

LESSON ONE –BASIC PARALLEGE (OR SIGN-SINGING)

PART ONE: The Names of the Notes (the Pthongos)

The basic Psaltic scale is comprised of 8 notes:

Νη (Ni)	Πα (Pa)	Βου (Vou)	Γα (Ga)	Δη (Dhi)	Κε (Ke)	Ζω (Zo)	Νη (Ni)
Do	Re	Me	Fa	Sol	La	Ti	Do

I have included the western Solfege notes for reference only, since in the first and most basic of Psaltic scales follows a similar pattern to the Western major scale with a couple of important differences that will be discussed a little later.

The practice of associating the names of the notes with pitches, which is called **Παραλλεγισ** (Parallegis) is an essential part of learning classical Byzantine chant, since there indicators in the notation which actually tell you where you are supposed to be, and it is a useful and traditional tool to learning new music, particularly in Byzantine notation. Therefore it is essential that the scale be memorized by heart (the Three Teachers Gregorios Protosaltis, Chrysanthos, Metropolitan of Mardytos, and Chourmouzius the Archivist of the Great Church, who reformed the notation and devised this system of teaching say that the notes and their names should be memorized both forward and backward, and should flow from the lips like the running of water).

Initial exercise: chant the scale with their note names forward and backward, according to the manner you are used to (as one would sing do-re-mi) several times. ***IMPORTANT! Make sure that each note gets exactly one beat –as you are chanting your scale tap out your down beat every two notes i.e. Ni Pa Vou Ga Dhi, etc.*** At this point, you should not be worried about chanting according to Byzantine scale degrees.

PART TWO -THE MODAL INDICATORS (THE MARTYRIE)


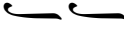
Beginning each piece of written music in Byzantine notation are a combination of first letters of each of the Paralleli names as well as a symbol indicating either the base note of the mode, the starting or ending pitch of a phrase, and by extension what the next note will be in relation with that pitch.


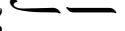
Here are the Indicators (Martyrie) for all eight notes of the scale for the Soft Diatonic Scale –which governs 1st, 4th and their Plagals (the bottom part of the Indicators of the Chromatic modes -2nd and Plagal 2nd are different and we will not worry about that now):



ν δ	π θ	ρ κ	Γ ϛ	Δ δ	ξ θ	ζ κ	ν ϛ
Nη	Πα	βου	Γα	Δη	Κε	Ζω	Nη

QUANTITATIVE NOTES -The Ascending and Descending 2nds (one up)

The following pneumes are the three most basic pneumes of the Psaltic system of notation: Same, one up and one down, and will comprise your first series of exercises that you will be assigned.

1.  The Ison –this pneume indicates that it is the same as either the last note or the starting pitch of the indicator i.e. δ  would be chanted as Nη Nη as the first is the same pitch as indicated in the starting indicator, and the 2nd note is the same.

2.  The Oligon –this pneume indicates a value of “one up” (or ascending 2nd in Western value) from the last pitch or indicator –i.e. δ  would be chanted as Nη Πα as the base pitch is Ni –the first note is an Ison (same) and the 2nd note –the Oligon is “One Up” from the Ison (which is the base pitch)

3.  The Apostrophos –this pneume indicates a value of “one down” (or descending 2nd) from the last pitch or indicator –i.e. the phrase δ 

would be chanted **Πα Νη** as the Apostrophos is one down from the last note, which is one pitch above the modal indicator **Νη**.

Here are some examples of these three pneumes as they would be chanted paralleli:

Example 1:

^ν
 α
 Νη Νη Νη Πα Πα Πα Βου Βου Βου Πα Πα Πα Νη Νη Νη ^ν
 α

Example 2:

^ν
 α
 Νη Πα Βου Πα Βου Γα Βου Γα Δη Γα Δη Κε Δη Κε Ζω Κε Ζω Νη
 Ζω Νη Πα Νη Νη Νη ^ν
 α Νη Ζω Κε Ζω Κε Δη Κε Δη Γα Δη Γα Βου Γα Βου Πα
 Βου Πα Νη Πα Νη Ζω Νη Νη Νη ^ν
 α