

Functions of Greek Pitch Names in the Medieval Musical Treatises during the Formation of Alphabetic Pitch Names

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Alphabetic pitch names are one of the most universal notations for indicating pitch, and represent the heptatonic scale system that constructs much of the music through the cyclic use of letters in octave. This nomenclature gradually developed in practical music theory that appeared around the ninth century, but its process of establishment is still ambiguous in many respects. This study will take notice to the Greek music theory as the foundation of music theory during this period, particularly focusing on the use of Greek pitch names and explore what role they played in the pitch scale system that formed the basis of the modal theory oriented toward a useful one for chant singing. The purpose of this paper is to shed light on the relationship between pitch scale system and pitch names in the period when alphabetic sound names were established.

This paper focuses on Hucbald's *Musica* (c. 885) and the *Alia musica* (c. 900) by several authors, noting that both treatises rely on Boethius's *De institutione musica* and use Greek pitch names, though the usage of them in each study shows quite different directions. By using chant melodies as a tool for setting tone intervals, Hucbald built up a two-octave pitch scale system, and then layered on it the Greater Perfect System based on tetrachords by Boethius. The Greek pitch names are intended to do more than indicate specific pitches; they serve to incorporate the notational symbols associated with the pitch names and to be useful in the practice of chant singing. In the *Alia musica*, the pitch scale system by Boethius is directly incorporated, and through the use of Greek pitch names, the discrepancies between Greek and medieval modal theories manifest themselves, foreshadowing the subsequent development of alphabetical pitch names as the standard pitch nomenclature.