

Marguerite HARL, Bruno MEYNADIER, Antonie PIETROBELLI, *Voice of Praise, The Biblical Scales of Liturgical Prayers*, Doxologia Publishing, Iași, 2016, 423 p.

The highly distinguished Mrs Marguerite Harl, the author of the work being presented by us, was a professor of post-classical Greek at the University of Sorbonne between 1960 and 1986, having dedicated her entire academic career and research to Hellenistic Judaism (Septuagint, Filon of Alexandria) and Ancient Christianity (The Greek Fathers). At the same time, in 1984, she founded the collection *La Bible d'Alexandrie*, a translation of the book of the Septuagint with commentary.

The particular work of researcher Marguerite Harl which we are referring to is split into four big parts, seeking to identify the origins of the Codex Alexandrinus, written in the 5th century, most probably in Constantinople. The great Codex Alexandrinus contains the version of the Septuagint for the Old Testament, to which the New Testament is added. However, what stands out is a unique particularity relating to the Psalms (p. 14). This contains a series of fourteen songs taken from different parts of the Bible: The Song of Moses from Exodus (Exodus 15, 1-19); The Song of Moses from the Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 32, 1 – 43); The Prayer of Anne, mother of Samuel (Kings I 3, 1 – 10); The Prayer of Isaiah (Esias 26, 9b – 15); The Prayer of Jonah (Jonah, 2, 3 – 10); The Prayer of Ambacum (Ambacum 3, 2 – 19); The Prayer of Hezekiah (Esias 38, 10 – 20); The Prayer of Manasseh; The Prayer of Azariah, The song of the Three Children (Daniel 3, 23); The Prayer of Mary, Mother of God (Luke 1, 46 – 55); The Prayer of Simeon (Luke 2, 29 – 32); The Prayer of Zachariah (Luke 1, 68 – 79); and The Song of the Morning (this hymn is a Christian composition of the first few centuries, known today as “The Great Doxology”).

The four parts are made of 19 small chapters, 16 belonging to Marguerite Harl, two of them being signed by Bruno Meynadier and one by Antoine Pietrobelli. As the author herself confesses, the purpose of

the research is “understanding the way in which, in the 5th century, the collection of biblical scales added to the Psalter of Alexandrinus was compiled” (p. 378).

Thus, the first part presents the study topic of this book: The Alexandrinus Codex (chap. 1), the song list (chap. 2) and the texts, the Greek original and the Romanian translation (chap. 3).

The second part is a literary and historical study of the 14 songs collection, with two short introductions, registering the biblical context of the songs introduced in the narrative texts or in the prophecies (chap. 4) and the liturgical context in which they will be gradually utilized (chap. 5), followed by a description that underlines the main literary and religious particularities (chap. 6-8).

The third part exposes the investigation related to the historical route of the collection, starting from the Bible, passing through the Hellenistic Judaism and reaching the Origen (chap. 9-12).

The fourth part addresses the problems from the immediate period of the collection’s prehistory. It includes the testimonials of the Greek and Latin Parents from the second half of the IV century (chap. 13-14) and the apparition of a list around the year 400, apparently complete (chap. 15-17). The last two chapters offer new elements referring to the origins of the list from the Alexaandrinus: the chapter wrote by Bruno Meynadier which insists on the importance the “Morning Song” has for ending the collection (chap. 18), and the one wrote by Antoine Pietrobelli brings arguments that sustain the Constantionopolitan origins of this codex (chap. 19) (p. 22).

Finally, under the title Conclusions and Dares, it is returning to the history of the writing of the collection, the development stages and of some new testimonials from the Church Fathers thinking over poetry’s, singing’s and music’s vast role in the liturgical prayer of the Christians.

As a final conclusion over this interesting incursions made by Marguerite Harl in the complex investigation of the Alexandrinus Codex, we propose a short text, included in the pages of the work presented by us: “This collection of odes represents the most remarkable adornment of the Christianization process of the texts of the Hebrew religion, because it reunites in just one section all the songs and prayers taken as well from the Old Testimony as from the New Testimony. The Odes Book, contained in the Alexandrinus, is the place where the two Testimonies unite” (p. 29).

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