

Imrényi Tibor

## The service of monastic tonsuring according to the Byzantine rite

The author publishes here the Hungarian translation of a post-Byzantine Greek liturgical text with some philological and historical commentary and the facsimile of the Greek original as an appendix.

In the introductory he calls our attention to the fact that ascetic strivings had been present in Christian communities from the very outset of Christianity. But we do not hear of organized, regulated communities before the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries. Such communities first appeared in Egypt and Syria. The most outstanding figures of this movement: St Anthony of Egypt († 355–356), St Pachomios († 346–347), St Macarius († 390), St Basil († 379) and later in the Byzantine period: St Theodorus Studites († 826), St Ioanikios the Great († 834).

Generally orthodox monasticism has four or, in a stricter sense, three stages: *noviciate*, the *cassock bearer*, the *small schema* (“vestment”) *bearer* and the *great and angelic schema bearer*.

Monasticism is not an “eccentric” way of life but is simply referred to as the ideal life according to the Gospel, *the Christian life*, a “second baptism”, the life of the first Christian community in Jerusalem (Acts 1–6). The service of tonsuring focuses on the parable of the prodigal son, who returns to his father’s house (Luk 15,11–32) — i. e. to that of the heavenly Father —, on willingness to join the community on one’s own initiative, without being forced to do it and in the same way the life of the monk is centred around choosing a pure, spiritual life, “similar to that of the angels”.