

APPENDIX III

The Intonations of the Eight Modes¹

FROM earliest times, composers of Byzantine chant have identified each musical mode by a characteristic intonation formula (ἀπήχημα), a phrase normally sung in its entirety by the protopsaltis (the lead chanter of the right choir) alone, without the ison. Its function is to help the chanters recall the ethos of a given mode before beginning the chant. Moreover, it also provides the choir with the pitch required for the first note of the piece.

In Byzantine music, there are eight modes and three modal genres: the diatonic, the enharmonic, and the chromatic.² Furthermore, each of the eight modes is broken down into three species, characterized by the number of notes typically attached to a syllable. A melody with one or two notes above a syllable is called “heirmologikon”; one carrying approximately three or four is called “sticherarikon”; and that having a dozen or more notes is called “papadikon.” In the first and third modes, the musical patterns are identical for each of these three species. For the others, however, the musical gestures differ significantly; hence the need for more than one intonation formula for each mode.

The following pages contain the typical intonation formulas of all eight modes. Since the vocal rendition of a given intonation varies greatly from chanter to chanter, those offered here are primarily based on the investigations of the musicologist, George Constantinou.³

Some⁴ believe that the syllables of the intonations derive from the following penitential prayer (though in a slightly altered form): “ἀναξ, ἄφεες, ναὶ ἄφεες, ἀναξ ἄγιε”: “O King, forgive, yea forgive, O holy King.”

According to current practice on the Holy Mountain, intonations, when used, are chanted during the Divine Liturgy only before “papadika” melodies (such as the cherubic hymn and the communion hymn). In some Athonite monasteries, however, intonations are never heard, while in others they appear almost every time a modal alteration takes place.



¹ While most Orthodox liturgical books in English translate the word “ἦχος” as “tone,” it is more accurate to use the term “mode.” (Vid. *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, Revised Edition, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1970, pp. 535, 856.)

² Note that the term “chromatic scale” in Western music denotes the scale embracing twelve successive half tones to the octave, whereas in Byzantine music, it is a modal genre with a tonic on D, flats on E and B, and sharps on F and C. The term “enharmonic” in Byzantine music is synonymous with B Flat Major, whereas “diatonic” in Byzantine music is approximately the scale of C Major.

³ Κωνσταντίνου, Γεώργιος Ν., *Θεωρία καὶ Πράξη τῆς Ἐκκλησιαστικῆς Μουσικῆς*, Ἀθήνα, γ' ἔκδοσις, 2001.

⁴ Παναγιωτοπούλου, Δημητρίου Γ., *Θεωρία καὶ Πράξεις τῆς Βυζαντινῆς Ἐκκλησιαστικῆς Μουσικῆς*. Ἐκδοσις Ἀδελφότητος Θεολόγων «Ὁ ΣΩΤΗΡ», Ἀθήναι, δ' ἔκδοσις, σελ. 45.

THE INTONATIONS OF THE EIGHT MODES

First Mode

Heirmologikon, Sticherarikon, and Papadikon

1

A - να - λες
Ah - nah - nes

Papadikon from KE "tetraphonic"

2

A - να - λες
Ah - nah - nes

Papadikon from KE "tetraphonic" (Elaborate version)

3

A - να - λες
Ah - nah - nes

Second Mode

Heirmologikon, Soft Chromatic Scale

4

λε α - λες
Neh ah - nes

APPENDIX III - THE INTONATIONS OF THE EIGHT MODES

Second Mode (cont.)

Heirmologikon, "Mesos" (with endings at VOU)

5

λε _____ α - - - λες _____
Neh _____ ah - - - nes _____

Heirmologikon, Hard Chromatic Scale

6

λε _____ α - - - λες _____
Neh _____ ah - - - nes _____

Sticherarikon and Papadikon, Soft Chromatic Scale

7

λε _____ α - - - λες _____
Neh _____ ah - - - nes _____

Third Mode

Heirmologikon, Sticherarikon, and Papadikon

8

να - - - να
Nah - - - nah

Fourth Mode

Heirmologikon from VOU

9

Λε - γε - τος
Leh - yeh - tos

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Fourth Mode (cont.)

Heirmologikon from DEE

10

Λε - - - γε - - - τος
Leh - - - yeh - - - tos

Sticherarikon

11

Α - γι - α
Ah - yee - ah

Papadikon

12

Α - γι - α
Ah - yee - ah

Plagal First Mode

Heirmologikon

13

Α - λε - α - λες
Ah - neh - ah - nes

Sticherarikon and Papadikon

14

Α - λε - α - λες
Ah - neh - ah - nes

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Plagal First Mode (cont.)

Sticherarikon and Papadikon (elaborate version)

15

A - λε - α - λες
Ah - neh - ah - nah - nes

Sticherarikon "tetraphonic" (with endings on KE)

16

A - λε - α - λες
Ah - neh - ah - nes

Plagal Second Mode

Hiermologikon, Soft Chromatic Scale

17

λε χε - α - λες
Neh heh - ah - nes

Elaborate version

18

λε χε - α - λες
Neh heh - ah - nes

Heirmologikon, Hard Chromatic Scale*

19

λε λ α - ω
Neh nah - no


* According to some musicologists, this heirmologikon version of the hard chromatic scale belongs to fourth mode.

APPENDIX III - THE INTONATIONS OF THE EIGHT MODES

Plagal Second Mode (cont.)

Sticherarikon and Papadikon (Hard Chromatic Scale)

20



λε - - - - - χε - - - - - α - - - - - λες
Neh - - - - - heh - - - - - ah - - - - - nes


D

Detailed description: This musical example shows a single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of a series of eighth notes: G4, A4, B-flat4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5. The notes are grouped into four pairs with slurs. A red 'D' with a fermata is placed above the final note, G5. Below the staff, the Greek letters and syllables are aligned with the notes: λε (Neh) under G4, χε (heh) under A4, α (ah) under B-flat4, and λες (nes) under C5.

Grave Mode

Heirmologikon and Sticherarikon (from GA)

21



A - - - - - λες
Ah - - - - - nes

F

Detailed description: This musical example shows a single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of a series of eighth notes: G4, A4, B-flat4, C5, D5. The notes are grouped into a single group with a slur and an accent (>) above the first note. A red 'F' is placed above the final note, D5. Below the staff, the Greek letters and syllables are aligned: A (Ah) under G4 and λες (nes) under C5.

Papadikon (Diatonic from ZO)

22




λε
Neh

B

Detailed description: This musical example shows a single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F-sharp). The melody consists of a series of eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5. The notes are grouped into two pairs with slurs. A red 'B' is placed above the final note, G5. Below the staff, the Greek letters and syllables are aligned: λε (Neh) under G4.

Papadikon (Enharmonic from ZO)

23



A - - - - - λες
Ah - - - - - nes


B \flat

Detailed description: This musical example shows a single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of a series of eighth notes: G4, A4, B-flat4, C5, D5. The notes are grouped into a single group with a slur and an accent (>) above the first note. A red 'B \flat ' is placed above the final note, D5. Below the staff, the Greek letters and syllables are aligned: A (Ah) under G4 and λες (nes) under C5.

Plagal Fourth Mode

Heirmologikon (from NEE)

24



λε α - - - - - γι - ε
Neh ah - - - - - yee - eh

C

Detailed description: This musical example shows a single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of a series of eighth notes: G4, A4, B-flat4, C5, D5. The notes are grouped into a single group with a slur and an accent (>) above the first note. A red 'C' is placed above the final note, D5. Below the staff, the Greek letters and syllables are aligned: λε (Neh) under G4, α (ah) under A4, γι (yee) under B-flat4, and ε (eh) under C5.

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Plagal Fourth Mode (cont.)

Heirmologikon (from GA)

25

A musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of the following notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter). A red 'F' is written above the staff. Below the staff, the Greek syllables and their Latin transliterations are: λε (Neh), α (ah), γι (yee), ε (eh).

Sticherarikon and Papadikon

26

A musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of the following notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter). There are accents (>) above the C5 and Bb4 notes. A red 'C' is written above the final C4 note. Below the staff, the Greek syllables and their Latin transliterations are: λε (Neh), α (ah), γι (yee), ε (eh).

