Fundamentals of New Testament Greek

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1 Alphabet, Accents, and Punctuation

In this chapter you will learn:

- the Greek alphabet, in lower- and uppercase, and its representation in Roman script;

- some common patterns related to the combinations and changes that take place when certain letters occur together.

1.1   Concepts

ALPHABET   *The twenty-four letters used for writing and pronouncing Greek.*

ACCENTS   *Three symbols that indicate the syllable in a word receiving the main stress.*

PUNCTUATION   *Four symbols that indicate major and minor divisions in the written text.*

1.2   Overview of This Chapter

We introduce a number of important concepts in this chapter, including such essential matters as the alphabet and pronunciation, as well as some points not essential at this stage but valuable in subsequent chapters (e.g., some of the rules of accenting and of vowel and consonant combining). We include these materials here so that students have a concise and relatively complete guide to these issues as they arise in the course of this book.

NOTE Whereas it is not important that students learn all of these items now, it will help in the long term if at least a basic familiarity is established. Reference back to this chapter will be important.

1.3   Letters and Their Combinations

1.3.1   The Alphabet

Capital letter (uppercase)	Small letter (lowercase)	Letter name	Transliteration	Erasmian pronunciation		Modern Greek pronunciation	
Α	α	alpha	a	a	*father*	a	*father*
Β	β	beta	b	b	*bed*	v	*viable*
Γ	γ	gamma	g or n[i]	g	*good*	gh y	Sp. *lago* *you*
Δ	δ	delta	d	d	*dead*	th	*this*
Ε	ε	epsilon	e	e (short)	*pet*	e	*pet*
Ζ	ζ	zeta	z	ds or dz	*adze*	z	*zoo*
Η	η	eta	ē	e (long)	*may*	i	*machine*
Θ	θ	theta	th	th[ii]	*thin*	th	*thin*
Ι	ι	iota	i	i (long)	*machine*	i	*machine*
Κ	κ	kappa	k	k	*kite*	k	*kite*
Λ	λ	lambda	l	l	*lick*	l	*lick*
Μ	μ	mu	m	m	*move*	m	*move*
Ν	ν	nu	n	n	*noise*	n	*noise*
Ξ	ξ	xi	x	ks	*ax*	ks	*ax*
Ο	ο	omicron	o	o[iii] (short)	*not* [iv]	o	*go*
Π	π	pi	p	p	*pout*	p	*pout*
Ρ	ρ	rho	r	r	*round*	r	*round*
Σ (C)	σ, ς (c)[v]	sigma	s	s	*simple*	s z	*simple* *zoo*
Τ	τ	tau	t	t	*taught*	t	*taught*
Υ	υ	upsilon	y or u[vi]	u (long)	*food*	i	*machine*
Φ	φ	phi	ph	f [ii]	*fort*	f	*fort*
Χ	χ	chi	ch or kh	kh[ii]	Ger. *Bach*	kh hy	Sp. *bajo* *human*
Ψ	ψ	psi	ps	ps	*oops*	ps	*oops*
Ω	ω	omega	ō	o (long)	*go*	o	*go*

Notes relating to the transliteration, pronunciation, and writing of letters

    i. Gamma is transliterated *n* when it precedes gamma, kappa, xi, or chi; otherwise, *g*.

    ii. In earlier forms of Greek, the consonants theta, phi, and chi were aspirated forms of tau, pi, and kappa; that is, they were pronounced with a puff of air following the letter (similar to the sound of the underlined letters said quickly in the words ta̲hini, pa̲hua, and ca̲hoots).

    iii. During the first century, Greek speakers probably pronounced the short *o* (omicron) very much like the long *o* (omega). This phonetic (i.e., sound) merger led to several textual variants in the Greek New Testament, which sometimes makes it difficult to decide the original reading (see, e.g., the debate about the Greek text of Rom. 5:1).

    iv. English speakers who pronounce the relevant vowels of *fa̲ther* (for alpha) and *no̲t* (for omicron) the same may wish to substitute another sound for omicron, such as the *o* of *office*.

    v. Two forms of sigma appear in later Greek manuscripts of the New Testament: one (σ) at the beginning of or within a word, and the other (ς), so-called final sigma, at the end of a word. Thus σεισμός. These forms arose during Byzantine times after the ninth century A.D. In some printed texts one also finds the lunate sigma (ϲ), which looks much like the English letter c and was the form of sigma used in first-century documents.

    vi. Upsilon is transliterated *u* when it is the second element in a diphthong; otherwise, *y*.

- The seven vowels of Greek are **α, ε, η, ι, ο, υ**, and **ω**.
- The other seventeen letters are consonants.

1.3.2.   The Greek Alphabet: History, Form, and Pronunciation

The Greek alphabet is different from those of other European languages, although they all have a common origin in the ancient Phoenician alphabet.[1] We can trace the Greek alphabet back to sometime in the early first millennium B.C., perhaps around the ninth century B.C.

    The Greek alphabet in use in the New Testament consists of twenty-four letters. Earlier Greek made use of several other letters as well.[2] The Greek alphabet has capital (uppercase) letters, or majuscules, which are similar to the forms of the letters used on formal documents such as inscriptions (writing on stone), and small (lowercase) letters, or minuscules, which are closer to the handwriting used by ancient Greeks for their personal documents.[3]

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    1. The Russian alphabet is based on Greek. According to tradition, it was devised by Cyril and Methodius in the ninth century A.D.

    2. Two of these letters are the ϝ (digamma, or double gamma) and the consonantal yod (or iota). The digamma was used before consonants and pronounced as *u,* as in **βασιλεύς**. The consonantal yod was used in a variety of formations, especially of the present-tense verb stem, where a double consonant such as **σσ** or **λλ** and such combinations as **ππ** now appear. Those intending to study Greek written earlier than that of even the classical period may want to learn more about these letters.

    3. The situation is actually more complex than this. The capital letters used on inscriptions were modified into the majuscule hand for writing on papyrus and other materials. Greeks used this majuscule hand in the copying of codices (sing. "codex," an early form of the book, with bound flat pages) until approximately the ninth century A.D., when the minuscule hand became predominant. A cursive, or running, hand was used at the same time but was employed for more mundane documents, such as personal letters.

Even though we have numerous documents from the time of the New Testament, including inscriptions and many personal documents written on papyrus (made from reeds laid on top of each other and pressed together), the equivalent of paper in the ancient world, there are many things we do not know about the pronunciation of ancient Greek, simply because it has never been heard by modern ears. Two of the debated factors are the regional differences in the language of its original speakers and the influence of native languages such as Aramaic in Palestine. Today students of biblical Greek follow two major schemes of pronunciation: the Erasmian, which follows the scheme of the Renaissance scholar Erasmus (1469?-1536), or the modern, which follows current Greek pronunciation.

1.3.3 Diphthongs

Greek has a number of vowel combinations, or **diphthongs**. The two vowel sounds were originally pronounced separately but in modern Greek are pronounced as one.

Letter combination	Transliteration	Erasmian pronunciation		Modern Greek pronunciation	
αι	ai	ai	*aisle*	e	*pet*
αυ	au	au	*out*	af/av	*a* as in *father*
ει	ei	e (long)	*may*	i	*machine*
ευ	eu	eu	*eulogy*	ef/ev	*e* as in *pet*
ηυ	ēu	eu	*eulogy*	if/iv	*i* as in *machine*
οι	oi	oi	*oil*	i	*machine*
ου	ou	oo	*food*	oo	*food*
υι	ui	wi	*suite*	i	*machine*

NOTE In modern Greek the vowels **η, ι, υ** and the diphthongs **ει, οι, υι** all have the same pronunciation: *i* as in *machine*; **ο** and **ω** are both pronunced *o* as in *go,* and **ε** and **αι** both *e* as in *pet*. The diphthongs **αυ, ευ,** and **ηυ** are pronounced as a vowel + *v* when followed by a vowel or diphthong or voiced consonant (**β, γ, δ, ζ, λ, μ, ν, ρ**), elsewhere, as vowel + *f*.

1.3.4 Notes on Writing the Letters

- As a general rule, write each letter with as few strokes as possible, beginning from the top of the letter (except begin **β, μ,** and **ρ** up from the "tail").
- All of the capital letters and many of the small letters rest upon the line.
- Ten small letters go below the line: **β, γ, ζ, η, μ, ξ, ρ, φ, χ, ψ.**
- Take care to differentiate gamma (**γ**), with its tail below the line; nu (**ν**), with its sharp point at the bottom; and upsilon (**υ**), which is rounded.

1.3.5   Notes on Pronouncing the Letters

Although most letters have a single pronunciation, some show variation. In the Erasmian pronunciation the vowel ι can vary from short *i* (as in *inn*) to long *i* (as in *machine*), although this distinction is not crucial to maintain. In the consonants, when **γ** comes before **γ**, **κ**, **ξ**, or **χ**, it is pronounced as *ng* in the word *king*. Thus **ἄγγελος** is pronounced *ang-gelos*.

1.3.6   Breathing Marks

Every word in Greek that begins with a vowel or diphthong must indicate whether that vowel or diphthong has **smooth** or **rough breathing**. Also, rho (**ρ**) at the beginning of a word takes a rough breathing mark.

    The Greeks were very conscious of the sounds of their words and of how the words were pronounced in a sequence of sounds. When certain Greek letters dropped out of use, they often left behind an indication of their former presence. One such letter became the symbol for rough breathing.

▶ **Smooth breathing**, indicated by the symbol ’ over an initial vowel or diphthong, makes no difference in the pronunciation of the vowel or diphthong.

▶ **Rough breathing**, indicated by the symbol ‛ over an initial vowel or diphthong and the consonant **ρ**, is aspirated, or pronounced like *h* before the letter.[4]

In transliteration rough breathing can be indicated with an *h*. The word **ἡμέρα**, for example, is transliterated *hēmera.* When a diphthong begins a word, the breathing mark is placed over the second letter, as in **οἶκος** *(oikos),* where ι carries the smooth breathing mark. Every word beginning with **υ** (e.g., **ὑπό**, *hypo*) has rough breathing, as does every word beginning with **ρ** (e.g., **ῥῆμα**, *hrēma*).

    Breathing marks are important, since in some cases two words differ only in their breathing marks. For example:

- **ἤ** (with smooth breathing mark) is the word "or," but **ἥ** (rough breathing mark) is a relative pronoun
- **ᾖ** (smooth; see 1.3.7.2 on iota subscript) is a verb form, but **ᾗ** (rough) is a form of the relative pronoun ("who, which")
- **ἧς** (rough) is a relative pronoun, but **ἦς** (smooth) is a verb, and **ἧς** (rough) is a different verb.[5]

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    4. In modern Greek, neither of the breathing marks makes any difference in pronunciation. Not widely used after the 1970s, they were officially abolished in 1982 by decree of the president of Greece.

    5. Students will not yet know what these forms are or what they mean, but they should be able to recognize that the forms have different breathing marks.

1.3.7 Relations of the Vowels and Consonants

1.3.7.1 Vowels

The vowels may be categorized as long or short in quantity.[6] This does not mean that the vowel is pronounced for a longer or shorter amount of time (although this may have been true for ancient Greek speakers) but has to do with accentuation and with how the words in which they appear are pronounced.

- Long vowels: **η**, **ω**
- Short vowels: **ε**, **o**
- Vowels that can be either long or short: **α**, **ι**, **υ**

NOTE Whether **α**, **ι**, and **υ** are long or short depends upon the linguistic contexts in which they appear (which will be specified as we proceed). They are pronounced the same in either case. The diphthongs are long, except when **αι** or **οι** appears word final (e.g., **πόλλοι** [short **οι**], but **δεξαμένοις** [long **οι**]).[7]

1.3.7.2 Iota Subscript

In writing lowercase letters, a iota (**ι**) that follows **η**, **ω**, or long **α** is normally written underneath the letter (**ῃ**, **ῳ**, and **ᾳ**, transliterated *ē̜*, *ō̜*, and *ā̜*) and is known as **iota subscript**. It does not change the pronunciation of the vowel.[8]

1.3.7.3 Vowel Lengthening and Compensation

The ancient Greeks avoided certain combinations of vowels and consonants, finding them too difficult or awkward to pronounce. If adding a suffix to a stem, for example, would bring about one of these combinations, letters drop out or are combined. When a letter drops out in Greek, it frequently leaves some indication of its former presence, often by **compensatory vowel lengthening** — that is, it "compensates" for the omitted letter by lengthening the vowel remaining. In such settings **ε** is often lengthened to **ει**, **o** to **ου**, and **α** (short) to **α** (long).

NOTE A common example of vowel lengthening occurs when a sigma would be expected between two vowels, the first of which is epsilon or alpha. This is called **intervocalic sigma**.

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6. Another way to categorize vowels is according to how they are formed in the mouth. The two scales are front-central-back and high-mid-low. It is unnecessary to go into this topic here, except to note that, as the pronunciation of modern Greek indicates, there is a tendency in Greek for most vowels to become high front vowels (the sound of *i* in *machine*). Consequently, there are many instances in nonliterary texts where iota or iota with another vowel is used in writing a word, where proper spelling would have had another vowel, such as an eta. This tendency is called itacism or iotacism.

7. In the optative mood, however, word-final **αι** and **οι** are long. See 30.4.1.

8. In some forms of printed Greek today, as well as in some writing of ancient Greek, the **ι** is written next to the long vowel (**αι**, **ηι**, **ωι**); this is called iota adscript.

In this context the sigma often drops out, and the vowels combine into a long form (e.g., **εσε** > **ε+ε** > **ει**). A number of verb endings have contractions after the intervocalic sigma drops out (e.g., **ε/ησαι** > **ε/ηαι** > **ῃ**).

1.3.7.4   Vowel Contraction

When vowels stand next to each other, they often (though not always) combine together, or "contract." We may summarize the rules of contraction as follows:[9]

ε:
- before long vowels and diphthongs is absorbed (e.g., **φιλέ+ω** > **φιλῶ** and **φιλέ+ου** > **φιλοῦ**)
- before **ε** lengthens to **ει** (e.g., **ἐφίλε+ε** > **ἐφίλει**)
- before **ο** lengthens to **ου** (e.g., **φιλέ+ομεν** > **φιλοῦμεν**)
- before **α/ᾳ** lengthens to **η/ῃ** (e.g., **λυε+σαι** > **λυε+αι** > **λυῃ**; note the dropping of the intervocalic sigma)

ο:
- before **ω** and **ου** is absorbed (e.g., **δηλό+ω** > **δηλῶ** and **δηλό+ου** > **δηλοῦ**)
- before **ε** or **ο** lengthens to **ου** (e.g., **δηλό+ομεν** > **δηλοῦμεν**)
- before **η** lengthens to **ω** (e.g., **δηλό+ητε** > **δηλῶτε**)
- before any **ι** changes to **οι** (e.g., **δηλό+ει** or **ῃ** or **οι** > **δηλοῖ**)

α:
- before **ο**, **ου,** or **ω** lengthens to **ω** (e.g., **φα+ος** > **φῶς**; **τιμά+ου** or **τιμά+ω** > **τιμῶ**)
- before any other vowel lengthens to **α** (long) (e.g., **τιμά+ητε** > **τιμᾶτε**)
- before any **ι** changes to **ᾳ** (e.g., **τιμά+ει** > **τιμᾷ**)

1.3.7.5   Crasis

The ancient Greeks did not like to end a word with a vowel and then begin the next word with a vowel, since this combination forced the speaker to pause between the words and break the flow of speaking. They often combined the two vowels, a practice that was followed more in earlier Greek than in the Greek of the New Testament. This process is called **crasis** (i.e., mixing). When the two words are combined, the resulting combined vowel is marked with a coronis, which resembles a smooth breathing mark.

The following combinations appear in the New Testament:

- **καὶ ἐάν** or **καὶ ἄν** > **κἄν**
- **καὶ ἐγώ** > **κἀγώ**
- **καὶ ἐκεῖ** > **κἀκεῖ**

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9. Students will not yet know what these forms are or what they mean, but should be able to recognize that vowel combining or contracting is taking place.

- **καὶ ἐκεῖθεν** > **κἀκεῖθεν**
- **καὶ ἐκεῖνος** > **κἀκεῖνος**
- **καὶ ἐμοί** > **κἀμόι**
- **τὰ αὐτά** > **ταὐτά**
- **τὸ ἐναντίον** > **τοὐναντίον**
- **τὸ ὄνομα** > **τοὔνομα**

Crasis is not always followed in the New Testament, even when it is possible.

1.3.7.6   Elision

In many contexts, instead of crasis (combining a word ending with a vowel with a word starting with a vowel), we have **elision**: a final short vowel in the first word is deleted, or elided, with an apostrophe marking the place of the deleted vowel. In the Greek of the New Testament, elision mostly occurs with prepositions and conjunctions.

   Examples include:

- **παρὰ ὧν** > **παρ᾽ ὧν**
- **ἀπὸ οὗ** > **ἀφ᾽ οὗ**

(Before rough breathing, as in the second example, **π** changes to **φ**; also in such a context, **τ** changes to **θ**, and **κ** changes to **ξ**.)

1.3.7.7   Diaeresis

Some Greek words contain consecutive vowels that could combine into a diphthong but that should remain two separate vowels. Because Greek manuscripts were written without word divisions, a way had to be found to distinguish the two cases. Scribes put a **diaeresis** (i.e., two dots) over a vowel if that vowel is meant to be pronounced separately from the vowel that precedes it. In the earliest manuscript of the Greek New Testament, a fragment from the Gospel of John (P.Ryl. 457, also known as $\mathfrak{P}^{52}$), there are two indications of diaeresis, the scribe indicating that vowels should not be combined.

   Examples found in the New Testament are:

- **ἰσχύϊ**
- **Μωϋσῆς** ("Moses")
- **πραΰς**
- **πραΰτης**

1.3.8   Consonants

The consonants may be categorized according to how and where the air used for pronunciation is impeded or redirected as the letter is pronounced.

▶ In the production of **liquids**, or **resonants**, the air is directed but not stopped in its flow through the mouth; the sound can be sustained.

The liquids, or resonants, are **λ** (lateral) and **ρ** (median), as well as the nasals. ("Lateral" and "median" refer to where the sound is produced in relation to the tongue, either on the sides of the tongue or in the middle.) Nasals, a subcategory of these consonants, are produced by the air being forced through the nasal cavity. The nasals are **μ** and **ν**, as well as the *ng* sound produced when **γ** precedes **γ**, **κ**, **ξ**, or **χ**.

▶ In the production of **stops**, or **mutes**, the air is completely stopped in its passage through the mouth.

Stops can be either **unvoiced** (or "voiceless"), which means that the vocal cords do not vibrate when the air passes through them, or **voiced**, which means that the vocal cords vibrate (and therefore have a pitch) when the air passes through them. The labial stops **π** and **β**, for example, differ only in that **π** is voiceless, and **β** is voiced.

▶ In the production of **fricatives**, or **continuants**, the air is partially, not completely, impeded as it passes through the mouth; friction is created.

Three of the fricatives are **φ**, **θ**, and **χ**. (As noted in 1.3.1, these letters were originally pronounced as a stop followed by a puff of air.) Sibilant fricatives have a hissing sound because of forcing the air through the closed front of the mouth. The only single sibilant is **σ/ς**. (**ζ**, **ξ**, and **ψ** are also sibilants, but they are double consonants created by the combination of sigma and another consonant. See the chart below.)

For both stops and fricatives, it is significant where the air flow is stopped or constricted. The air can be stopped or partially impeded by placing the lips together or in contact with the front teeth (bilabials or labials), by placing the tongue behind the front teeth where they meet the inside of the mouth (dentals or alveolars), or by bringing the middle of the tongue up to touch the roof of the mouth (velars or palatals).

▶ Some consonants are considered **double consonants** because they combine one other consonant with sigma, creating a new consonant.

The sound of this new consonant usually has traces of the two individual consonants (e.g., **π+σ > ψ**, pronounced *ps*).

1.3.8.1   Combination of Consonants, or Assimilation

It is important to learn the following chart of consonants, since in the formation of Greek words the pronunciation and combination of consonants (assimilation) follow predictable patterns. Knowing these patterns will aid in identifying various word forms and in finding their lexical or dictionary form. It will also be important when creating the form itself from its smaller parts.

For example, if a labial stop (**π** or **β**) or fricative (**φ**) is followed by a **σ**, the two letters become the double consonant **ψ**. Assimilation patterns for all stop consonants are as follows:

Place of stop or friction	Unvoiced stops	Voiced stops	Fricatives			Double consonants
Labial	**π**	**β**	**φ**			**ψ**
Dental	**τ**	**δ**	**θ**	+ **σ** >		**ζ** or **σ**
Velar	**κ**	**γ**	**χ**			**ξ**

There are many other rules for the combination of consonants, but the ones represented in the chart above are the most common and will be very important in analyzing various noun and verb forms. (We will refer to this chart in subsequent chapters.) Two other rules of combination not treated in the chart above are as follows:

- When a stop or fricative comes before **μ**, the following changes occur:
    labial (**π, β, φ**) + **μ** = **μμ**
    dental (**τ, δ, θ**) + **μ** = **σμ** (in verbs)
    velar (**κ, γ, χ**) + **μ** = **γμ** (in verbs).
- An unvoiced stop (**π, τ, κ**) before a word beginning with rough breathing becomes aspirated and hence a fricative (respectively, **φ, θ, χ**). For example, when **οὐκ** precedes **οὗτος**, the final **κ** actually appears as **χ**: **οὐχ οὗτος**.

Also, a final nu (**ν**), called **movable nu**, is frequently added to words ending in **ε** or **ι**. This addition was especially useful in creating smooth reading in Greek, although the Greek of the New Testament is not consistent in adding it.

1.3.8.2   Compensatory Lengthening and Consonants

In Greek, apart from a few exceptions such as **ἐκ** and **οὐκ**, words end only in a vowel or in the consonants **ν, ρ,** or **ς** (**ξ, ψ**). In Greek various sequences of consonants are more stable than others. For example, Greek speakers found the combinations **νσ** and **ντσ** to be unstable. As a result, when the letters **ντσ** would be expected to occur together, **τ** and **σ** usually combine as just **σ** (see chart above), leaving **νσ** (the sigma here is actually a double sigma, although it is still written as just one letter). But since **νσ** is also unstable, the **ν** often drops out, leaving the **σ** but requiring that a preceding short vowel be lengthened, often with **ε** being lengthened to **ει**, and **ο** to **ου**. For example, **οντσ** > **ονσ** > **ουσ**, or **εντσ** > **ενσ** > **εισ**, or **αντσ** > **ανσ** > **ασ** (with long **α**). This is a useful example to note for further reference in subsequent chapters.

1.4   Accents, Enclitics, and Proclitics

1.4.1   Accents

- The three accent marks in Greek are the **acute** (ά), the **grave** (ὰ), and the **circumflex** (ᾶ).

Most words in Greek have an accent mark. In earlier Greek, the accent was used to mark the intonation of words. One accent mark indicated rising intonation, as in the question "really?" Another indicated falling intonation, as in the exclamation "really!" And the third indicated rising and falling intonation, as in the "recognition" pronunciation of the word "oh!" (This last accent is a combination of the other two.) Although there is debate about how far New Testament Greek is removed from this scheme, most scholars believe that the accents in New Testament Greek indicated the stress placed on a syllable in pronunciation, rather than intonation. When pronouncing Greek words, stress the syllables that have an accent mark.

No matter how many syllables a word has in Greek, for the purposes of accent only the last three syllables are of relevance. There are five general rules of accent and two specific rules. With these rules in mind, one should be able to determine the accenting of most Greek words. Where deviations in accent occur, this information is useful for helping determine the identification of the word involved.

NOTE   For the purposes of accentuation, one must have some idea of how to identify Greek syllables. A syllable in Greek consists of a vowel and its preceding consonant(s), as well as any final consonants or doubled consonants after the vowel. Thus the word **γυναικός** consists of three syllables: **γυ**, **ναι**, **κος**. If several vowels stand in succession, a syllable may consist of only a single vowel. The word **οἰκία**, for example, consists of the following syllables: **οι**, **κι**, **α**. Syllables break between doubled consonants. Thus the word **καταλλάσσω** consists of four syllables: **κα**, **ταλ**, **λασ**, **σω**. The final three syllables of a word have names: antepenult (third to last), penult (second to last), and ultima (last).

General Rules of Accentuation
1. Each Greek word has only one accent, with a few exceptions specified below.
2. An **acute** accent may fall on any of the last three syllables of a word and may accent either a long or a short syllable (e.g., **ἄνθρωπος, λόγος, ἀνθρώπου, ἀρχή**). A **circumflex** accent may fall on either of the last two syllables of a word and may accent only a long syllable (e.g., **δῶρον, ἀρχῇ**). A **grave** accent may fall on only the last syllable. It is used only if an acute accent would have been used and if the word is followed by another accented word (e.g., **ἀρχὴ ἦν**). If a punctuation mark follows a word with an acute accent on the ultima, the acute accent does not change to grave (e.g., **ἀρχή, ἦν**).[10] Unaccented syllables are considered to have a grave accent, even though they receive no mark apart from the contexts specified here. This is worth noting when we discuss the contract verbs (see chs. 8 and 16; e.g., the spelling **φιλέὼ** is implied, and when the vowels combine, so do the accents, resulting in **φιλῶ**).

10. An exception to this rule involves the interrogative pronoun. See chapter 9.

3. If the ultima is short, the accent mark may fall on any of the last three syllables. If the ultima is short and the penult is long and is accented, it must have the circumflex (e.g., **δῶρον**, **σῶμα**).

4. If the ultima is long, the accent mark must fall on one of the last two syllables, not the antepenult. If the penult is accented, it must have the acute (e.g., **δώρου**).

5. If the ultima is long and is accented, it may have either the acute (changed to grave if followed by another word) or the circumflex accent.[11] In other words, the final syllable may have any of the three accents.

Specific Rules of Accentuation

- The accenting of finite verbs is **recessive**. That is, the accent *recedes* as far as possible from the end of the word: to the antepenult or, for shorter forms, to the first syllable. (In each case the General Rules determine the specific accent mark used.) Recessive accenting, which is extremely straightforward, is the pattern for virtually every finite verb form. ("Finite" verbs include all verb forms of the four moods — indicative, subjunctive, optative, and imperative. They do *not* include infinitives or participles. See 3.1 and 4.5.3.)

- The accenting of all other accented words is **retentive.** That is, each word *retains* the accent of its form in the lexicon (i.e., any standard Greek vocabulary list) unless, for any of its nonlexical forms, the general accent rules require moving the accent back toward the end of the word. In particular, all nouns and adjectives have their accent on the antepenult, penult, or ultima of their lexical form, which students must learn for each word. Similarly, the verbal nouns (i.e., infinitives) and verbal adjectives (i.e., participles) have their accent on the antepenult, penult, or ultima, which students must learn for each tense-voice combination. (See charts of the accents of the various combinations on p. 392 below.) The lexical form of nouns and infinitives is the nominative singular; that of adjectives and participles, the masculine nominative singular. Retentive accenting, although simple in conception, has quite a few irregularities, which are noted below along with the various examples and paradigms.

Many recent Greek grammar books do not teach accents. Although this book does not dwell on them extensively, a simple knowledge of accents can be quite valuable, if for no other reason than helping to distinguish certain words in Greek. We noted above that words can differ only in their breathing marks (i.e., rough vs. smooth), and the same is true with regard to accents. Below are a few examples of very common forms of words distinguished only by accent. The student will not know these words at this time, but these examples demonstrate the importance of paying attention to accent. In subsequent lessons, it will become clear that knowing accents will help the student to parse, or identify, certain Greek words.

- In the following pairs, the first word (with no accent mark) is a form of the article ("the"); the second (identical to the first except for its accent mark) is a form of the relative pronoun: **ὁ-ὅ**, **οἱ-οἵ**, **ἡ-ἥ**, **αἱ-αἵ**.

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11. In accenting nouns that have their accent on the ultima, certain forms of the noun have the acute accent, and others have the circumflex.

- Similarly, the first word in the following pairs is a form of the interrogative pronoun ("who? what?"); the second, a form of the indefinite pronoun ("someone, something"): **τίς-τις, τίνες-τινες, τίνα-τινα**.
- Other examples: **ἀλλά** is the conjunction "but," and **ἄλλα** is an adjective that means "other, another." **ἆρα** is a question word expecting a negative answer, **ἄρα** is an inferential word translated "therefore, consequently," and **ἀρά** is a noun that means "cursing, curse." **ἅγια** is one form of the adjective **ἅγιος**, and **ἁγία** is another. **εἰ** is the conditional particle "if," and **εἶ** is a verb form that means "you are."
- Many verb forms are distinguished only by their accent mark. Students will learn these in the course of the following chapters.

1.4.2 Enclitic Words

▶ An **enclitic** is a word that does not normally take its own accent because it is read closely with the preceding word, which provides for its accentuation.

As we saw in 1.4.1, an acute accent can fall on one of the final three syllables in a word, a circumflex on one of the final two syllables, and a grave on only the final syllable. In some cases this accentuation is sufficient to cover the enclitic as well; in other cases, the enclitic receives an acute accent on its second syllable, or the accented word receives a second accent (an acute on the ultima). An enclitic takes its own accent when it stands at the beginning of a sentence (since no word precedes it there) or when it receives emphasis. Also, when one enclitic follows another, the first one receives an accent mark. The common enclitic words are the following:

- first and second person singular personal pronouns (**μου, μοι, με, σου, σοι, σε**)
- the indefinite pronoun **τις** (**τινές, τινῶν**, etc.)
- adverbs such as **οὐ, ποτέ, πως**
- particles (see 6.2.2) such as **γε, τε, τοι**
- most present indicative forms of the verbs **εἰμί** and **φημί**.

Students will learn all these forms in subsequent lessons.

The following table, which shows all the accentuation patterns occurring with enclitics, is included for reference purposes only. Here **ά** and **ᾶ** represent an accented syllable, an underline stands for an unaccented syllable, an underline in parentheses is an optional syllable, and the symbol "x" represents a syllable that receives an accent (underlined in the examples) because of the presence of the enclitic.

Accented word	Enclitic	Example
(_ _) ά	_	καιρός τις
(_ _) ά	_ _	καιρόν τινα
(_ _) ᾶ	_	ψυχῆς σου
(_ _) ᾶ	_ _	αὐτῷ τινες

(_) ά _	_	θρόνος τις
(_) ά _	_ x	ἀνθρώπων τιν<u>ῶ</u>ν
(_) ᾶ x	_	δεῖξ<u>όν</u> μοι
(_) ᾶ x	_ _	γυναῖκ<u>ά</u> τινα
ά _ x	_	ἄνθρωπ<u>ός</u> τις
ά _ x	_ _	ἄνθρωπ<u>όν</u> τινα

An acute accent does not change to grave when it precedes an enclitic. A few words are composed of words that have combined with enclitics to form a new word and hence appear to violate the rules of accent (e.g., **ὥστε** = **ὡς** + **τε**).

1.4.3   Proclitic Words

▶ A **proclitic** is a word that does not take its own accent, unless it precedes an enclitic, because it is read closely with the following word.

Proclitics include **ὁ**, **ἡ**, **οἱ**, **αἱ**, **εἰς**, **ἐκ**, **ἐν**, **εἰ**, **ὡς**, **οὐ**.[12] If a proclitic precedes an enclitic, the proclitic follows the rules specified above for accenting of words preceding enclitics (e.g., **εἴ πως**).

1.5   Punctuation

Edited texts of the Greek New Testament do not always agree on punctuation. In fact, the two major editions — the Nestle-Aland (27th ed.) and the UBSGNT (3rd and 4th eds.) — have essentially the same printed text but in some cases different punctuation.[13] Punctuation is used to indicate whether certain clauses are questions or statements, or to indicate when major and minor breaks occur. It is an addition to the original text not found consistently or in quantity before the sixth century A.D. Hence there is room for editors to disagree on punctuation, although in some instances grammar can help make this decision.

The four punctuation marks are **period** (.), which indicates a complete break between sentences, as it does in English; **comma** (,), which indicates a minor break between phrases or clauses, also as in English; **raised dot**, or **colon** (·), which indicates an intermediate-level break, somewhat equivalent to the English semicolon or colon; and **question mark** (;), which looks like an English semicolon.

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12. If **οὐ** is used to mean "no" or at the end of a sentence, it is accented **οὔ**.

13. E. Nestle and K. Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece,* 27th ed. (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1993); K. Aland et al., *The Greek New Testament,* 3rd and 4th eds. (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1975, 1993).

1.6   Summary

After studying this chapter, you should be familiar with:

The following concepts:

- alphabet (1.3.1)
- accents (1.4.1)
- punctuation (1.5)

Definitions for

- smooth breathing (1.3.6)
- rough breathing (1.3.6)
- liquids, or resonants (1.3.8)
- stops, or mutes (1.3.8)
- fricatives, or continuants (1.3.8)
- double consonants (1.3.8)
- enclitics (1.4.2)
- proclitics (1.4.3)