

THE BASICS OF BYZANTINE MUSIC NOTATION

INTERVAL SIGNS

SIGNS	NAME	EXPLANATION
∩	Ison	Same pitch as preceding note
	Oligon	Ascending second
∪	Petasthé	Ascending second
=	Kentémata	Ascending second
˘	Kéntema	Ascending third
∪	Hypselé	Ascending fifth
∩	Apóstrophos	Descending second
˘˘	Hyporrhóé	Two consecutive descending seconds
∪	Elaphrón	Descending third
∩	Khamelé	Descending fifth

SIGNS THAT ADD DURATION

SIGNS	NAME	EXPLANATION
˘	Klásma	Adds one beat
.	Aplé	Adds one beat
..	Diplé	Adds two beats
...	Triplé	Adds three beats

SIGNS THAT DIVIDE THE BEAT

SIGNS	NAME	EXPLANATION
┌	Gorgón	Divides the beat in two equal parts
┌─┐	Dígorgon	Divides the beat in three equal parts
┌─┐─┐	Trígorgon	Divides the beat in four equal parts

Martyries

Martyries show the first chanting note of the melody. They are not interval signs so they are not chanted. Martyries are divided in three groups: diatonics, chromatics and enharmonics

A. Diatonic Martyries

Martyries	Name
ν ♠	Martyría of Ni
π ϣ	Martyría of Pa
β λ	Martyría of Vou
Γ ϛ	Martyría of Ga
Δ ♠	Martyría of Di
κ ϣ	Martyría of Ke

Martyrías	Name
ζ' ζ	Martyría of Zo
ν' ν	Martyría of Ni

B. Chromatic Martyrías

Martyrías	Name
π π	Martyría of Pa
β β	Martyría of Vou
Γ Γ	Martyría of Ga
Δ Δ	Martyría of Di
κ κ	Martyría of Ke
ζ' ζ	Martyría of Zo
ν' ν	Martyría of Ni
π' π	Martyría of Pa

Martyrías	Name
ν̇ ν	Martyría of Ni
π̇ π	Martyría of Pa
β̇ β	Martyría of Vou
Γ̇ Γ	Martyría of Ga
Δ̇ Δ	Martyría of Di

Martyrías	Name
κ ♁	Martyría of Ke
ζ' ♁	Martyría of Zo
ν' ♁	Martyría of Ni

C. Enharmonic Martyrías

Martyrías	Name
ν γγ	Martyría of Ni
π ♁	Martyría of Pa
β q	Martyría of Vou
Γ γγ	Martyría of Ga
Δ ♁	Martyría of Di
κ q	Martyría of Ke
ζ' γγ	Martyría of Zo
ν' ♁	Martyría of Ni
π' q	Martyría of Pa
β' γγ	Martyría of Vou

SCALE

Scale, in music, declares a series of single notes progressing up or down stepwise.

Diatonic Ni scale is made up of the following notes: Ni – Pa – Vou – Ga – Di – Ke – Zo – Ni' (Ni' is an octave higher from Ni). Diatonic Ni scale is equivalent to C Major scale in Western Music. The notes of this scale are shown in the next acrostic.

Πάλαι ήμαρτεν Αδάμ, εμακρύνθη του Θεού
Βουληθείς δ' ο Πλαστουργός, δούλου δέχεται μορφήν,
Γάλα πίνει εκ μητρός εις μετάνοιαν καλεί,
Διδαχών σκορπίζει φως, θαύματα πολλά ποιεί
Κεφαλήν δ' εχθρού πατεί, νεκρωθείς και αναστάς,
Ζωοδότης ων Θεός και εις μέλλουσιν ζωήν
Νηπενθή πιστούς καλεί, όπου πρώτος εισελθών
Πάσαν έλαβεν αρχήν παρά του Θεού Πατρός.

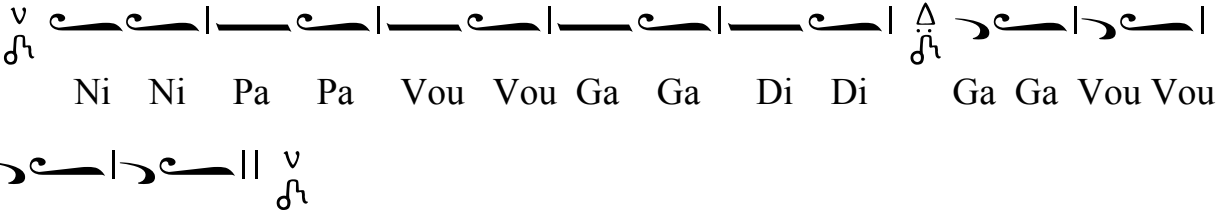
Practice in Byzantine Musical Notation

At this part I have included all the necessary exercises for the practice on Byzantine Musical Notation (parasemantic). I believe this will help those who would like to learn how to read Byzantine Music through the Internet. Exercises will be grouped in chapters in such a way that the “student” can test his or her progress. In each lesson a short theory will be preceded before the practice.

Basic rule: we always read the Byzantine musical notation from left to right.

Chapter 1

Exercises on 


 Ni Ni Pa Pa Vou Vou Ga Ga Di Di Ga Ga Vou Vou
 Pa Pa Ni Ni

The exercise begins with the diatonic martyria of Ni. We continue with ison, the sign that according to the table of the quantity signs has the same pitch as the preceding note: so we repeat Ni. The exercise goes on with another ison and again the repetition of note Ni. The next sign is oligon, which means an ascending second, so we read Pa until we reach martyria of Di (**martyria is not chanted**). After martyria of Di, we see apóstrophes, the sign that according to the table of the quantity signs means descending second, so we read Ga. In the same way we finally come to the martyria of Ni.

Chapter 2

Ni Ni Ni Pa Pa Pa Vou Vou Vou Ga Ga Ga Di Di Di
Ke Ke Ke Zo Zo Zo Ni Ni Ni

The exercise above begins with diatonic martyria, which is equivalent to note Ni. We continue our reading until we see ison, the sign which according to the table with the interval signs indicates the repetition of the previous note. So we read Ni and we go on in the same way until the end of the exercise.

Chapter 3

Exercises on

According to the interval signs table, Kentémata and Petasthé act in the same way as oligon (Petasthé, Kentémata and oligon will be explained in detail later). At this point, we have to mention that these exercises don't follow "spelling" rules.

Exercise 1η

Ni Ni Pa Pa Vou Vou Ga Ga Di Di Ke Ke Di Di Ga Vou Pa Ni

Exercise 2η

Ni Ni Ni Ni Pa Pa Pa Pa Vou Vou Vou Vou Ga Ga Ga Ga
Di Di Di Di Ke Ke Ke Ke Zo Zo Zo Zo Ni Ni Ni Ni

Exercise 3ⁿ

$\overset{v}{\delta\eta}$ ————— | ————— | ————— | ————— | ————— || $\overset{K}{\underset{q}{\delta\eta}}$
 Ni Pa Pa Pa Vou Vou Vou Ga Ga Ga Di Di Di Ke Ke

After the exercise three, quantity characters are not explained any more.

Ασκηση 4ⁿ

$\overset{v}{\delta\eta}$ ————— || ————— | ————— | ————— | ————— | ————— | ————— | ————— | ————— |
 Ni Ga Di Vou Di

————— | $\overset{\Gamma}{\underset{\gamma}{\delta\eta}}$ ————— || $\overset{v}{\delta\eta}$