

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
(Archimandrite Ephrem Lash, tr.: Harper, San Francisco, 1995), pp. 1-12.

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 popularl 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 commemmorated 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.*

English Text taken from: https://jbburnett.com/resources/romanos_nativity.pdf
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 ίδωμεν.
την τρυφήν εν κρυφή ηύραμεν,
δεύτε λάβωμεν
τα του παραδείσου εντός σπηλαίου.
εκεί εφάνη ρίζα
απότιστος βλαστάνουσα άφεσιν,
εκεί ηυρέθη φρέαρ ανόρυκτον,
ου ποιείν Δαβίδ πρίν επεθύμησεν.
εκεί παρθένος τεκούσα βρέφος
την δίψαν έπαυσεν
ευθύς την του Αδάμ και του Δαβίδ.
διά τούτο προς τούτο επειχθώμεν,
που ετέχθη

παιδίον νέον, ο πρό αιώνων θεός.

Β'

Ο πατήρ της μητρός γνώμη υϊός εγένετο.
ο σωτήρ των βρεφών
βρέφος εν φάτνη έκειτο.
όν 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,

σύ γάρ ταύτην φυλάξας εγεννήθης ευδοκήσας

παιδίον νέον, ο πρό αιώνων θεός.

Γ′

Ὑψηλέ βασιλεύ,
τί σοί και τοις πτωχεύσασι;
ποιητά ουρανού,
τι προς γηύνους ήλυθας;
σπηλαίου ηράσθης
η φάτνη ετέρφθης;
ιδού ουκ έστι τόπος τη δούλη σου εν τω καταλύματι.
ου λέγω τόπον, αλλ' ουδέ σπήλαιον,
ότι και αυτό τούτο αλλότριον.
και τη μέν Σάρρα τεκούση βρέφος εδόθη κλήρος γης πολύς,
εμοί δε ούτε φωλεός.
εχρησάμην το άντρον, ο κατώκησας βουλήσει

παιδίον νέον, ο πρό αιώνων θεός.

Δ′

Τα τοιαύτα ρητά εν απορρήτω λέγουσα
και τον των αφανών γνώστην καθικετεύουσα
ακούει των μάγων το βρέφος ζητούντων.
ευθύς δέ τούτοις. «Τίνες υπάρχετε;» η κόρη εβόησεν.
οι δέ προς ταύτην. «Σύ γάρ τις πέφυκας,
ότι τον τοιούτον απεκύησας;
τίς ο πατήρ σου; τις η τεκούσα;
ότι απάτορος υιού εγένου μήτηρ και τροφός,
ου το άστρον
ιδόντες συνήκαμεν ότι ώφθη

παιδίον νέον, ο πρό αιώνων θεός.

Ε′

Ακριβώς γάρ ημίν ο Βαλαάμ παρέθετο
των ρημάτων τον νουν ώνπερ προεμαντεύσατο,
ειπών 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,

αστήρ σβεννύων πάντα μαντεύματα και τα οιωνίσματα.
αστήρ εκλύων παραβολάς σοφών
ρήσεις τε αυτών και τα αινίγματα.
αστήρ αστέρος του φαινομένου
υπερφαιδρότερος πολύ
ως πάντων άστρων ποιητής,
περί ου προεγράφη. εκ του Ιακώβ
ανατέλλει

παιδίον νέον, ο πρό αιώνων θεός.

Σ′

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

παιδίον νέον, ο πρό αιώνων θεός.

Ζ′

Επειδή ουν λαός σός έστι, τέκνον,
κέλευσον
υπό σκέπην την σήν γένωνται, ίνα 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 βασιλείς
ήλθον ιδείν
βασιλέων και μάγων εγνωκότων ότι
ώφθης

παιδίον νέον, ο 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.

6

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.

7

“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 appeared

a new Child, God before the ages.

Η′

Ιησούς ο Χριστός όντως και ο θεός ημών
των φρενών αφανώς ήψατο της μητρός αυτού
«Εισάγαγε» λέγων «ούς ήγαγον λόγω.
εμός γάρ λόγος τούτοις επέλαμψε τοις επιζητούσι με.
αστήρ μέν έστιν εις το φαινόμενον,
δύναμις δε τις προς το νοούμενον.
συνήλθε μάγοις ως λειτουργών μοι
και έτι ίσταται πληρών την διακονίαν αυτού
και ακτίσι δεικνύων τον τόπον όπου ετέχθη

παιδίον νέον, ο πρό αιώνων θεός.

Θ′

Νυν ούν δέξαι, σεμνή, δέξαι τους δεξαμένους με.
εν αυτοίς γάρ ειμί
ώσπερ εν ταις αγκάλαις σου.
και σου ουκ απέστην κακείνοις συνήλθον.»
η δε ανοίγει θύραν και δέχεται των μάγων το σύστημα.
ανοίγει θύραν η απαράνοικτος
πύλη, ήν Χριστός μόνος διώδευσεν.
ανοίγει θύραν η ανοιχθείσα
και μη κλαπείσα μηδαμώς τον της αγνείας θησαυρόν.
αυτή ήνοιξε θύραν, αφ' ής εγεννήθη θύρα,

παιδίον νέον, ο πρό αιώνων θεός.

Ι′

Οι δέ μάγοι ευθύς ώρμησαν εις τον θάλαμον
και ιδόντες Χριστόν έφριξαν, ότι είδοσαν
την τούτου μητέρα, τον ταύτης μνηστήρα.
και φόβω είπον. «Ούτος υιός έστιν αγενεαλόγητος.
και πώς, παρθένε, τον μνηστευσάμενον
βλέπομεν ακμήν ένδον του οίκου σου;
ούκ έσχε μώμον η κύησίς σου;
μή η κατοίκησις ψεχθή 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?
Was your conceiving blameless?
Will people not find fault at Joseph's living

Ιωσήφ.
πλήθος έχεις φθονούντων, ερευνώντων
που ετέχθη

παιδίον νέον, ο πρό αιώνων θεός.

ΙΑ′

«Υπομνήσω υμάς», μάγοις Μαρία έφησε,
«τίνος χάριν κρατώ τον Ιωσήφ εν οίκω μου.
εις έλεγχον πάντων των καταλαλούντων.
αυτός γάρ λέξει άπερ ακήκοε περί του
παιδίου μου.
υπνών γάρ είδεν άγγελον άγιον
λέγοντα αυτώ, πόθεν συνέλαβον.
πυρίνη θέα τον ακανθώδη
επληροφόρησε νυκτός περί των
λυπούντων αυτόν.
δι′ αυτό σύνεστί μοι Ιωσήφ
δηλών ως έστι

παιδίον νέον, ο πρό αιώνων θεός.

ΙΒ′

Ρητορεύει σαφώς άπαντα άπερ ήκουσεν.
απαγγέλλει τρανώς όσα αυτός εώρακεν
εν τοις ουρανοίς και τοις επιγείοις.
τα των ποιμένων, πως συνανύμνησαν
πηλίνοις οι πύρινοι.
υμών των μάγων,
ότι προέδραμεν άστρον
φωταυγούν και οδηγούν υμάς.
διό αφέντες τα προρρηθέντα
εκδιηγήσασθε ημίν τα νυν γενόμενα ημίν.
πόθεν ήκατε,
πως δε συνήκατε ότι ώφθη

παιδίον νέον, ο πρό αιώνων θεός;

ΙΓ′

Ως δέ ταύτααυτοίς η φαεινή ελάλησεν,
οι της ανατολής λύχνοι προς ταύτην έφησαν.
«Μαθείν θέλεις,
πόθεν ηλύθαμεν ώδε;
εκ γης Χαλδαίων, όθεν ου λέγουσι. "θεός
θεών κύριος",
εκ Βαβυλώνος, όπου ουκ οίδασι

with you?
You have a multitude of jealous people enquiring 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 Chaldaeans, 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 ήλθε και ήρεν ημάς
ο του παιδίου σου σπινθήρ εκ του πυρός του Περσικού.
πυρ παμφάγον λιπόντες πυρ δροσίζον θεωρούμεν

παιδίον νέον, τον πρό αιώνων θεόν.

ΙΔ'

Ματαιότης εστί ματαιοτήτων άπαντα.
αλλ' ουδείς εν ημίν ταύτα φρονών ευρίσκεται.
οι μέν γάρ πλανώσιν, οι δε και πλανώνται.
διό, παρθένε, χάρις τω τόκω σου, δι' ου ελυτρώθημεν
ου μόνον πλάνης, αλλά και θλίψεως
των χωρών πασών ώνπερ διήλθομεν,
εθνών ασήμων,
γλωσσών αγνώστων,
περιερχόμενοι την γήν και εξερευνώντες αυτήν
μετά λύχνου του άστυρου εκζητούντες,
που ετέχθη

παιδίον νέον, ο πρό αιώνων θεός.

ΙΕ'

Αλλ' ως έτι αυτόν τούτον τον λύχνον είχομεν,
την Ιερουσαλήμ πάσαν περιωδεύσαμεν
πληρούντες εικότως τα της προφητείας.
ηκούσαμέν γαρ, ότι ηπείλησε θεός
ερευνάν αυτήν.
και μετά λύχνου περιηρχόμεθα
θέλοντες ευρείν μέγα δικαίωμα.
αλλ' ούχ ευρέθη, ότι επήρθη
η κιβωτός αυτής μεθ' ών συνείχε πρότερον καλών.
τα αρχαία παρήλθεν. ανεκαίνισε γάρ πάντα

παιδίον νέον, ο πρό αιώνων θεός.

ΙΣ'

«Ναι», φησί, τοις πιστοίς μάγοις Μαρία έφησε,
«την Ιερουσαλήμ 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.

16

Mary, Scripture says, said to the faithful magi,
"So, have you journeyed through all Jerusalem,
that city which slays prophets?

και πως αλύπως ταύτην διήλθατε την
πάσιν βοσκαίνουσαν;
Ηρώδην πάλιν πως διελάθετε
τον αντί θεσμών φόνους εμπνέοντα;»
οι δε προς ταύτην, φησί. «Παρθένε,
ου διελάθομεν αυτόν,
αλλ' ενεπαίξαμεν αυτώ.
συνετύχομεν πάσιν ερωτώντες που
ετέχθη

παιδίον νέον, ο πρό αιώνων θεός.

ΙΖ'

Ότε ταύτα αυτών η θεοτόκος ήκουσεν,
τότε είπεν αυτοίς. «Τι υμάς επηρώτησεν
Ηρώδης ο άναξ και οι Φαρισαίοι;»
«Ηρώδης πρώτον, είτα ως έφησας οι
πρώτοι του έθνους σου
τον χρόνον τούτου του φαινομένου νυν
άστρου παρ' ημών εξηκριβώσαντο.
και επιγνόντες
ως μή μαθόντες
ουκ επεθύμησαν ιδείν όν εξηρεύνησαν
μαθείν,
ότι τοις ερευνώσιν οφείλει θεωρηθήναι

παιδίον νέον, ο πρό αιώνων θεός.

ΙΗ'

Υπενόουν ημάς άφρονας οι ανόητοι
και ηρώτων, φησί.
"πόθεν και πότε ήκατε;
πώς μή φαινομένας ωδεύσατε τρίβους;"
ημείς δε τούτοις όπερ ηπίσταντο
αντεπηρωτήσαμεν.
"υμείς το πάρος πως διωδεύσατε
έρημον πολλήν ήνπερ διήλθετε;
ο οδηγήσας τους απ' Αιγύπτου
αυτός ωδήγησε και νύν τους εκ Χαλδαίων
προς αυτόν,
τότε στύλω πυρίνω, νύν δέ άστρω τω
δηλούντι

παιδίον νέον, τον πρό αιώνων θεόν.

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.

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 έσχομεν εν νω
θεωρήσαι ποθούντες, προσκυνήσαι και δοξάσαι

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.

Κ′

Υπό των απλανών μάγων αυτά ελέγετο.
υπό δέ της σεμνής πάντα επεσφραγίζετο
κυρούντος του 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,
ως ουκ εμόχθησεν ελθών ο Αμβακούμ προς Δανιήλ.
ο φανείς γάρ προφήταις ο αυτός εφάνη μάγοις,

παιδίον νέον, ο πρό αιώνων θεός.

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.

ΚΑ′

Μετά πάντα αυτών ταύτα τα διηγήματα
δώρα μάγοι χερσίν ήραν και προσεκύνησαν
τω δώρω των δώρων, τω μύρω των μύρων.
χρυσόν και σμύραν είτα και λίβανον Χριστώ
προσεκόμισαν βοώντες: «Δέξαι δώρημα τρίυλον,
ως των Σεραφίμ ύμνον τρισάγιον.
μή αποστρέψης ως τα του Κάϊν,
αλλ' εναγκάλισαι αυτά
ως την του Άβελ προσφοράν

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 seraphim.
Do not reject them like those of Cain,
but embrace them
like Abel's offering,

διά της σε τεκούσης, δι' ης ήμιν εγεννήθης

παιδίον νέον, ο πρό αιώνων θεός.

ΚΒ'

Νέα νυν και φαιδρά βλέπουσα η αμώμητος μάγους δώρα χερσί φέροντας και προσπίπτοντας,
αστέρα δηλούντα,
ποιμένας υμνούντας,
τον πάντων τούτων κτίστην και κύριον ικέτευε λέγουσα.
«Τριάδα δώρων, τέκνον, δεξάμενος
τρεις αιτήσεις δός τη γεννησάση σε.
υπέρ αέρων παρακαλώ σε
και υπέρ των καρπών της γης και των οικούντων εν αυτή.
διαλλάγηθι πάσι
δι' εμού ότι ετέχθης

παιδίον νέον, ο πρό αιώνων θεός.

ΚΓ'

Ούχ απλώς γάρ ειμί μήτηρ σου, σώτερ εύσπλαγχνε.
ουκ εική γαλουχώ
τον χορηγόν του γάλακτος.
αλλά υπέρ πάντων εγώ δυσωπώ σε.
εποίησάς με όλου του γένους μου και στόμα και καύχημα.
εμέ γάρ έχει η οικουμένη σου
σκέπην κραταιάν, τείχος και στήριγμα.
εμέ ορώσιν οι εκβληθέντες
του παραδείσου της τρυφής, ότι επιστρέφω αυτούς
λαβείν αίσθησιν πάντων δι' εμού της σε τεκούσης

παιδίον νέον, τον πρό αιώνων θεόν.

ΚΔ'

Σώσον κόσμον, σωτήρ. τούτου γάρ χάριν ήλυθας.
στήσον πάντα τα σά. τούτο γάρ χάριν έλαμψας

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, compassionate 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

εμοί και τοις μάγοις και πάση τη κτίσει.
ιδού γάρ μάγοι, οις ενεφάνισας το φως
του προσώπου σου,
προσπίπτοντές σοι δώρα προσφέρουσι
χρήσιμα καλά λίαν ζητούμενα.
αυτών γάρ χρήζω, επειδή μέλλω
επί την Αίγυπτον μολείν και φεύγειν σύν
σοί διά σε,
οδηγέ μου, υιέ μου,
ποιητά μου, λυτρωτά μου,

παιδίον νέον, ο πρό αιώνων θεός.

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.



