

## Appendix B 2

### Accents

#### 1. Accents

Accents are thought to have been introduced by Aristophanes of Byzantium, at the library of Alexandria ca. 200 B.C. Because of the Alexandrian empire and the spread of κοινή Greek as the *lingua franca* of the Middle East and the Roman Republic, the language began to develop regional variations. Foreigners needed help for "correct" pronunciation. However, accents and other punctuation and breathings were not used regularly until the 9th century A.D.

Originally Greek was tonal - the tone of voice might be higher or lower on parts of a word. Over time, this changed to a stress. Modern Greek, as modern English, uses a stress accent rather than a tonal accent, although for both languages there may be an (unmarked) rising of the voice when asking a question or showing surprise. e.g. "You did **that** ???"

Printed copies of the Greek New Testament show the accents, so when you read from the New Testament, either put a slight stress on the accents, or raise or lower the pitch of your voice.

NOTE : There are some exceptions to the rules for accents given below.

#### There are three accents

- ' The acute (oxia - ὀξεῖα), e.g. ἄ, which slopes up to the right - raise the pitch by whatever feels comfortable, somewhere between a tone (doh - ray) and a fifth (doh - fa).
- ` The grave (pronounced "grahv") (varia - βαρεῖα), e.g. ἄ, which slopes down to the right - lower the pitch, or return to the base pitch.
- ˘ The circumflex (perispomeni - περισπώμενος), e.g. ῶ - which is only used on long syllables - raise the pitch at the start of the syllable, then lower it towards the end.

#### 2. Vowels : Greek has seven vowels : α ε η ι ο υ ω

- η and ω are always long. Their pronunciation takes a longer time than that of the short vowels.
- ε and ο are always short. The time taken to pronounce them is short.
- α, ι and υ may be either short or long. They become long when they come before two consonants.

#### 3. Diphthongs : Diphthongs are always long except the -οι and -αι endings of the Nominative Plural of the First and Second Declensions, which are always treated as short syllables.

#### 4. Syllables : A Greek word contains as many syllables as there are separate vowels or diphthongs.

The last syllable of a word is called the **ultima**.

The next to the last syllable is called the **penult**. (pen- meaning "head" or "ahead of")

The syllable immediately before the penult is called the **antepenult**. (ante- meaning "before")

If a syllable ends in a vowel, it is said to be **open**.

If a syllable ends in a consonant, it is said to be **closed**.

A syllable is **long by nature** if it contains a long vowel or a diphthong.

A syllable is **long by position** if its vowel precedes two consonants or a double consonant.

A syllable is **short** if it contains a short vowel followed by a single vowel or a single consonant.

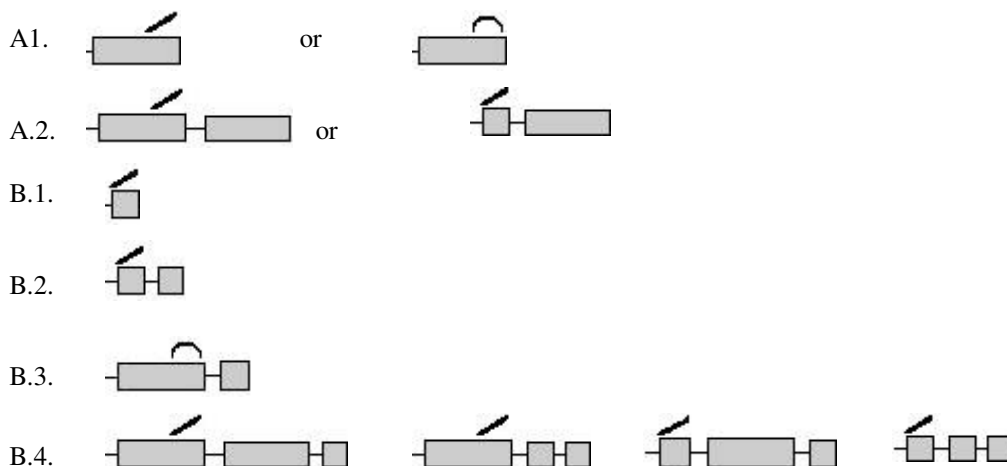
1. A single consonant between two vowels in one word forms a syllable with the second vowel.  
e.g. ἄ-γω (*I lead*)
2. Any group of consonants that can begin a word usually forms a syllable with the second vowel.  
(σ followed by a consonant may be attached to either syllable.  
e.g. ἄ-πτο-μαί (*I touch*)
3. Any group of consonants that cannot begin a word is divided between the two syllables.  
e.g. ἔλ-πίς (*hope*)
4. Doubled consonants are divided between two syllables.  
e.g. παρ-ρη-σί-α (*openness*)
5. Compound words are divided at the point of union and are then divided further .  
e.g. εἰσ-ά-γω (*I lead into*)

## 5. Terms used for the positions of the accents

1. Words which have an acute accent on the ultima are said to be **oxytone**. ("sharp-pitched")  
e.g. σοφός (*wise*)
2. Words which have a circumflex accent on the ultima are said to be **perispomenon**. ("turned around")  
e.g. μενῶ (*I will remain*)
3. Words which do not have an acute accent on the ultima are said to be **barytone** ("deep-pitched")  
They include categories 3.1 - 3.4 below.  
e.g. λόγος (*word*)
  - 3.1 Words which have a grave accent on the ultima are said to be **barytone**  
This happens only as a result of some of the rules below.
  - 3.2 Words which have an acute accent on the penult are said to be **paroxytone**  
e.g. λύω (*I loose*)
  - 3.3 Words which have an acute accent on the antepenult are said to be **proparoxytone**  
The antepenult can have only an acute accent - not a circumflex.  
If the ultima is long, the antepenult cannot take any accent.  
e.g. ἄνθρωπος (*man*), ἀνθρώπου (*of a man*)
  - 3.4 Words which have a circumflex accent on the penult are said to be **properispomenon**  
e.g. οἶκος (*house*)

## 6. Possible positions for the accents

1. The **acute** accent can fall on any of the last three syllables.  
If the last syllable contains a long vowel or a long diphthong, the accent can fall only on one of the last two syllables.  
If the acute accent falls on the last syllable, it becomes a grave if it is followed by another word, unless the following word is an enclitic. If there is a punctuation mark, the acute accent remains.
  2. The **grave** accent can only fall on the last syllable, not followed by an enclitic or a punctuation mark.
  3. The **circumflex** accent can only fall on one of the two last syllables of a word, also it can only fall on a long vowel or diphthong.  
If the last syllable is a long vowel or a diphthong, the circumflex accent cannot fall on the penult.
- A. If the last syllable is long :
- A.1 If the accent is on the last syllable, it can be an acute or a circumflex accent.
  - A.2 If the accent is on the next to last syllable, it can only be an acute accent.
  - A.3 The acute cannot fall on the antepenult, the circumflex cannot fall on the penult or the antepenult.
- B. If the last syllable is short :
- B.1 If the accent is on the last syllable, it can only be an acute accent.
  - B.2 If the accent is on a short penult, it can only be an acute accent.
  - B.3 If the accent is on a long penult, it is usually a circumflex accent.
  - B.4 If the accent is on the antepenult, it can only be an acute accent.



**6. Proclitics** : There are ten monosyllabic words which do not have an accent, and which tend to be pronounced as if part of the following word. They are called **proclitics** (leaning forward). They are the forms of the Definite Article which begin with a vowel (ὁ, ἡ, οἱ, αἱ), the negative adverb οὐ, οὐκ, οὐχ (*not*), the conjunctions εἰ (*if*) and ὡς (*as*), and the prepositions ἐν (*in*), ἐκ, ἐξ (*out of*), and εἰς (*into*).

**7. Enclitics** (from ἐγκλίνω - *I lean upon*) are small words which are closely linked to the preceding word. They usually lose their accent and are pronounced rapidly after the preceding word. They often produce an acute accent on the last syllable of the preceding word. The enclitics comprise

1. The following forms of the Personal Pronouns : μέ, μοῦ, μοί, σέ, σοῦ, σοί
2. All cases of the Indefinite Pronoun τίς τι (*someone, something*)
3. The Indefinite Adverbs πού (*somewhere*), ποτέ (*sometime, once, when[ever]*), πώς (*somehow*)
4. The particles γέ, τέ, τοί, πέρ
5. All forms of the Present Indicative of εἰμί except εἶ
6. All forms of the Present Indicative of φημί except φήσ
7. The inseparable -δε in ὅδε etc.

If enclitics retain their accent they are said to be **orthotone**. This happens

1. When pronouns are used emphatically, in contrast, or at the beginning of a clause or sentence.
2. When they follow a word which is elided. e.g. ταυτ' ἐστί(ν)
3. When a disyllabic enclitic follows a paroxytone, e.g. φίλοι τινές (*some friends*), unless its final vowel is elided.
4. ἐστί(ν) becomes ἔστι(ν) at the beginning of a sentence, or when expressing existence or possibility, or when following οὐκ, μή, εἰ (*if*), ὡς, καί, ἀλλ', τουτο (or τουτ').

When an enclitic throws its accent onto the preceding word, it is pronounced as if it were part of the preceding word.

1. An oxytone keeps its accent, e.g. δός μοι (*give me!*) (pr. DOSS-moy)
2. A perispomenon keeps its accent, e.g. φιλῶ σε (*I love you.*) (pr. fill-OH-seh)
3. A paroxytone keeps its accent and the enclitic, if monosyllabic, loses its accent e.g. φίλος μου (*my friend*). A disyllabic enclitic retains its accent unless its final vowel is elided. e.g. φίλοι τινές (*some friends*)
4. A proparoxytone or a properispomenon receives an acute accent on the ultima, in addition to the original accent, e.g. ἄνθρωπός τις (*some man, a certain man*), σῶσόν με (*save me!*)
5. A proclitic takes an acute accent, e.g. εἶ τινες (*if anyone*)
6. If several enclitics occur in succession, each receives an acute accent from the following enclitic, and only the final one has no accent. e.g. εἶ πού τις τινα ἴδιο ἐχθρόν (*If ever anyone saw an enemy anywhere* - Thucydides)

**8. Contraction** : Contraction is the joining of two vowels, or a vowel and a diphthong, in two successive syllables in the same word, to give just one long vowel or diphthong.

e.g. ποι-έ-ω → ποιῶ (*I do*)

1. If neither of the contracted syllables had an accent, the resulting contracted syllable has no accent. e.g. ποί-ε-ε → ποίει (*do!*)
2. If either of the contracted syllables had an accent, the resulting contracted syllable has an accent.
  - 2.1. A contracted ultima has an acute accent if the uncontracted form was oxytone. e.g. ἐστ-α-ώς → ἐστώς (*standing*)
  - 2.2. A contracted ultima has a circumflex accent if the uncontracted form was any other than oxytone. e.g. ποι-έ-ω → ποιῶ (*I do*)
  - 2.3. A contracted penult has a circumflex accent when the ultima is short. e.g. ποι-έ-ου-σιν → ποιοῦσιν (*they do*)
  - 2.4. A contracted penult has an acute accent when the ultima is long. e.g. ἐ-ποι-έ-ό-μην → ἐποιοῦμην (*we were being acted upon*)
  - 2.5. A contracted antepenult can only have an acute accent. e.g. ποι-ε-όμ-εν-ος → ποιοῦμενος (*being done*)

**9. Crasis** : Crasis is the contraction of a vowel or diphthong at the end of one word with a vowel or diphthong at the beginning of the next word. The first word loses its accent.

e.g. καί ἐγώ → κάγω (*and I, I also*) (note that in this example the breathing is also retained)

**10. Elision** : Elision is the dropping of a short vowel from the end of a word when it is followed by a word beginning with a vowel. The place of elision is indicated by an apostrophe.

1. Oxytone prepositions and conjunctions lose their accent

e.g. κατά ἴδιαν → κατ' ἴδιαν (*privately, apart*)

2. With other oxytones, the accent moves to the penult.

e.g. πόλλὰ ἔπαθον → πόλλ' ἔπαθον (*I or they suffered many things*)

## 11. Position of the accent on Verbs

The accent on a verb is usually **recessive** - it falls as far back as the length of the last syllable will allow - to the antepenult if the ultima is short, to the penult if the ultima is long. ( See Section 6, A.2 and B.4 )

1. For the purposes of placing the accent, final -αι or -οι are regarded as short syllables (except for the Optative).

2. The accent is usually acute.

Examples :

βάλλω, ἔβαλον (Aorist), βῆβληκα (Perfect), ἐβλήθην (Aorist Passive),

βληθήσομαι (Future Passive), βέβλημαι (Perfect Passive), ἐβεβλήμην (Pluperfect)

λύω, λύεις, λύει, λύομεν, λύετε, λύουσιν (Present)

ἔλυον, ἔλυες, ἔλυεν, ἐλύομεν, ἐλύετε, ἔλυον (Imperfect)

λέλυκα, λελύκαμεν (Perfect), ἐλελύκεν (Pluperfect), λύομαι, λύομεθα (Present Middle)

3. When the ultima contains -αι or a short vowel (except in the Optative), if a long penultimate vowel or diphthong takes an accent, it is a circumflex accent.

e.g. εἶναι (*to be*), διδόμεν (*let us give*) [cp. δίδομεν (*we give*) - short penultimate]

4. **Enclitics** - all the forms of εἰμί (*I am*) and φημί (*I say*) except εἶ and φῆς See Section 7 above.

5. **Contract Verbs** - two vowels, or a vowel and a diphthong, have already formed the contract syllable

5.1 If the first of the two contracting syllables was accented, the resulting syllable has a circumflex

e.g. ποι-έ-ω → ποιῶ, ποι-έ-ει → ποιεῖ, ποι-έ-ο-μεν → ποιούμεν

5.2 If the second of the contracting syllables was accented, the resulting syllable has an acute accent.

e.g. ποι-ε-ό-με-θα → ποιούμεθα

6. **Compound Verbs**

6.1 The accent cannot move further back than the last syllable of the preposition before the verb stem.

e.g. παραλαμβάνω (*I take along*), παρέλαβον (*I/they took along*)

κειμαι (*I recline*), ανάκειμαι (*I sit at table*), συνανάκειμαι (*I dine with*)

6.2 In past tenses, the accent cannot move further back than the augment or the reduplication.

e.g. ἀναβαίνω (*I go up*), ἀνέβην (*I went up*), ἀναβέβηκα (*I have gone up*)

7. **Imperatives**

7.1 The Second Person Singular of the Second Aorist Middle Imperative is perispomenon.

e.g. λαβοῦ (*take for yourself!*)

7.2 The Second Person Singular of the Second Aorist Active Imperative of the following five verbs is oxytone : εἰπέ (*speak!*), ἐλθέ (*come/go!*), εὔρε (*find!*), λαβέ (*take!*), ἰδέ (*see!*)

Their plural forms are accented εἰπέτε, ἐλθέτε, εὔρετε, λαβέτε, ἰδέτε

Their compounds have normal recessive accents.

e.g. ἄπελθε (*go away!*), παράλαβε (*take along!*)

8. **Infinitives** are Verbal Nouns - hence they do not obey the rules for recessive accent.
- 8.1 Infinitives ending in *-ναι* have an accent on the penult.  
 e.g. *λέλυκέναι* (*to have loosed, Perfect*), *λυθήναι* (*to have been loosed*),  
*διδόναι* (*to be giving*), *δοῦναι* (*to give*)
- 8.2. For the *-ω* verbs, there is an accent on the penult for the First Aorist Active, the Second Aorist Middle, and the Perfect Middle/Passive  
 e.g. *λύσαι* (*to loose*), *λιπέσθαι* (*to leave*), *λελύσθαι* (*to have loosed oneself*)
- 8.3. The Present Infinitive of contract verbs, and the Second Aorist Active Infinitive of *-ω* verbs is perispomenon.  
 e.g. *ποιεῖν* (*to do*), *τιμᾶν* (*to honor*), *πληροῦν* (*to fulfil*), *λιπεῖν* (*to leave*)
9. **Participles** are accented like adjectives. Most of them are oxytone.  
 e.g. *λύων, λύουσα, λῦον* (*loosing*), *λύσας, λύσασα, λῦσαν* (*having loosed*)  
*λυόμενος, λυομένη, λυόμενον* (*being loosed*), *λυσάμενος -η, -ον* (*having been loosed*)

## 12. Position of the accent on Nouns

1. The accent tends to stay on the same syllable as is accented in the Nominative, as far as the general rules for accents permit. If the accent must be moved, it generally moves to the syllable following the accented syllable of the Nominative.

For the purposes of the accent, final *-αι* and *-οι* are regarded as short syllables

e.g. *ἄνθρωπος, ἄνθρωπον, ἀνθρώπου, ἀνθρώπου,*  
*ἄνθρωποι, ἀνθρώπους, ἀνθρώπων, ἀνθρώποις*  
*λέων, λέοντα, λέοντος, λέοντι, λέοντες, λέοντων*

2. Oxytones of the First and Second declensions are perispomena in the Genitive and Dative.  
 e.g. *θεός, θεόν, θεοῦ, θεῷ, θεοί, θεούς, θεών, θεοῖς*
3. Nouns of the First declension have a circumflex on the Genitive Plural *-ῶν*.

This is caused by a contraction between the *-α* or *-ε* of the original stem and the case ending *-ων*

e.g. *θάλασσα, θάλασσαν, θαλάσσης, θαλάσση*  
*θάλασσαι, θαλάσσας, θαλασσῶν, θαλάσσαις*

## 13. Conclusion

The "rules" given above are but the main ones. There are other variations and exceptions.

The position of the accent is important for distinguishing between the Present and Future tenses of Liquid verbs, between the Indefinite and the Interrogative Pronouns, and between the Definite Article and the Relative Pronoun.

However, at this stage of learning Greek it is probably more important to work on vocabulary and grammar than to get bogged down with placing the accents.

**Words of advice :**

**Use a copy of the Greek New Testament which has the accents printed.**

**Read aloud every day and pay attention to the accents as you read printed Greek.**

The sounds and rhythm of Koine Greek will become natural to you as you read and listen to yourself.