

Monk Nektarios Prodromitis (1808-1903) (Elder Moses the Athonite)

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He was born in the town of Husi in Romania in 1808, of God-fearing parents. Even as a child he was a wonderful chanter, with his profound knowledge and really sweet voice. As a young man, influenced by his brother, Monk Alexander, he donned the monastic habit in the Monastery of Ciolanu, Buzau. Thereafter the two brothers went on a pilgrimage to Mount Athos and Jerusalem. Finally, Nektarios was tonsured a monk at the Monastery of Neamț in Moldavia.



In 1845, the two brothers settled in a kelli belonging to the Great Lavra, in the region of Vigla, there they remained for sixteen years. Nektarios' asceticism was wonderful. He wouldn't leave his kelli at all throughout the entire week, the only exception being Sundays and feast days, when he would go, along with his brother, to the skete of The Forerunner, to sing like an angel in the flesh. During the whole of Great Lent he would remain enclosed, living only off soaked beans. He had the gift of tears as well as that of the unceasing Jesus prayer.

He was distinguished in the art of psalmody, of which he was a past master. On Athos he was known as 'Koukouzelis the younger', and, 'the nightingale of Mount Athos'. The Romanians called him 'the nightingale of Moldavia'. One and all marvelled at his amazing ability. He moved them to compunction. He himself was always humble. They came from far and wide to listen to him sing. His singing was indeed more lovely than anyone else's. He transposed a great number of melodies from Greek to fit Romanian texts.

From 1862, he settled in the skete of The Honourable Forerunner. He worked willingly and obediently for forty years. He was, among other things, a skilled woodcarver, a maker of fishing-nets, and knew how to knit socks. He was always serious, devout and full of compunction. He didn't ever laugh or joke. His fervent tears came thick and fast, both in church and in his kelli. He had particular and great devotion to Our Lady. His most beautiful compositions and hymns-- were for the wonderful "Axion Esti". He felt that Our Lady was his helper in learning both

the art of psalmody and also the prayer of the heart. She saved him from a multitude of temptations caused by envious people.

He was meek, silent, good, and loved church services. Nothing of this world held any interest for him. His mind was always on things above, on the heavenly tabernacles. He taught others by his presence and his example. The demons hated him and made war on him. Our Lady of the Forerunner [Romanian skete], his great love and the subject of his hymns, would drive them away. In the summer of 1903, after an accident in the woods, Protopsaltis Nektarios departed for the heavenly places.

A. Moraitidis wrote about him that pilgrims would go to his skete “to hear the melodies – sweet as a nightingale – of this famous Wallachian, Nektarios, the foremost music-teacher of Mount Athos. However, old age and blindness meant that for years he had ceased to sing. Four months ago, he fell asleep in the Lord, having spread the Byzantine muse to the monasteries and particularly the Lavra, which was half an hour away, where almost all the monks, from Prot-Abbot Elder Kosmas down to the most recent novice, had learned Church music as apprentices to the Wallachian”.

He spent 75 years, of his life-span of 95, in the honourable monastic habit. His bones were laid to rest in the ossuary of the Skete of The Forerunner, to await the resurrection of the dead. His soul sings before the throne of the King of all and all-praised God, and of His Mother, the Queen-of-all.

Bibliography:

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