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One Specimen of Byzantine Hymnography and its Georgian Translation

Georgian hymnography began with the translations of Byzantine hymns, followed by the development of an original hymnography. Numerous examples of Byzantine theological poetry have been translated into Georgian over the centuries.

The translations of the greatest representative of Georgian culture - George the Athonite (1009-1065) deserve particular attention for the study of Byzantine hymnography. His goal was to bring Georgian translations as close as possible to the Greek originals.

"Lenten Triodion" of George the Athonite's redaction is a unique collection, which in its completeness surpasses similar Byzantine collections known in the specialist literature today. It contains numerous hymns of 14 Byzantine hymnographers. Among them is an important component of Great Lent - the hymnographic canon for Great Saturday, which is a compiliary. The author of the second part - last "four chants" is a prominent representative of Byzantine hymnography - Kosmas of Jerusalem.

The question of the authorship of the first part of this canon - "four chants" is controversial in the scientific literature.

The earliest data about it is preserved by Theodore Prodromos. According to him, these "four chants" belonged to ninth-century female hymnographer Kassia, but it was deemed appropriate to attach it to the hymn of Kozma of Jerusalem. Therefore, Mark Sabbaites (IX-X cc.) was assigned to rework this hymn. Some scholars hold that this canon entirely belongs to Kozma of Jerusalem.

In the "Lenten Triodion" of George the Athonite, at the beginning of this compiliary hymn there is an indication to the other author - Theophanes. The "Triodion" of George the Athonite's redaction is the earliest source for studying this issue. One should also take into account the great accuracy in attribution to the authors of the hymns which George the Athonite demonstrated.

Thus, according to the testimony of Georgian "Triodions" under George the Athonite's redaction, one of the authors of this renowned specimen of Byzantine hymnography is a well-known hymnographer of the 9th century - Theophanes the Confessor.