The Vocative Case

Using Nominals for Direct Address

A lesson for the *Paideia* web-app
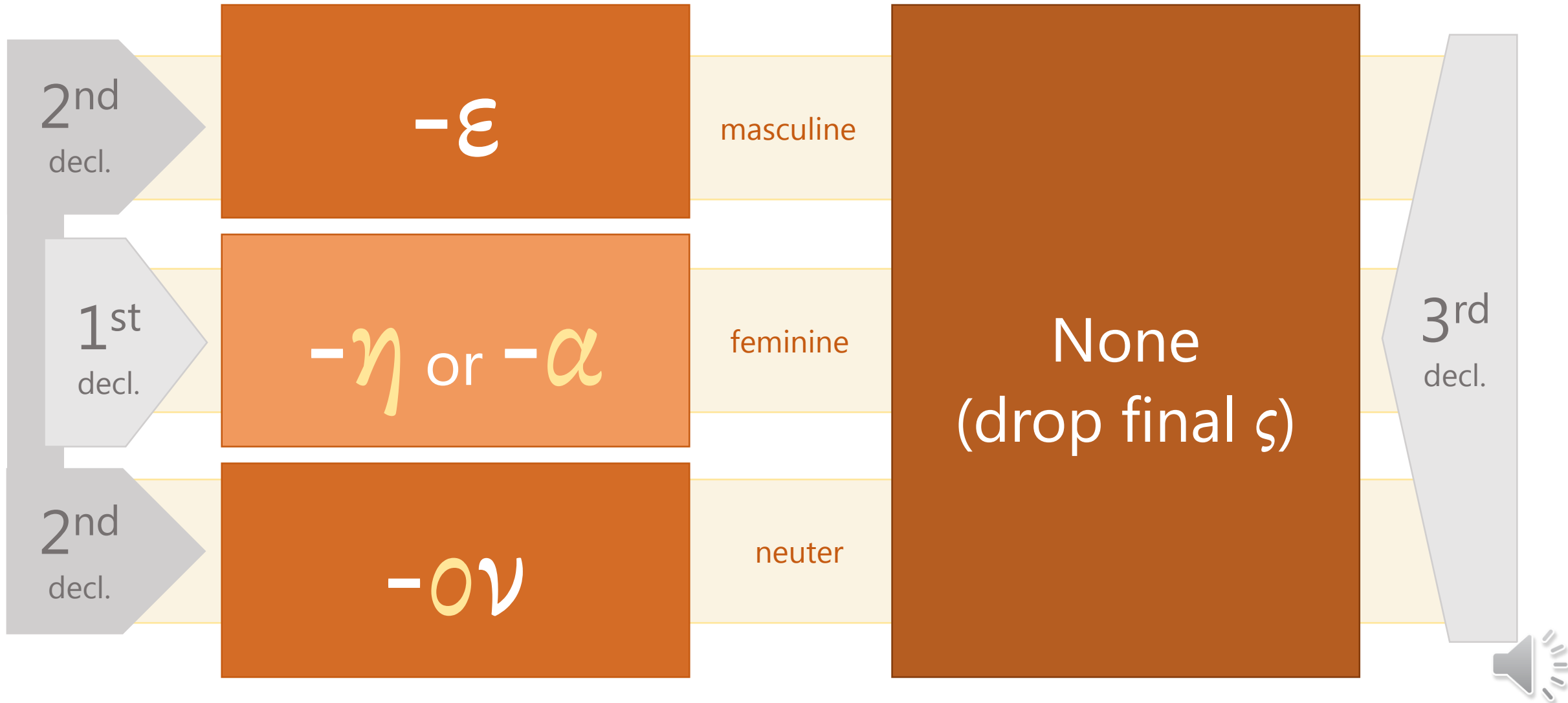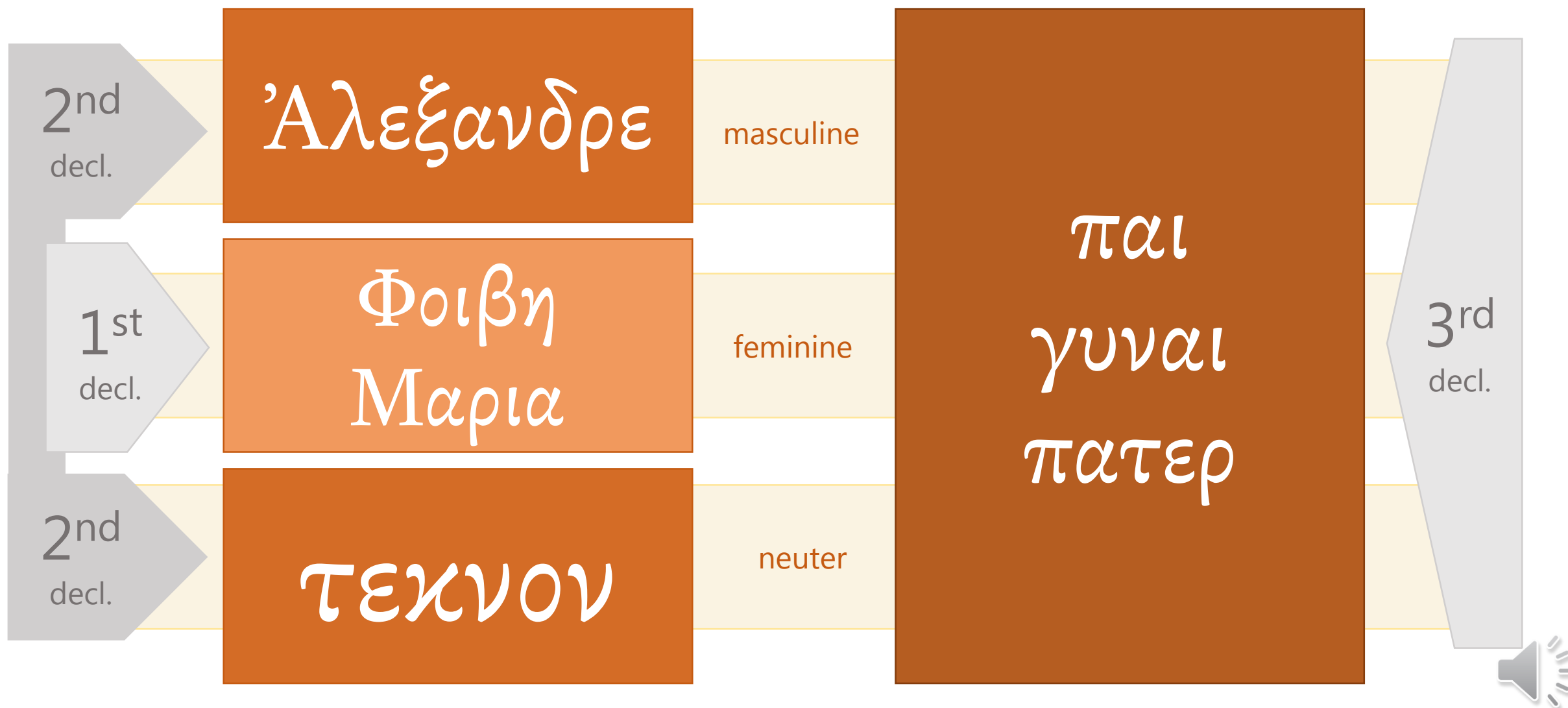© Ian W. Scott, 2015

My Slide Heading

- So far we have learned the Nominative case
  - Expressing the subject of a clause
- The vocative is another "job" a noun can do
  - Comes with its own different endings (uniforms)
- The vocative is for addressing someone directly

Vocative Case Endings

Vocative Case Examples

2nd decl.	Ἀλεξανδρε	masculine
1st decl.	Φοιβη Μαρια	feminine
2nd decl.	τεκνον	neuter

παι
γυναι
πατερ

3rd decl.

3rd Declension Vocative Forms

- Stem of the noun = Vocative form
  - Start with nominative form or nominative – final ς
    - παις -> παι
    - Σιμων -> Σιμων
    - Ἰασων -> Ἰασων
  - But often changes to the stem
    - μητηρ -> μητερ
    - πατηρ -> πατερ
    - θυγατηρ -> θυγατερ
    - ἀνηρ -> ἀνερ
    - γυνη -> γυναι

Using the Vocative Case

- Direct address
  - Stating the name or identity of the person you're speaking to
    - To catch their attention
    - To establish a personal connection
  - Loosely tied to the sentence

- English Examples
  - **John!** How are you?
  - So, **Esther**, are you busy?
  - **Boss**, did you get my report?

Greek Examples of Direct Address

- Often preceded by the particle ὠ
  - Ὠ ἀνθρωπε, τί το ὀνομα σου;
    - "Hey you, what is your name?"
  - Ὠ παι, τίς σου ὁ πατηρ;
    - "Hey child, who is your father?"
- But often appears without ὠ too
  - Φοιβη, συ ἡ μητηρ αὐτης;
    - "Phoebe, are you her mother?"
  - Γυναι μου, καλος συ."
    - "My wife, you are beautiful."

Keep Learning

- You can learn more about Greek cases and the vocative case in particular here:
  - Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek* (3rd edition)
    - vocative case, 13.10 (pp. 109-10)