

The Origin of the Recessive Accent in Greek



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I.—THE ORIGIN OF THE RECESSIVE ACCENT IN GREEK.

Jacob Wackernagel, in KZ. XXIII 457 fg., made the important discovery that the so-called 'recessive' accent in the finite forms of the Greek verb represents a substitute for an older Indo-European fact in sentence-accentuation, to wit, that the finite verb in principal clauses was treated as an enclitic. This enclisis was extended in Greek to the finite verb in both principal and subordinate clauses, but was, on the other hand, restricted by a law according to which an enclitic word may not contain more than two syllables and three moras. Therefore only two syllables at the end are allowed to be barytone: *φέρωμεν* for enclitic $\text{ᾠ} \text{ *φέρωμεν}$; three moras at the utmost, and that only in a polysyllabic form, ending in a trochaic cadence: *λελοίπων* for $\text{ᾠ} \text{ *λελοιπων}$; *φέρωμεν* for $\text{ᾠ} \text{ *φερωμεν}$. Elsewhere only two moras were left barytone: *φερόμεθα* for $\text{ᾠ} \text{ *φερομεθα}$; *φέρωμεν* for $\text{ᾠ} \text{ *φερομεν}$; *φέρω* for $\text{ᾠ} \text{ *φερω}$; *οἶδα* (i. e. **Fóida*) for $\text{ᾠ} \text{ *οἶδα}$. In words containing altogether but two moras, one was left barytone: *λίπες*, augmentless aorist for $\text{ᾠ} \text{ *λιπες}$; *βῆ* (i. e. **βέε*), augmentless aorist for $\text{ᾠ} \text{ *βῆ}$. Monosyllabic forms of one mora are accented, so that no mora is left toneless: *βάν*, *σάν*, *φθάν*, augmentless aorists for $\text{ᾠ} \text{ *βᾶν}$, etc.

We may refrain at present from any attempt at justifying the derivation of these 'recessively' accented verbal types from the assumed enclisis: we shall return to that question in the end. It is enough to state that these accentual types are one and all derivable from the enclitic theory, and that they represent every conceivable manifestation of the 'recessive' mode of accentuation, providing only it is remembered that words of more than three