PHILIP S. PEEK Ancient Greek I A 21st Century Approach



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Cover image: Athenian Fragmentary votive sculpture of Dionysus (?) Greek Ashmolean Museum. Photograph by Mary Harrsch, CC BY-SA. Cover design by Anna Gatti.

Module 2 More Sounds and Punctuation

Iota Subscript and Adscript

When the long vowels, $\bar{\alpha}$, η , and ω are combined with a short iota, the iota is written beneath the long vowels as an iota subscript. The prefix **sub**- means under.

α η ω

If the long vowel is capitalized, the iota is written beside the long vowel and is called an iota adscript. The prefix **ad-** means beside.

Αι Ηι Ωι

The iota is not pronounced and the pronunciation of these combined letters is the same as it is for the plain vowels, $\bar{\alpha}$, η , and ω . Practice pronouncing the name of Hades, the Greek god of the dead, $\Im t \delta \eta \varsigma$.

Note that the writing of the iota as a subscript or adscript is a writing convention begun in the Middle Ages. Originally the iota was pronounced with the long vowels, $\bar{\alpha}$, η , ω , as a combination of two sounds. From the fourth century to the second century BCE the iota weakened to a glide, similar to the way the English **y** can affect vowels. Pronounce out loud **late** and **day**, noting how the **y** influences the sound of the vowel **a**. After the second century BCE the iota was not pronounced. When reading ancient Greek, you will soon discover that the iota adscript or subscript often helps you identify the form of the word it appears in.

Gamma Clusters

When followed by a gamma γ , kappa κ , xi ξ , or chi χ , gamma γ , forms a cluster that creates the combined sound indicated by the bold letters below.

γγ	diphtho ng	δίφθο γγ ος
үк	a nch or	ἄ γκ υρα
γξ	lary nx , Sphi nx	λάρυ γξ , Σφί γξ
γχ	sy nch rony	σύ γχ ρονος

Punctuation

Greek uses the same period and comma as English. A single mark (\cdot) serves as either a colon (:) or a semicolon (;) depending on context.

'Έλληνες· Σοφοκλῆς, Περικλῆς, Δημοσθένης.*Greeks: Sophokles, Perikles, Demosthenes.*

δ δ λέγει· ή δ ε ποι έει.
He speaks; she acts.

The question mark in Greek is represented by (;) and looks the same as the English semicolon (;).

σὺ δὲ τίς καὶ τί βούλει; Who are you and what do you want?

Capitalization

Proper names and adjectives are capitalized, as are the first words of paragraphs and of quotations. The first word of a sentence is not typically capitalized. Note the capitalized words bolded in the paragraph below:

Ήροδότου Άλικαρνησσέος ιστορίης ἀπόδεξις ἥδε, ὡς μήτε τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα γένηται, μήτε ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά, τὰ μὲν Ἐλλησι τὰ δὲ βαρβάροισι ἀποδεχθέντα, ἀκλεᾶ γένηται, τά τε ἄλλα καὶ δι' ἢν αἰτίην ἐπολέμησαν ἀλλήλοισι.

[•] **Ε**λλησι is the Greek word for *Greeks*.

Who Were the Greeks?

The non-Greek Minoan civilization of Krete (Crete) flourished from c. 2200– 1500 BCE and influenced the Greeks. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* mention Minos, legendary king of Krete (Crete), who ruled the island and those nearby with his many ships. Around 2100 BCE Greek-speaking people arrived on mainland Greece, bringing with them their customs, language, and religion. The geographic area we call ancient Greece or Hellas never became a nation state, but rather was a collection of independent city-states which were diverse, comprising many different customs and dialects. Though diverse, Greek culture shared important features, including architecture, athletics, literature, music, religion, and science. The ancient Greek love for athletics led to our establishing the modern Olympic games. Their polytheistic religion and the accompanying stories of gods and heroes, their mythology, permeated much of what they accomplished and believed. Through their music, poetry, and prose writings they made sense of the world and their place in it. The richness the Greeks created continues to influence people all over the globe.

Greek Dialects

The earliest known dialect is the Mycenaean, attested in the Linear B syllabic script deciphered by the self-taught linguist, Michael Ventris. In the Classical period, roughly 750–350 BCE, there were about twenty-three Greek dialects, including Aeolic, Attic, Doric, and Ionic. At the end of the 4th century, the koine or common dialect began to be used, spreading to Asia and Egypt and eventually replacing the dialects that preceded it. The many dialects correspond roughly with Greek geography and their diversity was caused by many factors, including conquest, lineage, migrations, and natural barriers. Another influence on dialect was literature itself. The Homeric or epic dialect is a literary dialect, comprised of elements of the Ionic, Aeolic, and Arcado-Cypriot dialects. Later writers such as Apollonios Rhodios in his *Argonautica*, and Nonnos in his *Dionysiaca*, imitate Homer's literary dialect. Ionic was the dialect used to write elegiac poetry and poets used Doric for composing choral lyric poetry. For specifics on the Ionic-Attic dialect, see Appendix XII.

Arkhilokhos of Paros, Ἀρχίλοχος Πάρου, c. 680–645 BCE. The son of Telesikles, an aristocrat, and a slave woman, Arkhilokhos was a mercenary soldier and poet from Paros, a chief center for the worship of Demeter. In association with Demeter and Dionysos there was a tradition of iambic poetry, ἴαµβοι, a genre of poetry marked first by invective and scurrility, scatology, and sex, and second by its iambic meter. This iambic genre may have originated in the cult of Demeter, where insulting and abusive language, αἰσχρολογία, formed part of the ritual worship of the deity. In **iamboi** a first person narrator regales the audience with accounts of extravagant orgies or other escapades in which he claims to have taken part. Some of Arkhilokhos' **iamboi** were concerned with Lykambes and his two daughters, one of whom was named Neobule. In addition to iambics, he wrote about current events and military, personal, and political concerns. It is believed that his poetry was banned at Sparta because of its seditious qualities. In 708 B.C. his fellow islanders colonized Thasos, a northern Aegean island. The Parians who colonized it were often attacked by tribes from Thrakia. At some point Arkhilochos went to Thasos and fought against the Thrakians. The Saians, mentioned in the poem below, are a Thrakian tribe.

Module 2 Practice Reading Aloud. Practice reading this poem by Arkhilokhos. Read the poem a few times, trying to hear the rhythm of the words.

ἀσπίδι μὲν Σαΐων τις ἀγάλλεται, ἣν παρὰ θάμνῷ ἔντος ἀμώμητον κάλλιπον οὐκ ἐθέλων,

αὐτὸς δ' ἐξέφυγον θανάτου τέλος. ἀσπὶς ἐκείνη ἐρρέτω· ἐξαῦτις κτήσομαι οὐ κακίω.

Verse Translation

Dropped beside a bush, my shield no more some Saion With grasp and grin takes up. I blame myself.

Sadly leaving, fleeing gladly, I sidestepped Death. Without a shield I live to buy anew.

To hear me read, followed by Stefan Hagel's expert reading with a pitch accent, follow the link below:

Arkhilokhos' Ripsaspis Poem.¹

Etymology Corner II by Dr. E. Del Chrol

Knowledge of etymology will give you control over Greek

... is probably a true statement. You are going to learn a lot of new, strange, precise terminology in your quest to accurately describe the syntax of a sentence. When you learn the origin of these terms, you will learn they are actually straightforward. Early grammarians were trying to convey information, not create a secret code that only experts can use. Unfortunately, these terms are usually in Latin or Greek, languages you don't speak (yet!). These Etymology Corners are designed to demystify the precise terminology of this textbook and thereby help you understand the concepts much faster.

¹ https://loom.com/share/02a004f496ca45a2904e772ce874af59.

What to Study and Do 2. Familiarize yourself with the additional sounds and punctuation conventions. You will encounter this information frequently. As you work through this text you will find yourself easily memorizing each sound and punctuation convention.

Learning Tip 2: Memorize and Internalize the Sounds. When memorizing the sounds of Greek, learn them well. The first time you learn the vowel sounds, you may feel as though you are learning a sequence of noises. Try associating each sound with a memorable image. Long alpha ā may make you think of falling into grass on a warm summer's day. As you fall into the grass, say the sound \mathbf{ah} and picture a long alpha $\mathbf{\tilde{a}}$ in your mind. Imagine this picture of you and the smell of the grass and the sound **ah** and the long alpha $\bar{\mathbf{a}}$ as part of your lived experience. Link the next sound, eta, **ay** and η , to the **ah**, $\bar{\alpha}$, sound. Link the two by imagining the sun's r**ay**s (r η s) warming you as sink into the grass. Make sure that you connect the sound **ay** with an image of the letter eta, η , so that the two create a super-image in your mind. Link each image to the next and you will find that the time it takes you to remember brand-new information for the medium term is greatly reduced. By connecting new information, $\bar{\alpha}$ and η , which must begin as part of your short-term working memory, to old information that you already know, the English words **ah** and d**ay**, you create a link between your short-term memory and your long-term memory to create a medium-term memory. The formula **STM** + **LTM** = **MTM** is a memorization strategy that this textbook will recommend again and again. I have not invented this formula or these strategies. They have existed for a long time and the most powerful of them, presented soon, dates back to the ancient Greeks.

Next, think of a word in English that has the **ee** sound. Meet, i, works well. As you say **ah** $\bar{\mathbf{\alpha}}$ and sink into the grass warmed by the sun's r**n**s, your eyes m**ee**t (m $\bar{\mathbf{\iota}}$ t) with a cloud moving in the blue sky overhead. This cloud takes the form of a big boat (b ω t) filled with pirates. The pirates stand in the b ω t with black leather boots (b \bar{v} ts), as they stare back right at $y\bar{v}$. This linking strategy is powerful and can be used to place any number of items into your medium-term memory very quickly. You will still need to review this information in order to retain it and to place it, eventually, into your longterm memory. Just willing yourself to remember new information will not work. You need to use your imagination, if you wish to remember well and for the long term. Repetition also works but takes longer and often fails when you need to recall information. When creatively linking new information with old, remember to SEE it. SEEing it means that you create an image that you can make come alive with your five **S**enses—hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, touching. You Exaggerate that image to make it memorable. Finally you Energize the image by making it do something. This may seem like a lot of work. It will be, especially at the start. But with continued use the strategy will pay off and you will be able to use it for anything in life that you want to remember well.