



Plato's Particles



PARTICLES

Summary and List

1. **Definition.** PARTICLES include sentence adverbs and conjunctions. Sentence adverbs affect the sentence as a whole or give emphasis to particular words of any kind (whereas ordinary adverbs qualify verbs, adjectives, other adverbs and sometimes nouns). Some particles vary in function: i.e., sometimes they are adverbial, sometimes conjunctive, e.g., *καί* = *even* (adverb) or *and* (conjunction); *γάρ* = *in fact* (adverb) or *for* (conjunction).

As sentence adverbs, the value of the particles is logical, emotional, rhetorical. That is they help us understand what is important.

Either alone or in combination these sentence adverbs give a distinctness to the relations between ideas which is foreign to other languages and often resist translation by separate words, which in English are often over emphatic and cumbersome in comparison to the light and delicate nature of the Greek original (e.g., ἄρα, γέ, τοί). The force of such words is frequently best rendered by pause, stress, or alterations of pitch. To catch the subtle and elusive meaning of these often apparently insignificant elements of speech challenges the utmost vigilance and skill of the student. (SMYTH 2771)

PLATO'S PARTICLES (information based on Smyth, *Greek Grammar* and Denniston, *The Greek Particles*): for use with the study guides in reading *Apology*, *Crito*, etc.

ἀλλά *but*, originally = *ἄλλα* "other things" used adverbially (i.e., "on the other hand"). *ἀλλά* is stronger than *δέ*. It is used both where one notion excludes the other and where the two are not mutually exclusive.

ἀλλ' ἢ *except*

οὐδὲν ἀλλ' ἢ *nothing but*

ἀλλά at the beginning of a speech in opposition to something said by another or to a latent feeling in the mind of the writer/speaker himself: *well, well but, however*.

ἀλλὰ γάρ *but since, since however; but indeed, but in fact*

ἀλλὰ...γε *but at any rate*

ἀλλά γέ τοι *yet at least*

ἀλλὰ δὴ *well then*

ἀλλὰ μέντοι *no but, well however, but truly*

ἀλλ' οὖν *but then, well then, well at any rate*

ἄρα postpositive, marks immediate connection and succession of thoughts and events, natural and direct consequence; agreement. Marks the consequence drawn from connection of thought; expresses impression or feeling (weaker than οὖν which marks a positive conclusion drawn from the facts). ἄρα adds liveliness or increases the feeling. *then, consequently, so then, therefore, it seems, after all, of course*

αὖ postpositive *again, on the other hand, on the contrary*

γάρ postpositive *in fact, indeed, for*

--as a CONJUNCTION (*for*) usually placed after the first word in its clause

--as an ADVERB (*in fact*) its position is freer

καὶ γάρ *and in fact, and indeed*

καὶ γὰρ καί *and even*

καὶ γάρ (2) *for even, for also*

καὶ γὰρ καί (2) *for both...and*

...γὰρ δὴ *for of course*

...γὰρ δὴ που *for I presume*

...γὰρ οὖν *yes certainly*

...γάρ που *for I suppose*

...γάρ τοι / καὶ γάρ τοι *for surely*

γέ postpositive and enclitic intensive and restrictive; emphasizes single words or whole phrases or clauses. *at least, at any rate, even, certainly, indeed, yes* (frequent in dialogue)

δέ postpositive

--ADVERB *on the other hand, on the contrary*

--CONJUNCTION *but, and*

Marks something as different from something that precedes, to offset rather than to exclude or contradict. Denotes slight contrast (weaker than ἀλλά, stronger than καί).

...δὲ δὴ *but then, but now, well but* used in passing to a new point

δή postpositive (except in Homer); gives precision, positiveness, exactness; used of what is obvious and natural (*cf.* δῆλα δή); may be ironical, intensive, consecutive, resumptive. *certainly, obviously, in truth, accordingly, then, of course, clearly, you see, I say*

δήπου *probably, I presume, I should hope, doubtless* stronger than που; often adds a touch of irony or doubt

δητα used in questions, answers, wishes *really, in truth, assuredly*

ἦ *in truth, truly*
ἦ γάρ *is it not so?* (when used alone in dialogue) elsewhere it has the force of "am I to understand that?" expressing surprise

ἦ μήν prefaces strong avowals, threats, oaths

καί CONJUNCTION *and, as*
καί...καί *both...and*
ADVERB *also, even, too, actually*
πολλοὶ καὶ ἄλλοι *many others also*
καὶ δὴ καί *and in particular, and especially, and what is more* lays stress on a particular instance or application of a general statement
καὶ...δέ *and...also; and...moreover*

μέν postpositive (weaker form of μήν) used as first member in a contrast
ἀλλὰ μὲν δὴ *but certainly in fact*
...μὲν οὖν *certainly in fact* ...μὲν οὖν may indicate a correction *no rather*; may indicate a transition to a new subject
πάνυ μὲν οὖν *yes, by all means, yes, very much so*
ἀλλὰ μὲν *but for a fact*

μέντοι postpositive *certainly, of course, in truth*; may also be used to mark a contrast, *however, yet*

ἀλλὰ μέντοι *but surely, but in fact*
καὶ μέντοι *and...indeed*
οὐ μέντοι *no indeed, but not*

μήν postpositive *in truth, surely*

ἀλλὰ μήν *but surely, no indeed, yes in truth*
καὶ μήν *and truly, no indeed, yes in truth*
καὶ μήν...γε *shows something of still greater importance*
καὶ μήν καί *and in truth also*
οὐ μήν *surely not*
οὐ μήν ἀλλά *nevertheless*
οὐ μήν οὐδέ *nor again*
οὐδὲ μήν *and certainly not*
τί μήν; *what indeed? naturally, of course*
τί μήν οὐ *why indeed not, of course*

οὐδέ (μηδέ) ADVERB *not even, not either, also not*
CONJUNCTION *and not, nor*

οὐκοῦν INTERROGATIVE *not therefore? not then?* expects affirmative reply
INFERENCEAL *then, well then, therefore* Accented this way it carries no
negative force

οὐκουν *not then, therefore not, surely not* (οὐ is strongly emphasized)

οὐν postpositive CONFIRMATORY *in fact, at all events, in truth*
INFERENCEAL *therefore, accordingly*
...γάρ οὐν *for in fact*
...δ' οὐν *anyhow*

τοὶ postpositive and enclitic (originally derived from the dative of feeling of
σύ) *in truth, surely, doubtless, mind you* [Called by Basil Gildersleeve “the
wheedling particle”]

τοιγάρ prepositive *therefore, wherefore, so then*
τοιγαροῦν prepositive more emphatic than τοιγάρ
τοίνυν postpositive *now then, further, therefore, accordingly*

ὡς, ὡς

DEMONSTRATIVE *thus, so*

RELATIVE *as how*

EXCLAMATORY *how!*

CONJUNCTION *that* (like ὅτι);

in order that (like ἵνα)

that (like ὅπως);

since (like ὅτι, ἐπεὶ)

so that (like ὥστε);

when, whenever, after (like ἐπεὶ)

ὡς *as, like*

ὡς *to* a preposition with persons + accusative

