

#### 7.4: Where to put the accent?

In 7.3 you learned about “rules of limitation” imposed upon accents, as if they had a will of their own... Well, as a matter of fact they do. But it is important to make a distinction between accents in declension and in conjugation.

The accent of any word that is *declined* (articles, nouns, pronouns, adjectives) wants to stay, throughout the declension, on the same syllable where it stands in the nominative singular.

The accent of any verbal form that is *conjugated* tends to recede from the end of the word.

THE “RULES OF LIMITATION” RESTRICT THESE TWO TENDENCIES.

Let us see a couple of examples. First, a few nouns.

ἀπόστολος has an acute accent on syllable # 3 (see 7.3) because the last syllable (# 1) is short. But when in the genitive and dative the ending becomes long, the acute accent needs to move to syllable # 2 to comply with the rules:

ἀποστόλου, ἀποστόλω, ἀποστόλων, ἀποστόλοις.

Likewise, δῶρον has a legitimate circumflex on syllable # 2, since the last syllable (# 1) is short. Yet in the genitive and dative it will have to change to acute: δώρου, δώρω, δώρων, δώροις.

The anomalies that you will surely perceive in the accents of declension result from special circumstances such as attraction, or are exceptions relevant to a particular group or subgroup... this course will normally not include such explanations. For the moment, it will be sufficient to recognize the changes described above.

Page 5.5 offered a tip on one particular group of nouns of the 1st and 2nd declension, those with an acute accent on the last syllable. This accent does not change its position but changes its nature, from acute to circumflex. It helps to remember that the article does exactly the same.

Now a few verbal forms, to show how the accent moves away from the end as much as it is allowed. Consider the following forms of the verb *θεραπέω*: *θεράπευε*, *θεραπεύομεν*, *ἐθεράπευον*, *θεραπεύεις*, *θεραπεύειν*, *θεραπέη*.

A question I expect comes to mind is, How can we tell if syllable # 1 is short or long? Most of the time this is clear, since you know that *ε* and *ο* are short and *η* and *ω* are long. The vowels that may be short or long (*ι*, *υ*) will not appear, at least for the time being, in the last syllable of verbal forms. Diphthongs are, of course, long.

Again, a serious concern with the length of syllables and the rules of accents can be healthily delayed until much later. Take my word for it.