

2nd edition

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Greek

A Comprehensive Grammar

David Holton, Peter Mackridge
& Irene Philippaki-Warbuton
Revised by Vassilios Spyropoulos



Greek

A Comprehensive Grammar

2nd Edition

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Greek

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**David Holton,
Peter Mackridge &
Irene Philippaki-Warburton**

**Revised by
Vassilios Spyropoulos**

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Preface to the first edition

Greek is spoken by about 13 to 14 million people. It is the sole official language of the Republic of Greece and (with Turkish) one of the two official languages of the Republic of Cyprus. Since 1981 it has been one of the official languages of the European Community (now European Union). It is spoken as sole mother tongue by 95 per cent of the population of Greece (which totals about 10 million) and by about 600,000 of the inhabitants of Cyprus. It is also spoken by a significant number of people of Greek origin (perhaps 3 or 4 million) who are resident in many parts of the world, chiefly North America, Australia, Germany, the former Soviet Union and the United Kingdom.

Modern Greek is the sole descendant of Ancient Greek and as such is a member of the Indo-European group of languages. Although until recent times Greek was divided into regional dialects, the vast majority of Greek-speakers now speak a common language with only relatively minor dialectal variations. The only exception to this is the Greek Cypriots, many of whom ordinarily speak a dialect which, although linguistically close to standard Greek, presents some significant differences.

It has long been customary to use the term 'Greek' to refer to the ancient language, while the contemporary language is known as 'Modern Greek'. We believe that, as a living language, contemporary Greek does not need to be qualified by an adjective which implies that it is somehow secondary to the ancient language. For this reason, we use 'Greek' throughout this book to refer to the modern language, adding the adjective 'Ancient' or 'Modern' only when these two chronological stages need to be distinguished.

Comparison with previous grammars

This is the first comprehensive reference grammar of Modern Greek to have appeared since the pioneering work by Manolis Triandafyllidis and his collaborators, *Νεοελληνική Γραμματική (της Δημοτικής)* [*Modern Greek Grammar (of Demotic)*, Athens 1941]. Nothing to equal the magnitude, scope, accuracy and clarity of Triandafyllidis's grammar has appeared in the meantime, even in Greek. In 1949 Triandafyllidis produced an abridged version of his grammar, called *Μικρή Νεοελληνική Γραμματική*, and a revised edition of this volume is still in official use today in schools; for this reason it is often referred to in Greece as the 'state grammar' or 'official grammar'. In 1967 G. Babiniotis and P. Kontos published their *Συγχρονική γραμματική της κοινής νέας ελληνικής* [*Synchronic Grammar of Common Modern Greek*]. This attempted to describe actual language use in an innovative way, presenting a kind of Greek in which the two language varieties, demotic and *katharevousa*, had merged (for more on demotic and *katharevousa* see below). Nevertheless, some of the material is now outdated; besides, this book was also a teaching manual, and each section presenting a grammatical feature was followed by a set of exercises.

Other grammars of Greek have appeared in English, but they have been either very brief or not widely available. *A Grammar of Modern Greek on a Phonetic Basis*, by J.T. Pring (London 1950), is more of a teaching manual for beginners than a reference grammar, and the author's interest in phonetics led him to provide transcriptions of his material in the International Phonetic Alphabet instead of the Greek alphabet; although reissued many times, it has now been long out of print. The *Reference Grammar of Literary Dhimotiki*, by F.W. Householder, K. Kazazis and A. Koutsoudas (Bloomington 1964) provided a useful presentation of the phonology and morphology, based on what were then up-to-date modern theories and methods, but it devoted a mere thirteen pages to sentential syntax (it is characteristic that at the very end of the book the authors write: 'Greek syntax is enough like English syntax so that the great majority of your problems can be resolved by consulting a good dictionary' (p. 174) – this at a time when 'good dictionaries' of Greek did not exist); moreover, their grammar was reproduced from typescript and was not widely available. Most recently, *Modern Greek: A Contemporary Grammar* by Olga Eleftheriades (Palo Alto 1985) comes nearest to the comprehensiveness of Triandafyllidis, but the theory and method on which it was based were outdated; it too suffers from the lack of a specific and separate treatment of syntax (the author's stated aim was to provide 'a systematic exposition of Greek phonology and morphology'; 'syntax', the author continues, 'is touched upon when the uses of a morphological form are explained' (p. v)); this book too was reproduced from typescript and not readily available.

The difference between the titles of the Triandafyllidis grammar of 1941 and our own book is indicative of the radical shift that the Greek language has undergone in the half-century that separates them. Until 1976, two versions of Greek coexisted: demotic was not only the spoken language but – at least since the turn of the twentieth century – the language of almost all creative literature, while *katharevousa* was reserved for almost all official purposes. *Katharevousa*, a hybrid made up of lexical, morphological and syntactic features from Ancient and Modern Greek thrown together somewhat haphazardly, was never a unified language, but exhibited considerable variation according to the user's education and taste. In reality *katharevousa* was used not only in most official pronouncements but in most of secondary and tertiary education, the law, medicine, the Church, the armed forces, most newspapers, and even to a large extent broadcasting. Thus the authors of the 1941 grammar had to specify in their title that they were concerned with demotic Greek as opposed to *katharevousa*. Ever since the Greek state decided officially to adopt what it termed 'Modern Greek (Demotic)' as the official language in 1976, such a distinction has no longer been necessary, and the Greek language has come closer to developing a set of universally accepted norms than at any other stage in its history.

One significant difference between our Grammar and the 1941 grammar is, therefore, that the Greek language itself has changed considerably since then. The language described in our Grammar is the form spoken and written by educated Greeks from the urban centres of Greece, which, while it is primarily based on demotic vocabulary, phonology, morphology and syntax, displays a significant influence from *katharevousa*.

A second difference is that while Triandafyllidis, in his foreword to the 1941 grammar, claimed that his work was descriptive, he specified that his grammar was 'founded on the basis of the folk songs and of recent literature', and went on to distinguish 'popular' forms, which his grammar chiefly aimed to describe, from 'learned' forms, some of which he felt obliged to include in the morphology because they were used in the common spoken language. Our own grammar concentrates on contemporary spoken and written usage and does not take as its basis the language of literature (let alone the language of folk songs). Yet, despite his claim, Triandafyllidis and his collaborators produced a grammar that was, at least to some extent, prescriptive. Thus, faced with alternative variants of certain morphological forms, the authors of the 1941 grammar tended either to choose just one and omit the rest, or at least to promote one and relegate the rest to footnotes. What is more, some of these choices have proved to be ill-advised, since the form they promoted has not, in some cases, proved to be the dominant one today.

Thirdly, and most importantly, the 1941 grammar almost entirely ignores syntax, devoting well over half its pages to derivational and inflectional morphology. The description of the syntax of Modern Greek was left to Achilles Tzartanos, whose *Νεοελληνική Σύνταξις (της Κοινής Δημοτικής)* [*Modern Greek Syntax (of Common Demotic)*, 2nd edn, 2 vols., Athens 1946–53] is a rich treasure house of syntactical observation, but presents great difficulties in use because it lacks a proper index; in addition, many of its examples (some of them again taken from folk songs and other poetry) are antiquated. A glance at the contents pages of our own Grammar will show that we devote as much space to syntax as to all other features of the grammar put together.

Lastly, while we have attempted to achieve a theoretical neutrality and to reduce modern linguistic terminology to a minimum, we have been able to take advantage of the huge advances that have been made in general linguistics in the past forty years, and in the linguistic study of Greek in the last twenty-five or so. The sections on anaphora, as well as those on variations of word order and the absence or presence of clitics in the expression of topic and focus, are innovations; no previous grammar has covered these phenomena. In general, then, our description of the language is more theoretically sophisticated than those of our predecessors.

In short, we believe that our Grammar is both original and comprehensive. Despite the authority of Triandafyllidis and Tzartanos, we felt, at all stages of the preparation of the Grammar, that we were unable to use more than a tiny fraction of the material they provided, and that we were having to go back to first principles. We had to reinvent the description of every level of the language: the sound system in the light of generative phonology, the writing system in view of recent orthographic reforms, the morphology in view of radical changes in linguistic attitudes and behaviour brought about by the demise of *katharevousa* as a discrete linguistic code used for official purposes, and the verbal syntax in the light of the substantial amount of trail-blazing work that has been done on it in recent years. Our enterprise was an extremely difficult one, and it proved to be more laborious and time-consuming than we had ever imagined at the outset.

Aims of the Grammar

The Grammar aims to provide a comprehensive explanatory and illustrative description and analysis of contemporary Greek, so as to assist its users in oral and written communication. Our Grammar is not primarily aimed at theoretical linguists, although we hope that they will find it informative. It is intended to be usable by a wide range of people with no formal linguistic training, from adult

learners who have only a basic knowledge of Greek to those with a high competence in oral and/or written communication, including native speakers.

By ‘description’ we mean that it is our aim to inform the reader about which forms are normally used and about how they are used. It is not our aim to instruct the reader as to what is ‘correct’ and what is ‘incorrect’.

The form of the language described is primarily the usage of native Greek-speakers living in the urban centres of Greece who have completed at least their compulsory secondary education. We do not attempt to present all the alternative varieties that are still used today, let alone the plethora of variants to be found in traditional Greek poetry and fiction. Nevertheless, secondary mention is sometimes made of various alternative morphological forms found in literature, as well as of certain alternative *katharevousa* forms still to be found today in newspapers and elsewhere. In view of the wide variety of forms encountered in Greek literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, our Grammar does not aim to cover any but the chief demotic alternatives, and it is beyond its scope to facilitate the comprehension of texts written in *katharevousa*.

We aim to describe both formal and colloquial usage, and we often use these terms when describing a particular feature of the language. In view of the fact that diglossia (the coexistence of two differentiated varieties of the same language used for different purposes) prevailed in Greece until 1976, the sociolinguistic situation is very complex, and we do not attempt to adopt a sociolinguistic approach to the description of Greek. Greek-speakers did not suddenly forget their *katharevousa* when it officially ceased to be used as a variety of Greek that was perceived as being distinct from demotic; they often use *katharevousa* forms when they are trying to speak or write formally, or in jest, or simply because that is the form that comes naturally to them at that particular moment. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that when we describe a certain form or usage as ‘formal’, we generally mean that it has entered the common language from *katharevousa* and is still perceived by speakers as being more appropriate to formal than to informal contexts; but this does not mean that it is not to be found in informal contexts too. Conversely, a form or usage described as ‘colloquial’ means that it is generally perceived by speakers as being more appropriate to informal speech situations, and it is more likely to be found in such contexts; but this by no means excludes its use in formal contexts.

Layout of the Grammar

Greek is a highly inflected language. The nominal system (nouns, adjectives, etc.) displays four grammatical cases, while the verbal system is even more complex. Moreover, the morphology of Greek involves a significant number of alternative forms. For this reason, morphology (the actual forms of the words) has been placed in a separate part of the Grammar, distinct from syntax (which deals with the *use* of the forms). Bearing in mind that this is a work of *reference*, we decided that the reader would be able to find what s/he is looking for more readily if we made a fairly rigid separation between the forms of the words and their syntactic use, rather than dealing with the syntax of each individual morphological class of word along with an account of the forms. We have, of course, included plenty of cross-references to bridge the divisions between phonology, morphology and syntax.

The Grammar is divided into three parts. Part I covers the sound system (phonology, morphophonemics, and suprasegmental features such as stress and intonation) and the writing system (the alphabet, diacritics and punctuation) in two separate chapters.

Part II covers morphology, dealing with the inflection of each part of speech in turn (articles, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, numerals and verbs), and finally giving an account of the ways of forming derivatives. For ease of reference, the declension and conjugation patterns have been laid out as fully and as explicitly as possible by means of traditional tables, many of which are followed by notes providing details of formation (including alternative forms) that cannot be conveniently fitted into the tables. Obsolete and obsolescent forms that are to be found in older literature have been excluded.

Part III takes a broad view of syntax, detailing the use of the verb and verb phrase (including objects, person and number, mood, voice, aspect and tense), the noun phrase (including gender, number, case, and the use of the articles, adjectives, numerals, pronouns and determiners), adverbs and adverb phrases, prepositions and prepositional phrases, and finally the clause (including main (independent) and subordinate (embedded) clauses, word order, and other syntactic phenomena). Every syntactic phenomenon described in Part III is illustrated by examples of phrases and sentences that show the phenomenon in action. These examples are not taken from a corpus, but are based, for the most part, on everyday usage.

At the end of the Grammar there are four appendices dealing with features of the language that cannot be readily accommodated in any single part or chapter of the book. These appendices consist of a correspondence table of pronouns, determiners

and adverbs; the expression of spatial relations by means of prepositions and adverbs; expressions of time, space and quantity; and agreement of number, gender and case. These appendices are followed by a glossary of select grammatical terms. Finally the reader will find an index of grammatical categories and concepts and of some Greek words of special grammatical interest.

Methodology and terminology

Aside from the section on the sound and writing systems, where some phonemic and phonetic transcriptions are used, the Greek in this book is printed in the Greek alphabet, using the simplified 'monotonic' (single-accent) system in use in Greek education and in official and much unofficial communication since 1982. The chapter on the writing system does, however, include an account of the traditional system of diacritics which are still used in a number of publications. All Greek examples are translated into English.

We have attempted to include everything that will be of practical use to the reader. This means that, while full advantage is taken both of modern theoretical approaches and of the most recent work done on Greek from various viewpoints, theoretical statements are for the most part excluded. Our approach does not depend on any one theoretical standpoint. Instead, while it is informed throughout by modern theoretical approaches, the layout of the Grammar is largely traditional, devoting separate parts to the sound and writing systems, the morphology and the syntax. We believe that for this reason this Grammar is easily usable.

It is impossible to describe a language adequately without an arsenal of grammatical terms. We have tried as far as possible to use traditional grammatical terms (terms that have traditionally been used in English, that is, though not necessarily used for Greek) when they are available, and have resorted to terms taken from modern linguistics only when a term for a certain linguistic phenomenon does not exist in the traditional terminology, or where the traditional term has tended to misrepresent the phenomenon it claims to describe. At all events, we do not assume that the reader is familiar with all the grammatical terminology, and every attempt is made to explain it; there is also a glossary of grammatical terms at the end of the Grammar.

We have in fact found ourselves obliged to reevaluate the terminology traditionally used for the description of Greek, much of which dates back to descriptions of Ancient Greek by ancient grammarians, and some of which is not suitable for the description of the modern language. Most notable are the terms traditionally applied to the verb forms, particularly 'aorist' and 'subjunctive'. The term 'aorist'

(from a Greek word meaning ‘indefinite’) is not at all appropriate for the description of Modern Greek; besides, it really applied to a verbal aspect rather than to a particular form or tense. We have avoided using this term altogether, and have used the term ‘simple past’ for the tense traditionally called the ‘aorist indicative’; this term brings Greek into line with languages such as English and French. We have redefined the terms ‘indicative’ and ‘subjunctive’ not by reference to the verb forms themselves but by reference to the particles with which the verb forms can combine, a subjunctive being a verb introduced by $\nu\alpha$ or $\alpha\varsigma$ (and negated by $\mu\eta[v]$), while an indicative is a verb that is not introduced by $\nu\alpha$ or $\alpha\varsigma$ (and is negated by $\delta\epsilon[v]$). There is only one present tense in our book, since the old ‘present indicative’ and ‘present subjunctive’, as verb forms in themselves, are in fact identical in Modern Greek (unlike in Ancient Greek). As for the traditional ‘aorist subjunctive’, we have found ourselves forced to invent an entirely new term, namely the ‘dependent’, since it is the only verb form that cannot normally be used independently of a particle or conjunction.

Parallel with the terms ‘present’, ‘imperfect’, ‘simple past’ and ‘dependent’, we have also, when the need arises, used other descriptions of the same forms which indicate more transparently the tense and aspect of the forms in question: these terms, not used in grammars of Greek till now but familiar to linguists for several decades, are ‘imperfective non-past’, ‘imperfective past’, ‘perfective past’ and ‘perfective non-past’. These terms clearly, faithfully and unambiguously represent the actual status of each verb form, but we have used the other set of terms as far as possible in order to help the non-linguist reader. The three sets of terms are displayed in the table below, which also contains certain other sets of terms where we departed from traditional practice. (The various previous grammars of Greek in English have actually used a variety of terms, not always those classed in our table as ‘traditional’.)

Terms used for verb forms

This book does not use the terms classed here exclusively as ‘traditional’. ‘Technical’ terms are those that display tense and aspect; ‘non-technical’ terms are those used most frequently in this Grammar.

<i>Traditional</i>	<i>Technical</i>	<i>Non-technical</i>
Present indicative	Imperfective non-past	Present
Imperfect	Imperfective past	Imperfect
Aorist indicative	Perfective past	Simple past
Aorist subjunctive	Perfective non-past	Dependent
Simple future	Θα+perfective non-past	Perfective future
Continuous future	Θα+imperfective non-past	Imperfective future
Conditional	Θα+imperfective past	Conditional
Present participle	Gerund (i.e. indeclinable form in -vτας)	Gerund
Infinitive	Non-finite	Non-finite

The authors

The three authors of this Grammar come from different and complementary backgrounds. David Holton and Peter Mackridge are British university teachers of Greek language and literature, while Irene Philippaki-Warburton is a Greek linguist who teaches in Britain and has played a leading role in the revolution that has taken place in the linguistic study of Greek in the last decades.

Since two of the authors have produced books on the Greek language before, it is as well to clarify the differences between this Grammar and their previous books. *Modern Greek*, by Brian D. Joseph and Irene Philippaki-Warburton (London 1987), was produced for the Croom Helm Descriptive Language Series. This series was addressed to specialist linguists and had to follow a specific format based on the requirement of the chief editors for grammars that would form the basis for extracting linguistic universals. *Modern Greek* is therefore highly technical in its approach and treatment, and the predetermined format did not permit the authors to decide on the proportionate emphasis to be placed on the various phenomena of the language. *The Modern Greek Language*, by Peter Mackridge (Oxford 1985), was written to fill the gap left by the absence of a modern comprehensive grammar of Greek. Nevertheless, it was aimed primarily at those who already had a high degree of competence in the language. Rather than providing a comprehensive and systematic description, it concentrated on features of contemporary usage that were not accounted for, or were inadequately covered, in traditional grammars.

Each author of *Greek: A Comprehensive Grammar of the Modern Language* drafted different sections and sent them to the others for scrutiny and comment; all sections were radically revised in the light of comments from the drafter's co-authors. Irene Philippaki-Warbuton drafted the sections on the sound system and the verbal and sentential syntax; David Holton drafted the morphology sections; and Peter Mackridge drafted the sections on the writing system, the noun phrase, adverbs and prepositions. Tasos Christidis commented on draft chapters and acted as consultant to the authors at various stages of the preparation of the Grammar. Nevertheless, the Grammar as a whole is the joint responsibility of the three authors.

Note on orthography

As mentioned above, this Grammar uses the 'monotonic' accentuation system. It also uses the very slightly simplified orthography that has been taught in Greek schools since 1976. In the case of individual words we have attempted to follow the most recent authoritative concise dictionary of Greek, namely the *Néo Ellēnikó Lexikó* by E. Kriaras (Athens 1995). As for the use of the final -ν in certain auxiliary words (the negative particles and the masculine and feminine accusative singular forms of articles and pronouns), we have followed the 'Triandafyllidis rule' in our examples, i.e. we have used the final -ν only when the following word begins with a vowel or a plosive, and have omitted it elsewhere. We recognize that different Greek-speakers adopt different procedures on this and other orthographic matters, and we have adopted our orthography not as an article of faith but in the interests of consistency.

David Holton
Peter Mackridge
Irene Philippaki-Warbuton
October 1996

Preface to the second edition

Greek: A Comprehensive Grammar of the Modern Language, by David Holton, Peter Mackridge and Irene Philippaki-Warbuton, was first published in 1997 and has met with considerable success. One measure of this success is the fact that it has been reprinted (nine) times in English, and a Greek translation by Vassilis Spyropoulos, published in 1999, has also been reissued thirteen times.

The *Comprehensive Grammar* has been an ongoing long-term project for its authors. Corrections and additions have been incorporated into subsequent reprintings of the original English version, and all three authors worked with Vassilis Spyropoulos on his Greek translation, reading through his drafts, responding to his suggestions, and making proposals for further improvements, including the correction of minor errors and the improvement of the style in order to achieve greater clarity of expression. The three authors then went on to write *Greek: An Essential Grammar of the Modern Language*, first published in 2004, and to collaborate on the Greek translation of this grammar by Michalis Georgiafentis, which appeared in 2007. The *Essential Grammar* was not a condensed version of the *Comprehensive*. On the contrary, all of the material was rethought from first principles, and the two grammars are structured quite differently, with morphology and syntax being covered together in the *Essential*, whereas they are analysed in different parts of the *Comprehensive*. At each of these stages – the translation of the *Comprehensive*, the writing of the *Essential* and the translation of the *Essential* – the authors and the translators gained greater experience and were able to make improvements that have now been incorporated into the second edition of the *Comprehensive*.

This new edition of the *Comprehensive Grammar* is a collaborative effort between Vassilis Spyropoulos and the original three authors. All four authors have read through the whole text of the original version and have suggested major improvements as well as minor revisions of detail. Many of these improvements

have entailed expansion of the material, in the form of completely new sections, supplementary descriptive material added to existing sections, and additional illustrative examples of Greek usage.

In its original form, the *Comprehensive* already presented a large number of innovations in the description and analysis of Modern Greek. One of the chief innovations was in the analysis of the tense system, which entailed the development of new terminology that made our presentation of the system clearer and more consistent than that of previous grammars of Modern Greek. The new edition follows the same methodological approach as the original version. As before, even though our grammar is informed and inspired by the most successful current theories, in our analysis we are not trying to promote any particular theory. We have tried our best to describe the Greek language comprehensively, clearly and in detail on the basis of our knowledge of the language, our knowledge of current linguistic theories that offer a deeper and clearer understanding of language in general, and our long experience of teaching Greek.

We have preserved the overall structure of the first edition into three parts, and into numbered sections within each part. However, although we use the same numbering system as in the first edition, the addition of some new sections has meant that there are now some differences in the numbering of individual sections.

In this edition, Vassilis Spyropoulos has taken the initiative in making extensive major improvements. These include (a) the use of the IPA conventions in the phonetic description of the sounds of Modern Greek and in the transcription of the examples in the phonology sections, (b) a revised description of the non-syllabic variants of unstressed /i/ and of the consonant deletion process, (c) the addition of further illustrative examples in the presentation of the different allophonic variants of the phonemes and of the phonological rules, (d) a new chapter on derivational morphology and other word formation processes, which presents the processes of suffixation, prefixation and conversion, a description of the different types and structures of compounds and the formation of acronyms, (e) the revision and expansion of the material on (i) transitivity and voice, (ii) impersonal verbs and modalities, (iii) the dependent, (iv) complement clauses, (v) adversative and concessive clauses and (vi) agreement patterns in coordination, (f) the revision of the definitions of certain terms in the glossary and (g) a significantly expanded index which is supplemented by a detailed Index of Greek words that have a grammatical function.

Of the authors of the first edition, two are British and the third is Greek, but all three are resident in Britain. Not only does Vassilis Spyropoulos live in Greece (and specifically in Athens), but he is of a younger generation than the original

authors. This means that he is more up-to-date with developments in actual language use as well as in linguistic theory and methodology.

Both the language itself and the methods used for analysing and describing linguistic data have developed during the fifteen years since the first edition was written. At that time only twenty years had passed since the learned and artificially archaized version of Modern Greek known as *katharevousa* had been replaced by demotic (also known as ‘Common Modern Greek’) for all official uses. Now that another fifteen years have passed since the first edition was written, further developments have taken place. These developments are due to two coexisting but opposite tendencies. One of these is the levelling of some borrowings from the old learned language so as to conform to demotic morphological patterns and paradigms. The other is the use of older learned features in both grammar and vocabulary (whether from *katharevousa* or directly from Ancient Greek) in an attempt to lend greater gravity to a written text – and sometimes, it has to be said, in order for the writer to display superior knowledge. *Katharevousa* more or less ceased to exist as a discrete linguistic variety thirty-five years ago (in fact it was never a single, standardized variety) and readers should not be expected to know precisely what the term *katharevousa* refers to. For this reason, in the main text of the second edition, instead of the term *katharevousa* we have decided to use the more comprehensive and in many respects more accurate adjective ‘learned’.

In addition, in the last fifteen years, the use of Greek has spread into new media such as the Internet, email and mobile phone texting. Many texts (though not the majority) sent by email, SMS and other electronic media are written in what is often known as ‘Greeklish’, i.e. using Roman characters to represent Greek discourse. However, we are not aware that such modern forms of written communication are having any significant effect on the grammar of the language. As for Greeklish, there are various versions in use, and we have decided not to present an analysis of them in our Grammar.

As far as the collection and analysis of linguistic material are concerned, fifteen years ago there were no Greek linguistic corpora available, and searching for Greek material on the Internet was more or less impossible. In preparing the second edition we have made extensive searches for realistic material on the Internet (especially texts from newspapers, blogs and discussion groups), so as to ensure that both the grammatical information and the examples of usage that we provide reflect real current language use.

One last change needs to be mentioned. In the first edition, as we made clear in the ‘Note on orthography’ at the end of the Preface, we followed the so-called ‘Triandafyllidis rule’ regarding the use of the final -v in the masculine and

feminine singular forms of articles and pronouns and in the negative particles *δεν* and (in most of its uses) *μην*. This rule (which was supposed to be based on the actual pronunciation in everyday speech) stipulated that the *v* should be written at the end of such forms only when the following word begins with a vowel or a plosive. It has become clear in the years since we wrote the first edition that this rule is being applied in writing far less than it used to be. In most contemporary written texts, the masculine singular of the definite article and the negative particle *δεν* tend to be always written with *-v*, irrespective of the immediately following sound. For this reason we have decided to write the final *-v* on the definite article *τον* and the negative particle *δεν* and *μην* in most of our examples of usage. However, since it is still possible and legitimate to omit the final *-v* in these circumstances, we have not been absolutely consistent.

Apart from reprintings, translation and numbers of copies sold, there are other indications of the *Comprehensive Grammar*'s success. It is particularly encouraging to see that linguists writing on the Modern Greek language regularly cite our Grammar, in either its English or Greek version, for authoritative statements about grammatical phenomena. A number of departments in Greek universities recommend the translation of the *Comprehensive* to their students as a basic source for grammar courses. In addition, the Greek Ministry of Education commissioned a team of four experts (including Irene Philippaki-Warburton) to write a grammar for Greek primary schools. This grammar follows the *Comprehensive* in its basic structure as well as in a number of details such as the presentation of the tense system. This school grammar has already been in use for some time via the Internet.

The only major grammar of Greek to have been published since the first edition of the *Comprehensive* is the *Γραμματική της Νέας Ελληνικής: Δομολειτουργική – Επικοινωνιακή* [*Structural-Functional and Communicative Grammar of Modern Greek*] by Christos Clairis and Georgios Babiniotis, which appeared in instalments from 1996 onwards and was republished as a single volume of 1100 pages in 2005. However, this grammar is so far available only in Greek, and it is primarily intended for native speakers.

Fourteen years after its first publication, the *Comprehensive* still remains the fullest, most systematic, authoritative and up-to-date grammar of Greek.

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February 2011

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First edition

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Second edition

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List of conventions

*	ungrammatical forms or utterances
?	utterance of doubtful acceptability
<i>bold italics</i>	grammatical terms defined in the Glossary
bold	in examples, indicates the part of the example being discussed
<i>italics</i>	emphasis, or used to highlight terms for easy location by the reader
□	in Greek examples: indicates material that may be omitted
□	in English translations: indicates material added to make translation more comprehensible
□	around letters and symbols indicating sounds: phonetic realization
//	around letters and symbols indicating sounds: phonemic rendering
/	separates alternative forms
†	indicates a verb without a passive perfective form

List of abbreviations

acc.	accusative (case)
act.	active (voice)
AG	Ancient Greek
cf.	compare
def. art.	definite article
dep.	dependent (verb form)
e.g.	for example
emph.	emphatic (personal pronoun)
F <i>or</i> fem.	feminine
ff.	indicates pages or sections beginning with the specified number
fut.	future (tense)
gen.	genitive (case)
i.e.	that is
imp. <i>or</i> imper.	imperative (mood)
imperf.	imperfective (aspect); imperfect (tense)
lit.	literally
M <i>or</i> masc.	masculine
N <i>or</i> neut.	neuter
nom.	nominative (case)
pass.	passive (voice)
perf.	perfective (aspect)
pl.	plural
pres.	present (tense)
sg.	singular
voc.	vocative (case)



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PART I

The sound and writing systems



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The sound system

1.1 Phonologically distinct segments

The sound system of Greek consists of the following distinct segments or *phonemes*:

(a) *Consonants*

p, t, k, f, θ, x, v, ð, γ, s, z, l, r, m, n

(b) *Vowels*

i, e, a, o, u

1.1.1 The consonants

1.1.1.1 The pronunciation of each consonant phoneme

Each of the above phonemes may correspond to more than one actual pronunciation, i.e. more than one phonetically different variant or *allophone*, depending on the sounds adjacent to it, which can affect it in various ways. Below we give each phoneme with its allophones and the phonetic environment in which each allophone occurs. The phonemes are placed between slashes //, while the variants or allophones are placed inside square brackets [].

Phoneme	Allophone	Examples
/p/:	[p]	[póði] πόδι ‘foot’, [kápu] κάπου ‘somewhere’, [aplós] απλός ‘simple’, [elríða] ελπίδα ‘hope’
	[b]	[bóta] μπότα ‘boot’, [ka(m)bána] καμπάνα ‘bell’, [si(m)bonó] συμπονώ ‘I sympathize with’

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The consonant [p] is a voiceless bilabial plosive without aspiration. It occurs in all environments but rarely after a nasal. After a nasal it is pronounced as [b], i.e. as a voiced bilabial plosive, as is clearly shown in [si(m)bonó] ‘sympathize with’. However, it may also appear without the nasal in word-initial position as in [bóta] where it contrasts with the voiceless [p]. Nevertheless, even in such circumstances [b] can be analysed as the result of the combination of a nasal + p. This combination gives either a simple [b] in word-initial position [bóta] or a nasal + b in word-medial position. The nasal itself may be reduced even in medial position to a prenasalization feature [ᵐb] ([éᵐboros] ‘merchant’) or even be omitted completely ([éboros]). The presence or absence of nasal before [b] and the degree of nasality vary in accordance with sociolinguistic factors such as the speaker’s place of origin or age, the formality of the context, etc. The tendency nowadays is to omit it. For instance, young Athenian speakers tend not to pronounce it and older speakers seem to vary according to formality and the position of the nasal in the word. In any case, the variation in the pronunciation of the nasal is a very complicated issue and forming exact generalizations is a very difficult task as the language evolves. In some words of foreign origin which have not been assimilated completely to the Greek phonological system, such as [sampára] σαμπάνια ‘champagne’, [compjúter] κομπιούτερ ‘computer’, etc., the sequences nasal + p do not give rise to [(m)b], especially in the speech of educated people.

/t/:	[t]	[télos] τέλος ‘end’, [potó] ποτό ‘drink’, [atmós] ατμός ‘steam’, [astakós] αστακός ‘lobster’
	[d]	[dulápa] ντουλάπα ‘wardrobe’, [pé(n)de] πέντε ‘five’, [si(n)daksiðjótis] συνταξιδιώτης ‘travelling partner’

The consonant [t] is a voiceless alveolar plosive without aspiration. It occurs in all environments but rarely after a nasal. [d] is a voiced alveolar plosive and it occurs either after a nasal or as the result of the combination of a nasal + t. As in the case of (m)b, the nasal is absent before [d] in word-initial position ([dáma] ντάμα ‘female dancing partner, queen (in cards)’); it is optional in word-medial position and its reduction to a prenasalization feature depends on sociolinguistic factors ([é(n)domo] or éᵐdomo έντομο ‘insect’). The foreign origin of the word may also affect the choice of either omitting the nasal, or retaining the cluster [-nt-] ([anténa] or [a(n)déna] αντένα ‘aerial’).

/k/:	[k]	[kóri] κόρη ‘daughter’, [síka] σύκα ‘figs’, [kuvás] κουβάς ‘bucket’, [éksi] έξι ‘six’, [lefkós] λευκός ‘white’
	[g]	[a(η)gúri] αγγούρι ‘cucumber’, [a(η)gónas] αγκώνα ‘elbow’, [si(η)gátikos] συγκατοικός ‘roommate’, [grína] γκρίνια ‘nagging’
	[c]	[cípos] κήπος ‘garden’, [pacéto] πακέτο ‘package’, [sciní] σκηνή ‘tent’
	[ʃ]	[é(n)ʃiros] έγκυρος ‘valid’, [á(n)ʃelos] άγγελος ‘angel’

The consonant [k] is a voiceless velar plosive which occurs without a preceding nasal and in all environments except before a front vowel (see Section 1.1.2 for the position of vowels). [g] is a voiced velar plosive which occurs either after a nasal or as the result of the combination of nasal + k. As in the case of [b] and [d], the presence or absence of the nasal and the degree of nasality before [g] in word-medial position depends on sociolinguistic factors.

[c] is a voiceless palatal plosive. It occurs when there is no preceding nasal and when the following vowel is front, i.e. i and e. It may also be the result of the combination of k+i when the /i/ is unstressed and a vowel follows: /kiólas/ → [cólas] κιόλας ‘already’. Its voiced counterpart [ʃ] occurs after a nasal and before a front vowel. As in the case of [b], [d] and [g], [ʃ] in initial position represents the combination of nasal + k + front vowel, while in medial position the presence of the nasal and the degree of nasality are optional and are again determined by sociolinguistic factors. [ʃ] may also be the result of the combination g+i when the /i/ is unstressed and a vowel follows: /giónis/ → [ʃiónis] γκιόνις ‘scops owl’.

/f/:	[f]	[fóros] φόρος ‘tax’, [fílos] φίλος ‘friend’, [néfos] νέφος ‘cloud, smog’, [fajitó] φαγητό ‘food’, [sinjforá] συμφορά ‘disaster’, [aftós] αυτός ‘this’
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[f] is the only realization of the phoneme /f/. It is a voiceless labiodental *fricative*. However, see the discussion about the realization of phoneme /v/ below and the discussion of voice assimilation in Section 1.3.1.

/θ/:	[θ]	[θálasa] θάλασσα ‘sea’, [láθος] λάθος ‘mistake’, [káthetos] κάθετος ‘vertical’, [ánthos] άνθος ‘flower’, [staθmós] σταθμός ‘station’
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[θ] is the only realization of the phoneme /θ/. It is a voiceless dental fricative.

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/x/:	[x]	[xará] χαρά ‘joy’, [vixas] βήχας ‘cough’, [apéxo] απέχω ‘I abstain’, [axúri] αχούρι ‘stable’, [érxome] έρχομαι ‘I come’, [axthofóros] αχθοφόρος ‘carrier’, [áhxos] άγχος ‘anxiety’
	[ç]	[vroçi] βροχή ‘rain’, [çéti] χέρι ‘hand’, [ásçimos] άσχημος ‘ugly’, [erçiirisi] εγχείρηση ‘surgical operation’

The allophone [x] is a voiceless velar fricative which occurs in all environments except before a front vowel. The variant [ç] is a palatal voiceless fricative which occurs before a front vowel, i.e. i and e. It may also be the result of the combination x+i when the /i/ is unstressed and a vowel follows: /xióni/ → [çóni] χιόνι ‘snow’.

/v/:	[v]	[vulí] βουλή ‘parliament’, [sovarós] σοβαρός ‘serious’, [ávisos] άβυσσος ‘abyss’, [anevéno] ανεβαίνω ‘I come up’, [kárvuno] κάρβουνο ‘coal’, [aznós] ασβός ‘badger’, [sinjvulí] συμβουλή ‘advice’, [vjéno] βγαίνω ‘I come out’
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The phoneme /v/ has only one realization [v], which is a voiced labiodental fricative. The sound [v] does not occur before voiceless consonants, thus [evjénia] ευγένεια ‘nobility, politeness’, [évlogos] εύλογος ‘reasonable’, but [eftiçía] ευτυχία ‘happiness’, [efθiksía] ευθιξία ‘sensitivity’. See the discussion of voice assimilation in Section 1.3.1.

/ð/:	[ð]	[ðóro] δώρο ‘gift’, [peði] παιδί ‘child’, [kaðéna] καδένα ‘chain’, [kuðúni] κουδούνι ‘bell’, [enðjaféron] ενδιαφέρον ‘interest’, [aðjázo] αδειάζω ‘I empty’, [cerðízo] κερδίζω ‘I win’
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The phoneme /ð/ has only one realization [ð], which is a voiced dental fricative. Its distribution before a consonant is very restricted and it cannot appear before voiceless consonants.

/ɣ/:	[ɣ]	[ɣámos] γάμος ‘wedding’, [aɣári] αγάπη ‘love’, [aɣóri] αγόρι ‘boy’, [piɣáni] πηγούνι ‘chin’, [meyálos] μεγάλος ‘big’, [ɣrafi] γραφή ‘writing’, [zɣurós] σγουρός ‘curly’
	[j]	[jíɣas] γίγας ‘giant’, [flojéra] φλογέρα ‘flute’, [pijéno] πηγαίνω ‘I go’, [arjirós] αργυρός ‘silver’

[ɣ] is a voiced velar fricative which does not occur before a front vowel; [j] is a palatal voiced fricative which occurs only before a front vowel. It may also be the result of the combination γ+i when the /i/ is unstressed and a vowel follows: /kuráγio/ → [kurájjo] κουράγιο ‘courage’. For further discussion of the sound [j] see Section 1.1.3 below.

/s/:	[s]	[sóma] σώμα ‘body’, [ðásos] δάσος ‘woods’, [vási] βάση ‘base’, [psári] ψάρι ‘fish’, [astíos] αστείος ‘funny’
	[z]	[izvolí] εισβολή ‘invasion’, [zmínos] σμήνος ‘swarm’

[s] is a voiceless alveolar strident fricative consonant. The voiced variant [z] occurs only before a voiced consonant. See below and Section 1.3.1.

/z/:	[z]	[zoí] ζωή ‘life’, [zíla] ζήλια ‘jealousy’, [xazós] χαζός ‘stupid’
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[z] is a voiced alveolar strident fricative consonant. See below and Section 1.3.1.

/l/:	[l]	[láθος] λάθος ‘mistake’, [kaló] καλό ‘good’
	[ɭ]	[karvéla] καρβέλια ‘loaves’, [elá] ελιά ‘olive (tree)’, [pulá] πουλιά ‘birds’

The realization [l] of the phoneme /l/ is a voiced alveolar approximant lateral liquid. The variant [ɭ] is a voiced palatal approximant lateral liquid; it is the result of the combination l+i when the /i/ is unstressed and a vowel follows. It may also occur as an allophonic variant before the high front vowel /i/ in some dialects or idiolects: [ɭípi] λύπη ‘sorrow’, [fíɭi] φίλοι ‘friends’.

/r/:	[r]	[rolóɣ] ρολόι ‘clock’, [psári] ψάρι ‘fish’
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The only realization [r] of the phoneme /r/ is a voiced alveolar flap/trill.

/m/:	[m]	[mónos] μόνος ‘alone’, [xóma] χώμα ‘earth’, [mitéra] μητέρα ‘mother’, [vaθmós] βαθμός ‘grade’, [e(m)báθia] εμπάθεια ‘animosity’, [komninós] Κομνηνός ‘Komnenos’
	[ɱ]	[amfivolía] αμφιβολία ‘doubt’, [simvolí] συμβολή ‘contribution’

The realization [m] of the phoneme /m/ is a voiced bilabial nasal. It occurs in all environments except before a labiodental fricative, where the labiodental variant [ɱ] occurs instead. The [m] variant also occurs as the realization of a nasal before a labial consonant: /ton patéra/ → [to(m)batéra] τον πατέρα ‘the father (acc.)’. See also below and Section 1.3.1.

/n/:	[n]	[nonós] νονός ‘godfather’, [énas] ένας ‘one’, [kanonikós] κανονικός ‘normal’, [simvân] συμβάν ‘incident’, [ánetos] άνετος ‘comfortable’, [kapnós] καπνός ‘tobacco, smoke’
	[ɲ]	[názome] νιάζομαι ‘I care’, [siɲchéo] συγχέω ‘I confuse’, [si(ɲ)ɲinonía] συγκοινωνία ‘transportation’
	[ŋ]	[áɲxos] άγχος ‘anxiety’, [a(ɲ)gónas] αγκώνας ‘elbow’, [si(ɲ)ɣraféas] ή [si(ɲ)graféas] συγγραφέας ‘writer’

The phoneme /n/ has the following allophones. [n] is a voiced alveolar nasal which occurs before all vowels. The sound [ɲ] is a voiced palatal nasal which is the result of the combination n+i before a vowel when /i/ is unstressed; it may also occur before the high front vowel /i/ in the dialectal speech of some speakers of Greek. Before a consonant, the phoneme /n/ has various realizations depending on the place of articulation of the following consonant. Thus, before a labial consonant it is realized as a bilabial nasal [m], e.g. /sinpaθó/ → [si(m)baθó] συμπαθώ ‘I like, I sympathize with’, /ton pólemo/ → [to(m)bólemo] τον πόλεμο ‘the war (acc.)’; before a bilabial consonant it is realized as a labiodental nasal [ɱ], e.g. /sinfonía/ → [simfónia] συμφωνία ‘agreement’; before a palatal consonant it is realized as a palatal nasal [ɲ] and finally before a velar consonant it is realized as velar nasal [ŋ]. See also the discussion about the assimilation of place of articulation in Section 1.3.1.

1.1.1.2 The sounds [ts] and [dz]

[ts] and [dz] may be analysed as single consonantal segments: [ts] as a voiceless alveolar affricate, as in [tsépi] τσέπη ‘pocket’, [papútsi] παπούτσι ‘shoe’, and [dz] as a voiced alveolar affricate, as in [dzámi] τζάμι ‘windowpane’, [pa(n)dzári] παντζάρι ‘beetroot’. On the other hand these sounds may be analysed as forming clusters consisting of t + s and d + z respectively.

1.1.1.3 The consonants of Greek

The following chart summarizes the consonantal sounds of Greek and their articulatory properties:

	<i>Bilabial</i>		<i>Labiodental</i>		<i>Dental</i>		<i>Alveolar</i>		<i>Palatal</i>		<i>Velar</i>	
	VL	VD	VL	VD	VL	VD	VL	VD	VL	VD	VL	VD
Plosive	p	b					t	d	c	ɟ	k	g
Nasal		m		ɱ				n		ɲ		ŋ
Trill/flap								r				
Fricative			f	v	θ	ð	s	z	ç	ʝ	x	ɣ
Approximant		w								j		
Lateral								l		ʎ		
Affricate							ts	dz				

VL: voiceless VD: voiced

1.1.2 The vowels

The vowel system of Greek is a very symmetrical one. It consists of five vowels arranged as follows:

	<i>Front</i>	<i>Back</i>
High	/i/	/u/
Mid	/e/	/o/
Low	/a/	

All Greek vowels are slightly longer when stressed. There is very little vowel weakening in unstressed syllables, but when unstressed and in word-final position

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the vowels may be slightly shorter and slightly devoiced. For the high vowels /i/ and /u/ there are also non-syllabic and consonantal allophones as indicated below:

/u/	[u]	[pulí] πουλί ‘bird’, [fústa] φούστα ‘skirt’, [uranós] ουρανός ‘sky’, [tuscílu] του σκύλου ‘of the dog’, [kaúra] καούρα ‘heartburn’
	[w]	[fráwla] φράουλα ‘strawberry’, [scíwros] σκίουρος ‘squirrel’

The non-syllabic allophone [w] of the phoneme /u/ is very rare; it occurs only if /u/ is unstressed and is preceded by a vowel.

/i/	[i]	[níci] νίκη ‘victory’, [peðí] παιδί ‘child’, [istoría] ιστορία ‘history’, [proí] πρωί ‘morning’, [peðía] παιδεία ‘education’
	[j]	[ajtós] αϊτός ‘eagle’, [vujtó] βουητό ‘hubbub’, [korójdɔ] κορόιδο ‘sucker’, [léj] λέει ‘s/he is saying/says’
	[j]	[ðjó] δυο ‘two’, [karánja] καράβια ‘boats’, [peðjá] παιδιά ‘children’, [ðó(n)dja] δόντια ‘teeth’, [aγórja] αγόρια ‘boys’, [názja] νάζια ‘affectation’, [jatrós] γιατρός (<ιατρός) ‘doctor’
	[ç]	[eláfça] ελάφια ‘deer’, [kaláθça] καλάθια ‘baskets’, [kerasçá] κερασιά ‘cherry tree’, [xárpça] χάπια ‘pills’, [fotçá] φωτιά ‘fire’, [klotçá] κλωτσιά ‘kick’
	[ɲ]	[mɲá] μια ‘one (female)’, [kalámɲa] καλάμια ‘reeds’

The non-syllabic allophone [j] occurs when /i/ is unstressed and is preceded by a vowel. The consonantal palatal allophones [j], [ç] and [ɲ] of the phoneme /i/ occur in words of demotic (popular) origin and in those of learned origin that have become assimilated to the demotic system, only when /i/ is unstressed and is followed by another vowel. Their distribution is determined by the preceding consonant (see also next section). Thus, the voiced palatal [j] occurs after a voiced consonant or in word initial position, the voiceless palatal [ç] occurs after a voiceless consonant, whereas the nasal palatal [ɲ] occurs after /m/. However, when /i/ is unstressed and followed by a vowel and the preceding consonant is one of those consonants that have a palatal allophone, i.e. k, g, x, γ, n and l, the i is fused with the preceding consonant, thus producing the corresponding palatal sound, i.e. c, j, ç, j, ɲ and ʎ

(see the discussion of the relevant phonemes in the previous section). The allophone [i] is found in all other environments.

1.1.3 The palatals [j], [ç] and [ɲ]

There are a number of complications associated with the status and distribution of the palatal sounds [j] and [ç].

The sound [j] was described as being derived from three different sources: (a) it represents the palatal allophone of the phoneme /ɣ/ when it precedes a front vowel; (b) It is derived from the vowel /i/ when it occurs unstressed before a vowel and after a voiced consonant, or in word-initial position; and (c) it is also the result of the fusion of the phoneme /ɣ/ and the unstressed /i/ when followed by a vowel. Similarly, the sound [ç] has been described as: (a) the palatal allophone of the phoneme /x/ when it precedes a front vowel, (b) being derived from the vowel /i/ when it occurs unstressed before a vowel and after a voiceless consonant and (c) the result of the fusion of the phoneme /x/ and the unstressed /i/ when followed by a vowel. This rule is not applicable to all Greek words. Thus along with words such as [peði] παιδί ‘child’ → [peðjá] παιδιά ‘children’, [vaθís] βαθύς ‘deep (masc.)’ → [vaθçá] βαθιά ‘deep (fem./neut. pl.)’, where it is clear that /i/ becomes [j] or [ç] according to the voicing of the preceding consonant when it has no stress and there is a vowel following it, we also find words such as [stádio] στάδιο ‘stadium’, [áðia] άδεια ‘licence’, [ánia] άνοια ‘dementia’, [epétios] επέτειος ‘anniversary’, etc., where the unstressed /i/ followed by a vowel does not change to the palatal [j]/[ç]. Thus there are pairs like [áðia] ‘licence’ and [áðja] ‘empty’, and many more.

This problem is created by the fact that the Standard Greek vocabulary and with it some morphological and phonological patterns have been derived from two different language sources, the demotic tradition and the learned tradition. Vocabulary derived from demotic follows the rule that /i/ becomes [j]/[ç] if unstressed and next to a vowel, while vocabulary of learned origin resists this rule. In view of this historical explanation, we may retain the rule that [j] is not a distinct phoneme but an allophone of either /ɣ/ or /i/ by restricting the application of this rule to the demotic system.

Note that the palatal sound derived from /i/ may become a nasal palatal [ɲ] after the nasal /m/: /miá/ → [mɲa] μια ‘one (fem.)’.

The rule which produces a consonantal palatal [j]/[ç] from unstressed /i/ next to a vowel does not apply when /i/ is combined with another /i/; in these cases the /i/ may be realized either as a vowel [i] or as a non-syllabic vocalic [j]: [ðiikó] or

[ðjikó] διοικώ ‘govern’, [pjítis] ποιητής ‘poet’. It also fails to apply after a consonant cluster where the second consonant is /r/: [ávrio] or [ávrio] αύριο ‘tomorrow’, [ágrios] or [áγrios] άγριος ‘wild’.

1.2

The distribution of distinctive segments within the word

1.2.1

Consonants and consonant clusters

There are three factors that affect the combinations of consonants into consonant clusters: the position in the word (word-initial, word-medial or word-final), the source of the vocabulary item concerned, and the register or the level of formality of the discourse.

1.2.1.1

Consonants and consonant clusters in word-final position

In the vocabulary of colloquial Modern Greek there are no word-final consonant clusters. In fact, the majority of demotic Greek words end with an open syllable, i.e. a vowel. The only consonants which may appear in word-final position are /n/ and /s/. /n/ is much less frequently used and in any case there is a tendency in speech to avoid final /n/ either by omitting it or by adding the vowel /e/ after the final /n/: [gráfune] γράφουνε ‘they write’ instead of the formal [gráfun] γράφουν. There are some words of learned origin restricted only to formal discourse with consonant /r/ in final position, such as [íðor] ύδωρ ‘water’, [ipér] υπέρ ‘on behalf of, in favour of’. We also find final consonants in exclamations such as [uf] ουφ, [ax] αχ.

Words of learned origin may also have word-final consonant clusters such as /ks/ [ánθraks] άνθραξ ‘coal’ (occurring only in scientific discourse), or /fs/ [vasiléfs] βασιλεύς ‘king’.

Foreign loanwords may also contain word-final consonants and consonant clusters: [snob] and [znob] σνομπ ‘snob’, [bar] μπαρ ‘bar’, [boks] μποξ ‘boxing’.

1.2.1.2

Consonants and consonant clusters in word-initial position

Word-initial position allows for any consonant and for a rich variety of consonant clusters. All the clusters which occur in initial position may also occur in word-medial position.

The two-consonant clusters which occur in word-initial position can be summarized as follows:

Combinations of a voiceless plosive followed either by /s/ or /t/:

ps	[psomí] ψωμί 'bread', [psiméno] ψημένο 'cooked'
ts	[tsiγáro] τσιγάρο 'cigarette', [tsépi] τσέπη 'pocket'
ks	[ksílo] ξύλο 'wood', [ksaná] ξανά 'again'
pr	[prépi] πρέπει 'it is necessary', [provlépo] προβλέπω 'I foresee'
tr	[trofi] τροφή 'food', [trávma] τραύμα 'wound'
kr	[krasí] κρασί 'wine', [kremíði] κρεμμύδι 'onion'

Voiceless bilabial plosive /p/ or voiceless velar plosive /k/ followed by /l/ or /n/:

pl	[pliróno] πληρώνω 'I pay', [plíthos] πλήθος 'crowd'
pn	[pnoi] πνοή 'breath', [pnígome] πνίγομαι 'I am drowning'
kl	[kláma] κλάμα 'crying', [klistó] κλειστό 'closed'
kn	[knizmós] κνησμός 'itching'

Voiceless alveolar plosive followed by the nasal /m/. This combination is very rare:

tm	[tmíma] τμήμα 'section'
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Labial nasal /m/ followed by alveolar nasal /n/:

mn	[mními] μνήμη 'memory'
----	------------------------

Two-consonant clusters in initial position may also be formed by the combination of a voiceless or voiced fricative /f, θ, x, v, ð, ɣ/ followed by a liquid /l, r/; the combination /ðl/ is not attested.

fr	[fríci] φρίκη 'horror', [frási] φράση 'phrase'
fl	[fláwto] φλάουτο 'flute', [fléva] φλέβα 'vein'
θl	[θliménos] θλιμμένος 'sad'
θr	[θrimatízo] θρυμματίζω 'I shatter'
xl	[xlevázo] χλευάζω 'I jeer'
xr	[xróma] χρώμα 'colour'
vl	[vlávi] βλάβη 'damage'
vr	[vrozí] βροχή 'rain'
ðr	[ðraxmí] δραχμή 'drachma'
ɣl	[ɣláros] γλάρος 'seagull'
ɣr	[ɣráma] γράμμα 'letter'

Another two-consonant combination is formed with the voiceless fricative strident /s/ followed by any other voiceless fricative or plosive:

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sp	[spóros] σπόρος ‘seed’
st	[stóchos] στόχος ‘target’
sk	[skóni] σκόνη ‘dust’
sf	[sfirízo] σφυρίζω ‘whistle’
sθ	[sθenarós] σθεναρός ‘courageous’
sx	[sçeðón] σχεδόν ‘almost’

The combinations /sn/ or /zn/ and /sl/ or /zl/ occur only in words of foreign origin:

sn or zn	[snob] or [znob] σνομπ ‘snob’
sl or zl	[slávος] or [zlávος] σλάβος ‘Slav’

The combination /zb/ occurs only in the word [zbáros] σμπάρος ‘shot’.

The fricatives /ɣ, θ, x/ combine with nasal /n/, and the voiced /z/ combines with /m/:

ɣn	[ɣnómi] γνώμη ‘opinion’
θn	[θnitós] θνητός ‘mortal’
xn	[xnári] χνάρι ‘trace’
zm	[zminos] σμήνος ‘swarm’

The only possible combinations of a voiceless non-strident fricative with a plosive are /ft/, /fk/ and /xt/:

ft	[ftinós] φτηνός ‘cheap’
fk	[fcáno] φκιάνω ‘I fix, make’ (rather dialectal)
xt	[xtés] χτες ‘yesterday’

The only possible combinations of a voiced fricative with another voiced fricative are /vð, vɣ, ɣð, zv, zy/:

vð	[vðomáða] βδομάδα ‘week’
vɣ	[vɣázo] βγάζω ‘I take out’
ɣð	[ɣðérno] γδέρνω ‘I skin’
zv	[zvúra] σβούρα ‘spinning top’
zy	[zyurós] σγουρός ‘curly’

Combinations of two voiceless fricatives /fθ/, /xθ/ or two voiceless plosives /kt/, /pt/ are also possible:

fθ	[fθáno] φθάνω ‘I arrive’
xθ	[xθés] χθες ‘yesterday’
kt	[ktíma] κτήμα ‘farm’
pt	[ptóma] πτώμα ‘corpse’

Combinations of the voiced plosives [b, d, g], which derive from the combination of nasal + voiceless plosive (see above), with a liquid /l, r/, with the exception of [dl], are also found:

bl	[blé] μπλε ‘blue’
br	[brávo] μπράβο ‘bravo’
dr	[dropí] ντροπή ‘shame’
gr	[gremós] γκρεμός ‘cliff’
gl	[glítsa] γκλίτσα ‘shepherd’s crook’

The palatal allophones [j] after voiced consonants and [ç] after voiceless ones, which, as we stated, derive from unstressed /i/ before a vowel, often follow a word-initial consonant, forming various clusters:

ðj	[ðjóχno] διώχνω ‘I send away’
vj	[vjázome] βιάζομαι ‘I am in a hurry’
pç	[pçáno] πιάνο ‘piano’

The maximum number of consonants which may appear in word-initial position is three; the possible combinations are: /s/ + voiceless plosive /p, t, k/ + /l/ or /r/.

Of the possible combinations of these segments the following are actually attested:

spl	[splína] σπλήνα ‘spleen’
spr	[spróχno] σπρώχνω ‘I push’
skl	[sklávno] σκλάβος ‘slave’
str	[strofi] στροφή ‘bend’
skr	[skríno] σκρίνιο ‘kind of cupboard’

There is also a three-consonant cluster where the third segment is not a liquid but the nasal /n/:

skn	[sknípa] σκνίπα ‘gnat, midge’
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In initial position it is also possible to find a three-consonant cluster where /s/ is followed not by a voiceless plosive but by a voiceless fricative. However, this pattern is restricted to /sfr/:

sfr	[sfrajída] σφραγίδα ‘stamp’
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1.2.1.3

Consonants and consonant clusters in word-medial position

All of the consonant clusters which occur in word-initial position (see above, Section 1.2.1.2) also occur in word-medial position. In addition to these we also find a number of consonant combinations which occur only in word-medial

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position. Below are listed the two-consonant clusters which occur only in medial position and the three- and four-consonant clusters which occur only in this position.

Clusters of a plosive or fricative followed by a nasal: /tn, fn, vn, θm, vm/:

tn	[fátɲi] φάτνη ‘manger’
fn	[ksafɲiká] ξαφνικά ‘suddenly’
vn	[evnoikós] ευνοϊκός ‘favourable’
θm	[vaθmós] βαθμός ‘degree’
vm	[révma] ρεύμα ‘draught’

Clusters where the initial segment is a liquid, /l/ or /r/: /rt, rð, rf, rk, rx, rn, rm, ry/ and /lm, lp, lk, lt, ly/:

rt	[ártos] άρτος ‘bread’
rð	[karðjá] καρδιά ‘heart’
rf	[karfí] καρφί ‘nail’
rk	[fúrka] φούρκα ‘anger’
rx	[árxondas] άρχοντας ‘ruler, leader’
rn	[arní] αρνί ‘lamb’
rm	[árma] άρμα ‘chariot’
ry	[aryá] αργά ‘late’
lm	[álma] άλμα ‘jump’
lp	[elpíða] ελπίδα ‘hope’
lk	[éلكos] έλκος ‘ulcer’
lt	[peltés] πελτές ‘tomato purée’
ly	[nostalyós] νοσταλγός ‘nostalgic’

Clusters of nasal followed by a fricative: /nθ, nx, mf, ns, nð, mv, ny, nz/:

nθ	[ánθos] άνθος ‘flower’
nx	[ánhxos] άγχος ‘anxiety’
mf	[emfánisi] εμφάνιση ‘appearance’
ns	[ensomatóno] ενσωματώνω ‘incorporate’
nð	[endíazmós] ενδοιασμός ‘compunction’
mv	[emvólio] εμβόλιο ‘vaccine’
ny	[éɣɣamos] έγγαμος ‘married’
nz	[énzimo] ένζυμο ‘enzyme’

Three-consonant clusters found only in word-medial position are /sxr, sxn, sθm, ptr/:

sxr	[esxrós] αισχρός ‘disgraceful’
sxn	[isxnós] ισχνός ‘thin’

sθm	[isθmós] ισθμός ‘isthmus’
ptr	[káptro] κάτοπτρο ‘mirror’

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Additional three-consonant clusters are created word-medially with the combination of the final consonant of the prefixes /ek/ εκ-, [ef/ev] ευ-, /en/ εν-, /sin/ συν-, /iper/ υπερ-, /is/ εισ- and /pros/ προς- in combination with a following consonant or a consonant cluster. Examples of such combinations are:

ktr	[ektropí] εκτροπή ‘perversion’
kst	[ékstasi] έκσταση ‘ecstasy’
kðr	[ekðromí] εκδρομή ‘excursion’
ngl	[singlino] συγκλίνω ‘converge’
mbr	[simbráto] συμπράττω ‘cooperate’
fttr	[eftrafis] ευτραφής ‘well-fed’
fst	[efstáθia] ευστάθεια ‘steadiness’
vɣl	[évylos] εύλωτος ‘eloquent’
rtr	[ipertrofikós] υπερτροφικός ‘overgrown’

Examples such as [singlino] and [simbráto] show the effects of two phonological phenomena: (a) the nasal causes the following plosive to become voiced, and (b) the nasal assimilates in place of articulation with the following consonant. Also if we compare [efstáθia] and [évylos], both formed with the same prefix spelled ευ-, we see that the final segment of this prefix, a labiodental fricative, is voiceless if the consonant that follows is voiceless and voiced when the following consonant is voiced. In general, clusters in Greek tend to contain either all voiced or all voiceless consonants. This voice assimilation applies only optionally to the last consonant of the prefix εκ-: [ekðromí] and more rarely [egðromí] εκδρομή ‘excursion’.

Due to prefixes with final consonants such as those mentioned above, four-consonant clusters are also created in word-medial position:

kstr	[ekstratía] εκστρατεία ‘campaign’
fstr	[efstrofia] ευστροφία ‘quickness of mind’

1.2.1.4 Alternations of consonant clusters

It is possible to find the same word with two different consonant clusters and correspondingly different spelling, in either word-initial or word-medial position, as in the following examples:

[fθinós] φθηνός	or	[ftinós] φτηνός	‘cheap’
[xθés] χθες	or	[xtés] χτες	‘yesterday’

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[eptá] επτά	or	[eftá] εφτά	‘seven’
[ktíma] κτήμα	or	[xtíma] χτήμα	‘farm’
[péktis] παίκτης	or	[péxtis] παίχτης	‘player’
[ásçimos] άσχημος	or	[áscimos] άσκημος	‘ugly’
[písthice] πείσθηκε	or	[pístice] πείστηκε	‘s/he was persuaded’

The reason for such alternatives is that one of the sources of Standard Greek, namely *katharevousa*, allows for combinations of either two fricatives or two plosives, whereas demotic converts these to a sequence of one fricative and one plosive. This restriction applies only to voiceless consonants. Furthermore, in clusters containing the sound /s/, it is the non-strident partner that converts to a plosive, while in clusters of voiceless fricatives not containing the sound /s/, the first of the consonants must be the fricative and the second must be the plosive. The choice between the two alternative forms depends on the degree of formality or the register or even individual preference. Thus forms with combinations of voiceless fricatives or plosives are more formal than the corresponding forms with one fricative and one plosive.

It is also possible to find words which are morphologically related, in that they are derived from the same root, and which have derivatives with clusters of two plosives or two voiceless fricatives as well as derivatives which contain the corresponding fricative and the corresponding plosive, as in the following examples:

- (a) [sçízma] σχίσμα ‘schism’, [sçizmí] σχισμή ‘tear’
- (b) [scízo] σκίζω ‘I tear up’, [skizménos] σκισμένος ‘torn’
- (a) [períptero] περίπτερο ‘kiosk’, [ápteros níci] άπτερος νίκη ‘wingless victory’
- (b) [fteró] φτερό ‘wing, feather’, [fterúga] φτερούγα ‘wing’
- (a) [kleptarodóchos] κλεπταποδόχος ‘receiver of stolen goods’, [kleptomanía] κλεπτομανία ‘kleptomania’
- (b) [kléftis] κλέφτης ‘thief’, [kléftiko] κλέφτικο ‘(cooked in the) bandit style’

The words in (a) above belong to more formal, technical or scientific vocabulary, while those in (b) are forms that originate in colloquial speech.

1.2.2 Vowels and combinations of vowels

All vowels may occur in word-initial, medial and final position. The only restriction concerns unstressed syllabic /i/ in initial and medial position preceded or followed by another vowel. As has already been mentioned, in such contexts the phoneme /i/ is realized as an approximant [j] or as the palatals [j], [ç] and [ɲ] in demotic words and all other words that have assimilated to the demotic pattern.

All syllabic vowels may combine:

eo	[jeorɣós] γεωργός ‘farmer’
ii	[ðiiicitís] διοικητής ‘director’
oo	[aθóos] αθώος ‘innocent’
ao	[aóratos] αόρατος ‘invisible’
ua	[ipákua] or [ipákwa] υπάκουα ‘obediently’

Through compounding, sequences of three vowels may also be produced:

eo	[neoeelinikós] νεοελληνικός ‘modern Greek’
ioa	[vorioanatolikós] or [vorjoanatolikós] βορειοανατολικός ‘north-east’

1.2.3 Diphthongs

Diphthongs are formed by the combination of any vowel adjacent to a non-syllabic allophone [j] or [w] of the phonemes /i/ and /u/ respectively. Since the reduction of unstressed /i/ and /u/ next to a vowel is optional, diphthongization is also optional:

ej	[kléj] κλαίει ‘s/he is crying’
aj	[tsáj] τσάι ‘tea’
oj	[bój] μπόι ‘height’
uj	[akúj] ακούει ‘s/he listens’
iw	[sciwráci] σκιουράκι ‘little squirrel’
aw	[fráwla] φράουλα ‘strawberry’
ow	[krówl] κρόουλ ‘front crawl (swimming style)’

1.3

Morphophonemics: phonological phenomena across morpheme and word boundaries

A number of phonological phenomena which affect the phonological structure of **morphemes** or words when they are combined together may take place within certain domains. These domains are created either by the combination of morphemes within a grammatical word or by the combination of certain kinds of words into phrasal units, such as the following: (i) the article followed by a noun or an adjective, (ii) a preposition followed by either an adverb or a noun phrase, (iii) the preverbal particles *να* or *θα* followed by the verb, (iv) the weak personal pronouns followed by a verb, or (v) a noun, an adjective, a gerund, an imperative verb or an adverb followed by a weak personal pronoun. These phenomena are listed and exemplified in Sections 1.3.1–1.3.3.

1.3.1 Assimilation

Assimilation is a process by which one segment changes its features in such a way as to become more like its adjacent segment. The assimilatory processes applying in Greek are assimilation in place of articulation and assimilation in voice.

(i) Assimilation in place of articulation

This applies to a nasal which assimilates in place of articulation with the consonant that follows it, as in the examples below, where the nasal of the weak pronoun or the definite article becomes labial when followed by a labial consonant, labiodental when followed by a labiodental consonant, palatal when followed by a palatal or velar when followed by a velar:

/ton patéra/	→	[to(m)batéra]	τον πατέρα ‘the father (acc.)’
/ton filise/	→	[tonɣilise]	τον φίλησε ‘s/he kissed him’
/ton keró/	→	[to(ŋ)ɣeró]	τον καιρό ‘the weather (acc.)’
/ton kuvá/	→	[to(ŋ)guvá]	τον κουβά ‘the bucket (acc.)’

This phenomenon is also observed across morpheme boundaries in prefixation and compounding, as in the following examples:

/sin-pono/	→	[si(m)bonó]	συμπονώ ‘I pity’
/sin-filióno/	→	[sinɣfiljóno]	συμφιλιώνω ‘I reconcile’
/sin-xéo/	→	[sinɣséο]	συγχέω ‘I confuse’
/en-xórios/	→	[enɣxórios]	εγχώριος ‘local’

(ii) Assimilation in voice

This has the following sub-varieties:

- 1 a voiceless plosive becomes voiced after a nasal:

/ðen katálava/	→	[ðe(ŋ)gatalava]	δεν κατάλαβα ‘I did not understand’
/ton tímisán/	→	[to(n)dímisan]	τον τίμησαν ‘they honoured him’
/ton pólemo/	→	[to(m)bólemo]	τον πόλεμο ‘the war’
/tin kérðisa/	→	[ti(ŋ)ɣérðisa]	την κέρδισα ‘I won her’
/sin-ponó/	→	[si(m)bonó]	συμπονώ ‘I pity’
/en-tixízo/	→	[é(n)diçízo]	εντοιχίζω ‘I build something into a wall’
/sin-kentróno/	→	[si(ŋ)ɣe(n)dróno]	συγκεντρώνω ‘I gather’
/sin-kátikos/	→	[si(ŋ)gátikos]	συγκάτοικος ‘flatmate’

- 2 a consonant (other than a nasal or a liquid) assimilates with the following consonant (including a nasal or a liquid) in terms of voice so that it becomes

voiced if it is followed by a voiced consonant and voiceless if it is followed by a voiceless one:

/tus ýerus/	→	[tuzj́erus]	τους γέρους ‘the old men’
/as vális/	→	[azvális]	ας βάλεις ‘you may put’
/mas ðósane/	→	[mazðósane]	μας δώσανε ‘they gave us’
/ev-tixía/	→	[eftiçía]	ευτυχία ‘happiness’
/ev-xéria/	→	[efçéria]	ευχέρεια ‘ease’
/is-volí/	→	[izvolí]	εισβολή ‘attack’
/ék-ðosi/	→	[égðosi] (or [ékðosi])	έκδοση ‘edition’
/vrex-menos/	→	[vreyménos]	βρεγμένος ‘wet’
/é-kov-s-a	→	[ékopsa]	έκοψα ‘I cut’
/ráv-θ-ik-a/	→	[ráftika]	ράφτηκα ‘I was sewn’
/aniγ-tos/	→	[anixtós]	ανοιχτός ‘open’

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The assimilation rules mentioned above apply across derivational affixes and inflectional affixes and between words forming a phonological word (see below) or phrase. Sometimes, in fast speech, voicing assimilation may be extended across phrases.

1.3.2 Dissimilation in manner of articulation

As mentioned above, there is a constraint on consonant clusters, both within morphemes and between morphemes, which affects vocabulary derived from the demotic tradition but also words from the learned that have become assimilated to the demotic system. According to this constraint a consonant cluster with two voiceless fricatives or two plosives is disallowed. This constraint, dealt with in Section 1.2.1.4 above, applies to all clusters both within morphemes and between them but only for vocabulary following the demotic pattern. Its effects are also shown in the inflection of verbs.

There are four rules of dissimilation which bring about the desired combinations.

- 1 A fricative (not including nasals or liquids) becomes plosive if it is adjacent to an /s/, irrespective of the order of the two elements. Thus we have the following examples:

/tréx-o/	→	[tréxo]	τρέχω ‘I run’
/θa tréx-s-o/	→	[θa trékso]	θα τρέξω ‘I will run’
/klév-o/	→	[klévo]	κλέβω ‘I steal’
/θa klév-s-o/	→	[θa klépso]	θα κλέψω ‘I will steal’
/xtíz-o/	→	[xtízo]	χτίζω ‘I build’
/θa xtiz-θ-ó/	→	[θa xtis-t-ó]	θα χτιστώ ‘I will be built’

In the above examples a root-final fricative, such as /v/ or /x/, when it comes into contact with the perfective active affix /s/, dissimilates with it in manner of articulation by becoming plosive ([trékso], [klépsɔ]), while the fricative /θ/, the affix of the perfective passive, becomes the corresponding plosive /t/ when preceded by a root-final /z/ (which devoices to /s/ by the rule of voice assimilation before voiceless /θ/).

- 2 If the consonant cluster does not contain an /s/, then it is the order that determines which of the consonants will be the plosive and which one will be the fricative; the first of the two must be the fricative while the second will be the plosive. Thus, if we have two fricatives the second becomes a plosive:

/θa ɣraf-θ-ó/ → [θa ɣraftó] θα γραφτώ 'I will be written'

This rule is also restricted to words of demotic origin. Words of more formal style or of scientific discourse deriving from the learned tradition do not undergo this rule:

[eléchθi] ελέχθη 'it was said'

[elífθi] ελήφθη 'it was received'

It is also restricted to inflection, while derivation, such as prepositional prefixation, does not seem to be affected, as the following example shows:

/ef-θanasía/ → [efθanasía] ευθανασία 'euthanasia'

- 3 In a combination of two plosives the first becomes a fricative:

/plek-tó/ → [plextó] πλεχτό 'knitting'

This phenomenon tends to occur in word-medial clusters in words of demotic origin, as in the above example, while vocabulary of learned origin generally does not obey it:

[eklektós] εκλεκτός 'excellent'

[andiliptós] αντιληπτός 'noticed'

Clusters with two voiceless plosives may also appear between morphemes after the prepositional prefix εκ-, as in the following examples:

/ek-timó/ → [ektimó] εκτιμώ 'I appreciate'

/ek-pémbo/ → [ekpémbo] εκπέμπω 'I broadcast'

- 4 If we have a cluster with a plosive before a fricative the initial plosive will change to a fricative while the following fricative will become a plosive:

/mplék-θ-ike/ → [bléx-t-ice] μπλέχτηκε 'he was implicated'

1.3.3 Deletion

Deletion is a process by which a segment is deleted under certain circumstances. It can be divided into consonant and vowel deletion.

1.3.3.1 Consonant deletion

The following rules describe the conditions under which a consonant may be deleted.

- 1 When a sequence of identical consonants is created within a word or a phrase, one of the two is deleted (see also Section 1.4):

/θa xtíz-s-o/	→	[θa xtís-so]	→	[θa xtíso]	θα χτίσω 'I will build'
/mas sósate/	→	[masósate]			μας σώσατε 'you saved us'

- 2 Within words, a nasal is deleted before a liquid /l, r/:

/sin-léyo/	→	[siléyo]	συλλέγω 'I collect'
/sin-roí/	→	[síroi]	συρροή 'large crowd'
/en-loγos/	→	[éloγos]	έλλογος 'rational'
/en-riθmos/	→	[ériθmos]	έρρυθμος 'with rhythm'

- 3 Within words, the final /n/ of the prefix συν- is deleted before a strident /s, z/. But the final /n/ of prefix εν- is not deleted in similar circumstances:

/sin-sítio/	→	[sisítio]	συσσίτιο 'communal meal', but
/én-simo/	→	[énsimo]	ένσημο 'official stamp'

- 4 The verb root-final /n/ in verbs is deleted before /s/ and /θ/ of the perfective active and perfective passive respectively:

/ðén-o/		δένω 'I tie'	
/θα दें-s-o/	→	[θα देंso]	θα देंσω 'I will tie'
/θα दें-θ-ό/	→	[θα देंθό]	θα देंθώ 'I will be tied'

- 5 The final /n/ of the feminine accusative definite article /tin/ is deleted before a fricative including /s/ and /z/ or a liquid /l/ or /r/, but the final /n/ of the masculine definite article /ton/ is only optionally deleted before these sounds.

/tin lípi/	→	[tilípi]	τη λύπη 'the sorrow'
/tin ráxi/	→	[tiraçi]	τη ράχη 'the back'
/tin vási/	→	[tivási]	τη βάση 'the base'
/tin thálasa/	→	[tiθάlasa]	τη θάλασσα 'the sea'
/tin skúpa/	→	[tiskúpa]	τη σκούπα 'the broom'

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/tin zóni/	→	[tizóni]	τη ζώνη ‘the belt’
/tin fáva/	→	[tifáva]	τη φάβα ‘the yellow lentils’
/tin dáða/	→	[tidáða]	τη δάδα ‘the torch’
/tin yáta/	→	[tiýáta]	τη γάτα ‘the cat’
/tin yída/	→	[tijíða]	τη γίδα ‘the goat’
/tin xará/	→	[tixará]	τη χαρά ‘the joy’
/tin xíra/	→	[tiçíra]	τη χήρα ‘the widow’

but:

/ton líko/	→	[tolíko] or [tonlíko]	τον λύκο ‘the wolf’
/ton ráfti/	→	[toráfti] or [tonráfti]	τον ράφτη ‘the tailor’
/ton fóvo/	→	[tofóvo] or [tonfóvo]	τον φόβο ‘the fear’
/ton θimó/	→	[toθimó] or [tonθimó]	τον θυμό ‘the anger’
/ton sofó/	→	[tosofó] or [tonsofó]	τον σοφό ‘the wise man’
/ton ziγó/	→	[toziγó] or [tonziγó]	τον ζυγό ‘the balance’
/ton vasiljá/	→	[tovasiλά] or [tonvasiλά]	τον βασιλιά ‘the king’
/ton dáskalo/	→	[toḃáskalo] or [tonḃáskalo]	τον δάσκαλο ‘the teacher’
/ton yámo/	→	[toyámo] or [tonyámo]	τον γάμο ‘the wedding’
/ton yítona/	→	[toýítona] or [tonýítona]	τον γείτονα ‘the neighbour’
/ton xoró/	→	[toxoró] or [tonxoró]	τον χορό ‘the dance’
/ton xíro/	→	[toçíro] ή [tonçíro]	τον χοίρο ‘the male pig’

Similarly, the final nasal of the accusative form of the feminine weak pronoun is deleted before a fricative or a liquid of the following verb, but the final /n/ of the accusative form of the masculine weak pronoun is only optionally deleted before /s, z, l, r/, whereas it is retained before any other initial fricative of the following verb.

/tin sinoḃévi/	→	[tisinoḃévi]	τη συνοδεύει ‘he accompanies her’
/tin zilévi/	→	[tizilévi]	τη ζηλεύει ‘s/he envies her’
/tin lipáme/	→	[tilipáme]	τη λυπάμαι ‘I feel sorry for her’
/tin rótise/	→	[tirótise]	τη ρώτησε ‘s/he asked her’
/tin fováme/	→	[tifováme]	τη φοβάμαι ‘I fear her’
/tin θímose/	→	[tiθímose]	τη θύμωσε ‘s/he made her angry’
/tin yémise/	→	[tijémise]	τη γέμισε ‘s/he filled it up’
/tin yḃísame/	→	[tiyḃísame]	τη γḃḃσαμε ‘we undressed her’
/tin xórepse/	→	[tixórepse]	τη χόρεψε ‘s/he danced with her’
/tin xérome/	→	[tiçérome]	τη χαίρομαι ‘I am glad/proud of her’

but:

/ton sinoḃévi/	→	[tosinoḃévi] or [tonsinoḃévi]	τον συνοδεύει ‘he accompanies him’
/ton zilévi/	→	[tozilévi] or [tonzilévi]	τον ζηλεύει ‘s/he envies him’

/ton lipáme/	→	[tolipáme] or [tonlipáme]	τον λυπάμαι ‘I feel sorry for him’
/ton rótise/	→	[torótise] or [tonrótise]	τον ρώτησε ‘s/he asked him’
/ton fováme/	→	[tomfováme]	τον φοβάμαι ‘I fear him’
/ton θίμose/	→	[tonθίμose]	τον θύμωσε ‘s/he made him angry’
/ton γέmise/	→	[tomjémise]	τον γέμισε ‘s/he filled it up’
/ton γδίsame/	→	[tomγdísame]	τον γδύσαμε ‘we undressed him’
/ton chórepse/	→	[tomchórepse]	τον χόρεψε ‘s/he danced with him’
/ton xérome/	→	[tomxérome]	τον χαίρομαι ‘I am glad/proud of him’

6 The segments /θ/ and /ð/ in root-final position of verbs are deleted before the perfective marker /s/.

/θα pláθ-s-o/	→	[θa pláso]	θα πλάσω ‘I will knead’
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1.3.3.2 Vowel deletion

It has been pointed out that within words an unstressed /i/ or /u/, if it is adjacent to another vowel, may reduce to a non-syllabic [j] and [w] respectively. In other combinations of two vowels both vowels remain fully syllabic. Thus hiatus, i.e. the combination of two vowels, is not avoided within a simple word. However, between morphemes within a **complex word** or between words in a phonological word or phrase, when two vowels come together, it is likely that one of them will be deleted. The factors determining which of the two vowels is to be deleted are fairly complex and involve both **phonology** and morphology. The most important factor affecting the choice of the vowel to be deleted is the position of that vowel in the *sonority hierarchy*. The five vowels of Greek are arranged on a sonority scale from the most sonorant /a/ to the least sonorant /i/. The scale is a > o > u > e > i, although sometimes /i/ proves stronger than /e/. The more sonorant a segment, the less likely it is to be deleted. Thus, when two vowels come together across morphemes or words within a phrase, the less sonorant may be deleted, leaving the more sonorant behind. Such deletions appear especially across boundaries between a weak pronoun and a following verb with an initial vowel.

/ta ípa/	→	[tápa]	τα ’πα ‘I said it’
/to éfera/	→	[tófera]	το ’φερα ‘I brought it’
/tu éðosan/	→	[túðosan]	του ’δωσαν ‘they gave him’
/mu árese/	→	[márese]	μ’ άρεσε ‘I liked it’

In the demotic system we find that both within complex words and within phrases consisting of a weak pronoun followed by a verb (as above), or of one of the preverbal particles *να* or *θα* followed by a verb, the deletion of one vowel is

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optional, with the preference being to keep both vowels intact, especially in more careful and slower speech.

/para-éfaya/	→	[paráfaya] or [paraéfaya]	παράφαγα or παραέφαγα ‘I overate’
/ksana-édosa/	→	[ksanádosa] or [ksanaédosa]	ξανάδωσα or ξαναέδωσα ‘I gave once before’
/tha érthi/	→	[thaérthi] or [thárthi]	θα έρθει or θα ’ρθει ‘he will come’

Vowel deletion is obligatory in derivational processes of learned origin, especially in prepositional prefixation. In this case the sonority hierarchy is not operative; the rule instead is that the last vowel of the prefix is the one to be deleted.

/para-édosa/	→	[parédosa]	παρέδωσα ‘I delivered’
/kata-éxo/	→	[katéxo]	κατέχω ‘I possess’
/anti-édōrasa/	→	[andédōrasa]	αντέδρασα ‘I reacted’
/epi-érxete/	→	[epérxete]	επέρχεται ‘it is coming’

When the sequence of two vowels is formed by the combination of an article followed by a noun or adjective, deletion takes place only very rarely, but when it does, it obeys the sonority hierarchy. Deletion is avoided when the first vowel is one of the definite articles *o* /o/ (masculine singular), *η* /i/ (feminine singular) or *oi* /i/ (masculine and feminine plural):

/o alékos/	→	[oalékos]	ο Αλέκος ‘Alex’
/i alepú/	→	[ialepú]	η αλεπού ‘the fox’
/i exθrí/	→	[iexθrí]	οι εχθροί ‘the enemy’
/i óres/	→	[ióres]	οι ώρες ‘the hours’

In the vowel sequence created by the neuter definite article singular *το* /to/ or plural *τα* /ta/ deletion takes place following the sonority hierarchy. This is especially common if the article precedes the word *άλλος* ‘other’:

/to avγó/	→	[tavγó]	τ’ αβγό ‘the egg’
/to álo/	→	[tálo]	τ’ άλλο ‘the other’

The prepositions *σε* ‘at’ (obligatorily) and *από* ‘from’ and the adverb *μέσα* ‘inside’ (optionally) lose their final vowel when they precede the definite article:

/se to trapézi/	→	[sto trapézi]	στο τραπέζι ‘at the table’
/apó tin eláða/	→	[aptineláða] or [apotineláða]	απ’ την Ελλάδα or από την Ελλάδα ‘from Greece’
/méσα se tin póli/	→	[mesti(m)bóli] or [mesasti(m)bóli]	μες στην πόλη or μέσα στην πόλη ‘in the city’

In the last example there are two vowel deletions, that of /a/ in μέσα and that of /e/ in σε, and two assimilations: the final nasal /n/ of την assimilates in place of articulation with the bilabial plosive /p/ which follows, and /p/ in turn assimilates in voice with the preceding nasal. Notice that the two-plosive cluster /pt/ created by the deletion of the final /o/ of από does not undergo the dissimilation rule which demands that the first consonant be a fricative.

The final /e/ of a singular imperative verb may be deleted if followed by a weak pronoun with initial /t/:

/dóse to/	→	[dósto]	δώσ' το 'give it'
/páre to/	→	[pártο]	πάρ' το 'take it'
/kópse to/	→	[kópsto]	κόψ' το 'cut it'
/γράψε ta/	→	[γράφta]	γράψ' τα 'write them down'

This deletion is normal with imperative forms stressed on the penultimate only, but it may also be found in some dialects or idiolects with forms stressed on the antepenultimate:

/plírose to/	→	[plírosto]	πλήρωσ' το 'pay for it'
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The /e/ of the penultimate syllable of the imperative plural forms is also deleted after /s, r, l/.

/párete/	→	[párte]	πάρτε 'take'
/διόκsete/	→	[δjókste]	διώξτε 'send away'

The unstressed initial /e/ of the personal pronouns and of the adverbs εδώ 'here' and εκεί 'there' may optionally be deleted if the preceding word ends in a vowel:

/θα πάο εγό/	→	[θα παογό]	θα πάω 'γώ 'I will go'
/έλα esí/	→	[elasí]	έλα 'σύ 'you come (imperative)'
/φέρε ta εδό/	→	[fertaδό]	φέρ' τα 'δó 'bring them here'

1.4 Length

In Standard Greek length in either consonants or vowels is not distinctive. Vowels, when stressed, may be slightly longer than vowels without stress but this is simply a phonetic and not a distinctive (phonemic) difference. There is also no contrast between long and short consonants. Indeed when two identical consonants come together across the boundaries of two morphemes which are combined in a complex word, the two consonants are simplified to one: from /sin-metoxí/ by assimilation of [n] to [m] we get [sim-metoxí] and by simplification of the two [mm] to a single [m] we get [simetoxí] συμμετοχή 'participation'; similarly

[sin-nomos] → [sínomos] σύννομος ‘according to the law’ (see also Section 1.3.3.1(a)). In some cases educated people may pronounce each of the two identical consonants separately: [ek-cendrikós] εκκεντρικός ‘eccentric’.

1.5 Stress

1.5.1 Stress within a single grammatical word

A **grammatical word** is a unit which is either a simple morpheme or a more complex form derived by the processes of inflection and/or derivation.

Stress in Greek is distinctive. Thus words may be differentiated simply by the position of the stress, as in pairs such as [píra] πείρα ‘experience’, [pirá] πυρά ‘fire’, [xóros] χώρος ‘space’, [xorós] χορός ‘dance’, [ála] άλλα ‘others (neut.)’, [alá] αλλά ‘but’. In the pronunciation of a word, stress is manifested by extra loudness on the stressed syllable, clearer quality of the vowel and some slight lengthening. The difference in the position of the stress in the pairs listed above shows that the position of the stress in a word is not predictable. However, there are some general rules that constrain the position of the stress. These are as follows:

- 1 Every disyllabic or polysyllabic word must, and some monosyllabic ones do, contain one stressed syllable.
- 2 *The antepenultimate rule:*
The stress may not fall further from the end than the antepenultimate. It may fall on the last syllable (the ultimate), or the one before the last (penultimate) or the third syllable from the end (antepenultimate).

The effects of these rules will become evident when we discuss changes in the position of the stress in the following section.

1.5.2 Phonological phenomena affecting the position of stress

The position of the stress in a word remains constant only in a non-inflected word such as a preposition or an adverb; in nouns, adjectives and verbs the position of the stress is affected by phonological and/or morphological factors. We will examine here only the phonologically motivated stress variations.

Nouns may be stressed on the last syllable (η οδός ‘the street’, η φωλιά ‘the nest’), the penultimate (ο φίλος ‘the friend’, η μοίρα ‘fate’) or the antepenultimate (ο δάσκαλος ‘the teacher’, η θάλασσα ‘the sea’). In certain classes of nouns stressed on the penultimate or antepenultimate in the nominative singular this basic stress will move one syllable to the right in the following circumstances:

- 1 Nouns having their basic stress on the antepenultimate will move the stress to the penultimate if an inflectional ending adds an extra syllable. This change of the position of the stress is motivated by the antepenultimate rule which forbids a word to be stressed further to the left than the antepenultimate.

nom. sg. το μάθημα	gen. sg. του μαθήματος	‘of the lesson’
	nom. pl. τα μαθήματα	‘the lessons’

This rule also applies to the genitive singular -εως and genitive plural -εων of feminine nouns whose ending in the nominative is either -ις (learned form) or -η (see Part II, Section 2.2.4).

nom. sg. η κυβέρνηση/ις	gen. sg. της κυβερνήσεως	‘of the government’
	gen. pl. των κυβερνήσεων	‘of the governments’

- 2 Nouns stressed on the antepenultimate syllable move the stress to the penultimate before the genitive singular ending -ου, the genitive plural -ων, the accusative plural -ους and the nominative and accusative ending -εις, in spite of the fact that no extra syllable is added. There is a historical explanation for this. In Classical Greek these endings contained long vowels or diphthongs which were equivalent to a sequence of two short vowels.

nom. sg. ο άνθρωπος ‘man’	gen. sg. του ανθρώπου
	gen. pl. των ανθρώπων
	acc. pl. τους ανθρώπους
nom. sg. η κυβέρνηση/ις	nom./acc. pl. τις κυβερνήσεις

The movement of the stress to the right in the classes of nouns which contain masculines and feminines ending in -ος and neuters in -ο does not always take place. There are words which through use have become more acceptable without the change of stress, such as του δάσκαλου ‘of the teacher’, του τραπεζομάντηλου ‘of the tablecloth’, etc. Conversely, in non-standard speech stress movement may also be applied to the nominative plural of such nouns: οι άνθρωποι.

- 3 For the stress patterns of other classes of nouns see Part II, Sections 2.1–2.4.

1.5.2.2 Adjectives

Almost all types of adjective have what is referred to as *columnar stress*. This means that they keep the stress in its basic position throughout the paradigm. For further discussion and examples see Part II, Section 3.

1.5.2.3 Verbs

In verbs the stress may move either to the left (in some past tenses, see Part II, Section 7.1.8) or to the right in cases where the inflectional ending has added syllables and the basic stress position violates the antepenultimate rule. The latter case is exemplified by the verb γράφομαι 'I am written':

pass. pres.	γράφομαι	pass. imperf.	γραφόμευνα
act. imperf. sg.	έγραφα	act. imperf. pl.	γράφαμε
pass. simple past sg.	γράφηκα	pass. past pl.	γραφήκαμε

For morphologically conditioned stress variations in the verb system see the tables in Part II, Sections 7.2–7.7.

1.5.3 Stress within a phonological word

A *phonological word* is a phrasal unit whose elements are pronounced so closely together as to form a single phonological unit with the result that morphophonemic processes which apply within the word also apply across the word-boundaries of this unit. A phonological word consists of one word from a major grammatical category (noun, verb, adjective, adverb) in combination with monosyllabic or disyllabic unstressed elements which provide grammatical modification for the major constituent. Thus the following combinations form phonological words: a preposition with the phrase that follows it; the definite article + noun or adjective; a noun or adjective with or without a definite article + a weak possessive pronoun; one or two weak personal pronouns + a verb; a verb in the imperative + one or two weak personal pronouns; a gerund + weak personal pronouns; an adverbial + a weak personal pronoun. On each occasion the elements forming a phonological word must belong to the same syntactic phrase.

The phonological word is a domain in which, under certain conditions, more than one stress may appear: a basic stress and a derived one. The phenomenon responsible for this situation is referred to as *enclisis of stress*, which can be described as follows: