

**THE ANCIENT USE OF THE GREEK
ACCENTS IN READING AND
CHANTING: WITH SOME NEWLY
RESTORED GREEK MELODIES**

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The Ancient Use of the Greek Accents in Reading and Chanting: With Some newly restored greek melodies by G. T. Carruthers

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G. T. CARRUTHERS

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THE ANCIENT USE
OF THE
"GREEK ACCENTS"
IN
Reading and Chanting;
WITH SOME NEWLY RESTORED
GREEK MELODIES

George Thomas BY
G. T. CARRUTHERS, M.A., T.C.TOR.
Chaplain (Retd.) East India Service



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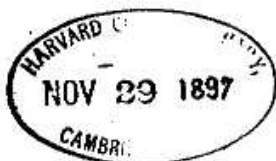
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The Author

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THE ANCIENT USE
OF THE
GREEK ACCENTS.

THE Greek accents began to be attached to the words of the language in a somewhat late period of Grecian history. The great poets and historians had already lived and passed away, and it has been surmised by many that the accents were introduced to preserve the pronunciation of the ancient language, or at least to make a permanent record of the pronunciation.

Others have thought that the accents were introduced when it became the fashion for Roman citizens to profess a knowledge of Greek. The use of the accents was to help foreigners to read Greek readily, and to point out to them the emphatic syllables, peculiar stresses, and other such particulars of a living language, which was not their mother-tongue.

Whatever may have been the reason which urged the old grammarians to affix accents to words, it is plain that it was an urgent reason, for it involved a great deal of extra trouble on all those who made use of accents in writing. At the same time, the reason was a good one, for all future writers adopted the accents as though they were the necessary concomitants of the words.

In the reading of Greek with the help of the accents, it should first of all be noted that when they were introduced there was a general rule of pronunciation of the language

which had not materially altered from ancient times. This rule was not only used by Greeks in speaking the language of their time, but was a rule of pronunciation common both to the Greek and Latin languages, so that there was no need of special instruction in that particular, whether the persons to be instructed were Greeks or foreigners. The accents were devised to show exceptions to the general rule, and to point out those syllables in a word which required a stress to be laid upon them which the general rule would not meet.

The general rule of the Greek pronunciation rests upon the principle common to all languages, that a stress of voice is succeeded by an unaccented syllable. Thus in English, when we use monosyllables, we use alternate positions for the accents, as in "it came to pass." In long words such as in "understanding," "handkerchief," the same rule holds good, nor does the rule alter when we use foreign words, such as "bibliography," "permanganate of potash."

The Greek rule is that a stress of voice must be placed upon the last syllable of every word and upon all monosyllables. The importance attached to the right use of particles in Greek arises from the special attention which was always paid to the pronunciation of monosyllables. All words are by rule Barytones. Should a word have more than two syllables, the next preceding stress must be put upon the antepenult, and other stresses upon alternate syllables preceding the antepenult.

This rule is supported somewhat by the authority of Aristotle, who wrote, "our common conversation frequently falls into Iambic verse."

In Euripides, Ph. 53, there is found a word of five syllables at the end of the verse, and the Iambic rhythm of the metre requires the word to be pronounced as if written or accented in the form *σύνκοιμώμενῃ*.

In Theb. 614, we have:

Διὸς θέλοντος ξύναθελευσθήσεται, in which the long word must be pronounced *σύνκαθελευσθήσεται*.

In the artificial verse preserved by Athenæus we have a verse written by one who knew nothing of verse-making, and