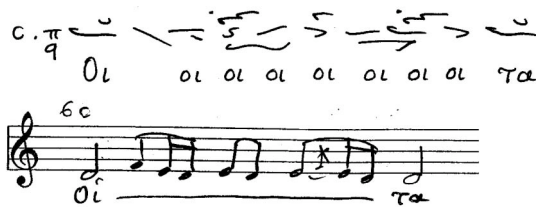




The “skeleton” of this would be something like this:

EXAMPLE 6 C

Oi ta, syllabic transcription or simple skeleton



So, these long interpretations are what we have received through the transcriptions of the Three Teachers and consequently this is the picture we have of the older music and, according to this, also of the old notation. The impression we gain from the old notation, at least from these examples, *Oi tá*, and *τοῦ Κυρίου*, is that the notation was *stenographic*, and frequently *highly stenographic*. That is, very few signs were notated and long phrases should actually be sung. Everything was ‘hidden’ and probably learnt only through live teaching, through oral tradition. The notation would give only a “skeleton”, to guide the singer to sing a certain composition.

But if we accept this picture for the old music and the old notation, there are some problems; problems concerning the notation itself and its historical evolution, but also problems concerning the duration of the services. Let us take an example and make a rough estimation of the duration, accepting for the moment this idea about the stenographic character of the notation. Let us take the Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete. The music of its heirmoi can be found in the oldest Heirmologia.

A brief look at the manuscripts shows that the notation and the musical style of the heirmoi of this period are not at all different from the notation and the style of the old stichera. The Three Teachers did not transcribe the old Heirmologia, but if they had transcribed them, it is certain that they would have done so in a long melismatic way and with the same long formulas as they transcribed the old stichera. In this style, the music of each troparion can be roughly estimated at 3 minutes. There are at least 250 troparia in this canon. So this would result in a duration of at least 12 hours, only for the troparia of the canon. But during the course of the daily services, one should also sing stichera, *long* stichera according to this picture, and many other long chants. According to this same picture, the older asmatic services would also have been very long, say 25 hours, more than the hours in one day!

On the contrary, a different approach to the notation, i.e. that it was not stenographic, according to which I transcribed the Asmatic Vespers,⁴ resulted in the completely reasonable duration of only 2 hours. So, if we do not accept the stenographic theory, there is no problem concerning the duration of the services but probably the old chants would not sound as the Three Teachers transmitted them to us. The interpretation of the notation was probably not so elaborate, and consequently the chants were not so long, and the services had a reasonable duration.

So, the way of reading the notation of the old stichera should be shorter than that of the Three Teachers. It could be, for instance, according to the short melismatic style. We have not received such a transcription of the old stichera from the Three Teachers but we are almost obliged to accept the idea that, at least some centuries before them, they would have been sung in a shorter way. The *short* melismatic melody for *τοῦ Κυρίου* could be, for example:

⁴ This service was liturgically restored by Alexander Lingas, transcribed by me and sung at St, Peter's College Chapel, Oxford, some years ago by the Greek Byzantine Choir, under the direction of Lycourgos Angelopoulos and me.

EXAMPLE 7

The image shows two lines of musical notation for a sticheron. The top line features a highly stylized, shorthand notation above the Greek lyrics: "του Κυριου του ου ου Κυ ρι ρι ρι". The bottom line shows a more standard musical notation with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics are "ου ου του ου Κυ ρι ρι ου". Below the second line, a short melismatic interpretation is shown on a single staff with the lyrics "του Κυριου του Κυριου ου".

That is, the notation could be somewhat stenographic but not too much, and consequently a sticheron could be shorter. This is a transcription, a short melismatic interpretation of this formula, of this phrase, as I personally, have concluded that is should be. This can be thought of perhaps as *my own* interpretation. But if we investigate the *new* stichera and their interpretation by the Three Teachers with a little more attention, we can find some formulas which are very close to this interpretation.

For example, we have the phrase “Οσιε Πάτερ” from a sticheron by Petros Lampadarios. It is from a sticheron in the *new* sticheraric style and so transcribed by the Three Teachers in short melismatic style, and sung thus today. The same phrase, as found in the old stichera, e.g. in Iakovos Protopsaltis’ Doxastarion,⁵ is transcribed by me also in short melismatic style,⁶ while the Three Teachers transcribe it in a long melismatic style.

⁵ Iakovos, a teacher of the Three Teachers, is a later composer but his Doxastika follow the tradition of the Old Sticherarion and were meant to have a long interpretation, exactly as his pupils transcribed them.

⁶ That the “Πάτερ” in Iakovos’ sticheron should be transcribed in the way I have done can be verified by the same formula transcribed, by *the Three Teachers*, in the *short* style e.g. in the sticheron *Θεαρχίω νεύματι* by Ioannis Trapezountios, as well by other means.