NAME THAT TONE
OR
HOW TO Recognize the 8 Tones
(or Modes) of Byzantine Chant

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PLEASE NOTE: This presentation is for choir members who want to learn more about the Tones and is not a full course of study in Byzantine music. It is an introduction for beginners.
We can recognize the Tones...

**Visually**
what we see with our eyes

**Aurally**
what we hear with our ears
### OCTOECHOS

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*In this presentation, we’ll use the simple names.*
HINT: There are more than 8

Every Tone has three different forms, each with its own rules:

**Heirmological** — mostly one beat per syllable; can be found in Apolytikia, Kontakia, and the Canons

**Sticheraric** — mostly two or more beats per syllable; often used in the Praises (Ainoi)

**Papadic** — many notes per syllable; used in Cherubic and some Communion hymns
## Pitch Equivalents

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“Fixed Do” or “Moveable Do”?

- Visually, as when printed, the pitches are fixed in their places. This is needed to recognize the tones. Often, when transcribed to staff notation, the keys are changed to accommodate voice range. But you always have to THINK of DO (or the Byzantine NI) as C.

- When chanting Byzantine music, the base note of the Tone may shift according to the voice range of the chanter or of the priest.
Harmony and the use of an organ completely obscures the aural properties of Byzantine chant. Therefore when studying the Tones using staff notation, as we are doing here, always use melody-only music with a Fixed DO on C.
Byzantine Music:

Save, O Lord, Your people and bless Your inheritance,

Converted to Staff Notation:

Save, O Lord, Your people and bless Your inheritance,
Websites with Byzantine chant correctly transcribed to staff notation:

- New Byzantium Publications: newbyz.org
- AGES Initiatives: agesinitiatives.com
- St. Anthony’s Monastery: stanthonyssmonastery.org
  Click on “Divine Music Project”
- Holy Transfiguration Monastery: thehtm.org  Click on “Music”
The Tones are written in 4 scale genres, Enharmonic, Diatonic, Soft Chromatic, and Hard Chromatic which affect the key signatures in staff notation. We are not going into a study of these scale genres here, but know that with staff notation, we basically use only THREE key signatures:

- No sharps or flats
- One flat
- A special key signature for hard chromatic
Visual Clues to the Tones

• Key Signature
• Ison (or Final Note)
• Melodic Patterns and Nuances
• Dominant Notes
• Phrase Endings (Cadences)
Τόνος 1

Θεός Κύριος καὶ ἔπεφανεν ἡμῖν.
Theos Kyriios ke epefanes hymin.

Εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος
Euloghenemos o erchomenos

ἐν ονόματί Κυρίου.
en onoma ti Kyriou.
Σώσον Κύριε τόν λαόν σου καὶ εὐλογήσον
So-son Ky-ri-e ton la-on sou, ke ev-lo-ghi-son

tήν κληρονομίαν σου, νίκας τοῖς Βασίλευσι κατὰ βαρτῖτιν κληρονομιαν σου, ni-kas tis Va-si-lef-si, ka-ta var-

-βάρων δωρούμενος καὶ τὸ σὸν φυλαττῶν δι-

-ναρόν δηορομένος, ke to son fi-la-ton, dhi-

-ἀ τοῦ Σταυροῦ σου πολίτευμα.
-α tou Stav-rou sou po-li-tev ma.
Examples of Other Hymns in Tone 1:

- Trisagion substitution: *Osi Is Christon*
- Palm Sunday Apolytikion: *Tin Kinin Anastasin*
- Theophany Apolytikion: *En Iordhani*
- Nativity of Christ Megalynarion
- Apolytikia of the Three Hierarchs, Spyridon, and the Dormition of the Theotokos
VISUAL IDENTIFICATION OF TONE 2
Tone 2

Θεός Κύριος καὶ ἐπέφανεν ἦμιν. Εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος

Theos Kyriios ke epefanen i-n.

min. Evloghimenos o erho me-nos

έν ὁ νόματι Κυρίου.
en o nomati Kyriou.
2nd Antiphon of the Divine Liturgy

Ταῖς πρεσβείαις τῆς Θεοτόκου, Σῶτερ,
Tes presvies tis Theotokou, So - ter,

σώσον ἡμᾶς. (2χ) Ταῖς πρεσβείαις τῆς Θεοτόκου, Σῶτερ, σώσον ἡμᾶς.
so - son i - mas. (2χ) Tes presvies tis Theotokou, So - ter, so - son i - mas.
Examples of Other Hymns in Tone 2:

• Many Divine Liturgy Hymns: 
  *Tes Presvies*, *Soson Imas*, *Aghios O Theos*, *Prostasia ton Christianon*, *Idhomen to Fos*, *Ii to Onoma*

• The Fimi (Hierarch’s Hymn)

• Many Years (*Ton Evloghoundha*)

• Holy Icons: *Tin Achrandon Ikona Sou*
VISUAL IDENTIFICATION OF TONE 3
Τόνος 3

Θεός Κύριος και ἐπέφανεν ἡμῖν.

Εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρημιτὸς,

χόμενος ἐν ονόματι Κυρίου.
The Lamentations – 3rd Stasis

Every generation offers adoration, my Christ, at Your entombment.
Examples of Other Hymns in Tone 3:

• Apolytikion of St. Demetrios: Megan Evrato

• Kontakion of the Nativity: I Parthenos Simeron

• Third Stasis of the Lamentations: Eyene Pase

• The Kathisma Tin Oreotita
VISUAL IDENTIFICATION OF TONE 4
Tone 4

Θε - ὁς Κύ - ρι - ος καὶ ἐ - πέ - φα - νεν ἦ -
The - os Ky - ri - os ke e - pe - fa - nen i -

- μῖν. Εὐ - λο - γη - μέ - νος ὁ ἐρ - χό - με - νος
- μῖν. Eυ - lo - ghi - me - nos o er - ho - me - nos

ἐν ὁ - νό - μα - τί Κυ - ρί - ου.
en o - no - ma - ti Ky - ri - ou.
My mouth shall I open up, and by the Spirit shall it be filled; and words shall pour forth from me unto the Mother and Queen. Then shall I be seen in glad-some celebration, and joy-fully I shall sing, praising her miracles.
Examples of Other Hymns in Tone 4:

Many, many apolytikia including:
   Andrew, Barbara, Nicholas, Peter & Paul
   Archangels
   Nativity of Christ
   Nativity of the Theotokos
   The Annunciation
   The Presentation of Christ in the Temple
   Palm Sunday Megalynarion
VISUAL IDENTIFICATION OF TONE 5 (PLAGAL 1) HEIROMOLOGICAL
Τόνος 5 (Πλαγαλάς 1)

Θεός Κύριος καὶ ἐπεφανεν ἡμῖν. Εὐ-
λογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ο-
νόματι Κύριο. οὐ.
Ευλογητός εἶ, Κύριε, δίδαξο
Ευλογήτος Ἰ, Κυρίε, δικαιώματά σου.
-ξόν με τά δικαιώματά σου.
-χον με τά δικαιώματά σου.

Evloghitaria (Benedictions)
Examples of Other Hymns in Tone 5:

- Apolytikion of St. Katherine
- The Praises (Ainoi) of Pascha
- *Christos Anesti* (Sticheraric form of Tone 5)
VISUAL IDENTIFICATION OF TONE 6 (PLAGAL 2) HEIRMOLOGICAL
Tone 6 (Plagal 2) Heirmological

Θεός Κύριος καὶ ἐπέφανεν ἡ μῖν.
Theos Kyriios ke epefanein imin.

Εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος
Evloghimenos ho erchomenos

ἐν ὧν νόμαι τινες
en on nomai ti

Kyriou.
Τον έκουσίως προσπαγέντα ἐν σταυρῷ, καὶ τὸν ἀναστάντα ἐκ νεκρῶν, Χριστὸν τὸν Θεόν ἡμῶν, σωθεναι τὰς ψυχὰς ἡμῶν.

Τον Θεότοκο Παρθένα, ικέτευς τὸν Υἱὸν σου, ίσως προσπαγέντα ἐν σταυρῷ, καὶ τὸν ἀναστάντα ἐκ νεκρῶν, Χριστὸν τὸν Θεόν ἡμῶν, σωθεναι τὰς ψυχὰς ἡμῶν.
Examples of Other Hymns in Tone 6 Heirmological:

- Kontakion of Cheesefare Sunday

- Kontakion of Palm Sunday: *Ton throno en ourano*

- Resurrection Service Response: *Tin Anastasin Sou Christie Sotir*
VISUAL IDENTIFICATION OF TONE 6 (PLAGAL 2) STICHERARIC
15th Antiphon of Holy Friday Orthros

Σήμερον κρεμάται επί
Simemon kreme-mate epi

ξύλου, ο εν ύδατι
xiliou, o en i-tha-

- σι την γην κρεμάσ.
- si tin yin krema-sas.

(3x)
VISUAL IDENTIFICATION OF TONE 7 (GRAVE)
(or Varys)
Tone 7 (Grave)

Θεός Κυριος και ἐπέφανεν ἡμῖν.
Theos Kyriios ke epefanen imin.

Εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος
Evloghimenos o erchomenos

ἐν ονοματι Κυριου.
en onomati Kyriou.
Apolytikion of the Transfiguration

You were transfigured upon the mountain, O Christ God, showing your disciples as much of your glory as they were able to perceive it. Let your everlasting light upon us sinners also shine. Through the prayers of the Theotokos, glory to you, the Giver of Light.
Examples of Other Hymns in Tone 7:

• Apolytikion and Kontakion of the Transfiguration

• Apolytikion of St. Thomas Sunday

• The Great Prokeimenon: *Tis Theos Meghas*

• Artoklasia Hymn: *Plousii eptochefsan*
VISUAL IDENTIFICATION OF TONE 8 (PLAGAL 4) HEIRMONOLOGICAL
Θεός Κύριος καὶ ἐπέφανεν ἦμιν. Εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὁνόματι Κυρίου.
Apolytikion of Pentecost

Εὐλογητός εἶ, Χριστέ ὁ Θεός ἡμῶν, ὁ πανσόφους
Evloghi-tos i Christe o Theos i-mon, o pan-so-fous
tous ἁλιεὶς ἀναδείξας, καταπέμψας αὐτοῖς τὸ
Pnev-ma to ἀγίον, καὶ δι' αὐτῶν τὴν οἰκου-
μένην σαγηνεύσας, φιλάνθρωπε, δόξα σοι.
VISUAL
IDENTIFICATION
OF
TONE 8 (PLAGAL 4)
STICHERARIC
Two Communion Hymns

Αἰ - νεὶ - τε τὸν Κύ - ρι - ον ἐκ τῶν οὐ - ρα - νῶν - αἰ-
Ενι - τε τὸν Κυρίον ἐκ τῶν οὐ - ρα - νῶν, ε-

- νεὶ - τε αὐ - τὸν ἐν τοῖς ὑ - ψί - στοῖς.
- νι - τε ἀφ - τὸν ἐν τις ἰ - ψι - στίς.

Λύ - τρω - σιν α - πέ - στει - λε
Li - tro - sin a - pe - sti - le

Κύ - ρι - ος τῷ λα - ῦ Αὐ - τοῦ.
Κυρίος τῷ λαῷ Αὕτου.
Examples of Other Hymns in Tone 8:

Numerous apolytikia and kontakia including:
- Holy Fathers of the 7 Ecumenical Councils,
- Gregory Palamas, Mary of Egypt,
- Kontakion of Pascha: I ke en tafo

In the sticheraric form based on C:
- Hymn of Kassiane
- Orthros Lenten Hymn Tis Metanias
VISUAL QUIZ

Use the visual markers listed on your handout to identify the following ten hymns.
'Εν τῷ οὐρανῷ τοῦς ὄ φθαλμος μου σῴρῳ, πρὸς σὲ Λόγυε,
οἴκτειρόν με, ἵνα ζῶ σοι.
En to ou-ram-no tous o-fthal-
- mous mou e-ro, pros se Lo-ghe,
i-kti-ron me, i-na zo si.
Τὴν αἰ-χμα-λω-σί-αν Σι-ών, ἐκ
Τιν ἐ-χμα-λο-σί-αν Σι-ον, εκ
πλάνης ἐ-πι-στρέψας, κά-με Σω-τήρ
pla-nis e-ri-stre-psas, ka-me So-tir
ζώ-ω-σον, ἐ-ξαίρων δου-λο-πα-θεί-ας.
zo-o-son, e-xe-ron dhou-lo-ra-thi-as.
The noble Joseph, having taken from the wood your immaculate Body, and having wrapped it in clean linen with spices, he laid your Body down inside a new hewn tomb. But on the third day, you are risen, O Lord, bestowing great mercy upon the universe.
VISUAL QUIZ — HYMN 4:

Τόν ἀ-κα-τά-λη-πτον καὶ ἀ-πε-ρί-γρα-πτον, τὸν ὀ-μο-οὐ-σι-
Ton a-ka-talip ton ke a-peri-ghrap ton, ton o-mo-ou-si-
-
on Πα-τρὶ καὶ Πνεῦ-μα-τι, ἐν τῇ γα-στρί σου μυ-στι-κῷς, ἔ-χω-ρη-σας
on Pa-tri ke Pnev-mati, en ti gha-stri sou mi-sti-koz, e-cho-ri-sas
-
Θε-ο-μή-τορ, μί-αν καὶ ἀ-σύγ-χυ-τον, τῆς Τρι-ά-δος ἔ-
The-o-mi-tor, mi-an ke a-sin-chi-ton, tis Tri-a-dos e-
-
νέρ-γει-αν, ἔ-γνω-μεν τῷ Τό-κῳ σου, ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, δο-ξά-ζε-σθαι
ner-ghi-an, e-ghno-men to To-ko sou, en to ko-smo, dho-xa-ze-sthe;

dhi-o ke ef-chari-stos vo-omen si: Che-re i Ke-char-i-to-me-ni.
VISUAL QUIZ — HYMN 5:

From the ends of the earth, O Lord, the Isles of the Sea do offer
Thee all the saints who have shone forth therein as the fair
fruit of Thy saving splendour. Through their supplications and through the Mother of God, O most Merciful
One, preserve Thy Church and Thine Isles in peace profound.
VISUAL QUIZ — HYMN 6:

'Η καρδία μου πρός σέ Λόγε ύψω-
I καρδία μου προσ σε Λόγε ις-
- θητώ, καὶ οὐ δὲν θέλ-ξει με, τῶν τοῦ-
- θή-το, κε ου-δη-ν θελ-ξι με, τον τοῦ-
κόσμου τερ-πνῶν πρός χαμαι-ζη-λί-
VISUAL QUIZ — HYMN 7:

 Receive me today, O Son of God, as partaker of Your mystical Supper.
Ανάστηθι, Κύριε ὁ Θεός μου, οτι
Αναστίθη, Κυριε ο Θεος μου, οτι
σὺ βασιλεύεις εἰς τοὺς αἰώνας.
si vasi lev-is is tous e-o-nas.
VISUAL QUIZ — HYMN 9:

Έκ νε-ό-τη-τός μου ὁ ἔ-χθρος με πει-

-ρά-ζει, ταῖς ἡ-δο-ναῖς φλέ-γει μὲ ἑ-γὼ δὲ πε-ποι-

-θώς, ἐν σοὶ Κύ-ρι-ε τρο-ποῦ-μαι τοῦ-τον.

thos, en si Ky-ri-e tro-pou-me tou-ton.
VISUAL QUIZ — HYMN 10:

Super-cal-i-frag-il-i-stic-ex-pi-al-i-do-cious,
even though the sound of it is some-thing quite a-tro-cious.

If you say it loud e-nough you'll al-ways sound pre-co-cious.

VISUAL QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Tone 6
2. Tone 7
3. Tone 2
4. Tone 3
5. Tone 8
6. Tone 4
7. Tone 6 (sticheraric)
8. Tone 5
9. Tone 8 (sticheraric)
10. Tone 1
AURAL IDENTIFICATION

Listen for the ISON.
Listen for identifying MELODIC PATTERNS.
Refer to the previously mentioned identifiers.

For example:
— You will recognize Tone 5 heirmological because it will remind you of memorials.
— You will recognize Tone 6 sticheraric because it has that Middle Eastern sound.
— You probably are aware of Tone 8 because of the distinctive ending cadence.
Suggestions for Learning the Tones by Ear:

1. Memorize which of the Resurrection apolytikia is in what Tone.
2. Eliminate harmony to isolate the melody and transpose it to the ison of the Tone.
3. Listen to unharmonized recordings of Byzantine chant. (Hundreds are on YouTube)
4. Listen for the ison and beware of how it draws the ear, creates a base, and moves.
5. Learn the Great Doxology in all 8 Tones by listening to them and singing them.
7. Attend Saturday evening Vespers or Sunday morning Orthros led by a knowledgeable and experienced chanter. Get a feel for the Tone of the Day.

8. Use the new hymnal to help hear how the English and Greek versions of the same hymn express the nuances of the text melodically.

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