

Syntomon, A Musical Genre From Around AD 800.

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In the MS Ambr.A 139 sup., dated 1341 and following the standard abridged version of the sticherarion there are 17 *idiomela* for the proeortia of Christmas. Three of these are ascribed to the hymnographer Kyprianos, among them οἶκος τοῦ Ἐφραθά, the well-known prototype of the syntomon-genre in the second authentic mode described by Giuseppe Schirò.(1)

The syntomon-genre belongs to the great group of hymns called *troparia*. The various genres in this group are designated after their function in the liturgy, and a syntomon could just as well be called a *sticheron* syntomon because it is meant to be sung 'εἰς στίχους', i.e. intercalated between psalmverses, like a *sticheron*. But where the *sticheron* is monostrophic, the syntomon originally consisted of five stanzas, sometimes more, sung to the same melody.(2) The form was therefore more like that of the canon with the first stanza functioning as a *heirmos*, but where the canon normally takes its starting point in one of the Canticles, the nine biblical odes, the syntomon seems to take its subject from the feast of the day alone. As the function of a *sticheron* is to establish a connection between the psalm in question and the particular feast of the day, the syntomon may be looked upon as an attempt to combine this function with the form of the canon. According to Hans-Georg Beck, the syntomon genre flourished in the period when the *kanon* was gaining ground at the expense of the *kontakion* and this was shortened, but the syntomon never achieved the same popularity as these two genres, and it was, eventually, superseded by the *sticheron*-genre.(3)

In his investigation Schirò classifies the *stichera* syntomon in the way mentioned above and he points out that they did not have their fixed place in the service as the *kontakion* and the *kanon* have.(4) The name itself is very old and goes far back in time,(5) and Schirò wonders whether there once existed a *syntomarion*, but comes to the conclusion that this is not the case, though the Grottaferrata ms. C 855, 14th cent., might be interpreted as an 'unico' of such a type with its *syntoma* grouped together in a separate section in the order of the liturgical calendar.(6) The model melody with its text is used universally, but the texts of the *proshomoia* differ from place to place and from church to church and do seldom coincide. In some cases the initial letters of the stanzas form an *acrostichon*, but this is broken when only some of the stanzas of the syntomon are taken over by other churches.(7) Schirò brings the lay-out of ten different *syntoma* from various manuscripts in his examples, but

in the standard abridged version of the sticherarion as for instance in Ambr.A 139 sup. the automelon occurs alone without any of the proshomoia.(8)

In the words οἶκος τοῦ Ἐφραθά of the opening of the automelon there is an allusion to Micha 5.1, from the Old Testament.(9) The syntomon for Christmas is used as well at proeortia as at meteortia and may be spread over several days.(10) It is Schirò's impression that the origin of the genre and its name must be sought in a monastic Jerusalem environment where also Kyprianos seems to have belonged.(11) His investigation is, however, concentrated on the later development of the genre (12) and is based mainly on Italo-Greco manuscripts from 11th - 15th cent. in the collection of the Grottaferrata monastery. To these are added Vat.gr.1609 representing the Studite typikon, the Euergetis-typikon in Dmitrievskij's edition, typika from various South-Italian localities representing the later Sabaitic typikon, and the Roman Menaia, II-III.

The present investigation, then, is an attempt to follow the development of the genre backwards in time in Byzantine musical manuscripts. There are only a few extant palæobyzantine manuscripts and the contents of these are fragmentary. Most of them do not comprise the whole ecclesiastical year. I have consulted three manuscripts of the 11th cent., Sinai 581, Coislin notation, A.γ.74, Chartres notation, and Brit.mus.add. 24.378 in Theta notation, dipole notation, and other types of "quasi-notation" and two 12th cent. manuscripts, Vind.theol.gr.136, first half of the century, late Coislin notation, and Saba 63, Coislin notation. Finally, two manuscripts in Round notation, Ambr.A 139 sup., dated 1341, and Vind.theol.gr.181, Codex Dalasseni, dated 1221, both representing the standard abridged version of the sticherarion have been used.

In the two sticheraria in round notation plus one of the 12th cent. manuscripts in Coislin notation, the sticherarion Vind.136, we find the automelon without the proshomoia appearing among the idiomela for the proeortia of Christmas. In the other 12th cent. manuscript plus the 11th cent. palæobyzantine manuscripts, on the other hand, we have the automelon together with the proshomoia varying in number and text. Proeortia of Christmas fall on December 20.(13) On this day the fast before Christmas is over, and the following six days are celebrated with great festivity according to Theodore Studites.(14) This date is followed in four of the palæobyzantine manuscripts, Brit.mus.add. 24.378, Sinai 581, A.γ.74, and Saba 63, where the automelon is included on Dec.20 with the melody added in neumes, see diagram below. That the automelon is without neumes in Brit.mus.add. 24.378 is quite normal since only longer idiomela with melismata are neumated in this

manuscript. The proshomoia mainly occur on Dec.20,22, and 23, in agreement with Theodore Studites, whereas Sinai 581 introduces the automelon and the prosomoia already on Dec.19, though without neumes.

19. Dec.	Sinai 581	automelon without neumes	proshomoia
20. Dec.	Brit.mus.add. 24.378	automelon without neumes	proshomoia
	Sinai 581	automelon with neumes	proshomoia
	Λ.γ 74	automelon with neumes	proshomoia
	Saba 63	automelon with neumes	proshomoia
22. Dec.	Saba 63		proshomoia
23. Dec.	Sinai 581	automelon with neumes	proshomoia
	Vind.136	automelon with neumes	proshomoia
	Vind.181	automelon with neumes	proshomoia
	Ambr.A 139 sup	automelon with neumes	proshomoia

In the ms. Λ.γ 74, in Chartres notation, and in Brit.mus.add. 24.378 the proshomoia are written in continuation of the automelon in a lay-out corresponding to Schirò's examples, and in Λ.γ 74 the automelon is followed by four proshomoia so that the length of this syntomon corresponds to the original length for a syntomon observed by Schirò. One of the proshomoia in Λ.γ 74 is marked in the margin as a doxastikon, another as a theotokion, and four of the proshomoia are among the proshomoia in Schirò's examples. In the manuscript the syntomon follows after a group of stichera for the proeortia of Christmas under the rubric ἑτέρα στιχηρὰ προεόρτια, and it is followed by the paramone. In the three younger manuscripts, Vind.theol.gr.136, Vind.theol.gr.181, and Ambr.A 139 sup., the automelon falls on Dec. 23, in all three manuscripts with the melody indicated by neumes.

The palæobyzantine manuscripts, then, follow the practice prescribed by Theodore Studites with the syntoma spread over several days, but in the standard abridged version this liturgical practice can not be seen. In Λ.γ 74 a later hand has added the melody for the automelon in round notation in the lower margin of fol.14v, where also the syntomon is. The added melody is exactly the same as in Ambr. A 139 sup.

The palæobyzantine musical manuscripts do not, however, take us further back in time than to the 11th.cent., so the investigation must therefore be based on whatever exists of older typika, a method also employed by Schirò

in his investigations. Such typika available are the typikon in the manuscript Athens 788 for the Euergetis-monastery in Constantinople from the 2nd. half of 11th.cent.(15), which was also included in Schirò's investigation, and the two typika for Hagia Sophia, Staurou 40, 10th.cent.(16) and Patmos 266, 9th.cent.(17). Moreover, it is possible to get an impression of an old Jerusalem typikon, because the 5th-8th cent. liturgical tradition of Jerusalem can be recognized through extant old Georgian manuscripts (18). A reconstruction of this typikon has been consulted to see whether there is a reality behind Schirò's impression that the syntomon genre originated in Jerusalem. The rubrics in the Euergetis-typikon explicitly say that proeortia of Christmas begins on Dec.20 and also includes the days from Dec.21 to Dec.24, and the typikon states how important it is to notice that all the texts for these days are sung. 'Χρῆ δὲ γινώσκειν, ὅτι ἀπὸ ταύτης τῆς ἡμέρας ἀρχόμεθα ψάλλειν τὰ προεόρτια....!...! πάντα δὲ ψάλλομεν τὰ τῆς ἐορτῆς.'(19). On Dec.25, however, the liturgical prescriptions are completely different. Syntomon is sung near the end of hesperinos 'εἰς τὸν στίχον'. It is followed by an idiomelon, a δόξα καὶ νῦν, and the apolytikion. On Dec.20 the automelon is sung with a proshomoion, then, until Dec.23, only the proshomoia are sung. On Dec.24, however, the automelon alone is sung, since the rules for that day are somewhat different. After the stichos follows στιχηρὰ προεόρτια ἰδιόμελα in the second authentic mode, then comes a δόξα, then οἶκος τοῦ Ἐφραθά, then a καὶ νῦν, and then the rest is as usual. As chances are that the sunday before Christmas, τῶν ἀγίων Πατέρων, will fall on Dec.20, the syntomon is prescribed for this day too.(20) Here only two proshomoia are sung.

As for the dates and the proshomoia, the typikon and the palæobyzantine manuscripts are in fairly good agreement with one another, but differs from the tradition shown in Schirò's example, where the automelon with its proshomoia is sung on Dec.24 alone. The Euergetis-typikon prescribes eight different proshomoia distributed over the period of proeortia. Five of these are mentioned in Schirò's example.(21). The two typika with the liturgical rules for Hagia Sophia, Patmos 266 and Staurou 40, 9th-10th cent., do not mention the proeortia and οἶκος τοῦ Ἐφραθά at all, neither as a lesson nor as a syntomon. The days leading up to Christmas are characterized by celebrations of saints, many more than in the Euergetis-typikon. Processions and readings from the Old and New Testaments are distinctive features in the liturgy. On the days immediately before Christmas both of them celebrate the anniversary of the inauguration of Hagia Sophia with a stationary liturgy outside the church. In Patmos 266, however, there is an exapostelion

proeortion at the end of Dec.23 and a paramone early on Dec.24, but nothing like this is found in Staurou 40. References to stichera to be sung during the service are remarkably few in these two manuscripts. Under these circumstances the Constantinople typika do not contribute directly to an understanding of the development of the syntomon-genre.

An investigation of the Jerusalem lectionary mentioned above reveals, however, that there really seems to be some connection between the habits of Jerusalem and οἶκος τοῦ Ἐφραθά. On Dec.24, the opening of the churchyear, the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ is celebrated, and the celebration includes a stational liturgy. Having begun the service in Jerusalem with prayers and readings of psalms and biblical pericopes, the priests and the congregation go in procession to Bethlehem where the vespers is celebrated in the grotto.(22) At midnight a series of stichoi and lectiones is begun, each structural unit consisting of a stichos, a psalm, and a lectio, where the stichos is definitely sung since an indication of the mode is given.(23) The fourth unit of the series comprises (in Tarchnischvili's Latin translation):

IV STICHUS, MODUS V: CONSUMMATUM EST DICTUM ILLUD PROPHETARUM
 PSALMUS: DEUS MISERERE NOSTRI ET BENEDICARE (PS. LXVI,2)
 IV LECTIO, IEREMIAE (LEGE: MICHAELAE) PROPHETA: ET TU, BETHLEEM,
 DOMUS EPHRATA, NEQUAQUAM IUNIOR ES....

The rest of the lectiones, nos. V-XI, are taken from the Proverbs, Isaiah, and Daniel, and then the Gospel according to Luke 2, is read. The text in lectio IV, Micha 5,1-7, begins like this in Septuaginta and in the Authorized Version (24-25) and clearly reveals itself as a source of inspiration for the model stanza of the syntomon:

SYNTOMON	MICHA 5:1-2
Οἶκος τοῦ Ἐφραθά ἡ πόλις ἡ ἁγία τῶν προφητῶν ἡ δόξα εὐτρέπισον τὸν οἶκον ἐν ᾧ τὸ θεῖον τίκτεται.	(LXX) Καὶ σύ, Βηθλεεμ οἶκος τοῦ Ἐφραθα, ὀλιγοστὸς εἰ τοῦ εἶναι ἐν χιλιᾷσιν Ἰουδα· ἐκ σοῦ μοι ἐξελεύσεται τοῦ εἶναι εἰς ἄρχοντα ἐν τῷ Ἰσραηλ, καὶ αἱ ἐξοδοὶ αὐτοῦ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἐξ ἡμερῶν αἰῶνος.(23)

House of Ephratha Holy city Glory of the prophets Make ready the house in which the divine is born.	(AUTHORIZED VERSION) But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.(24).
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The combination of text and liturgical occurrence in the Jerusalem lectionary, then, supports Schirò's impression of a connection of the syntomon genre with Jerusalem. The prescription of οἶκος τοῦ Ἐφραθὰ for the proeortia of Christmas in the Euergetis-typikon seems to point to the Jerusalem tradition, especially when the background for the typikon is taken into consideration. The typikon belongs to the fourth stage of the five stages into which the development of the Byzantine typikon can be divided according to Robert Taft (26). The liturgy was in this stage dominated by the effects of the reaction against iconoclasm, a reaction which culminated in the Studite reform of the preceding stage. The growing monasticism of the third stage and the fact that the church gradually turned inwards upon itself also had an influence. The churches had by now become smaller and were for the most part monastic, and since the liturgy was now performed in the sanctuary itself behind the iconostasis, the splendid processions and stational liturgy of the great basilicas were given up.

The reform carried out by Theodore Studites was a monastic reform. Since the first half of the seventh century there had been a mutual influence between Constantinople and Jerusalem, and Theodore summoned monks from the monastery of St. Sabas near Jerusalem to the Studios monastery. (27) In the poetry that flourished in St. Sabas after the Persian attack in 614 he saw a support for orthodoxy in the struggle against heretics, and the syntomon may very well have been inspired by this poetry. Theodore wanted to combine the office of St. Sabas with the cathedral office of the Great Church. (28) The resulting new typika, which assign a greater importance to chant than to the reading of psalms, begin to emerge in the first half of the 11th C., and the late 11th century Euergetis-typikon can in many ways be considered the apex of the Studite era'. (29)

The music that accompanies the syntomon comes close to the music of the heirmologion, and this is in accordance with the canon-form chosen for the text. The melody is simple and without ornamentation, suitable for a function as a heirmos or model melody for the many proshomoia. The

was also used as an opening formula in heirmos 488 of the same *akolouthia*, ὁ σκιογράφον ἀχλύν, E.γ.II fol.42v, covering the words οἶκος τοῦ εὐ- -- in the syntomon.

Line two and line three are identical in the syntomon, and these two lines plus line four have parallels in the heirmologion. The lines two and three of the syntomon are identical with line three in heirmos 492, but there is no repetition in the heirmos, so the beginning of the syntomon is more or less identical with the beginning of heirmos 492. The first formula of line three in this heirmos occurs in other heirmoi too e.g. in heirmos 432, *akolouthia* 49, ἀπορεῖ πᾶσα γλῶσσα, E.γ.II fol.34r, where it occurs as opening formula as well as repeated in line three, and in *akolouthia* 46, in a heirmos marked 'ἄλλος' inserted between ode 8 and 9 which is not registered by Eustratiades. In this heirmos, τὸν ἐν καμίνῳ τοῦ πυρός, E.γ.II fol.30, it is found in line four.

Line four of the syntomon deviates from the other lines by being in the second plagal mode. The line is an exact parallel of line four in a heirmos of the 69th *akolouthia*, τὴν κάμινον τῶν παίδων, on the same pitch - bdbcabaGG- as in the syntomon, but without being marked as plagios deuterios with a medial signature. This heirmos is not registered by Eustratiades, but marked as ode 7 in E.γ.II fol.58r. Only the first two heirmoi in the manuscript correspond to Eustratiades's registration, in the rest of the *akolouthia* the repertoire is different.

The first formula of the line covering the word εὐτρέπισον in the syntomon is found in other heirmoi too, either with a variation of the cadential formula or with an extension at the beginning or at the end. There are four occurrences in all in the heirmologion. In ode 8 of *akolouthia* 69, in heirmos 591 of *akolouthia* 65, in heirmos 443 of *akolouthia* 51, where the line is nearly identical with the line in the syntomon, and in heirmos 579 of *akolouthia* 63. The main cadence of the syntomon is not among the cadences for stichera in the second authentic mode registered by Amargianakis.(33) There are, however, two occurrences in the heirmologion, in heirmos 405 and 408 both from *akolouthia* 47.

The end of the identical lines two and three in the syntomon and line three in heirmos 492 *akolouthia* 55 covering the words ---λις ἡ ἀγία in the syntomon, is registered as formula 58 by Amargianakis.(34) He marks this formula as cadential, but there is only one occurrence in the repertoire for September. The only other occurrence of a formula from the sticherarion is the formula in line 5 preceding the cadence and covering the ---ω το--- of the text. This is a fairly frequent medial formula which Amargianakis lists as

formula 12B.(35) Not only the form, then, but also the musical material chosen for the melody underlines the close affinity between the syntomon and the kanon-genre and points in the direction of the Jerusalem tradition.

As for the hymnographer Kyprianos, his identity has been much discussed. Some consider him to have come from the monastery of St.Sabas near Jerusalem, others to have been a monk from the Studios monastery in Constantinople.(36) No matter which of the theories is correct, however, he fits into the liturgical program worked out by Theodore. The silence about the syntomon in the Jerusalem lectionary as well as in the two Hagia Sophia-typika makes it most likely that he mastered the poetry of St.Sabas which Theodore admired and that he was among the monks from St.Sabas who were summoned to the Studios monastery.

In composing the syntomon, Kyprianos continues a tradition of transforming quotations from the Scriptures into poetry as stichera or heirmoi. According to Symeon of Thessaloniki the singing of canons did not originally belong to the typikon for Hagia Sophia (37), so also by employing the canon-form, Kyprianos points to the tradition of Jerusalem. With this close relation to the Studite reform, the dating of the syntomon genre is pushed forward in time from H.G.Beck's suggestion of the period around 700, when the canon became popular, to the years around 800, and the same goes for the composer Kyprianos and the twelve of the hymns ascribed to him where the ascription is indisputable (38). This investigation of the syntomon from the early period of Byzantine hymnography in the earliest extant typika, menaia, and sticheraria thus confirmed Schirò's impression that the background of the syntomon-genre together with its composer Kyprianos must be sought in the monastic environment of Jerusalem.

Notes

- 1) Schirò, Giuseppe. Lineamenti storici sulla genesi e lo sviluppo del *Syntomon* (Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata, Nuova Serie III, 1949, 133-152 and 195-224
- 2) *ibid.*, 135
- 3) Beck, H.-G. Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich, München 1959, 266
- 4) Schirò, *op.cit.*, 135-6
- 5) *ibid.*, 136
- 6) *ibid.*, 137
- 7) *ibid.*, 148
- 8) *ibid.*, 218-224, and Ambr. A 139 sup. fol. 73r
- 9) Schirò, *op.cit.*, 218

- 10) *ibid.*, 149
- 11) *ibid.*, 195, 199 and 208
- 12) *ibid.*, 149
- 13) Sophocles, E.A. *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*. New York 1900. Vol.2, προεόρτιος - ον.
- 14) *cf.* Migne, PG 99, 1697 A
- 15) Dmitrievskij, A. *Opisanie I Kiev 1895, Euergetis 788, 343 ff.*
- 16) Mateos, Juan.ed. *Le Typikon de la Grande Église I*, Rome 1962, 138-59
- 17) Dmitrievskij, *op.cit.*, 32-7
- 18) Tarchnischvili, Michel. *Le Grand Lectionaire de l'Église de Jerusalem (5.-8.Siècle)*, I-II, Louvain 1959.
- 19) Dmitrievskij, *op.cit.*, 346
- 20) *ibid.*, 343
- 21) Schirò, *op.cit.*, 218
- 22) Tarchnischvili, *op.cit.* I, 9
- 23) *ibid.*, 10
- 24) Rahlfs, Alfred, ed. *Septuaginta I-II*. Stuttgart 1935.
- 25) *The Holy Bible. Authorized King James Version*. Oxford University Press.
- 26) Taft, Robert. *The Synaxarion of Evergetis in the history of Byzantine liturgy*. In: Mullett, Margaret and Anthony Kirby, eds. *The Theotokos Evergetis and eleventh-century monasticism*. Belfast 1994., 274 ff.
- 27) *ibid.*, 286-7
- 28) *ibid.*, 287
- 29) *ibid.*, 291
- 30) *Heirmologium Cryptense (E.γ.II)*, MMB 3, ed. Lorenzo Tardo, Rome 1950-51.
- 31) Raasted, Jørgen. *Observations on the Manuscript Tradition of Byzantine Music I: A List of heirmos Call-Numbers, Based on Eustratiades' Edition of the Heirmologion*. *Cahiers de l'Institut du Moyen-Âge Grec et Latin*, No.1, Copenhagen 1969-71.
- 32) Eustratiades, Sophronios, ed., *Heirmologion*. Chennevières-Sur-Marne, 1932.
- 33) Amargianakis, George, *An Analysis of Stichera in the Deuterios Modes, I-II*, *Cahiers de l'Institut du Moyen-Âge Grec et Latin*, 22-23, Copenhagen 1977. *Formulas* 8, 11, and 58.
- 34) *ibid.*, I, 49
- 35) *ibid.*, II, 227
- 36) Arata, Mariangela Cappelli. *Some notes on Cyprian the Hymnographer*. *Studies in Eastern Chant V*, New York 1990, 123-9
- 37) Strunk, Oliver, *Essays on Music in the Byzantine World*, ed. K. Levy, New York 1977, 112-150, 'The Byzantine Office at Hagia Sophia', 133. Migne, PG 155, 648
'...καὶ εὐθὺς οἱ κανόνες τῆς ἑορτῆς ἡ τοῦ ἁγίου, οὓς
προσέθηκαμεν δι'εὐκοσμίαν ἡμεῖς καὶ εὐταξίαν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας,
δόξαν τε Θεοῦ καὶ τῶν ἁγίων αὐτοῦ. ... Πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ
κανόνες ἐν τῷ ἁσματικῷ οὐκ ἐψάλλοντο...'
- 38) Arata, *op.cit.*, 132