The Nativity Kontakion
of St. Romanos the Melodist
St. Romanos the Melodist
Kontakion on the Nativity of Christ

From St. Romanos the Melodist, On the Life of Christ: Kontakia

Introduction

A “kontakion” is a poetic form frequently encountered in Byzantine hymnography. It was probably based in Syriac hymnographical traditions, which underwent an independent development in Greek-speaking Byzantium. We can perhaps best describe it as a “sermon in verse accompanied by music”. In character it is similar to the early Byzantine festival sermons in prose, but meter and music have greatly heightened the drama and rhetorical beauty of the speaker’s often profound and very rich meditation. The form generally consists of 18 to 24 metrically identical stanzas (called “oikoi”, or “houses”), preceded, in another meter, by a short prelude (called a “koukoulion”, or “cowl”). The first letters of the stanzas form an acrostic, which frequently includes the name of the poet; the last line of the prelude introduces a refrain, which is repeated at the end of all the stanzas. This form became especially popular after the magnificent work of St. Romanos the Melodist during the 6th century.

The main body of a kontakion was chanted from the pulpit by the preacher after the reading of the gospel, while a choir, or even the whole congregation, joined in the refrain. The length of many kontakia, and the epic character of some, point to a kind of recitative, but unfortunately, the original music which accompanied the kontakia is now all lost.

The oldest datable kontakia are those of St. Romanos, and the present one is his best known work and in fact is the composition that seems to have first brought him to the notice of the public of Constantinople. For many years, it was sung at the royal banquet on Christmas Day. The prelude, one of the best-loved hymns among Orthodox Christians, and the first stanza are still used for the feast of the Nativity in the Orthodox Church.

Little is known about St. Romanos himself. He was born in the late 5th century, probably in Emesa, Syria, of Jewish descent. He served as deacon in the church of the Resurrection in Beirut before coming to Constantinople during the reign of Anastasius I (491-518). According to his Life, he was miraculously endowed with the gift of writing kontakia. The Virgin appeared to him in a dream on Christmas eve, and gave him a scroll which he swallowed. The poet rose from sleep, gave praise to God, went straight to church and, mounting the pulpit, chanted the kontakion which appears below. We know that he lived beyond the middle of the 6th century, and that he was buried in the church of the Virgin in the Kyrou Quarter of Constantinople. He is commemorated in the Orthodox Church on October 1st, along with his disciple Ananias.

Eighty-five kontakia attributed to Romanos have survived, but not all of those ascribed are genuinely his. Of these, thirty-four are on the person of Christ, and the others deal with other figures of the New and Old Testaments, various martyrs and saints, and so forth. He wrote in an Atticized literary koine — i.e., he had a popular, but elevated style — and abundant Semiticisms support the view that he was of Jewish origin. Arresting imagery, sharp metaphors and similes, bold comparisons, antitheses, coining of successful maxims, and vivid dramatization characterize his style.

Most of the present poem takes the form of a dialogue between the Mother of God and the magi, whose visit to the newborn Child is celebrated in the Byzantine rite on 25th of December, rather than on the 6th of January, when Western Christians celebrate the visit (Jan. 6 is the Feast of the Baptism of Christ in the Orthodox Church).

The basic Gospel text is Matthew 2.1-14.

Compiler's Note: In each refrain, one word, from the translation of Fr. Lash, was changed to “a new Child, God before the ages.” Fr. Lash translated, “a little Child, God before the ages” for musical purposes.

Greek Text taken from: http://www.orp.gr/wordpress/?p=233
ΧΟΡΟΣ

Προοίμιον

Η παρθένος σήμερον τον υπερούσιον τίκτει, και η γη το σπήλαιον τω απροσίτω προσάγει. άγγελοι μετά ποιμένων δοξολογούσι, μάγοι δε μετά αστέρος οδοιπορούσι. δι' ημάς γάρ εγεννήθη παιδίον νέον, ο πρό αιώνων θεός.

Οίκοι

Α’

Την Εδέμ Βηθλεέμ ήνοιξε, δεύτε ιδαμεν. την τρυφήν εν κρυφή ήραμεν, δεύτε λάβωμεν τα του παραδείσου εντός σπηλαίου. εκεί εφάνη οίζα απότιστος βλαστάνουσα άφεσιν, εκεί ήρεθη φρέαρ ανόρυκτον, ου ποιείν Δαβίδ πρίν επεθύμησεν. εκεί παρθένος τεκούσα βρέφος την δίψαν έπαυσεν ευθύς την του Αδάμ και του Δαβίδ.

Β’

Ο πατήρ της μητρός υϊόν έγένετο. ο σωτήρ των βρεφών βρέφος εν φάτνη έκειτο. ου κατανοούσα φησίν η τεκούσα. «Ειπέ μοι, τέκνον, πως ενεσπάρης μοι ή πως ενεφύης μοι; ορώ σε, σπλάγχνον, και καταπλήττομαι, ότι γαλουχώ και ου νενύμφευμαι. και σε μέν βλέπω μετά σπαργάνων, την παρθενίαν δε ακμήν εσφραγισμένην θεωρώ.

CHOIR

Prelude

Today the Virgin gives birth to Him who is above all being, and the earth offers a cave to him whom no one can approach. Angels with shepherds give glory, and magi journey with a star, for to us there has been born a new Child, God before the ages.

Oikos

1’

Bethlehem has opened Eden, come, let us see; we have found delight in secret, come, let us receive the joys of Paradise within the cave. There the unwatered root whose blossom is forgiveness has appeared. There has been found the undug well from which David once longed to drink. There a virgin has borne a babe and has quenched at once Adam’s and David’s thirst. For this, let us hasten to this place where there has been born a new Child, God before the ages.

2’

The mother’s Father has willingly become her Son, the infants’ saviour is laid as an infant in a manger. As she who bore him contemplates him, she says, “Tell me, my Child, how were you sown, or how were you planted in me? I see you, flesh and blood, and I am amazed, because I give suck and yet I am not married. And though I see you in swaddling clothes, I know that the flower of my virginity is sealed,
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σῦ γάρ ταύτην φυλάξας εγεννήθης ευδοκήσας
παιδίον νέον, ο πρό αιώνων θεός.

Γ’

Υψηλέ βασιλεύ,
tί σοί και τοις πτωχεύσασι;  
ποιητά ουρανοῦ,  
tι πρὸς γηνύους ἠλυθας;  
σπηλαίου ηράσθης  
η φάτνη ετέρφθης;  
ιδού ουκ έστι τόπος τη δούλη σου εν τω  
katalύματι.  
ου λέγω τόπον, αλλ’ ουδέ σπήλαιον,  
ότι και αυτό τούτο αλλότριον.  
και τη μέν Σάρρα τεκούση  
ηράσθης η φάτνη ετέρφθης;  
και τη μέν Σάρρα τεκούση  
eμοί δε ούτε φωλεός.  
εχθρισάμην το ἀντρόν, ο κατώκησας  
βουλήσει  
παιδίον νέον, ο πρό αιώνων θεός.

Δ’

Τα τοιαύτα ηταν εν απορρήτῳ λέγουσα  
και των οφανών γνώστην  
καθικετεύουσα  
ακούει των μάγων το βρέφος ζητούντων.  
eυθὺς δὲ τούτως. «Τίνες υπάρχετε;» η  
kόρη εβόησεν.  
oi δὲ πρὸς ταύτην. «Σύ γάρ τις πέφυκας,  
ότι τον τοιούτον απεκύησας;  
tίς ο πατήρ σου; τις η τεκούσα;  
ότι απάτορος υιού εγένου μήτηρ και  
τροφός,  
oυ το άστρον  
ιδόντες συνήκαμεν ότι ώφθη  
παιδίον νέον, ο πρό αιώνων θεός.

Ε’

Ακριβώς γάρ ημίν ο Βαλαάμ παρέθετο  
tων οημάτων τον νουν ώνπερ  
προεμαντεύσατο,  
eιπὼν ότι μέλλει αστήρ ανατέλλειν,

for you preserved it when, in your good pleasure, you were born

a new Child, God before the ages.

3

“High King,  
what have you to do with beggars?  
Maker of heaven,  
why have you come to those born of earth?  
Did you love a cave  
or take pleasure in a manger?  
See, there is no place for your servant in the inn,  
I do not say a place, not even a cave,  
for that too belongs to another.  
To Sara, when she bore a child, a vast land  
was given as her lot.  
To me, not even a fox hole.  
I used the cavern where willingly you made  
your dwelling,  
a new Child, God before the ages.

4

As she spoke such words in secret  
and entreated the One who knows what is hidden,  
she heard the magi seeking the babe.  
At once, the Maiden cried to them, “Who are you?”  
They answered her, “And you, who are you,  
that you have borne such a Child?  
Who is your father, who is she who bore you,  
that you have become mother and nurse of a  
son without father?  
On seeing his star  
we understood that there had appeared  
a new Child, God before the ages.

5

“For Balaam laid before us precisely  
the meaning of the words he spoke in prophecy,  
when he said that a Star would dawn,
ΤΟ ΚΟΝΤΑΚΙΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΓΕΝΝΗΣΕΩΣ ΤΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΡΟΜΑΝΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΜΕΛΛΩΔΟΥ

αστήρ σβεννύων πάντα μαντεύματα και
ta οιωνίσματα.
αστήρ εκλύων παραβολάς σοφών
φήσεις τε αυτών και τα αινίγματα.
αστήρ αστέρος του φαινομένου
υπεφαινοί τον πολύ
ως πάνων άστρων ποιητής,
περί ου προσεγγάρη. εκ του Ιακώβ
ανατέλλει

παιδίον νέον, o πρό αιώνων θεός.

Σ’

Παραδόξων ρητών η Μαριάμ ως ήκουσε,
tω εκ σπλάχνων αυτής κύψασα
και κλαίουσα είπε. «Μεγάλα μοι, τέκνον,
μεγάλα πάντα, όσα εποίησας μετά της
πτωχείας μου.
ιδού γάρ μάγοι έξω ζητούσι σε
tων ανατολών οι βασιλεύοντες.
tο πρόσωπόν σου επιζητούσι
και λιτανεύουσιν ιδείν οι πλούσιοι του
σου λαού.
ο λαός σου γάρ όντως εισίν ούτοι οις
εγνώσθης

παιδίον νέον, o πρό αιώνων θεός.

Ζ’

Επειδή ουν λαός σός έστι, τέκνον,
κέλεψον
υπό σκέπην την σήν γένωνται, ινα ίδωσι
πενίαν πλουσίαν, πτωχείαν τιμίαν.
αυτόν σε δόξαν έχω και καύχημα. διό ουκ
αισχύνομαι.
αυτός ει χάρις και η ευπρέπεια
της σκηνής καμού.
νεύσον εισέλθωσιν.
ουδέν μοι μέλει της ευτελείας.
ως θησαυρόν σε γάρ κρατώ, όν βασιλεύεις
ήλθον ιδείν
βασιλέων και μάγων εγνωκότων στι
ώφθης

παιδίον νέον, o πρό αιώνων θεός.

a Star that quenches all prophecies and auguries;
a Star that resolves the parables of the wise,
and their sayings and their riddles,
a Star far more brilliant than the star which
has appeared,
for he is the maker of all the stars,
of whom it was written of old, From Jacob,
there dawns

a new Child, God before the ages.

When Mary heard these amazing words,
she bowed low and worshipped the offspring
of her womb
and with tears, she said, “Great, my Child,
great is all that you have done for me in my
poverty;
for see, magi are outside seeking you.
The kings of the East
seek your face,
and the rich among your people beg to see
you,
for truly your people are those to whom you
have been made known as

a new Child, God before the ages.

“So, since they are your people, my Child, bid
them
come under your roof, that they may see
rich poverty, precious beggary.
You I have as glory and pride, therefore I am
not ashamed.
You are the grace and beauty
of my dwelling and of me.
Nod and let them enter.
My poverty does not worry me;
I hold you as a treasure that the kings have
come to see,
for kings and magi know that you have ap-
peared

a new Child, God before the ages.
Η’

Ἡ Ιησοῦς ο Χριστός οντως και ο θεός ημών των φρενών αφανώς ἔφατο της μητρός αυτού
«Εἰσάγαγε» λέγων «ούς ἤγαγον λόγω, εμός γάρ λόγος τούτος επέλαμψε τοις επιζητούσι με.
αστήρ μέν ἐστιν εἰς το φαινόμενον, δύναμις δε τις προς το νοούμενον. συνήλθε μάγοις ως λειτουργών μοι και ἐτι ἱσταται πληρών την διακονίαν αυτού και ακτίσι δεικνύων τον τόπον όπου ετέχθη
παιδίον νέον, o πρὸ aiώνων θεός.

Θ’

Νυν οὐν ἅξει, σεμνή, ἅξει τους δεξαμένους με.
ἐν αὐτοῖς γάρ εἰμὶ ὡσπερ εν ταῖς αγκάλαις σου. και σου οὐκ απέστην κακείνοις συνήλθον.»
η δε ανοίγει θύραν και δέχεται των μάγων το σώστημα.
ανοίγει θύραν η απαράνοικτος πύλη, ἣν Χριστός μόνος διώδευσεν. ανοίγει θύραν η ανοιχθείσα και μη κλαπείσα μηδαμώς τον της αγνείας θησαυρόν.
αυτή ήνοιξε θύραν, αφ ἐς εγεννήθη θύρα,
παιδίον νέον, o πρὸ aiώνων θεός.

Ι’

Οι δέ μάγοι εὐθὺς ἁρμήσαν εἰς τὸν θάλαμον καὶ ἰδόντες Χριστὸν ἔφριξαν, ὅτι εἰδοὺσαν τὴν τοῦτον μητέρα, τὸν ταύτης μνηστήρα. καὶ φόβῳ εἶπον. «Οὕτως νιῶ ε스τιν αγγελάλογης. καὶ πῶς, παρθένε, τὸν μηναστευόμενον βλέπομεν ακριβῶς ἔνδον τοῦ ὅικου σου; ὥστε ἔσχε σωματία η κύησες σου; μὴ τὴ κατοικίσεις ψεχῆ συνόντος σοι του

8

Jesus the Christ and truly our God secretly touched his mother’s mind saying, “Bring in those I have brought by my word, for it is my word which shone on those who were seeking me.
To the senses it is a star, but to the mind a power.
It accompanied the magi as my minister, and still stands fulfilling its service and showing with its rays the place where there has been born
a new Child, God before the ages.

9

“Therefore now receive, holy Lady— receive those who have received me, for I am in them as I am in your arms; I did not leave you and yet I came with them.”
She opens the door and receives the company of the magi.
She opens the door— she, the unopened gate through which Christ alone has passed.
She opens the door— she who was opened and yet in no way robbed of the treasure of her purity.
She opened the door, she from whom was born the door,
a new Child, God before the ages.

10

The magi at once hastened into the room and, seeing Christ, they trembled as they saw his mother and her betrothed.
And in fear they said, “This is a son without ancestry.
And how is it, O Virgin, that at this moment we see your betrothed within your house?
Will people not find fault at Joseph’s living
ΤΟ ΚΟΝΤΑΚΙΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΓΕΝΝΗΣΕΩΣ ΤΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΡΟΜΑΝΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΜΕΛΛΩΔΟΥ

Ιωσήφ.
πλήθος έχεις φθονούντων, ερευνώντων
που ετέχθη
παιδίον νέον, ο πρό αιώνων θεός.

ΙΑ’
«Υπομνήσω υμάς μιᾷ», μάγοις Μαρία έφησε,
«τίνος χάριν κρατώ τον Ιωσήφ εν οίκω μου.
εις ἑλεγχον πάντων των καταλαλούντων.
αυτός γάρ λέξει ἀπέρ ακήκοε περί τού
παιδίου μου.
υπνών γάρ εἶδεν ἁγγελον ἁγίον
λέγοντα αυτώ, πόθεν συνέλαβον.
πυρίνη θέα τον ακανθώδη
επληροφόρησε νυκτός περί των
λυπούντων αυτόν.
δι’ αυτό σύνεστί μοι Ιωσήφ
dηλών ως ἔστι
παιδίον νέον, ο πρό αιώνων θεός.

ΙΒ’
Ρητορεύει σαφῶς ἀπαντα ἀπερ ἠκουσεν.
ἀπαγγέλλει τρανῷ ὡσα αυτός εώρακεν
ἐν τοις οὐρανοῖς καὶ τοις ἐπιγείοις.
τα των ποιμένων, πως συνανύμνησαν
πηλίνοις οἱ πύρινοι.
υμών τοι ὁ μάγων,
ὅτι προεδραμεν ἁστρον
φωταυγοῦν καὶ οδηγοῦν υμᾶς.
δι’ αφέντες τα προφητεύντα
ἐκδηγήσασθε ἡμίν τα νυν γενόμενα ημίν.
πώθεν ἠκατε,
πως δε συνήκατε ὑπερ γρήγορον
παιδίον νέον, ο πρό αιώνων θεός;

ΠΓ’
Ως δέ ταύτα αυτοίς η φαεινή ελάλησεν,
οι της ανατολής λύχνοι προς ταύτην ἐφήσαν.
«Μαθεῖν θέλεις,
πώθεν ἔλθαμεν ὡδὲ;
ἐκ γῆς Χαλδαίων, οθέν ου λέγουσι. “Θεός
θεών κύριος”,
ἐκ Βαβυλώνος, ὁπον οὐκ οἴδασί

with you?
You have a multitude of jealous people en-
quiring where there has been born

a new Child, God before the ages.

11

“I will tell you”, Mary said to the magi,
“why I keep Joseph in my house:
to refute all those who slander me.
He will tell what he has heard about my
Child.
For in his sleep he saw a holy angel
who told him how I had conceived.
In the night a fiery vision told
he creature of thorn about the things which
grieved him.
That is why Joseph is with me,
to show that there is

a new Child, God before the ages.

12

“He proclaims clearly all he has heard.
He declares openly all that he has seen
in heaven and on earth:
the story of the shepherds, how beings of fire
sang praises with ones of clay,
that of you, magi,
how a star hastened before you,
lighting your way and guiding you.
And so, leaving aside all that you said before,
now recount to us what has befallen you.
Where have you come from,
how did you understand that there had appeared

a new Child, God before the ages?

13

When the Shining One had spoken thus,
the lamps of the East said to her,
“Do you wish to learn
from where we have come here?
From the land of the Chaldaean, where they
do not say, ‘The Lord is God of gods.’
From Babylon, where they do not know
τίς ο ποιητής τούτων ως σέβουσιν. εκείθεν ἤλθε καὶ ήρεν ημᾶς ο τοῦ παιδίου σου σπινθήρ εκ τοῦ πυρός του Περσικοῦ. πυρ παμφάγον λιπόντες πυρ δροσίζον θεωρούμεν παιδίον νέον, τον πρὸ αἰώνων θεόν.

ΙΔ’
Ματαιότης εστὶ ματαιοτήτων ἀπαντα. αλλ’ ουδείς εν ημῖν ταύτα φρονών ευφίκεται. οι μέν γὰρ πλανώσιν, οι δὲ καὶ πλανώνται. διό, παρθένε, χάρις τω τόκω σου, δι’ ου ελυτρώθημεν ου μόνον πλάνης, αλλά καὶ θλίψεως των χωρών πασών ὄντων διήλθομεν, εθνών ασήμων, γλωσσών αγνώστων, περιερχόμενοι την γῆν καὶ εξερευνώντες αυτὴν μετά λύχνου του ἀστυρού εκζητούντες, που ετέχθη παιδίον νέον, ο πρὸ αἰώνων θεός.

ΙΕ’
Ἀλλ’ ὡς ἐτι αὐτῶν τούτων τοῦ λύχνου εἴχομεν, την Ἰερουσαλήμ πάσαν περιωδεύσαμεν πληρούντες εικότως τα της προφητείας. ἤκουσαμεν γὰρ, ότι ηπείλησε θεός ερευνάν αυτὴν. και μετὰ λύχνου περιηρχόμεθα θέλοντες ευφίκεις μέγα δικαίωμα. αλλ’ οὐχ εὐφίκε, ὅτι επήρθη η κιβωτός αὐτής μεθ’ ὄν συνείχε πρότερον καλών. τα αρχαία παρήλθεν. ανεκαίνισε γὰρ πάντα παιδίον νέον, ο πρὸ αἰώνων θεός.

ΙΣ’
«Ναι», φησί, τοις πιστοῖς μάγοις Μαρία ἔφησε, την Ἰερουσαλήμ πάσαν περιωδεύσατε, την πόλιν εκείνην την προφητοκτόνον; who is the maker of the things they reverence. From there it came, the spark from your Child, and raised us from the Persian fire; we have left an all-devouring fire and see a fire which brings dew: 
a new Child, God before the ages.

14
“Everything is vanity of vanities. But there is none among us who thinks this, for some deceive while others are deceived. Therefore, Virgin, thanks be to your Offspring, through whom we have been freed, not only from deception but from hardship in all the countries through which we passed, of nations unknown, of tongues incomprehensible, as we wandered through the earth and searched it, with the lamp of the star seeking out where there had been born

a new Child, God before the ages.

15
“But while we still had this lamp we journeyed through all Jerusalem, fitly fulfilling the words of the prophecy. For we had heard that God had threatened to search her thoroughly, and with the lamp we wandered, wishing to find a great judgment. But it was not found, because her Ark had been taken away with all the good things it had held before. The things of old have passed away, for He has renewed all things

a new Child, God before the ages.

Mary, Scripture says, said to the faithful magi, “So, have you journeyed through all Jerusalem, that city which slays prophets?
και πως αλάπως ταύτην διήλθατε την πάσιν βοσκαίνουσαν;
Ηρώδην πάλιν πως διελάθετε
τον αντί θεσμών φόνους εμπνεόντα;»
οι διελάθαμεν αυτόν,
ενεπαίξαμεν αυτόν.
συνετύχομεν πάσιν ερωτώντες που
παιδίον νέον, ο προ αιώνων θεός.

How did you pass unharmed through the city malevolent to all?
How did you avoid Herod,
who breathes out murder, not justice?”
But they answered her, “Virgin,
we did not avoid him,
we mocked him.
We met them all and asked where there had been born
a new Child, God before the ages.

17
When the Mother of God heard this from them,
she said to them, “What did
King Herod and the Pharisees ask you?”
“First Herod, then, as you said, the leaders of your nation
inquired of us exactly the time
of this star which is now visible.
And when they knew,
as though they had not learned,
they had no desire to see the one of whom they sought to learn
because, for those who seek, there must be seen
a new Child, God before the ages.

18
“They thought us mad, the fools,
and asked,
From where have you come and when?
And how have you journeyed by unseen paths?”
But we in turn asked them what they already knew,
‘But how did you of old journey through
the great desert which you crossed?
He who guided those who came from Egypt
Himself now guides those who come to Him
from Chaldaea;
then by a pillar of fire, now by the star which shows
a new Child, God before the ages.
The Nativity Kontakion of St. Romanos the Melodist

ΙΘ’
Ο αστήρ πανταχού ήν ημών προηγούμενος ως υμίν ο Μωσής ράβδον επιφερόμενος, το φώς περιλάμπων της θεογνωσίας. υμάς το μάννα πάλαι διέθρεψε, και πέτρα επότισεν. 
ημάς ελπίς η τούτου ενέπλησε. τη τούτου χαρά διατρεφόμενοι ουκ εν Περσίδι αναποδίσαι διά το άβατον οδόν οδεύειν εν νω θεωρήσαι ποθούντες, προσκυνήσαι και δοξάσαι

παιδίον νέον, τον πρό αιώνων θεόν.

Κ’
Υπό των απλανών μάγων αυτά ελέγετο. υπό δέ της σεμνής πάντα επεσφραγίζετο κυρούντος τον βρέφους τα των αμφοτέρων, 
της μέν ποιούντος μετά την κύησιν την μήτραν αμίαντον, των δε δεικνύντος μετά την έλευσιν άμοχθον τον νουν ώσπερ τα βήματα.
ουδείς γάρ τούτων υπέστη κόπον, 
διά το άβατον οδόν οδούν οδεύειν εν νω θεωρήσαι ποθούντες, προσκυνήσαι και δοξάσαι

παιδίον νέον, τον πρό αιώνων θεόν.

ΚΑ’
Μετά πάντα αυτών ταύτα τα διηγήματα δώρα μάγων χερσίν και προσεκόμισαν χρυσόν και σμύραν είτα και λίβανον
Χριστώ

παιδίον νέον, τον πρό αιώνων θεόν.

19
“Everywhere the star traveled on ahead of us, just as Moses once carried a staff before you—a lamp shining with knowledge of God.
Of old the manna nourished you, and a rock gave drink:
as for us, hope of Him has made us full.
Nourished on joy of Him
we could not tarry in Persia;
we took in mind to travel the trackless road desiring to see,
to worship, and to glorify

a new Child, God before the ages.

20
These things were spoken by the unerring magi,
and they were all sealed by the holy Virgin.
And what both had said was confirmed by the infant;
he left her womb
unsullied after childbirth,
and showed their mind, like their steps,
unwearied after their coming.
For none of them had undergone toil,
as Avvakoum had not been wearied when he came to Daniel.
For he who appeared to the prophets was the same who appeared to the magi,

a new Child, God before the ages.

21
When they had told all their story,
the magi took the gifts in their hands and worshipped
the Gift of gifts, the Myrrh of myrrh.
They brought Christ gold and myrrh and then incense
and cried, “Accept our triple gift,
as you do the Thrice Holy Hymn of the sera-

phim.
Do not reject them like those of Cain,
but embrace them

like Abel’s offering,
ΤΟ ΚΟΝΤΑΚΙΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΓΕΝΝΗΣΕΩΣ ΤΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΡΟΜΑΝΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΜΕΛΛΩΔΟΥ

διά της σε τεκούσης, δι’ ήμιν εγεννήθης
παιδίον νέον, ο πρό αιώνων θεός.

ΚΒ’

Νέα νυν και φαίνοµαι βλέπουσα η αµώµητος
μάγους δώρα χερσί φέροντας και
προσπίπτοντας,
αστέρα δηλούντα,
ποιµένας υµνούντας,
τον πάντων τούτων κτίστην και κύριον
ικέτευε λέγουσα.
«Τριάδα δώρων, τέκνων, δεξάµενος
τρεῖς αιτήσεις δός τῇ γεννησάσῃ σε.
υπέρ αέρων παρακαλῶ σε
και υπέρ των καρπών τῆς γῆς καὶ τῶν
οικούντων εν αὐτῇ.
διαλλάγηθι πάσι
δι’ εµοῦ ὁτι ετέχθης
παιδίον νέον, ο πρό αιώνων θεός.

ΚΓ’

Οὐχ απλῶς γάρ εἰµί µήτηρ σου, σώτερ
εὐσπλαγχνε.
οὐκ εἰκή γαλουχὼ
tον χορηγόν του γάλακτος.
αλλὰ υπέρ πάντων εγώ δυσωπῶ σε.
εποίησάς µε ὅλου του γένους µου καὶ
στόµα καὶ καύχηµα.
εµὲ γάρ ἔχει η οἰκουµένη σου
σκέπην κραταιάν, τείχος καὶ στήριγµα.
εµὲ ορῶσιν οι εκβληθέντες
tου παραδείσου της τρυφῆς, ὅτι
επιστρέψω αυτοὺς
λαβεῖν αἰσθήσιν πάντων δι’ εµοῦ τῆς σε
τεκούσης
παιδίον νέον, τον πρό αιώνων θεόν.

ΚΔ’

Σώσον κόσµον, σωτήρ. τούτου γάρ χάριν
Ηµᾶς.
στήσον πάντα τα σά. τούτο γάρ χάριν
ἔλαµψας

through her who gave you birth, and through
whom you have been born for us,
a new Child, God before the ages.

22

When the blameless Virgin saw
the magi bringing new and radiant gifts and
worshipping,
the star showing Him,
the shepherds praising Him,
she implored the Maker and Creator of all
these, saying,
“Accept, my Child, a trinity of gifts,
grant her who gave you birth three requests.
I pray to you for the seasons
and for the fruits of the earth and for those
who dwell on it.
Be reconciled to all, because through me you
have been born
a new Child, God before the ages.

23

“For I am not simply your mother, compas-
sionate Saviour;
it is not in vain that I suckle
the giver of milk,
but for the sake of all I implore you.
You have made me the mouth and the boast
of all my race,
and your world has me
as a mighty protection, a wall and a buttress.
They look to me, those who were cast out
of the Paradise of pleasure, for I bring them
back.
May all things understand that, through me,
you have been born
a new Child, God before the ages.

24

“Save the world, O Saviour. For this you have
come.
Set your whole universe aright. For this you
have shone
on me and on the magi and on all creation. For see, the magi, to whom you have shown the light of your face, fall down before you and offer gifts, useful, fair and eagerly sought. For I have need of them, since I am about to go to Egypt and to flee with you and for you, my Guide, my Son, my Maker, my Redeemer,
a new Child, God before the ages.