

THE Morphology OF Biblical Greek



A Companion to
Basics of Biblical Greek
and
The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament

William D. Mounce

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OF
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Greek



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This text is dedicated to

William Sanford LaSor.

My professor and friend, who always put time
with his students ahead of his own professional
advancement, and who tried to teach me what
inductive language study is all about.

Morphology of Biblical Greek
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Requests for information should be addressed to:
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Preface

I hate memorizing words, especially principal parts. But it seems that all I did when I was learning Greek was to memorize, or at least try to memorize. Especially those irregular forms. Question: "Why does the aorist passive of ἀκούω have a σ before the θ (ἤκούσθην)?" Answer: "It's irregular, so memorize it." I hate memorizing!

At seminary I was introduced to Prof. William LaSor and his inductive grammar, and later to the works by Profs. Robert Funk and H.W. Smyth. It was here that I first realized that Greek was a tremendously regular language, if you know the rules. My debt to these three scholars cannot be overestimated.

As I learned these rules, memorization not only became easier but unnecessary in many situations, especially of principal parts. I found that it is essential to think in terms of verbal roots. As we all know, once you know the forms of, ἔρχομαι, for example, you know the forms of eighteen other verbs. But more than that, if you can see all the verbs that form their principal parts the same way side by side, there is something about it that helps you remember what they are even without memorization. Having words sorted by category and not alphabetically as they are in this text may be a nuisance at first because you first have to look up their category in the *Index*, but in the long run we feel it is the best arrangement. You do not need to memorize all the categories, or what we call "tags"; it is helpful, however, to learn the basic tags as we have laid them out starting on page xviii.

After many years of working on this text, I had to lay it aside for several years while I taught, worked on other projects, and completed my *Analytical Lexicon* and *Basics of Biblical Greek*, which is based on what I had learned doing the *Morphology*. Both of these works are keyed into the *Morphology* for easy reference. And while I see many areas that I would like to enlarge, it is now ready to be shared with others who dislike memorization as much as I.

MBG is designed primarily as an aid to knowing New Testament Greek. While using the term *Biblical* in the name *Morphology of Biblical Greek* may be a bit of a misnomer since it does not deal heavily with the LXX, MBG does incorporate a significant amount of material that goes beyond the New Testament, including variants, the LXX, and Hellenistic Greek in general.

Despite the size and relative uniqueness of this work, it is far from being exhaustive. It does not deal with pure phonology and morphology; the rules listed at the beginning are designed to be a quick reference guide for the rest of the book. It does not delve into word formation (cf BDF §108-125, MH 267-410, Robertson 143-176, Smyth §822-899). It does not attempt to replace the discussions in *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (F. Blass, A. Debrunner, R. Funk), *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* (J.H. Moulton, W.F. Howard), or *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (W. Bauer, W.F. Arndt, F.W. Gingrich, F.W. Danker).

The primary purpose of MBG is to categorize all the words in the New Testa-

ment, and others, assemble all the rules that govern their inflection, and present that information in a way that the student can understand without first having to learn the entire field of morphology. As such it functions as an introduction to the more detailed analyses of the language by these texts and others.

Of the many things I learned writing this text, two stand out. Students cannot approach Greek as if it were a “dead” language. True, Koine Greek is no longer spoken, but what we have in the New Testament is a snapshot of a language that was alive and changing. Secondly, language study must be descriptive, not prescriptive. When I started Greek I thought, for example, that either a word had a second aorist or it didn’t. But then you find the three aorist passive forms of ἀνοίγω (ἠνεώχθην, ἠνοίχθην, ἠνοίγην). Then you realize that the same root can form its present either as ῥήσσω or ῥήγνυμι, and even the compounds to switch back and forth between these two forms of the same verb. The best we can do is describe what we see and allow for the variations that accompany any living language.

I would be remiss in not mentioning a few people who were instrumental in the writing of the book. William Sanford LaSor, former professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, was one of the truly great pioneers in inductive language study. It was through his writing and our continuing friendship that the seed was planted and watered that eventually resulted in *MBG*. The three-volume grammar of Robert Funk was also enthralling; anyone familiar with his work will see my indebtedness to him. The monumental work of Hebert Weir Smyth was used as the final authority. These three grammars are heavily cross-referenced for further study, and because I wanted to give credit to whom credit is due. Dr. Walter W. Wessel was also a tremendous help and encouragement, answering my unusual questions at any time, day or night. Among the many students that used and worked on *MBG* I would like to thank especially John Stone, Lester Yamashita, Brad Rigney, Bob Ramsey, and Ian and Kathleen Lopez. Special thanks to Ed van der Maas, Stan Gundry, and Zondervan for publishing a book they felt was of academic importance even though it is not destined for blockbuster sales, and to my editor, Verlyn Verbrugge, for his careful work and many fine suggestions. Thanks also to Scotte Meredith, for shouldering the burden of StarSoft while I finished this text, and to Garland Avenue Alliance Church for their support.

I must also thank my good friend Μῆλον as well as *Gramcord* and *acCordance*, two superb computer programs that were instrumental in writing *MBG*.

But most of my thanks must go to Robin, who has constantly encouraged me to “play with my Greek.” If there ever was a wife who supported her husband in all his endeavors, it surely is she, even to the point of encouraging me to quit a secure job and move to Spokane so I could finish this and other writing projects.

What started as a frustration has developed into what I trust will be a useful Greek aid. At the core of this study is a profound reverence for the biblical text and a desire to understand God’s word as completely as possible. May this grammar be as much help to you as it has been to me.

Bill Mounce

How to use *MBG*

MBG is unique in its structure. It is worth your time to study the following discussion.

Numbering system

The numbering system is straightforward. The pattern is as follows.

§30

§31

§32.1

§32.2

§32.3a

§32.3b

§32.3c(1)

§32.3c(2)

§32.3c(3a)

§32.3c(3b)

§32.3d

§32.4

§33

Nouns, adjectives, and verbs follow a similar pattern. Nouns are prefaced with "n-," adjectives with "a-," simple verbs with "v-," and compound verbs with "cv-." (Only compound verbs formed with prepositions are listed as "cv-" verbs; compounds formed with other words such as nouns, adverbs, etc. are listed as "v-" verbs. See pp. 248f. for the rationale.)

n-1

n-2

n-3a

n-3b

n-3c(1)

n-3c(2)

n-3c(3a)

n-3c(3b)

n-3c(4)

n-3d

n-4

Nouns are divided into three categories.

n-1	First declension	ῥα, ῥας
n-2	Second declension	λόγος, λόγου
n-3	Third declension	σάρξ, σαρκός

It is helpful to learn the basic subdivisions of third declension nouns.

n-3a	Stems ending in a labial	ῥαψ, ῥαβος
n-3b	Stems ending in a velar	σάρξ, σαρκός
n-3c	Stems ending in a dental	ἐλπίς, ἐλπίδος
n-3d	Stems ending in a sibilant	γένος, γένους
n-3e	Stems ending in a semi-vowel	πόλις, πόλεως
n-3f	Stems showing different degrees of ablaut	πατήρ, πατρός
n-3g	Irregular nouns	Ἰησοῦς, Ἰησοῦ

Adjectives are divided into five categories, depending on how many endings are used and from which declension.

a-1	2-1-2	ἅγιος, ἁγία, ἅγιον
a-2	3-1-3	πᾶς, πᾶσα, πᾶν
a-3	2-2	ἁμαρτωλός, ἁμαρτωλόν
a-4	3-3	ἀληθής, ἀληθές
a-5	Irregular and indeclinable roots	δύο; ἕξ

Verbs are divided into v-1 through v-8, depending upon how they modify their verbal root in order to form their present tense stem.

v-1	Present tense = verbal root	*λυ · λύω · ἔλυσα
v-2	Present tense = verbal root + ι	*βαλ · βάλλω · ἔβαλον
v-3	Present tense = verbal root + ν	*αὐξα · αὐξάνω · αὐξήσω
v-4	Present tense = verbal root + τ	*βαπ · βάπτω · βάψω
v-5	Present tense = verbal root + σκ	*ἄρε · ἀρέσκω · ἀρέσω
v-6	Athematic (μι) verbs	*δο · δίδωμι
v-7	Verbal roots that undergo ablaut	ἀκούω · ἀκήκοα
v-8	Verbs that use more than one verbal root to form their different tense stems.	ἐσθίω · φάγομαι

It is helpful to learn the basic subdivisions of v-1 verbs.

v-1a	Roots ending in ι or ʃ	λύω
v-1b	Roots ending in a stop	βλέπω
v-1c	Roots ending in a liquid/nasal	φέρω
v-1d	Roots ending in a vowel	
v-1d(1)	α contracts	ἀγαπάω

v-1d(2)	ε contracts	ποιέω
v-1d(3)	ο contracts	πληρόω

MBG uses, as far as possible, linguistically correct terminology such as “dental,” “assimilation,” etc. While this can be confusing at first, it is important for the student to learn the basic terminology. In the section on rules, you do not actually have to know the terminology; the charts explain what the terminology is saying. The serious student should learn the classification scheme for consonants (§11) and especially the “Square of Stops” (§12). Most find the terminology helpful and automatic after several encounters.

Charts and lists

There are several ways you can use *MBG*. The simplest is to view it as a collection of charts and lists. I would encourage you to page through the text and become familiar with what it contains.

Inductive

In class we use *MBG* inductively. As we are reading through the biblical text and come across a form that doesn’t make sense, we check the index to get the word’s morphological tag and look it up. Once we see why the word is formed the way it is, it is easier to recognize the form the next time it is encountered. Here are some examples.

1. You have noticed that whenever a consonantal stop (π β φ, κ γ χ, τ δ θ) is followed by a σ, there are consistent changes (such as in the future and aorist). Rather than simply memorizing what happens in each case, you want to learn the basic rules. So you look up in the table of contents, and find that §22 is entitled “Stop + σ.” There you will see why σ becomes ψ (βλέψω), ξ (διώξω), or drops out (χάρις).
2. σάββατον is a seemingly regular second declension neuter noun. You know that the dative plural of ἔργον, for example, is ἔργοις and therefore would expect to find σάββατοις. Yet you find σάββασιν thirteen times, an ending you are used to finding on third declension nouns (e.g., χάρισιν). What is happening? You turn to the index, find that σάββατον is a n-2c noun, and look the category up. You find the paradigm and the listing of all the nouns declined like σάββατον.

In the footnote to σάββατον you read, “Has a dative plural form σάββασιν formed by analogy to third declension neuter nouns with roots ending in τ (n-3c[4,5]): *σαββατ + σι.”

3. How does ἀκούω become ἀκήκοα in the perfect? If you turn to the discussion of reduplication (§32), as you skim through you will find that there is something called “Attic Reduplication” (§32.6). There you read that the vowel

and consonant are both reduplicated, and the second vowel is then lengthened. One of the examples is,

ἀκούω *ακο ▶ ακακο ▶ ἀκήκοα (v-1a[8]).

You could also find this information by looking ἀκούω up in the index, find it is a v-1a(8) verb, look it up in the section on principal parts where the perfect tense stem ἀκήκοα is listed. There you will see a footnote explaining that in the perfect ἀκούω undergoes “Attic Reduplication,” which is discussed at §32.6.

4. You have wondered why there is an iota in the present tense αἶρω but in every other tense it is not there. In the index you find that αἶρω is a v-2d(2) verb. There you find the following introduction.

“The present undergoes significant changes. When ι is added to λ (v-2d[1]), they produce λλ (§26.6). In the other four classes, ι becomes vocalic ι, and the final stem consonant and the ι undergo metathesis (§7.6; §26.7).¹ (ὀφείλω follows the pattern of the latter four classes.) Therefore, when looking at the tenses other than the present, remember that the λλ or the ι is a factor only in the present. It does not have to be accounted for in the other tenses.”

You can now skim down to the word and you see its entry.

αἶρω² ἀρῶ ἦρα ἦρκα ἦρμαι ἦρθην

The principal parts are listed for every word that forms its principal parts just like αἶρω, and the footnotes give you compounds and any further explanation necessary to understand the forms of the principal parts. Compound verbs formed with prepositions are footnoted under their simple verb.

The morphological tags for each word can become detailed. Not many will remember what “v-1d(2c)” stands for. What works for us is to memorize the basic divisions listed on pp. xvii - xix. If the word fits in one of the lesser-known categories, follow the tags as they are printed in the header of each page.

Deductive

Many brave souls in my classes use MBG deductively, reading through from cover to cover. Of course, there is too much information to memorize, but it gave

¹ αρι ▶ αιρ; επι ▶ ειρ; ανι ▶ αιν; ενι ▶ ειν. Smyth (§519) and LaSor (§24.2553) say that the ι drops and the preceding vowel is lengthened to compensate. Funk (§484.40) says in the case of ανι/αρι, ι is inserted (epenthesis) and the ι dropped. In the case of ενι/επι, the ι is dropped and the preceding vowel is lengthened in compensation. Morphology is not an exact science, and all three explanations achieve the same result.

² ἀπαίρω, ἐξαίρω, ἐπαίρω (in N.T. only as passive), μεταίρω, συναίρω, ὑπεραίρω. On the augment see §31.5d.

them the feel for the language and the arrangement of the text, both of which were invaluable.

MBG is broken down into eight basic divisions.

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| §1-§9 | Vowel changes. Sections §1-§9 discuss the types of changes we see with vowels. If you have a question about contractions, ablaut, etc., this is the place to go. |
| §10-§28 | Consonantal changes. Sections §10-§28 discuss the types of changes we see with consonants. Whereas vocalic changes are basically well known, consonantal changes are rarely taught and yet are the key in understanding especially the third declension and principal parts. |
| §28-§29 | Accents. Here we look at the rules for accents, and those situations where knowing accents can help translation. |
| §30-§36 | Verb formation. Sections §30-§36 contain the rules for augmentation, reduplication, a brief introduction to the formation of tense stems, tense and mood formatives, connecting vowels, personal endings, and movable <i>v</i> . |
| §40-§96 | Mood and tense formation. Sections §40-§96 discuss verbal formation. It is broken down between the moods (indicative, subjunctive, optative, imperative), including the infinitive and participle. The indicative is further divided into the different tenses. Here you can find paradigms of almost any verbal form you wish, lists of special formations such as Attic futures, second aorists, verbs inserting <i>σ</i> in their tense stems, etc. |
| Nouns, adj. | The discussions of nouns and adjectives are straightforward. Nouns are divided into declensions, and adjectives are categorized depending upon how many endings are used in their inflection in different genders. |
| Principal parts | The discussion of principal parts will probably be the most beneficial aspect of <i>MBG</i> . You should read the introduction. If your question has to do with how a principal part is formed, this is the place to go. It does not discuss personal endings (§36). |

Referenced Bibliography and Abbreviations

ALGNT	<i>The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament</i> , William D. Mounce (Zondervan, 1993).
BAGD	<i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> , Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, Frederick W. Danker (The University of Chicago Press, 1979).
BBG	<i>The Basics of Biblical Greek</i> , William D. Mounce (Zondervan, 1993).
BDF	<i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> , F. Blass, A. Debrunner, Robert W. Funk (The University of Chicago Press, 1961).
Carson	<i>Greek Accents: A Student's Manual</i> , D.A. Carson (Baker, 1985).
Funk	<i>A Beginning-Intermediate Grammar of Hellenistic Greek</i> , Robert W. Funk (Scholars Press, 1973), 3 vols.
LaSor	<i>Handbook of New Testament Greek</i> , William Sanford LaSor (Eerdmans, 1973), 2 vols.
LS	<i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> , Henry Stuart Jones, Roderick McKenzie, E.A. Barber (Oxford, 1977).
MBG	<i>The Morphology of Biblical Greek</i> , William D. Mounce (Zondervan, 1994).
MH	<i>A Grammar of New Testament Greek</i> , James Hope Moulton, Wilbert Francis Howard, vol. 2, <i>Accidence and Word-Formation</i> (T. & T. Clark, 1979).
Robertson	<i>A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research</i> , A.T. Robertson (Broadman, 1934).
Smyth	<i>Greek Grammar</i> , Herbert Weir Smyth (Harvard University Press, 1920).
ι	Consonantal iota, discussed at §27.
Ϝ	Digamma, discussed at §28.
§	Section number in MBG and other reference works.
acc	Accusative
dat	Dative
gen	Genitive
nom	Nominative
pl	Plural
sg	Singular
T.R.	Textus Receptus

Phonology

Introduction to Vocalic Change (§1)

One of the problems with many morphological texts is that they assume that the beginning student understands the basics of the field of morphology. What follows is our attempt to explain, in as simple and untechnical language as possible, what happens to vowels in Greek.

Every language has ways that people like to speak and ways that they do not. Certain sounds appeal to them. Others do not. For example, English speakers do not like the pause that is necessary to pronounce the word “a” when it is followed by another word that begins with a vowel. Since vowels are produced by air flowing out of the mouth, you have to make an unnatural stop after the “a” in order to make the second vowel understandable. Therefore, we use an “a” in front of words beginning with a consonant, and an “an” if the next word begins with a vowel. The “n” makes it so that the speaker does not have to pronounce two vowel sounds in a row. Greek is no different, and in §6 you will see all the ways the Greeks got around this “unnatural stop,” which is technically called “hiatus.”

There are other considerations that come into play in explaining the behavior of vowels. For example, in all languages, vowels are pronounced differently from one location to another. The “i” in “fire” is pronounced differently in Minnesota, Kentucky, and Texas. Likewise Greek had its different dialects that must be considered. There also is the matter of the influence of foreign speakers on a language.

Morphology (a study of the written form of the language) is directly controlled by **phonology** (how the language was spoken). In other words, what we read was determined by how it was spoken. If one vowel followed another and both could be blended into one sound, they did so (contraction). If not, the word was syllabified between the two vowels. If one word ended in a vowel and the next word began with the vowel, the first vowel could drop out (apocope) to help pronunciation. The changes are not mysterious and irrational. They follow specific rules based upon the nature of the spoken language.

Another thing that is helpful to understand is that the vocalic changes we will be discussing all occurred before the word assumed the shape as we now have it. For example, §2.10 says that when a two-syllable word originally had a vowel-sigma-vowel pattern, the sigma dropped out but the two vowels did not contract. As far as the people of the New Testament times were concerned, the word θεος never really occurred. The σ had dropped out many years earlier, and nowhere in the New Testament does it ever occur. But at one time the σ was there, and it explains why the ε and ο do not contract to ου in θεός.

This is our point. The changes that we will be discussing are not changes you can see in the New Testament. They are changes that went into making the word appear in the form in which it now does in the New Testament. They are what happened when different suffixes and endings were put on tense stems. They are what happened as the language evolved through influences of various Greek dialects and other languages, as well as the evolution due to the natural simplification process of any language through the years.

Those who have done work in phonology will recognize that this is a simplification, but a simplification that is necessary for those who are first starting out in morphological studies.

Vowel Contractions (§2)

Contractions of Single Vowels

§2.1

Chart

	α	ϵ	η	ι	υ	o	ω
α	α^3	α^7	α^7	$\alpha\iota^2$	$\alpha\upsilon^2$	ω^5	ω^5
ϵ	η^7	$\epsilon\iota^4$	η^3	$\epsilon\iota^2$	$\epsilon\upsilon^2$	$\omega\upsilon^6$	ω^5
η	η^7	η^3	η^3	η^2	$\eta\upsilon^2$	ω^5	ω^5
o	ω^5	$\omega\upsilon^6$	ω^5	$\omega\iota^2$	$\omega\upsilon^2$	$\omega\upsilon^4$	ω^{35}
ω	ω^5	ω^5	ω^5	ω^2	$\omega\upsilon^2$	ω^{35}	ω^{35}

The superscripts refer to the rule number that discusses that particular contraction (e.g., "3" = §2.3). For a fuller discussion showing long and short vowels, see Smyth §59. See also *MH* 89-92.

The seven vowels are α , ϵ , η , ι , o , υ , and ω . ϵ and o are always short, η and ω are always long. α , ι , and υ can be either short or long.

§2.2

The basic rule is as follows:

- like vowels assimilate to their common long (cf. §2.3).
- unlike vowels assimilate, either the second to the first (**progressive assimilation**, e.g., $\alpha\epsilon \rightarrow \alpha$), or the first to the second (**regressive assimilation**, e.g., $\epsilon\eta \rightarrow \eta$).
- If the second vowel is an υ or ι , then the two vowels form a diphthong. If the first vowel is long and the second ι , then the ι subscript (cf. §2.11-18).

There are two ways to give the vowel contraction rules. The first moves from the uncontracted to the contracted. The second moves from the contracted back to the uncontracted. We list the former as the basic rules (e.g., §2.4) and the latter as sub-rules (e.g., §2.4a). *BBG* follows the sub-rules. Smyth's rules are at §48-59.

§2.3 Two like vowels form their common¹ long.

α	+	α	→	α		ε	+	η	→	η
ι	+	ι	→	ι		η	+	ε	→	η
υ	+	υ	→	υ		ο	+	ω	→	ω
η	+	η	→	η		ω	+	ο	→	ω
ω	+	ω	→	ω						

§2.4 Exceptions to §2.3.

ε	+	ε	→	ει		ποιε	+	ετε	→	ποιεῖτε
ο	+	ο	→	ου		φανερο	+	ομεν	→	φανερούμεεν

These diphthongs are “spurious” (§2.14).

§2.4a ει is formed by εε.

ει	←	εε		ποιεῖτε	←	ποιεετε
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§2.4b ου is formed by εο (§2.6), οε (§2.6), and οο.

ου	←	εο		ποιούμεεν	←	ποιεομεν
ου	←	οε		πληρούτε	←	πληροετε
ου	←	οο		πληρούμεεν	←	πληροομεν

§2.5 ο or ω overcome α, ε, or η regardless of the order, and form ω.

α	+	ο	→	ω		ἀγαπα	+	ομεν	→	ἀγαπώμεεν
ο	+	η	→	ω		φανερο	+	ητε	→	φανερῶτε

§2.5a ω is formed from almost any combination of omicron or omega with any other vowel, except for §2.4b (also §2.6).

§2.6 Exceptions to §2.5.

ε	+	ο	→	ου		ποιε	+	ομαι	→	ποιούμεαι
ο	+	ε	→	ου		φανερο	+	ετε	→	φανερούτε

These diphthongs are “spurious” (§2.14).

¹ ε and η are viewed as common, as are ο and ω.

§2.7 If α comes before ε or η, they will contract to α. If ε or η comes before α, they will contract to η (“progressive assimilation,” §2.2).

α	+	ε	→	α	γεννα	+	ετε	→	γεννᾶτε (ind.)
α	+	η	→	α	γεννα	+	ητε	→	γεννᾶτε (subj.)
ε	+	α	→	α					
η	+	α	→	α					

§2.7a α is formed from αε.

§2.7b η is formed from εα.

§2.8 When three vowels come into contact, and if the first two or the last two do not form a diphthong, then the second and third vowels contract first, and the result contracts with the first vowel. In other words, contraction is from the right to the left (“progressive assimilation”; §2.2; Smyth §55). This is especially frequent in contract verbs.

αει	→	αι	→	α	ἀγαπαει	→	ἀγαπᾶ
εαι	→	εα	→	η	ποιεσαι	→	ποιεαι → ποιηι → ποιῇ

§2.9 Sometimes when a long and a short vowel come into contact, they will not contract. This is often due to “analogy” (§3.4; Smyth §57).

§2.10 Sometimes there is a two-syllable word that had the pattern “vowel-sigma-vowel” or “vowel-digamma-vowel,” and the intervocalic sigma (§25.5) or digamma (§27.4) has dropped out. In cases like this, those remaining two vowels normally do not contract.

For example, θεός is from the stem *θεσο. The σ dropped out and the ε and ο did not contract to ου.

They can contract in polysyllabic forms (θεσός + κῦδος → θουκυδίδης; Smyth §58)

Contractions with Diphthongs

§2.11 A **diphthong** (δίφθογγος; “having two sounds”) consists of two vowels that produce one sound. The first vowel must be an open vowel (α, ε, η, ο, ω), and the second vowel must be a closed vowel (ι, υ) form.¹ “Open” and “closed” refer to the relative shape of the mouth when pronouncing the vowels. Diphthongs are considered “long” for accent purposes except for final αι and οι (except in the optative, where they are considered long).

¹ The only possible exception to this is υ + ι, which can contract to υ (Smyth §51c) or can remain υι.

Possible diphthongs in Greek are αι, ει, οι, αυ, ευ, ου, ηυ, υι. The so-called “improper” diphthongs are α, η, and ω (cf. §2.18).

§2.12 A closed and an open vowel never form a diphthong, and the word is syllabified between the two vowels (e.g., αἰ ὀν).

§2.13 Contraction chart for diphthongs

In the following charts, the ει and ου diphthongs are separated depending whether they are “spurious” or “genuine.” See §2.14 for definitions and §2.13c for why this distinction is important in understanding vowel contractions. Some of these combinations may be theoretical; it is questionable whether they ever occur.

	αι	ει (spurious)	ει (genuine)	οι	
α	α	α	α	ω	
ε	η	ει	ει	οι	
η	η	η	η	ω	
ο	ω	ου	οι	οι	
ω	ω	ω	ω	ω	
	αυ	ευ	ηυ	ου (spurious)	ου (genuine)
α	αυ	αυ	αυ	ω	ωυ
ε	ηυ	ευ	ηυ	ου	ου
η	ηυ	ηυ	ηυ	ω	ωυ
ο	ωυ	ου	ωυ	ου	ου
ω	ωυ	ωυ	ωυ	ω	ωυ
	υι ¹		α	η	ω
α	αυ		α	α	ω
ε	ευ		η	η	ω
η	ηυ		η	η	ω
ο	ου		ω	οι	ω
ω	ωυ		ω	ω	ω

§2.13a **Single vowel + diphthong** (beginning with the same vowel as the single vowel). When a single vowel is followed by a diphthong that begins with the same vowel as the single vowel, then the two similar vowels combine into one.

¹ Our assumption is that the ι drops out. υι is not listed in Smyth (§59).

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The Morphology of Biblical Greek

A Companion to *Basics of Biblical Greek* and
The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament

William D. Mounce



The Morphology of Biblical Greek explains, in a way second-year Greek students can understand, how Greek words are formed. It shows that Greek word formation follows a limited set of rules. Once these rules are understood, it becomes clear that forms which once seemed to be irregular or an exception actually follow these morphological rules.

The Morphology of Biblical Greek has five parts:

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3. Paradigms for every type of noun and adjective form, with all the words that belong in each category and any peculiarities of a given word.
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The Morphology of Biblical Greek contains the most complete set of paradigms for nouns, verbs, adjectives, and pronouns available for New Testament Greek.

William D. Mounce (Ph.D., University of Aberdeen) for many years taught Greek and New Testament at Azusa Pacific University in Southern California. He is the author of the highly successful *Basics of Biblical Greek*, *The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*, and the forthcoming volume on the Pastoral Epistles in the *Word Biblical Commentary*.