

**GREEK PROSODY, CONTAINING  
RULES FOR THE STRUCTURE OF  
IAMBIC, TROCHAIC, ANAPAESTIC,  
AND DACTYLIC VERSE: WITH TWO  
DISSERTATIONS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649762699

Greek prosody, containing rules for the structure of iambic, trochaic, anapaestic, and dactylic verse: with two dissertations by George Dunbar

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Cover @ 2017

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**GEORGE DUNBAR**

**GREEK PROSODY, CONTAINING  
RULES FOR THE STRUCTURE OF  
IAMBIC, TROCHAIC, ANAPAESTIC,  
AND DACTYLIC VERSE: WITH TWO  
DISSERTATIONS**



TO  
JAMES PILLANS, ESQ.

PROFESSOR OF HUMANITY IN THE UNIVERSITY  
OF EDINBURGH, &c. &c.

*MY DEAR SIR,*

*Allow me to inscribe to you the following pages, both in token of our long friendship and cordial coöperation as colleagues in the University, and as an acknowledgment of your kindness in examining a portion of the first Dissertation, and the favourable opinion you expressed of the doctrines therein stated.*

*With every sentiment of esteem for your character and talents,*

*I am,*

*My Dear Sir,*

*Yours faithfully,*

*GEORGE DUNBAR.*

COLLEGE OF EDINBURGH,  
16th October 1843.

## P R E F A C E.

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It will be observed that, in the following short system of Greek Prosody, I have omitted the rules usually given for determining the quantities of syllables, because I observed that they were very seldom consulted by Students, and because they are now in a great measure rendered unnecessary by the quantities being generally marked in Greek Lexicons. It will also be observed, that I have not given the rules for the structure of those kinds of verse that are found in the Choral Odes, as the work is intended to be introductory chiefly to the two Dissertations. My object was to state plainly and distinctly the rules for the structure of those kinds of verse that are commonly used by the Epic, Tragic, and Comic Poets.

A number of years ago I published, in the "*Prosodia Græca*," an "*Inquiry into Homer's Versification, and the Use of the Digamma in his Poems*." Since that period the subject has drawn considerable attention from several of the Continental Scholars, and from some also in this country. Most of these have supported the doctrine of the Digamma, in my opinion, on insufficient grounds. But as I found some great names opposed to me, I was resolved, in the course of reading several of the books of Homer in my Classes, to examine the subject anew with as much care as possible, and to collect evidence either for or against my opinions: because it appeared to me to be a question that must be determined, not by authorities, but by internal evidence drawn from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* themselves. I have extended the inquiry considerably, and have adduced new arguments and proofs, capable, I think, of shaking

the credulity of even the most bigotted supporters of the Digamma. On a knowledge of Homer's versification depends also a knowledge of his language, which, I apprehend, has been much altered and vitiated by ignorant Grammarians and Editors, to suit their notions of his verse.

The substance of the Dissertation on "Metrical Time in Iambic, Trochaic, and Anapæstic Verse," was published many years ago in the CLASSICAL JOURNAL, No. XXXI. p. 83. It was printed in a more extended form as an *Appendix* to the 4th Edition of the "Prosodia Græca." Dr. Major, the learned Head-Master of King's-College School, London, reprinted it, with a few omissions, from the Classical Journal, in his very useful work, entitled, "A Guide to the Greek Tragœdians," &c. &c.; and to him I am indebted for his favourable opinion of it. The principle which I endeavoured to establish in that Dissertation has been adopted by several Scholars, both on the Continent and in this country, though they do not appear to have followed it out to its full extent, nor appreciated its advantages in correcting numerous errors in the versification of the Attic Poets.—Having again examined the whole subject with as much care as possible, I have been able to produce some additional arguments and examples in support of my former opinions, trusting that they will be examined with candour, and adopted if they shall appear to be supported by undoubted evidence.

COLLEGE OF EDINBURGH,  
9th October 1843.

## PROSODY.

PROSODY treats of the quantity of syllables, and the nature and arrangement of the various feet in the different kinds of verse used by the Poets. The short syllable is considered a *metrical unit*, and is called a *tempus* (time) or *mora*. A long syllable is equivalent in time to two short, and *vice versâ*.

The quantity of syllables in which doubtful vowels occur, when not lengthened according to the rules afterwards stated, can be ascertained either by a knowledge of scansion, or from a good Lexicon, in which it is marked.

### I. OF THE POSITION OF VOWELS.

1. A short or doubtful vowel before two consonants or a double consonant is almost always lengthened;\* *thus*, στήματα ἔχων. *Homer.* ἀλζήχης. *Id.* ὅς τί με. *Id.*

2. In Hexameter and Pentameter verse, a short or doubtful vowel before a mute and a liquid is most commonly lengthened; † *thus*, *Il.* vi. 317.

Ἐγγύθη τε Πριάμοιο καὶ Ἐκτοροῦ, ἐν πόλει ἄκρη.

3. In Iambic and Trochaic verse, a short or doubtful vowel generally remains short before a mute and a liquid; *thus*, σπιν ἄν τὰ Τροίας. *Soph. Phil.* 1332. ὄστις αἰδοφρων. *Eurip. Alc.* 675.

The exceptions are ελ, γλ, γμ, γν, ὄμ, ὄν; before which a short

\* Before σρ, βρ, in certain words in Hexameter verse, a short or doubtful vowel generally remains short; *as*, σπρίοντα προσπύδα. *Homer, Il.* ii. 7. εἰ δὲ τις ἰσοὶ ἔροσιν. *Id.* vi. 142. In Homer's time the intonation of mutes and liquids seems to have been stronger than afterwards, when they were, in general, pronounced more rapidly.

† A few examples occur in which a doubtful vowel is short before two consonants; *as*, Αἰγυπταίης, ὄτι. *Id.* ix. 382. τὸν β' Ἐκτωρ καλίσκε Σκαμάδριον. *Il.* vi. 402. But the first was probably pronounced as a trisyllable, Αἰγυπταίης ὄτι, and the latter, Καμάδριον.



or doubtful vowel is almost always lengthened. But a short or doubtful vowel before any mute and liquid is lengthened, if it is the second syllable of an Iambus or the first of a Trochæus.\*

4. A short or doubtful vowel at the end of an Iambus is generally lengthened before the initial *g*; as,

τοῦτ' ἐστὶν ἡδὴ τοῦργον εἰς ἐμὲ βέπον. *Soph. Œd. Tyr.* 847. See

*Eurip. Suppl.* 105. See also *Dissertation Second*.

5. Comparatives in *ων* have the penult long in the Attic dialect. In the other dialects the penult is short; † thus,

ξὺν ἀνδράσιν κάλλιον ἢ κενῆς κρατεῖν. *Soph. Œd. Tyr.* 55.

καὶ πολὺ κάλλιονες καὶ μείζονες εἰσοράσασθαι. *Odyss.* x. 396.

## II. OF THE ELISION OF VOWELS AND DIPHTHONGS.

1. A short vowel in the end of a word is generally elided before a long vowel or diphthong; as, *iv' εἰδῆτε*. *Demosth.* Sometimes also before a short vowel, to prevent a disagreeable hiatus; thus, ἀλλ' ὄμως. *Id.* †

2. The Attic Poets, in Iambic or Trochaic verse, always elide the vowel either at the end of a word or at the commencement, to avoid an hiatus; thus, ἐν τῇ κλησίᾳ. *Aristoph. Eq.* 75. μὴ ἔξῃ for μὴ ἐξίγῃ. *Aristoph. Vesp.* 112. ἡ γλαῦσ' ἀληθής. *Æschyl. S. Th.* 435. μὲλωσ' ἐκᾶνοι. *Soph. Phil.* 764. μὲλωσ' for μὲλωσι. §

3. In interjectional expressions the hiatus is admitted; thus, ἴδι, ἴδι μοι παιῶν. *Soph. Phil.* 82. ἀλλ' ἄνα, εἴξ' ἰδράνων. *Id.* 194.

In Aristophanes such hiatuses as the following are not uncommon: τί οὖν; *Nub.* 88. χᾶστιν περὶ ἡμᾶς. *Id.* 98. περὶ εἰρήνης λέγῃ. *Acharn.* 39. οὔτι οὐχὶ τὴν πῶλον λέγω. *Id.* 516.

\* See *Dissertation Second*.

† In Anapaestic verse, which is evidently founded upon the Hexameter, the penult in comparatives is sometimes short in the Attic dialect; as,

οὐδ' ὄ κραῖναι, γλώσσας τι ποτὸν. *Soph. Phil.* 1461.

‡ No certain rules can be given for the elision of vowels with Prose writers, who seem to have been guided very much by the ear. They always elided one of the vowels where a disagreeable hiatus would be produced if both were pronounced; as, δ' ἰμέ. *Demosth.*

§ The elision of the Augment is very rare when the verb begins the next line; thus, ἰσικασμῆν, φρούρου. *Soph. Trach.* 916. See also *Electr.* 715, 716. It is also very rare to find the vowel of the last word in a verse elided in consequence of the word beginning the next line commencing with a vowel; as,

τί σαῦτ'

\* Ἄλλως ἰλίγχοις; *Soph. Œd. Tyr.* 332.

4. The *i* of *ῥσι*, and of the dative plural of the third declension, and of *περί*, is never elided; nor the *o* of the genitive in *ωο* or *αο*.

5. Diphthongs are very rarely elided by the Attic Tragic Poets: a few examples only are found; thus, *λειφθήσομαι* (*λειφθήσομαι*) ἥδη.—*Soph. Phil.* 1071. (Some editions, however, have *λειφθήσομαι* ἥ, which certainly does not appear so correct or appropriate.) *ἀείρομαι*, οὐδ' ἀπάσομαι.—*Id. Trach.* 217. *Erfurd's Ed.* φέρει' (*φέρεται*).—*Eurip. Ion.* 1065. See *Id. Herc.* 418. *Iph. Taur.* 166. *Iph. Aul.* 407, &c. (See *Lobeck's note on Soph. Aj.* 191.)

6. The Epic and Comic Poets frequently elide the diphthongs *αι* and *οι* of verbs; as, *βόλομαι* (*βόλομαι*) ἐγώ.—*Il.* i. 117. *ζευγύμενοι* (*ζευγύμενοι*) αὐτός.—*Id.* xv. 120. ἔρχομαι (*ἔρχομαι*) ἔχων.—*Id.* i. 168. γενήσεται (*γενήσεται*) ἀγαθά.—*Aristoph. Plut.* 113. παῦσ' (*παύσαι*) Δισχόλι.—*Id. Ran.* 867. ἀναγεῖν' (*ἀναγεῖσαι*) ὑμᾶς.—*Id. Nub.* 519.

The following elisions are not considered as producing a hiatus:—*ἀναιδέσ'* (*ἀναιδέσα*) εὔ. *Eurip. Med.* 472. ἑμμενέσ', ἴσως γὰρ. *Id.* 625. "Ολοσ' ἐγώ. *Id.* 1326.

It has been disputed whether the Tragic Poets ever elided the diphthong *οι* of the pronouns *μοι* and *σοι*. Several examples might be produced of such an elision; thus, *χαίρων*, Ἀθάνα, τᾶλλ' ἐγὼ σ' ἐφίεμαι. *Soph. Aj.* 112. The same construction occurs, verse 116; τοῦτό σοι ἐφίεμαι. See verse 191. *Κεῖσσον δὲ μοι εὔν* πρὸς σ' ἀπέχουσαι, γύναι. *Eurip. Med.* 292; where *πρὸς* cannot govern the accusative. The *σ'* is for *σοι*.

### III. OF THE SHORTENING OF VOWELS AND DIPHTHONGS.

1. In Hexameter and Pentameter verse, a long vowel or diphthong in the end of a word, being the second or third syllable of the foot, is shortened before another initial vowel or diphthong;\* as,

Ὅς νῦν πολλὸν ἀριστος ἐνὶ στρατῷ εὐχεται ἄναι. *Il.* i. 91.

2. The diphthongs *αι* and *οι* are frequently shortened in the middle of a word by the Attic Poets; probably never by the Epic Poets; thus,

κάμ' ἂν τοιαύτη χερσὶ— *Soph. Œd. Tyr.* 140.

See also *v. v.* 13, 435, 537. *Aristoph. Ran.* 1008–9. *Nub.* 579.

\* See *Dissertation First.*

ἰκταίου κότος— *Æschyl. Suppl.* 381.

Οὐδέ πω ἤπιος; ἀλλ', ὦ γεραία. *Eurip. Med.* 133. *See also Herc. Fur.* 115.

In Aristophanes some long vowels as well as diphthongs are shortened in the middle of words; *thus,*

Ἄλλ' ἢ Λακεδαιμῶν ποῦ' σιν; *Math. ἔπου' σιν; αὐτηί. Nub.* 215.

Ἄστρονομία μὲν αὐτηί—*Id.* 202.

Ἄταρ τί ποτ' ἐς τὴν γῆν βλάπουσαν αὐτοί. *Nub.* 187.

Σκέψαι τοῖνον γ' ἀπὸ γαστριδίου τυνοῦτου οἶα πέποραδας. *Nub.* 391.\*

3. The diphthongs *ει* and *ευ* are never shortened by the Attic Poets.

#### IV. OF CONTRACTIONS.

1. Every syllable becomes long in which there is a contraction of vowels; *thus,* εἰληθῆες for τὸ ἀληθῆες, βότρεις for βότερες.

2. Two long vowels in different words are sometimes contracted; *also* a short with a long, or with a diphthong, in the same word: *as,* ἡ οὐχ ἄλλης—*Il.* v. 349. πλείων ἔπι—*Id.* vii. 88.

ἱμῶν μὲν θεοί—*Id.* i. 18. Ἀμφιαζέω βίαν—*Æschyl. S. Th.* 566.

μὴ μοί τι Θεσίως τῶνδ'—*Eurip. Hippol.* 522. Σάξεις δ' ἀπ' ἰστίων, ὥστε—*Id. Med.* 1197.

3. Two short syllables are sometimes contracted into one long; *thus,* Ἀχιλλέως παρ' Νεοπτόλεμος,—*Soph. Phil.* 4. ἀνδρόμαα χεῖρα—*Odys.* ix. 347.†

4. The Epic and Pastoral Poets sometimes contract a short and a long vowel into one short before the vowel of another

\* It would seem that the long vowels and the diphthongs in such examples, were resolved into their constituent elements of two short vowels, and that the latter of these was probably pronounced along with the vowel following.

† The Latin Poets also sometimes contract two vowels; *as,*

Punicis ibant evincti tempora tenuis. *Virg. Æn.* v. 269.

Bis patriæ cecidere manus. Quin protenus omnia. *Id.* vi. 33.