

## ACCENTUATION OF GREEK WORDS

### PRELIMINARY DEFINITIONS

#### 1. LONG AND SHORT SYLLABLES

A Greek word has as many syllables as it has vowels or diphthongs. A syllable containing a long vowel or a long diphthong is considered “long,” while all others are necessarily considered “short.”

Short vowels: α ε ι ο υ

Long vowels: ᾱ ῆ ῖ ῳ ῷ

Diphthongs\*: αι, ει, οι, υι, αυ, ευ, ηυ, ου

\*Final αι and οι are considered short for purposes of accentuation, except when used in the conjugation of verbs in the optative mood.

#### 2. ACCENTED SYLLABLES

Most Greek words have one syllable whose musical pitch varies slightly from that of the other syllables of the word. That syllable is said to be “accented,” and this difference in pitch is called the word’s “accent.”

Acute accent: ῆ

Grave accent: ῆ

Circumflex accent: ῆ̃

#### 3. WRITING ACCENTS

Accent marks are written over the vowel or diphthong of the syllable to be accented.

In the case of a diphthong, the accent stands over the second vowel: e.g., αὐτούς, αὐτοῖς.

When a breathing mark and an accent belong to the same vowel, then the acute or grave accent is written to the right of the breathing mark, while the circumflex is placed just above it: e.g., ἄνθρωπος, ὅλος, οἶκος, ἦν.

When breathing marks and accents belong to capital letters, they retain the same configuration but are placed before the letter: e.g., Ἕλλην, Ἑρραστος.

## RULES FOR ACCENTUATION

### 1. GENERAL RULE FOR GREEK ACCENTS

No matter how many syllables a word may have, the accent can appear only over one of the last three syllables: the final syllable (the *ultima*, “u”), the second-to-last syllable (the *penult*, “p”), or the third-to-last syllable (the *antepenult*, “a”).

### 2. RULES FOR THE ACUTE ACCENT

Possibilities: appears over ultima, penult, or antepenult  
appears over short vowels, long vowels, or diphthongs

Restrictions: CAN appear over the ultima ONLY when a pause follows (i.e., at the end of a sentence or before a comma or semicolon)  
CANNOT appear over the penult when it is accented and contains a long vowel or diphthong and the ultima contains a short vowel  
CAN appear over the antepenult ONLY when ultima contains a short vowel

### 3. RULES FOR THE GRAVE ACCENT

Possibilities: appears ONLY over the ultima  
appears over short vowels or long vowels or diphthongs

Restrictions: MUST replace an acute accent over the ultima when another word directly follows without a pause, and CANNOT appear otherwise

### 4. RULES FOR THE CIRCUMFLEX ACCENT

Possibilities: appears ONLY over the ultima and the penult  
appears ONLY over long vowels or diphthongs

Restrictions: MUST appear over penult when the penult is accented and contains a long vowel or diphthong and the ultima contains a short vowel  
CANNOT appear over the penult when the ultima contains a long vowel or diphthong

### 5. SUMMARY OF POSSIBILITIES OF ACCENT

- 1) – a – p – ú + pause
- 2) – a – p – ù + word without a pause
- 3) – a – p̄ – u BUT NOT - a – p̄ – ũ
- 4) – á – p – ũ
- 5) – a – p – û
- 6) – a – p̂ – ũ MUST, if p̄ is accented, BUT NEVER p̂, if ũ

## 6. RECESSIVE ACCENT

The accent of a word is said to be recessive when it goes back from the end of the word as far as allowed by the rules for the possibilities of accent. All finite forms of verbs (i.e., all forms except infinitives and participles) have recessive accent

Consider: ἔπαυσα, ἐπαύσω παῦσον παύση

Drill:

1. ἤρξαν, ἤρξατε, ἀρξῆς, ἀρξετε, ἀρξῆτε, ἀρξατω
2. ἔβαλον, ἐβαλομεν, βαλω, βαλε, ἐβαλε, ἐβαλετε
3. ἐδυνατο, ἐδυναμεθα, ἐδυνασθε, ἐδυνω
4. ἀγγελεις, ἀγγελλετε, ἠγγειλα, ἠγγελθην, ἠγγειλατε
5. ἐδεχετο, ἐδεχομεθα, ἐδεχον, ἐδεχεσθε
6. ἐκρινα, ἐκρινατε, κρινε, κρινατε, κρινον, κρινω
7. γιγνομεθα, ἐγιγνετο, γιγνεσθω, ἐγιγνοντο
8. ἔλωσιν, ἔλης, εἶλον, εἶλετε
9. ἐδοξα, ἐδοξατε, ἐδοξαμεν, δοξῆς, δοξῆτε
10. ἠκουσα, ἠκουσας, ἠκουσαμεν, ἠκουσατε
11. ἐλαυνω, ἐλαυνε, ἐλαυνετε, ἠλαυνον, ἠλαυνετε
12. ἀπωλεσα, ἀπωλεσατε, ἀπωλεσαν, ἀπολεσης
13. ἐδίδαξα, ἐδίδαξατε, διδαξω, διδαξεις, διδαξετε
14. βουλη, βουλεσθω, βουλεσθε, ἐβουλου
15. ἐσπομην, ἐσπου, ἐσπετο, ἐπομεθα
16. εὔρω, ἠύρον, εὔρομεν, ἠύρετε
17. ἐθαψα, ἐθαψατε, ἐθαψαν, θαψητε, θαψατω
18. θῦω, θῦε, θῦετε, θῦετω, θῦσον, θῦσατε, θῦσατω
19. ἐδειξα, ἐδειξατε, ἐδειξαν, δειξω, δειξωσιν
20. γεγραφα, γεγραφατε, ἐγεγραφη, ἐγεγραφετε

## 7. PERSISTENT ACCENT

The accent of a word is said to be persistent when it tries to stay the same accent, over the same vowel or diphthong, in all the forms of the word unless forced by the rules for the possibilities of accent to change in nature (e.g., from circumflex to acute) or position (e.g., from antepenult to penult) Persistent accents change in nature, exhausting all possibilities for remaining on the same syllable, before changing position. The accent on most nouns and adjectives is persistent and must be learned as part of the vocabulary.

Consider: βιβλίον, βιβλίου  
ἄνθρωπος, ἀνθρώπου  
νῆσος νήσου  
δρᾶμα, δράματος δραμάτων

Drill:

1. δίκη, δικης, δικην, δικαι
2. ἡμέτερος, ἡμετερα, ἡμετερα, ἡμετερων
3. ἀθάνατος, ἀθανατου, ἀθανατοις, ἀθανατον
4. ζωγράφος, ζωγραφου, ζωγραφοι, ζωγραφων
5. τράπεζα, τραπεζης, τραπεζη, τραπεζαν, τραπεζας
6. νῆσος, νησω, νησον, νησους
7. δοῦλος, δουλω, δουλον, δουλοις
8. δαίμων, δαιμονος, δαιμονι, δαιμονων, δαιμονας
9. κῆρυξ, κηρῦκος, κηρῦκι, κηρῦκων, κηρῦξιν
10. ἀδελφός, ἀδελφον, ἀδελφοι, ἀδελφους
11. ἐλεύθερος, ἐλευθερον, ἐλευθερα, ἐλευθερα
12. πρᾶγμα, πρᾶγματος, πρᾶγματων, πρᾶγμασι
13. ἦττων, ἦττον, ἦττω, ἦττοσιν
14. δῆλος, δηλη, δηλαις, δηλα
15. θυσία, θυσιᾶν, θυσιαι, θυσιαις
16. ἀγών, ἀγωνος, ἀγωνι, ἀγωνων, ἀγωσι
17. κρείττων, κρειττον, κρειττονος, κρειττονων
18. τάχιστος, ταχιστην, ταχιστους, ταχιστα
19. αἶξ, αἶγας, αἶγες, αἶγα
20. δόξα, δοξης, δοξαν, δοξαι
21. σωτήρ, σωτηρος, σωτηρι, σωτηρων
22. ἔμπειρος, ἐμπειρω, ἐμπειροις, ἐμπειρα
23. γῆ, γης, γη, γην
24. τέχνη, τεχνης, τεχναι, τεχνάς
25. Ἀθηναῖος, Ἀθηναιας, Ἀθηναια, Ἀθηναιας

## EXCEPTIONS TO THE RULES FOR ACCENTUATION

### 1. RECESSIVE ACCENT

- 1.1. The final diphthong *οι* in the third person singular of the *Present Optative Active* and *αι* in the third person singular of the *Aorist Optative Active* count as *long* for the purposes of accentuation.

E.g. παιδεύοιμι    παιδεύοιμεν            παιδεύσαιμι    παιδεύσαιμεν  
      παιδεύοις    παιδεύοιτε            παιδεύσαις    παιδεύσαιτε  
      παιδεύοι    παιδεύοιεν            παιδεύσαι    παιδεύσαιεν

- 1.2. In the *Aorist Subjunctive Passive*, the accent is *always* a circumflex over the initial vowel of the ending.

E.g. λυθῶ            λυθῶμεν  
      λυθῆς            λυθῆτε  
      λυθῆ            λυθῶσι(ν)

### 2. PERSISTENT ACCENT

- 2.1. The diphthongs *αι* and *οι*, when final, count as short for purposes of accentuation

E.g. ἄνθρωποι, χῶραι

- 2.2. When nouns (and adjectives) of the *First* and *Second Declensions* have an acute accent on the ultima in the nominative singular, the accent is changed to a circumflex in the genitive and dative, singular and plural.

E.g. ζωή            ζωαί            ἀδελφός        ἀδελφοί  
      ζωῆς            ζωῶν            ἀδελφοῦ        ἀδελφῶν  
      ζωῆ            ζωαῖς            ἀδελφῶ        ἀδελφοῖς  
      ζωήν            ζωάς            ἀδελφόν        ἀδελφούς

- 2.3. For nouns of the *Third Declension* with *monosyllabic stems*, the accent shifts to the ultima in the genitive and dative, singular and plural; the genitive plural has a circumflex.

E.g. αἶξ            αἶγες  
      αἰγός        αἰγῶν  
      αἰγί        αἰξί(ν)  
      αἶγα        αἶγας

## 2.4. Feminine Genitive Plural: Nouns

For *all nouns* of the *First Declension*, the accent in the genitive plural shifts to a circumflex over the ultima.

E.g. ἡμερα	ἡμέραι
ἡμέρας	<u>ἡμερῶν</u>
ἡμέρα	ἡμέραις
ἡμέραν	ἡμέρας

## 2.5. Feminine Genitive Plural: Adjectives

In *First-and-Second Declension Adjectives*, the accent *does not* shift to the ultima in the feminine genitive plural.

In *First-and-Third Declension Adjectives*, the accent *does* shift to a circumflex in the feminine genitive plural.

## 2.6. Feminine Genitive Plural: Participles

In all *Active Participles (Present, Aorist, Perfect)*, the accent *does* shift to a circumflex over the ultima of the feminine genitive plural.

In the *Present Middle/Passive, Aorist Middle, and Perfect Middle/Passive Participles*, the accent *does not* shift to the ultima in the feminine genitive plural.

In the *Aorist Passive Participles*, the accent is on the penult in all forms except the masculine nominative singular, the neuter nominative and accusative singular, and the feminine genitive plural.

E.g. <u>λυθείς</u>	λυθεῖσα	<u>λυθέν</u>
λυθέντος	λυθείς	λυθέντος
λυθέντι	λυθείση	λυθέντι
λυθέντα	λυθεῖσαν	<u>λυθέν</u>
λυθέντες	λυθεῖσαι	λυθέντα
λυθέντων	<u>λυθεισῶν</u>	λυθέντων
λυθεῖσι	λυθείσαις	λυθεῖσι
λυθέντας	λυθείσας	λυθέντα

## PROCLITICS AND ENCLITICS

### 1. PRELIMINARY DEFINITIONS

1.1. *Proclitics* (cf. προκλίνω, ‘to lean forward’) are words which normally have no accent because they are read so closely with the word that follows.

Examples: certain forms of the definite article: ὁ, ἡ, οἱ, αἱ  
the conjunctions εἰ and ὡς  
the prepositions εἰς and ἐκ  
the negating adverb οὐ/οὐκ/οὐχ

1.2. *Enclitics* (cf. ἐγκλίνω, ‘to lean upon’) are words which are so closely attached in pronunciation to the preceding word as to affect, in some cases, the accent of the preceding word.

Examples: the personal pronouns μου, μοι, με, σου, σοι, σε  
the particles γε (‘at any rate’) and τε (‘and’)  
the indefinite adverbs που (‘somewhere’; ‘I suppose’), ποτέ (‘at some time, ever’), πῶς (‘in any way, in some way’)  
all forms of the indefinite pronoun/adjective τις, τι, τινός, τινί, τινά, τινές, τινῶν, τισί(ν), τινάς  
the present indicative forms of εἰμί, except the second person singular: εἰμί, ἐστί(ν), ἐσμέν, ἐστέ, εἰσί(ν).  
the present indicative forms of φημί, except the second person singular: φημί, φησί(ν), φαμέν, φατέ, φασί(ν)

### 2. RULES FOR ACCENTUATION

2.1. A word ending with an acute accent followed by an enclitic (e, e-έ, e-ê) *does not* change its acute accent to a grave accent; the enclitic does not take any accent:

– a – p – ú + e                                  ἀγαθός τις (‘some good man’)

– a – p – ú + e–e                                  ἀδελφοί τινες (‘some brothers’)

2.2. A *monosyllabic* enclitic following a word with an acute accent on the penult has no accent, but a *disyllabic* enclitic following a word with an acute accent on the penult does take an accent on its final syllable:

– a – p̄ – u + e                                  λόγῳ τε καὶ ἔργῳ (‘by word and deed’)

– a – p̄ – u + e–έ                                  ἀνδράσι τισίν (‘to some men’)

– a – p̄ – u + e–ê                                  ἀνθρώπων τινῶν (‘of some men’)

2.3. A word with an acute accent on the antepenult receives an additional acute accent from the enclitic; the enclitic does not take any accent:

– á – p – ú + e      ἄνθρωποι τε καὶ θεοί ('men and gods')

– á – p – ú + e-e      ἄνθρωποι τινες ('some men')

2.4. A word ending with a circumflex keeps its circumflex; the enclitic has no accent:

– a – p – ũ + e      αἱ τιμαὶ τῶν ἀγαθῶν τε καὶ σοφῶν ('the honors of the good and wise')

– a – p – ũ + e-e      αἱ τιμαὶ σοφῶν τινῶν ('the honors of some wise men')

2.5. A word with a circumflex accent on the penult takes an additional accent on the final syllable; the enclitic has no accent:

– a – p̂ – ú + e      ἐκεῖνά τε καὶ ταῦτα ('those things and these things')

– a – p̂ – ú + e-e      δῶρά τινα ('some gifts')

2.6. In a series of enclitics, each takes an acute accent from the following enclitic; the final enclitic of such a series has no accent:

ἐάν ποτέ τις τί τινι διδῶ ('if anyone ever gives anything to anyone')

2.7. A proclitic takes an acute accent when it stands alone at the end of a clause, or when followed by an enclitic; the enclitic has no accent:

ὁ δέ φησιν, οὔ. ('But he said, no')

εἴ τις ('if anyone')

2.8. Disyllabic enclitics can retain their accent when: 1) they stand at the beginning of a clause or sentence, 2) when there is emphasis on the enclitic:

τινὲς μὲν χρυσὸν διδῶσιν, τινὲς δ' οὔ. (Some give gold, others do not.)

### 3. THE SPECIAL CASE OF ἔστιν

The verbal form ἔστιν becomes ἔστιν, completely losing its character as an enclitic, under certain circumstances:

- when it stands at the beginning of a sentence or clause
- when it signifies existence or possibility
- when it is preceded by οὐκ, μή, ὥς, εἰ, καί, ἀλλά, τοῦτο (τοῦτ')
- when it is strongly emphatic