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THE PROSE ACCENTS.*

BY PROF. H. G. MITCHELL.

The works of Rev. William Wickes, D.D., on the Hebrew accents¹ have been universally recognized by scholars as making an era in the treatment of the subject. In the following tables I have attempted to present his scheme of prose accents in a form convenient for reference.

The first table shows which accent is used to mark the main dichotomy, i.e. the principal division in a clause closed by a given disjunctive.

I.

THE MAIN DICHOTOMY.

FINAL.	FIRST WORD.	SECOND WORD.	THIRD WORD.	FOURTH WORD.	FIFTH WORD.	SIXTH WORD.
—	— (A)	A (—) (—)	A (—)	A (—)	A	A
A	— (—)	— (—)	— (—) (—)	— (A)	A (—)	A (—)
—	—	— (—)	— (—)	—	—	
A	A	A (—)	— (—)	—	—	
—	—	— (—)	—	—	—	
—	—	— (—)	— (—)	— (—) (—)	— (—) (—)	— (—)
—	—	— (—)	— (—) (—)	— (—) (—)	— (—) (—)	—
—	—	— (—) (—)	—	—	—	—

* Read in December 1889.

¹ *Treatise on the Accentuation of the Three so-called Poetical Books of the Old Testament, Psalms, Proverbs, and Job.* Oxford, 1881. *Treatise on the Accentuation of the Twenty-one so-called Prose Books of the Old Testament.* Oxford, 1887.

The explanation is simple. In *silluq's* clause (which is the whole verse) the main dichotomy, if on the word preceding the last, is marked by *tiphcha*, but sometimes by *athnach*; if on the second, by *athnach*, but sometimes by *tiphcha* or *zaqeph-qaton* etc.; *athnach* being the prevailing divider, especially at some distance from the end of the verse. In the first half of the verse, closed by *athnach*, the main dichotomy, if on the first (preceding) word, is marked by *tiphcha*, but sometimes by *zaqeph-qaton*, etc.

The minor dichotomy is the division of the clause included between a given disjunctive and the accent which marks the main dichotomy in its clause. The following table indicates what accents are used in such cases.

II.

THE MINOR DICHOTOMY.

FINAL.	FIRST WORD.	SECOND WORD.	THIRD WORD.	FOURTH WORD.	FIFTH WORD.
—	—	— (·)	·	·	·
—	—	— (·)	·	·	·
·	·	· (·)	· (·)	· (·)	· (·)
·	·	·	· (·)	· (·) (·)	· (·) (·)
·	·	·	· (·)	· (·) (·)	· (·) (·)
·	·	· (·)	· (·) (·)	· (·) (·)	· (·)
·	·	· (·)	· (·) (·)	· (·) (·)	·
·	·	· (·)	· (·) (·)	· (·) (·)	·

The second table is on the same plan as the first, and it is to be used in the same way. The similarity between the two arises from the fact that the minor dichotomy in a longer clause is generally marked by the same accent as the main dichotomy in a shorter one, when the two come at the same distance from the end.

The third table shows what conjunctives are used with the several disjunctives and in what order.

III.

THE CONJUNCTIVES.

DISJ.	FIRST CONJ.	SECOND CONJ.	THIRD CONJ.	FOURTH CONJ.	FIFTH CONJ.	SIXTH CONJ.
1	2					
2	2	2				
3	2	2				
4	2	2				
5	2	2				
6	2 (2)	2				
7	2	2	2			
8	2 (2)	2 (2)	2	2		2
9	2 (2)	2 (2)	2	2	2	
10	2 (2)	2	2	2	2	
11	2					
12	2	2	2	2	2	
13	2	2	2	2	2	2
14	2	2	2	2	2	2
15	2	2	2	2	2	2
16	2	2	2	2	2	2

This table indicates the combinations possible. As a matter of fact, a given disjunctive may have fewer conjunctives than are here assigned to it, or even stand without any of them. If, however, it has any, it will have those here shown, and take them in the order in which they here appear.

The circumstances controlling the choice between two accents, in this as in preceding tables, must be learned from the text of Dr. Wickes's work.