. La brochure est aussi disponible en format électronique à l'adresse suivante:  
[www.etudesup.uottawa.ca/reglements/fraude\\_scolaire/index.html](http://www.etudesup.uottawa.ca/reglements/fraude_scolaire/index.html)

N.B.: Dans ce document, le genre non marqué est employé pour désigner aussi bien les femmes que les hommes.

## Facturation

Les étudiants qui s'inscriront le 5 septembre 2003 ou avant recevront une facture qui devra être acquittée au plus tard le 5 septembre 2003. Les étudiants qui s'inscriront après le 5 septembre ne recevront pas de facture; ils devront régler leurs droits de scolarité immédiatement après leur inscription. La même règle s'applique dans le cas des étudiants qui ajoutent des cours après le 5 septembre. Pour plus d'information au sujet du paiement des droits universitaires, veuillez référer vos étudiants au site web: [http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/info/regist/fees/pay\\_f.html](http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/info/regist/fees/pay_f.html).

Les étudiants qui veulent prendre les dispositions pour faire déduire les droits de scolarité de leur assistantat doivent s'adresser à la FÉSP au pavillon Hagen, pièce 107. Un délai de 24 heures après l'inscription est requis pour préparer les billets à ordre. L'étudiant doit avoir une copie du contrat en main.

---

### NOTEZ BIEN

---

## Demande de congé

Toutes demandes de congé pour des raisons de maternité doivent être accompagnées d'un certificat médical ou d'un certificat de naissance. Nous aimerions préciser que la prolongation dans les cas de congé de maternité, n'est pas donnée automatiquement; l'étudiante doit en faire la demande écrite par lettre ou en indiquant une note sur sa demande de congé.

Les demandes de congé pour la session de l'automne 2003 doivent nous parvenir **au plus tard le 19 septembre** (à l'attention de Nicole Lanthier). N'oubliez pas les frais de 40\$.

## Dépôt de thèse

Les étudiants auront jusqu'au **19 septembre 2003** pour déposer leur thèse et annuler leur inscription de l'automne 2003 (septembre-décembre), à condition d'avoir une inscription valide à la thèse pour la session du printemps/été 2003 (mai-août). **N'oubliez pas d'entrer l'annulation de la thèse au SIS. Pour tout dépôt de thèse après le 19 septembre, l'étudiant doit demeurer inscrit pour la session de l'automne 2003.**

## Dépôt du mémoire ou du rapport d'ingénieur

Les étudiants auront jusqu'au 29 août 2003 pour déposer leur mémoire ou rapport d'ingénieur sans avoir à se réinscrire pour la session de l'automne 2003 (septembre-décembre), à condition d'avoir une inscription valide à cette activité pour la session du printemps/été 2003 (mai-août). Pour tout dépôt après le 29 août, l'étudiant doit demeurer inscrit pour la session de l'automne 2003. **Les notes finales du mémoire ou rapport d'ingénieur doivent nous être parvenues au plus tard le 15 septembre 2003 (à l'attention de Johanne Forgues).**

## Contingentement

Les étudiants du 1<sup>er</sup> cycle peuvent s'inscrire via le WEB. Si vos cours ne sont pas offerts aux étudiants du 1<sup>er</sup> cycle ou sont réservés à certaines catégories d'étudiants, il devient impératif de continger vos cours afin de pouvoir contrôler les inscriptions dans ces cours. La commande directe pour accéder au contingentement est le 4 A H.

Si vous croyez avoir besoin de plus de détails pour savoir comment faire du contingentement, veuillez me le laisser savoir et nous évaluerons les besoins.

---

## **RAPPEL**

---

## Frais de retard d'inscription

Les frais de retard d'inscription ne sont jamais remboursables même lorsque l'inscription est annulée.

## Cartes d'étudiant

Veillez rappeler à tous vos étudiants diplômés, qu'ils peuvent se procurer une vignette de validation attestant l'inscription aux études supérieures. Cette vignette est apposée sur la carte d'étudiant et les identifie comme étant inscrit à un programme d'études supérieures. Ils peuvent se procurer ce collant à InfoService ou à la GSAED.

---

## Matériel d'inscription

Vous trouverez sur vos listes "*ÉTUDIANTS ET ETUDIANTES INVITÉS ET INSCRITS - Automne 2003*", le temps limite pour compléter les exigences du programme, le T-SESSION (total des sessions à temps complet et partiel), le statut d'inscription (inscrit ou invité), T- T/C (total des sessions à temps complet) ainsi que l'option scolaire (thèse, mémoire ou cours), indiquée comme option thèse sur votre liste, et le nom du directeur de recherche (s'il y a lieu).

Votre matériel d'inscription ci-inclus comprend :

1. des listes de vos étudiants invités et inscrits (nouveaux, anciens et hors campus) ;
2. des formulaires "Inscription/ 2e et 3e cycles" pour vos étudiants invités à s'inscrire (nouveaux et anciens) ;
3. des formulaires "Autorisation d'inscription hors campus" pour vos étudiants hors campus (suivront sous peu);
4. une liste des conditions d'admission et d'inscription à être remplies pour vos étudiants INVITÉS à s'inscrire;

5. une liste des conditions sévères financières et RAMU à être remplies ;
6. des copies de l'affiche "Changements d'inscription/Dates limites" à remettre à tous les étudiants qui s'inscrivent ;
7. des dépliants de la GSAÉD à remettre à tous les étudiants qui s'inscrivent;
8. des documents concernant le plagiat pour vos présentoirs.

Les formulaires d'inscription et de modification en blanc ainsi que tout autre formulaire concernant l'inscription sont disponibles à la FÉSP sur demande.

J'espère que cette information vous sera utile. Toutefois si vous avez des questions, n'hésitez pas à nous contacter.

Bonne inscription !

# MEMORANDUM

TO: Academic and Administrative Assistants  
FROM: Sylvie Chénier  
Graduate Registration Coordinator  
DATE: August 13, 2003  
SUBJECT: Registration - Fall 2003  
CC: Graduate Programs Coordinators



---

We ask you *not to enter an admission candidacy* in the SIS and *not to send us the student's file* for students *changing from the thesis option to the non-thesis or vice versa and for student transferring from a master's program to the Ph.D. or vice versa*. All we need is a letter from the student and the approval of the professor in charge of graduate studies. Please send all requests for transferring from the master's degree to the Ph.D. to Mrs. Johanne Forgues. For all other changes, please sent them to my attention.

---

## NEWS

---

### Pre-printed forms for new students

In your registration material you will find pre-printed forms for only *new students who have answered YES* to the offer of admission and for your returning students eligible to register for the Fall 2003 session. If you receive printed forms for ineligible students, please let us know.

### GSAED 2003-2004

You will receive with your registration material a leaflet from the Graduate Student Association informing students on several services offered and also on the health and medical insurance plans. Please hand a copy to all students registering.

### Document on plagiarism

At the request of several academic units, we are sending you a document (in two versions, french and english) on plagiarism. Please make them available for your students. It is also available in eletronic version at this site: [www.grad.uottawa.ca/regulations/academic\\_fraud/index.html](http://www.grad.uottawa.ca/regulations/academic_fraud/index.html)

## Invoices

Students who register on or before September 5, 2003 will receive an invoice with payment due September 5, 2003. Students who register after September 5 will not receive an invoice. They will have to pay their fees at registration. The same rule applies for students adding courses after September 5. For more information regarding payment of fees please refer your students to the web site: \_\_\_\_\_

Students who wish to pay their fees through an assistantship must make arrangements in person at the FGPS, Hagen Hall, room 107. A delay of 24 hours is required for processing promissary notes after registration. The student must bring his/her copy of the contract.

---

## NOTE

---

## Thesis Submission

Students will have until **September 19, 2003**, to submit their thesis and cancel their Fall 2003 (September-December) registration, assuming that they were officially registered for the thesis for the Spring/Summer 2003 session (May-August). ***Do not forget to enter the cancellation of the thesis in the SIS. For all theses submitted after September 19, students must remain registered for the Fall 2003 session.***

## Major Research Paper and Engineering Report Submission

To avoid having to re-register for the Fall 2003 session (September-December), students must be registered for the major research paper or engineering report for the Spring/Summer 2003 session (May-August) and ***must submit their major research paper or engineering report by August 29, 2003***. Students who miss the submissions deadline of August 29, 2003, must register for the Fall 2003 session. ***The final grades for submitted major research papers or engineering reports must be sent to us no later than September 15, 2003 (c/o Johanne Forgues).***

## Requests for Leave of Absence

All requests for Leave of Absence for maternity reasons must be submitted with a medical certificate or a birth certificate. Extensions of the time limit, in the cases of maternity are not given automatically; the student must request it in writing (letter or note on the leave of absence form).

Requests for the Fall 2003 session must reach us (c/o Nicole Lanthier) ***no later than September 19, 2003***. Don't forget the \$40 fee.

## Specific Enrolment Limits

Undergraduate students can register via the WEB. If your courses are not open to undergraduate students or are reserved to specific category of students, it is imperative that you enter enrolment limits in order to control registration in those courses. The direct command to access the Specific Enrolment Limits screen is 4 A H.

If you think that you will need more details in how to do Enrolment Limits, please let me know and we will evaluate the needs.

---

### **REMINDER**

---

## Late Registration fees

Late registration fees are not refundable even when registration is cancelled.

## Student ID card

Please remind your graduate students that they can obtain a validation sticker to attest that they are registered in a graduate program. This sticker is affixed to the student ID card and will confirm that they are registered in graduate studies. This sticker is available at InfoService or at GSAED offices.

---

## Registration material

You will find on your list "*INVITED AND REGISTERED STUDENTS FOR - Fall 2003*", the deadline to complete the requirements of the program, T-SESSION (the TOTAL SESSION count), registration status (INVITED OR REGISTERED), the T-T/C (Full-time session count) as well as the thesis option and the name of the research supervisor (if applicable).

The material for the registration includes:

1. Listings of all your new, returning and off-campus students invited to register and registered;
2. "Graduate Registration" forms for all your new and returning students invited to register;
3. "Authorization to Register Off-Campus" forms for all your off-campus students (to be sent soon);

4. A list of invited students with conditions of admission and registration to satisfy;
5. A list of students with severe financial conditions or UHIP to satisfy;
6. Copies of the poster "Registration Changes" and "Deadlines" to hand to all students registering;
7. Leaflets from the GSAED to hand to all students registering;
8. Documents regarding plagiarism for your display unit.

Blank "Graduate Registration" and "Cancellation/Modification of Registration" forms as well as any other pertinent form are available on request at the FGPS.

I sincerely hope these instructions will be of some help to you.  
However if any questions arise, do not hesitate to contact us.

GOOD LUCK !