

A GUIDE FOR PARSING VERBS

by Sakae Kubo

1. **Pick out the stem of the verb.** You must know the dictionary (lexical) form of the verb in order to be absolutely sure what the stem is. The stem is the dictionary form of the verb without its first person singular ending. For the form, *ἐλύομεν*, *λυ* is the stem. Some stems change, however, especially in the aorist.
2. **Check before the stem for augment or reduplication.**
 - a. If there is no augment or reduplication, the following are eliminated: aorist, imperfect, and perfect indicative (pluperfect as well, but this form is rare so one can leave it out of consideration), as well as the perfect participle.
 - b. If there is an augment, it is either an imperfect or aorist indicative. It could also be a perfect indicative if the stem of the verb begins with a vowel.
 - c. If there is reduplication, it is either a perfect indicative or perfect participle. A reduplication with the augment is the pluperfect.
3. **Check your stem.** Is it identical with your present stem, or is it different?
 - a. If it is the same and the form has the augment, the verb form must be a first aorist or imperfect indicative, or a perfect participle. Since *ἐλύομεν* has an augment, it is either an aorist, an imperfect indicative, or a perfect participle.
 - b. If the stem is not the same, and the form has the augment, the verb form must be a second aorist.
4. **Check the ending.**
 - a. Indicative
 - 1) The present forms in all the moods and voices should be memorized.
 - 2) The future forms take the *σ* tense formative with the present (primary) endings, except for the liquid verbs which act as contract verbs.
 - 3) The imperfect (secondary) endings are similar to the present, except for the identical first singular and third plural forms. Thus *ἐλύομεν* is an imperfect active indicative first plural.
 - 4) The second aorist endings are identical to the imperfect. Remember that it is distinguished by a stem different from the present stem.
 - 5) The first aorist endings have the *σα* tense formative, except for the third person singular which has *σε*. The liquid verbs do not take the *σ* but have the same endings.
 - 6) The first perfect has the same endings as the first aorist, except that it has the *κα* tense formative instead of the *σα* and its third plural has a second form in *κασι(ν)*.
 - 7) The middle in the imperfect is more similar to the aorist than the present, but the aorist has the characteristic *σα*.
 - 8) The perfect forms can be recognized in the middle voice by its lack of thematic vowel along with the reduplication or augment.
 - 9) The passive forms are identical as the middle in the present, imperfect, and perfect. In the future, the *θησ* is added before the middle endings. In the aorist, *θη* is followed by the regular active endings, except for the first singular which has *θην*.

b. Subjunctive

- 1) The subjunctive has only present and aorist forms, and is marked by a long connecting vowel.
- 2) The aorist passive has the same endings as the aorist active but with the θ preceding them instead of the σ .
- 3) No augments are used for the aorist subjunctive.
- 4) All aorist endings are the same as the corresponding present forms, except the passive which has the same endings as the active but preceded by θ .

c. Imperative

- 1) The imperative has only present and aorist forms.
- 2) No augments are used for the aorist.
- 3) The imperative forms are identical with the indicative forms in the second plural (except it has no augment in the aorist) in both tenses and all the voices.
- 4) The third person forms are characterized by $\tau\omega$, $\tau\omega\sigma\alpha\iota$ endings in the active forms and aorist passive and $\theta\omega$, $\theta\omega\sigma\alpha\iota$ endings in the present and aorist (1 and 2) middle and present passive.
- 5) The second singular forms should be memorized.

d. Infinitive

- 1) All tenses are used in the infinitive, but the aorist and present forms are the most common.
- 2) No augments are used.
- 3) These forms must be memorized. A good sign for the infinitive is the $\alpha\iota$ ending, which is found in every form except for the present and second aorist active, which have the $\epsilon\iota\upsilon$ ending.

e. Participles

- 1) Participles in the present, aorist, and perfect active, and the aorist passive, follow the third declension noun pattern in the masculine and neuter forms, and the first declension pattern in the feminine forms.
- 2) Participles in the present middle and passive, aorist and perfect middle follow the second declension in the masculine and neuter and the first declension in the feminine.

Basic Signs of Recognition

1. *Indicative Mood*

Future -- σ with present (primary) endings.

Imperfect -- augment with present stem; use secondary endings without $\sigma\alpha$.

First Aorist -- augment with $\sigma\alpha$ endings in active and middle forms.

Second Aorist -- augment with stem different from present and with imperfect (secondary) personal endings.

Perfect -- reduplication or augment with $\kappa\alpha$ endings in active.

Passive -- aorist and future have $\theta\eta$.

2. *Subjunctive*

Present -- long connecting vowel in ending.

Aorist -- long connecting vowel in ending. No augments.

3. *Imperative*

Second person plural form identical with its corresponding indicative form except for augment in aorist $\tau\omega$, $\tau\omega\sigma\alpha\iota$ or $\theta\omega$, $\theta\omega\sigma\alpha\iota$ in third person singular and plural respectively.