

## On “Wheeler's Law Generalization” and the Accentuation of Greek Second Member Verbal Governing Compounds in \*-o-

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The second member verbal governing compounds in \*-o- are one subtype of Indo-European nominal compound. Some examples of this compound type are Greek ἀνδροφόνος 'man-slaying', Sanskrit *sam-bhará-* 'bringing together', Old Church Slavonic *vodo-nosŭ* 'water-carrier' and Armenian *lows-awor* 'light-bearing' (second member from Proto-Indo-European \*-b<sup>h</sup>oro-). Our knowledge of the accentuation of these compounds is based entirely on the evidence found in Greek and Sanskrit. In Sanskrit, these compounds are consistently accented on the thematic vowel (e.g. *sam-bhará-*). In Greek, however, the accent pattern is more complicated; the accent can fall on the ultima (e.g. ὑφορβός 'pig-feeder'), on the penult (e.g. βουκόλος 'cowherd') or on the antepenult (e.g. ππολίπορθος 'city-sacking').

In his *Wortbildung der homerischen Sprache*<sup>2</sup> (1974), Risch summarizes the Greek accent rule as follows, “meistens oxytonierten (bei langer Paenultima) oder paroxytonierten (bei kurzer Paenultima)” (p. 196). Probert, in her *Ancient Greek Accentuation. Synchronic Patterns, Frequency Effects and Prehistory* (2004), provides an updated version of a theory first suggested by Wheeler in his *Der Griechische Nominalaccent* (1885); she explains this Greek accent pattern as an instance of “Wheeler's Law Generalization”. According to Wheeler's Law proper, if a word ends in a sequence of a heavy followed by two light syllables and the last syllable is accented, the accent gets retracted to the penult. She argues that Wheeler's Law was generalized via the following process: these compounds were originally oxytone, based on the evidence from Sanskrit. The accent remained unchanged in compounds that lacked the correct environment for Wheeler's Law, such as ὑφορβός. Some compounds contained the right environment for Wheeler's Law, so their accent was retracted (e.g. \*βουκολός → βουκόλος). At that point, speakers reinterpreted Wheeler's Law and abstracted a new accent rule. This new rule consisted of accenting the ultima when the penult was heavy and accenting the penult when the penult was light. Probert does not offer an explanation for the recessive accent of the ππολίπορθος forms; however, the recessive accent in these forms is most likely an Aeolic feature (see Chantraine, *Grammaire Homérique*<sup>3</sup> 1.191 (1958)). The general consensus is that the same generalization process is responsible for the accentuation of the Greek perfect middle participles in -μένος (cf. the Sanskrit participles in -āná-), and Probert cites these participles as potential

comparanda.

While this theory initially seems attractive, its weakness is that it only considers the nominative singular of these compounds when determining the effects of Wheeler's Law. However, the other case forms of the paradigm have different syllable structures, and the majority of them (five out of eight) contain long ultimae that would block the application of Wheeler's Law. Therefore, it is difficult to predict that the Wheeler's Law variant should have been spread throughout the paradigm; one would predict that the more common variant, namely, the oxytone variant, would get spread at the expense of the Wheeler's Law variant. As a result, the aforementioned analysis puts a rather heavy burden on analogy in order to predict the Greek data.

There is a proposed sound law known as "Bartoli's Law" that has not yet been considered in connection with the accentuation of the thematic compounds in Greek. Proposed by Bartoli in his *Ancora una deviazione del greco dall'ossitonia ario-europea* (1930), this law states that an oxytone word of three or more syllables ending in a sequence of a light followed by a heavy syllable becomes paroxytone. Bartoli's Law is relevant for the current purpose because it will retract the accent of the compounds with light penults and long ultimae; most importantly, it will retract the accent in the case forms where the accent was unaffected by Wheeler's Law.

I propose that the combination of Wheeler's and Bartoli's Laws motivates the accent pattern of the thematic verbal governing compounds in Greek better than the current theory that relies on Wheeler's Law Generalization. The main appeal of my approach is that by relying on the interplay of two regular sound laws, the burden that otherwise needs to be put on analogy is significantly alleviated.