



GREEK VERB TENSES IN ENGLISH

Prof. Vanessa Gorman
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
vgorman1@unl.edu

Finite Verbs

Analysis includes 5 pieces of information

- Person = 1st, 2nd, 3rd
- Number = singular, plural, [dual]
- Tense = present, imperfect, aorist, perfect, future, pluperfect, future perfect
- Mood = indicative, imperative, subjunctive, optative
- Voice = active, middle, passive; also deponent

Tenses denote time and aspect/stage [Smyth 1850]

Time =

- Present, past, future

Aspect =

- Continuous
- Completed
- Completed with continued relevance/effect

Review: Aorist Tense [Smyth 1923-1944]

Time = past; aspect = completed

- “He sailed into Ephesus.”
- “The Great King wept.”

Usually translated “-ed” or equivalent

Review: Imperfect Tense [Smyth 1889-1909]

Time = past; action = incomplete, continuous, habitual

- “The army was marching” [not finished/continuous]
- “Every spring, the army marched against Caria.” [repeated]

Usually it is safe to translate it with “was” or “were”;
sometimes “-ed”

Perfect Tense [Smyth 1945-1951]

Time = past; aspect = completed with permanent result

Translated “have/has”

- “Alkibiades has betrayed Athens time and time again.”
- “Perikles has asked the Athenians to remain inside the walls.”
- *He has done it in the past and the effect continues into the present.*

Far less common than impf and aor!

Present Tense [Smyth 1875-1888]

Time = present; aspect = continuous/on-going

1. Simple present: “The army marches”
2. Progressive present: “The army is marching.”
3. Emphatic present: “The army does march.”
4. General truth or gnomic present: “Truth is a virtue.”
5. Historical present: “The army marches into Karia and fights a great battle.” [*usually pretty obvious*]

Future Tense [Smyth 1910-1922]

Time = future; NO ASPECT

Translated “will/shall”

- “Perikles will lead out the army tomorrow.”
- [*“shall” is nearly obsolete: 1st person sg/pl or sense of obligation*]

Note: In subordinate clauses, the future is often used to denote purpose/intention

Uncommon

Pluperfect Tense [Smyth 1952-1954]

Time = past; aspect = completed, but still relevant

Something prior to something else in the past.

Usually translate “had”

- “Perikles had been sleeping before the noise woke him up.”
- “He had intended to rescue the hostages, but they were freed before he arrived.”

Very rare

Future Perfect Tense [Smyth 1955-1958]

Time = future; aspect = ongoing effect of a completed action
Implies an immediate consequence.

Expected to happen before some time in the future

Translate “will have”

- Alkibiades will have fled by now.
- He will have died in vain.

So rare as to not be worth learning

Contrast the tenses.

- Perikles is making a speech right now. [Pres]
- Perikles made a speech yesterday. [Aor]
- Perikles will make a speech tomorrow. [Fut]
- Perikles was making a speech yesterday, when the rain began. [Impf]
- Perikles has made a speech, and now Thucydides is responding. [Perf]
- Perikles had made a speech before the assembly voted. [PluPerf]
- As of today, Perikles will have made a speech every week this year. [FP]

Summary: Aspect/stage

Aspect = complete or incomplete action

Present stem = present and imperfect tenses

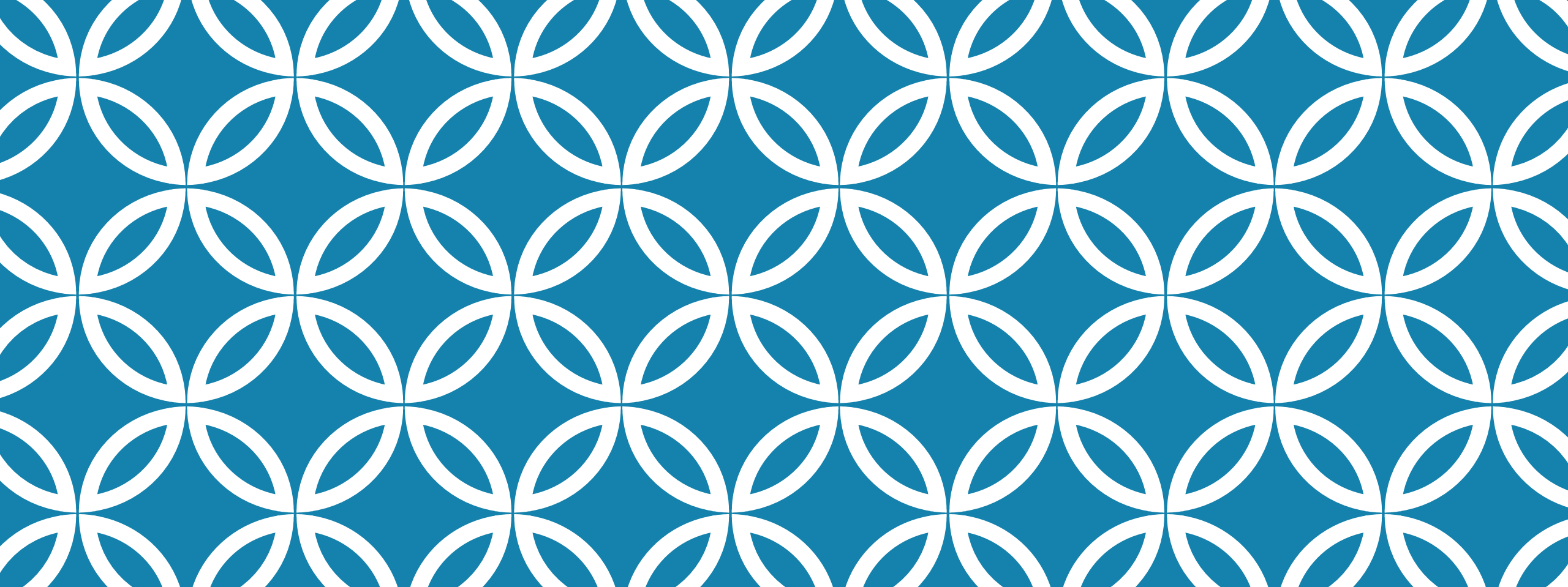
- Incomplete action, ongoing, habitual

Aorist Stem = aorist tense

- Completed action in the past

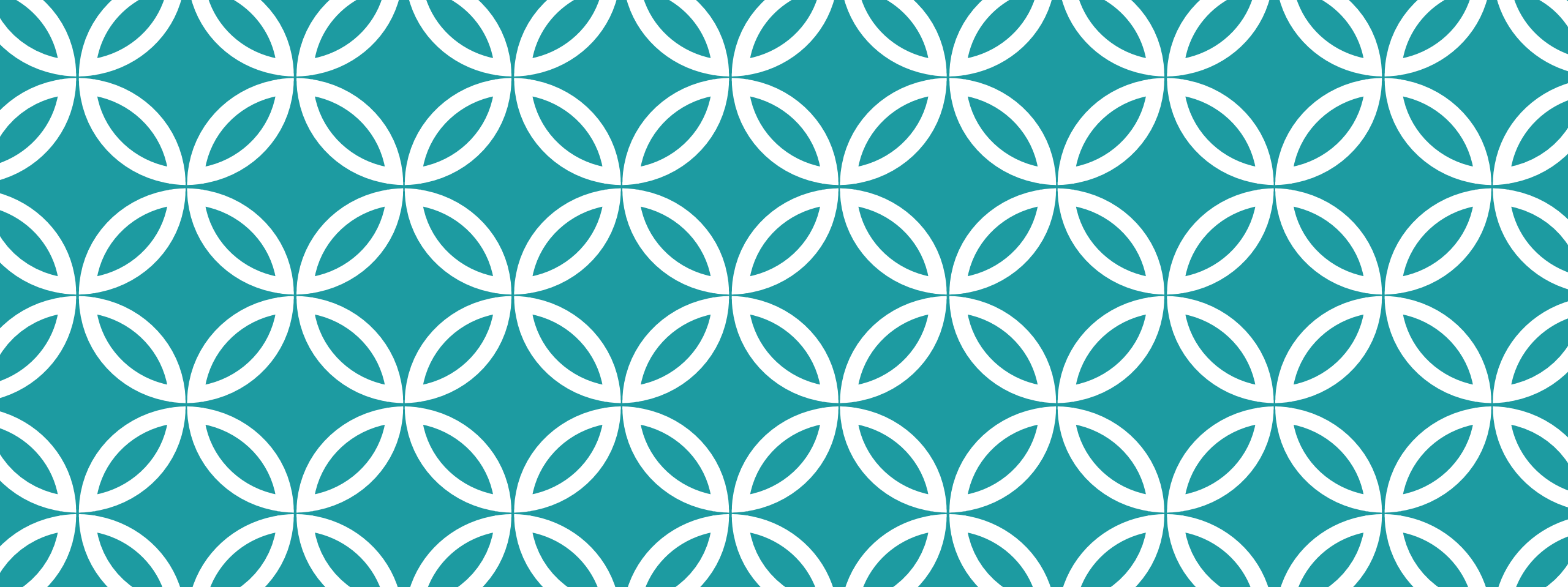
Perfect stem = perfect, pluperfect, future perfect tenses

- Completed action whose effects are still relevant [permanent result]



GREEK VERB TENSES





**INDICATIVE ACTIVE GREEK VERBS
IN 3RD SG/PL**



Primary Tense Endings

Primary endings used on Present, Future, Perfect,
and Future Perfect [and subjunctives]

-ει ... -ουσι(ν)

[active]

-εταΙ ... -οϋταΙ

[deponent/middle/passive]

Secondary Tense Endings

Secondary endings used on Aorist, Imperfect, and
Pluperfect [and optatives]

-EV, -OV

[active]

-ETO, -OVTO

[deponent/middle/passive]

Verbs have six “principal parts”

- 1st person singular present indicative active
- -- -- future -- --
- -- -- aorist -- --
- -- -- perfect -- --
- -- -- perfect -- middle
- -- -- aorist -- passive

- Mastronarde link:

<http://atticgreek.org/downloads/allPPbytypes.pdf>

Examples of Principal Parts

[1 to 4 are 1st sg pres – fut – aor – perf ind act]

πέμπω, πέμψω, ἔπεμψα, πέπομφα, πέπεμμαι, ἐπέμφθην

▪ [send]

ἄρχω, ἄρξω, ἤρξα, ἤρχα, ἤργμαι, ἤρχθην

▪ [begin/rule]

ποιέω, ποιήσω, ἐποίησα, πεποίηκα, ποποίημαι, ἐποιήθην

▪ [make, do]

βάλλω, βαλέω, ἔβαλον, βέβληκα, βέβλημαι, ἐβλήθην

▪ [throw]

Aorist stem [3PP] = Aorist tense

Augment + σ + ε(ν)/α(ν) [1st Aor]

Augment + -ε(ν)/-ον [2nd Aor]

πέμπω, πέμψω, **ἔπεμψα**, πέπομφα, πέπεμμαι, ἐπέμφθην

- **ἔπεμψε(ν), ἔπεμψα(ν)**

ἄρχω, ἄρξω, **ἤρξα**, ἤρχα, ἤργμαι, ἤρχθην

- **ἤρξε(ν), ἤρξα(ν)**

ποιέω, ποιήσω, **ἐποίησα**, πεποίηκα, ποποίημαι, ἐποιήθην

- **ἐποίησε(ν), ἐποίησα(ν)**

βάλλω, βαλέω, **ἔβαλον**, βέβληκα, βέβλημαι, ἐβλήθην

- **ἔβαλε(ν), ἔβαλον [2nd aor]**

Present stem [1PP] = Imperfect tense

Augment + 3rd sg/pl endings = -ε(ν)/-ον

πέμπ-ω, πέμψω, ἔπεμψα, πέπομφα, πέπεμμαι, ἐπέμφθην

- ἔπεμπε(ν), ἔπεμπον

ἄρχ-ω, ἄρξω, ἤρξα, ἤρχα, ἤργμαι, ἤρχθην

- ἤρχε(ν), ἤρχον

ποιέ-ω, ποιήσω, ἐποίησα, πεποίηκα, ποποίημαι, ἐποιήθην

- ἐποίει, ἐποίουν

βάλλ-ω, βαλέω, ἔβαλον, βέβληκα, βέβλημαι, ἐβλήθην

- ἔβαλε(ν), ἔβαλον

Present stem [1PP] = Present tense

3rd sg/pl endings = -ει/-ουσι(v)

πέμπ-ω, πέμψω, ἔπεμψα, πέπομφα, πέπεμμαι, ἐπέμφθην

- πέμπει, πέμπουσι(v)

ἄρχ-ω, ἄρξω, ἤρξα, ἤρχα, ἤργμαι, ἤρχθην

- ἄρχει, ἄρχουσι(v)

ποιέ-ω, ποιήσω, ἐποίησα, πεποίηκα, ποποίημαι, ἐποιήθην

- ποιεῖ, ἐποιουσι(v)

βάλλ-ω, βαλέω, ἔβαλον, βέβληκα, βέβλημαι, ἐβλήθην

- βάλλει, βάλλουσι(v)

Future stem [2PP] = Future tense

σ + 3rd sg/pl pres endings = -ει/-ουσι(v)

πέμπω, **πέμψω**, ἔπεμψα, πέπομφα, πέπεμμαι, ἐπέμφθην

▪ πέμψει, πέμψουσι(v)

ἄρχω, **ἄρξω**, ἤρξα, ἤρχα, ἤργμαι, ἤρχθην

▪ ἄρξει, ἄρξουσι(v)

ποιέω, **ποιή-σω**, ἐποίησα, πεποίηκα, ποποίημαι, ἐποιήθην

▪ ποιήσει, ποιήσουσι(v)

βάλλω, **βαλέ-ω**, ἔβαλον, βέβληκα, βέβλημαι, ἐβλήθην

▪ βαλεῖ, βαλοῦσι(v)

Perfect stem [4PP] = Perfect tense

Reduplication + κ + 3rd sg/pl endings = -ε(ν)/-ασι(ν)

πέμπω, πέμψω, ἔπεμψα, **πέπομφα**, πέπεμμαι, ἐπέμφθην

- **πέπομφε(ν), πεπόμφασι(ν)**

ἄρχω, ἄρξω, ἤρξα, **ἤρχα**, ἤργμαι, ἤρχθην

- **ἤρχε(ν), --**

ποιέω, ποιήσω, ἐποίησα, **πεποίη-κα**, πεποίημαι, ἐποιήθην

- **πεπόηκε(ν), πεποήκασιν**

βάλλω, βαλέω, ἔβαλον, **βέβλη-κα**, βέβλημαι, ἐβλήθην

- **βέβληκε(ν), --**

Perfect stem [4PP] = Pluperfect tense

Augment + Reduplication + **κ** + 3rd sg/pl endings = -ει/-εσαν
RARE!

πέμπω, πέμψω, ἔπεμψα, **πέ-πομφα**, πέπεμμαι, ἐπέμφθην

- **ἐπεπόμφει, ἐπεπόμφεσαν**

ἄρχω, ἄρξω, ἤρξα, **ἤρχα**, ἤργμαι, ἤρχθην

- --, --

ποιέω, ποιήσω, ἐποίησα, **πε-ποίη-κα**, ποποίημαι, ἐποιήθην

- **ἐπεποιήκει, ἐπεποιήκεσαν**

βάλλω, βαλέω, ἔβαλον, **βέ-βλη-κα**, βέβλημαι, ἐβλήθην

- **ἐβεβλήκει, ἐβεβλήκεσαν**

In sum: active endings (3rd sg/pl)

> Imperfect Active = 1 PP stem + augment + $-\epsilon(v)/-ov$

> Aorist Active = 3 PP stem + augment

- $+\sigma + \epsilon(v)/\alpha(v)$ [1st Aor]

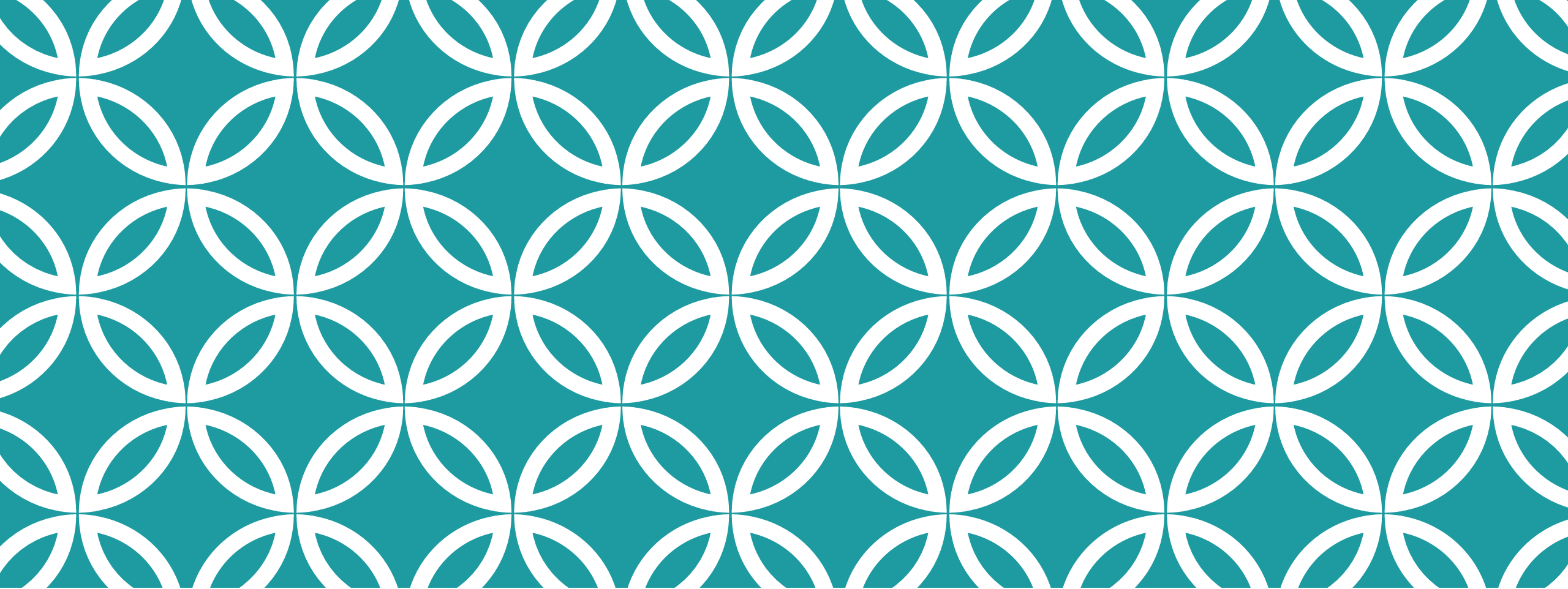
- $+\epsilon(v)/-ov$ [2nd Aor]

> Present Active = 1 PP stem + $-\epsilon\iota/-ou\sigma\iota(v)$

--Future Active = 2 PP stem + $\sigma + -\epsilon\iota/-ou\sigma\iota(v)$

--Perfect Active = 4 PP stem + reduplication + $\kappa + -\epsilon(v)/-\alpha\sigma\iota(v)$

--Pluperfect Active = 4 PP stem + aug + redupl + $\kappa + -\epsilon\iota/-\epsilon\sigma\alpha v$



**INDICATIVE DEPONENT AND –MI
VERBS IN 3RD SG/PL**



Deponent Verbs

Often Identified as “Present Indicative Middle”

ἀφικνέομαι, ἀφίξομαι, ἀφικόμην, --, ἀφίγμαι, --

γίγνομαι, γενήσομαι, ἔγενόμην, γέγονα, γεγέννημαι, ἐγενήθην

ἔρχομαι, ἐλεύσομαι, ἦλθον, ἐλήλυθα, --, --

ἠγέομαι, ἠγήσομαι, ἠγησάμην, --, ἠγῆμαι, --

μάχομαι, μαχέομαι, ἐμαχεσάμην, --, μεμάχημαι, --

Present = Present stem + -εται, -ονται

Future = Future stem [σ] + -εται, -ονται

ἀφικνέομαι, ἀφίξομαι, ἀφικόμην,
--, ἀφῖγμαι, --

- Impf = ἀφικνεῖτο, ἀφικνοῦντο
- Aor = ἀφίκετο, ἀφίκοντο
- Present = ἀφικνεῖται, ἀφικνέονται
- No future

γίγνομαι, γενήσομαι, ἔγενόμην,
γέγονα, γεγένημαι, ἐγενήθην

- Impf = ἐγίγνετο, ἐγίνοντο
- Aor = ἠγένετο, ἠγένοντο
- Present = γίγνεται, γίνονται
- Future = γενήσεται, γενήσονται

Present = Present stem + -εται, -ονται

Future = Future stem [σ] + -εται, -ονται

ἔρχομαι, ἐλεύσομαι, ἦλθον,
ἐλήλυθα, --, --

- Impf = ἦρχετο, ἦρχοντο
- Aor = ἦλθε, ἦλθον

- Present = ἔρχεται, ἔρχονται
- Future = ἐλεύσεται, ἐλεύσονται

ἡγέομαι, ἡγήσομαι, ἡγησάμην, --,
ἡγήμαι, --

- Impf = ἡγεῖτο, ἡγοῦντο
- Aor = ἡγήσατο, ἡγήσαντο

- Present = ἡγείται, ἡγοῦνται
- Future = ἡγήσεται, ἡγήσονται

Present = Present stem + -εται, -ονται

Future = Future stem [σ] + -εται, -ονται

μάχομαι, μαχέομαι, έμαχεσάμην, --, μεμάχημαι, --

- Impf = έμάχετο, έμάχοντο
- [Aor = έμαχέσατο, έμαχέσαντο]

- Present = μάχεται, μάχονται
- Future = μαχεΐται/μαχήσεται, μαχοϋνται/μαχήσονται

—MI Verbs [irregular]

εἶμί, ἐσόμαι, --, --, --, --

ἴστημι, στήσω, ἔστησα/ἔστην, ἔστηκα, ἔσταμαι, ἐστάθην

δίδωμι, δώσω, ἔδωκα, δέδωκα, δέδομαι, ἐδόθην

ἀπόλλυμι, ἀπολέω, ἀπόλεσα/ἀπωλόμην, ἀπολώλεκα/ἀπόλωλα,
--, --

—MI Verbs [irregular]

εἶμί, ἐσόμαι, --, --, --, --

- Impf = ἦν, ἦσαν
- Present = ἐστί(v), εἶσι(v) [enclitic]
- Future = ἔσται, ἔσονται [deponent]

ἴστημι, στήσω, ἔστησα/ἔστην, ἔστηκα, ἔσταμαι, ἐστάθην

- Impf = ἴστη, ἴστασαν
- Aor = ἔστη/ἔστησε, ἔστησαν
- Pres = ἴστησι(v), ἰσταῖσι(v)
- Future = στήσεται, στήσονται [deponent]

—MI Verbs [irregular]

δίδωμι, δώσω, ἔδωκα, δέδωκα, δέδομαι, ἐδόθην

- Impf = ἐδίδου, ἐδίδοσαν
- Aor = ἔδωκε(ν), ἔδοσαν
- Present = δίδωσι(ν), διδόασι(ν)
- Future = δώσει, δώσουσι(ν)

ἀπόλλυμι, ἀπολέω, ἀπώλεσα/ἀπωλόμην, ἀπολώλεκα/ἀπόλωλα, --, --

- Impf = ἀπώλλυε, ἀπώλλυσαν
- Aor = ἀπώλεσε, ἀπώλεσαν
- Present = ἀπόλλυσι(ν), ἀπολλύασι(ν)
- Future = ἀπολεῖ, ἀπολοῦσι(ν)