

SECOND EDITION

GEOFFREY HORROCKS

GREEK

A HISTORY OF THE LANGUAGE AND ITS SPEAKERS



 WILEY-BLACKWELL

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 **WILEY-BLACKWELL**

A John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., Publication

This second edition first published 2010
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Edition history: 1e (Longman Publishing Group, 1997)

Blackwell Publishing was acquired by John Wiley & Sons in February 2007. Blackwell's publishing program has been merged with Wiley's global Scientific, Technical, and Medical business to form Wiley-Blackwell.

Registered Office

John Wiley & Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, United Kingdom

Editorial Offices

350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5020, USA

9600 Garsington Road, Oxford, OX4 2DQ, UK

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Horrocks, Geoffrey C.

Greek : a history of the language and its speakers / Geoffrey Horrocks. – 2nd ed.
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-4051-3415-6 (hardcover : alk. paper) 1. Greek language–History. 2. Greek language, Medieval and late. 3. Greek language, Modern. 4. Greece–Civilization. I. Title.
PA227.H76 2010
480.9–dc22

2009025375

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Set in 10/13pt Sabon by Toppan Best-set Premedia Limited
Printed in Singapore by Fabulous Printers Pte Ltd

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

The writing of this book has taken five years, and had I realized at the outset the scale of the task I was undertaking, I am not sure I would have had the courage to begin. The history of Greek starts with the Mycenaean documents dating from the second half of the second millennium BC, and many scholars have found sufficient interest and material in every period between then and the present day to build their careers on the study of issues which here have often had to be treated in a single subsection.

Obviously no one writer can be an expert on everything, and I am deeply conscious of my reliance on the publications of those who have devoted themselves to the detailed study of specific topics and periods. It is a pleasure, therefore, to record my particular debt to the works of Roddy Beaton, C. Brixhe, Robert Browning, C.D. Buck, John Chadwick, P. Chantraine, Anna Davies, F.T. Gignac, A.N. Jannaris, E.M. and M.J. Jeffreys, Peter Mackridge, A. Meillet, A. Mirambel, L.R. Palmer, H. Tonnet and M. Triandafyllidis. Without the outstanding contributions of these scholars, it would have been impossible to acquire the conceptual grip necessary to deal with nearly 3,500 years of language history. I would also like to thank David Holton, Törsten Meißner and Bobby Robins, each of whom read through earlier drafts of various sections of the material in this book, and saved me from all-too-many errors of fact, judgement and omission.

Because the work covers such a long period, it deals with issues that have traditionally concerned classicists, Byzantinists and neo-Hellenists, as well as historical linguists. I have tried to make it accessible to all these groups by avoiding excessive use of technical jargon (though no serious discussion can dispense with it altogether), and by transcribing, glossing and translating every Greek text. Since the orthography of Greek has remained conservative, the transcriptions (inevitably often based on more or less controversial reconstructions of pronunciation) in fact serve a useful purpose, but I remain conscious that different aspects of the presentation will be irritating to different subsets of potential readers; I ask for forbearance in the interests of those with different academic backgrounds.

The book, however, is not a teach-yourself manual, and I have had to assume some minimal familiarity with Greek in order to say anything at all. Bobby Robins recently

pointed out to me that, even today, discussion of Greek is almost automatically assumed to concern the ancient language in the absence of indications to the contrary. Following the Robins dictum, I have therefore taken Ancient Greek to be the ‘unmarked’ option, though I hope that this will not prove to be an insuperable obstacle to those who bring different perspectives to the material presented here.

I should say at the outset that the work has been a labour of love, founded on a profound admiration for the achievements of Greeks and speakers of Greek throughout their long and turbulent history, and on a long-term fascination with their language in all its forms. It will perhaps surprise those who know me exclusively as a classicist, as a theoretical syntactician, as a historical linguist, or as someone with a growing interest in Medieval and Modern Greek, to discover that I am in fact all of these things simultaneously. Indeed, had I not been, this book could not have been written. Despite the traditional emphasis on antiquity, the history of Greek does not end with the classical period, or even with the Hellenistic Koine, and my purpose has been to stress the continuity of linguistic development, on through the Roman imperial, Byzantine and Ottoman periods, down to the present day.

Most histories of (Ancient) Greek focus on Mycenaean and the official and literary dialects of the classical period, with the Koine treated almost as an afterthought. In the context of the history of Greek as a whole, however, the Ancient Attic dialect, and the Koine that evolved out of its wider use in the Greek-speaking world, are of paramount importance. The emphasis here, therefore, is necessarily placed on the rise of Attic, the development and spread of the Koine, and the role and development of this ‘common Greek’ in the Roman and Byzantine periods. Though there are now some excellent treatments of the development of Modern Greek from this source within the context of the ‘language question’ (i.e. the problems arising from the historical split between conservative written forms of Greek and the spoken forms that evolved more naturally), it is still the case that the Byzantine period in particular remains for many a closed book. I hope very much that the present work will do something to help prise it open.

That said, I believe very strongly that attempts to confine the history of Greek to the study of the ‘vernacular’, motivated in large part by a desire to be seen to be on the ‘right side’ in the highly politicized language debate of the 19th and 20th centuries, result in distortion and guarantee that only half the story is told. Now that that debate has been effectively settled, it is possible to acknowledge that standard Modern Greek has in fact incorporated many elements from the learned written tradition, and that it continues to do so. It seemed to me, therefore, that the history of written Greek, and of the cultural circumstances that led the Greek-speaking intelligentsia, from Roman times until surprisingly recently, to employ archaizing written styles, had to be included, and I make no apologies for doing so. The two traditions interacted at all times, and a projection into the past of the artificially polarized positions adopted by theorists of both persuasions in the first 150 years of Greek independence does not do justice to the complexity of the issues involved.

Anyone attempting to write the history of a language has to choose from among three options: dealing with its ‘external’ history, presenting its ‘internal’ history, or attempting to do both. For me, the choice was easy, even if the implementation of that decision proved, in the event, to be rather more difficult. Some years ago, a friend

(who, it should be said, was a theoretical linguist with no background in Greek) made her first visit to Athens, and on her return confessed herself disappointed to find that it did not resemble Rome with its wealth of architectural and artistic treasures. Since ancient Greece and modern Greece now occupy much the same geographical space, her natural assumption was that the one had simply emerged out of the other, and that the Greeks had somehow carelessly mislaid their medieval and Renaissance heritage. I suspect that there is little general awareness of the fact that Greek was the dominant language of the whole Roman empire in the east, or that Constantinople (now Istanbul) was the epicentre of Greek/Byzantine culture for well over a thousand years, during most of which Athens was little more than a village in an imperial backwater. Nor, despite general awareness of contemporary Greco-Turkish hostility, are non-specialists usually conscious of the devastating impact on the Greek-speaking world of the crusades and the Turkish conquests of the middle ages, or of the fact that for nearly 400 years there was no Greek state at all. Despite the obvious risks, this is therefore a history of the Greek language and its speakers, and the treatment of internal linguistic developments is carefully interwoven into a study of the changing cultural, political and military circumstances of those who used it. Indeed, it seemed to me that much of what happened linguistically makes sense only when placed in its wider historical context.

It remains to thank John Chadwick, who, many years ago, first aroused my interest in the history of Greek, and whose inventive work remains a source of inspiration. I should also like to record my thanks to Professor N.M. Panayiotákis and the staff of the Greek Institute in Venice for their generous hospitality and the opportunity to do some valuable research in the middle of a frantic term. Above all, however, I must take this opportunity to thank my wife Gill, and my daughters Amy and Sophie, for their endless support and mainly cheerful, though sometimes necessarily stoic, tolerance of my irritable and distracted state during much of the time I spent putting this book together.

So, all too well aware of my limitations in many of the fields in which I have had to venture, I offer this book to those who will read it in the hope that they will come to share at least some of my fascination with this remarkable language.

Cambridge
February 1997

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

More than 12 years have passed since the first edition of this book appeared, and much has happened in that time. First and foremost, the original version is no longer in print, following the decision of Pearson, after its takeover of Longman, to terminate the series to which it belonged (Longman Linguistics Library). Demand, however, remains high, at least to judge from my email – not to mention the prices that second-hand copies currently command! A second edition is therefore timely, and I am very grateful to Wiley-Blackwell for all the interest they have shown in this project and for their steady encouragement through the years in which it has been in preparation. Its appearance has been much delayed by other commitments, most notably the writing (with James Clackson) of the *Blackwell History of the Latin Language*, which was published late in 2007, and the fact that I served as chairman of the Faculty of Classics in Cambridge for two years (2007 and 2008), a demanding job which, though always interesting, left little time for serious research and writing.

This new edition has taken full account of the many reviews that appeared soon after the original was published, and I am enormously grateful to all those who contributed in this way to its reshaping. A wonderful Greek translation was also published in 2006 by Estia in Athens, and I had long discussions with the translators, Melita Stavrou and Maria Tzeveleku, from whom I learned a great deal. Many errors were corrected in the process, and this new English edition is a major beneficiary of changes that were made then. Some reviewers and one of the translators commented that the wealth of detail in the original, though inherently interesting, tended to obscure the major theme of the work, namely the effects of early standardization and the consequential state of diglossia on the long-term evolution of the language. I had hoped therefore to refocus things quite radically in this version in order to help readers keep this bigger picture in view. While that objective has not been lost sight of, the fact that the first edition is now out of print has meant that I can no longer take its availability for granted. I have therefore decided to retain discussion of the specifics of linguistic history, while simultaneously attempting to subordinate this material more effectively to the demands of the overall narrative. With what success remains to be seen.

Two particular issues are perhaps worthy of special mention here. Classicists were generally disappointed that I did not pay more attention to the many varieties of Ancient Greek. Since the work was never intended to be primarily a history of Ancient Greek, the first edition naturally focused on the standardized form of the language from which Medieval and Modern Greek evolved. Here, however, I have included a little more discussion, and some examples, of the 'other' Ancient Greek dialects, both literary and epigraphic. While this may well tend to work against the principal thrust of the enterprise, I hope it will provide classicists with enough to stave off their hunger for a meatier survey. Secondly, my knowledge of Medieval Greek in the mid-to-late 1990s was, frankly, that of an amateur, and more than one reviewer was quick to spot the naivety and superficiality of some aspects of the presentation. While I cannot claim in the interim to have devoted my life to mastering this vast domain, I have had the privilege over the last four years of working on the Cambridge-based 'Medieval Greek Grammar Project', funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council. The truly expert knowledge of my colleagues, Marjolijne Janssen, Tina Lendari, Io Manollessou and Notis Toufexis, coupled with my own exposure to a great deal more material than I previously had any inkling of, has, I hope, led to significant improvement in this important section of the work.

During the revision process I have been especially grateful to Julián Méndez Dosuna, Peter Mackridge, Marjolijne Janssen and Marc Lauxtermann for their detailed comments on all, or at least significant parts, of the original. These have been invaluable to me in reworking the relevant chapters. I should also like to record my special debt to two outstanding scholars mentioned in the preface to the first edition, but sadly no longer with us, both of whom were at different times instrumental in my professional development as a Hellenist and as a linguist, namely John Chadwick and Bobby Robins. Without their instruction, good advice and boundless support and enthusiasm, none of this would ever have been possible. I miss them both.

Last but by no means least, I should like to thank everyone involved in the production of this book at Wiley-Blackwell for their encouragement, patience and professionalism throughout. A special word of thanks is due to Fiona Sewell for copyediting a complex manuscript so expertly and for ensuring that the final product looks as good as the material allows it to be.

Cambridge
February 2010

THE INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC ALPHABET (revised to 2005)

CONSONANTS (PULMONIC)

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	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	p b		t d			ʈ ɖ	c ɟ	k ɡ	q ɢ		ʔ
Nasal	m	ɱ		n		ɳ	ɲ	ŋ	ɴ		
Trill	ʙ			r					ʀ		
Tap or Flap		ⱱ		ɾ		ɽ					
Fricative	ɸ β	f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ	ʂ ʐ	ç ʝ	x ɣ	χ ʁ	ħ ʕ	h ɦ
Lateral fricative				ɬ ɮ							
Approximant		ʋ		ɹ		ɻ	j	ɰ			
Lateral approximant				l		ɭ	ʎ	ʟ			

Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a voiced consonant. Shaded areas denote articulations judged impossible.

CONSONANTS (NON-PULMONIC)

Clicks		Voiced implosives		Ejectives
◌ǀ	Bilabial	◌ɓ	Bilabial	' Examples:
◌ǁ	Dental	◌ɗ	Dental/alveolar	p' Bilabial
◌ǃ	(Post)alveolar	◌ɟ	Palatal	t' Dental/alveolar
◌ǂ	Palatoalveolar	◌ɠ	Velar	k' Velar
◌ǁ̥	Alveolar lateral	◌ɠ̥	Uvular	s' Alveolar fricative

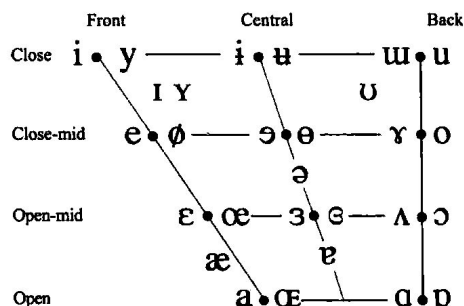
OTHER SYMBOLS

M	Voiceless labial-velar fricative	ɕ ʑ	Alveolo-palatal fricatives
W	Voiced labial-velar approximant	ɺ	Voiced alveolar lateral flap
ɸ	Voiced labial-palatal approximant	ɥ	Simultaneous ɸ and X
H	Voiceless epiglottal fricative		
ʕ	Voiced epiglottal fricative		Affricates and double articulations
ʡ	Epiglottal plosive		can be represented by two symbols
			joined by a tie bar if necessary.

DIACRITICS Diacritics may be placed above a symbol with a descender, e.g. $\dot{\eta}$

◌ [◌]	Voiceless	<u>n</u> <u>d</u>	◌ [◌]	Breathy voiced	<u>b</u> <u>a</u>	◌ [◌]	Dental	<u>t</u> <u>d</u>
◌ [◌]	Voiced	<u>ŋ</u> <u>t</u>	◌ [◌]	Creaky voiced	<u>b̥</u> <u>ḁ</u>	◌ [◌]	Apical	<u>t̪</u> <u>d̪</u>
◌ [◌]	Aspirated	<u>tʰ</u> <u>dʰ</u>	◌ [◌]	Linguolabial	<u>ɸ</u> <u>ɸ</u>	◌ [◌]	Laminal	<u>ɸ</u> <u>ɸ</u>
◌ [◌]	More rounded	<u>ɔ</u>	◌ [◌]	Labialized	<u>tʷ</u> <u>dʷ</u>	◌ [◌]	Nasalized	<u>ẽ</u>
◌ [◌]	Less rounded	<u>ɔ̟</u>	◌ [◌]	Palatalized	<u>tʲ</u> <u>dʲ</u>	◌ [◌]	Nasal release	<u>d̪ⁿ</u>
◌ [◌]	Advanced	<u>u̟</u>	◌ [◌]	Velarized	<u>t̠</u> <u>d̠</u>	◌ [◌]	Lateral release	<u>d̪ˡ</u>
◌ [◌]	Retracted	<u>u̠</u>	◌ [◌]	Pharyngealized	<u>tˤ</u> <u>dˤ</u>	◌ [◌]	No audible release	<u>d̪̚</u>
◌ [◌]	Centralized	<u>ɛ̞</u>	◌ [◌]	Velarized or pharyngealized	<u>ɤ</u>			
◌ [◌]	Mid-centralized	<u>ɛ̠</u>	◌ [◌]	Raised	<u>e̟</u> (<u>ɹ̟</u> = voiced alveolar fricative)			
◌ [◌]	Syllabic	<u>n̩</u>	◌ [◌]	Lowered	<u>e̠</u> (<u>ɸ̠</u> = voiced bilabial approximant)			
◌ [◌]	Non-syllabic	<u>ɐ</u>	◌ [◌]	Advanced Tongue Root	<u>ɛ̟</u>			
◌ [◌]	Rhoticity	<u>ɹ</u> <u>ɑ̟</u>	◌ [◌]	Retracted Tongue Root	<u>ɛ̠</u>			

VOWELS



Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a rounded vowel.

SUPRASEGMENTALS

	Primary stress
	Secondary stress
	ˌfəʊnəˈtʃən
ː	Long eː
ˑ	Half-long eˑ
˘	Extra-short ě
	Minor (foot) group
	Major (intonation) group
.	Syllable break ʃi.ækt
ˌ	Linking (absence of a break)

TONES AND WORD ACCENTS
LEVEL CONTOUR

ē _{or}	↗	Extra high	ě _{or}	↗	Rising
é	↗	High	ê	↘	Falling
ē	↗	Mid	ē	↗	High rising
è	↘	Low	ē	↗	Low rising
ě	↘	Extra low	ē	↗	Rising-falling
↓		Downstep	↗		Global rise
↑		Upstep	↘		Global fall

THE GREEK ALPHABET

The Mycenaean civilization, dating from the second half of the second millennium BC, employed a syllabic script for the writing of Greek. But writing disappears with the final collapse of this civilization c.1200 BC, and examples of the novel alphabetic writing first appear on pieces of pottery in the 8th century BC, the earliest, not later than 770 BC, coming from a tomb at Osteria dell' Osa near the Latin city of Gabii (Cornell (1995: 103)). Letter forms and spelling conventions display considerable regional variation for several centuries thereafter (the Latin alphabet, incidentally, derives ultimately from that employed by Euboean colonists in Italy). See Jeffery (1990), Powell (1996), Woodard (1997) and Easterling and Handley (2001) for a range of views about the origins of the alphabet, some quite controversial, and for examples of the diversity of letter forms etc.

It seems that these local Greek alphabets were initially developed during the latter part of the 9th century BC on the basis of a brilliant adaptation of the Phoenician script, which, like those used for other Semitic languages, did not note vowel sounds. By redeploing letters that denoted consonant sounds irrelevant to Greek, the vowels could now be written systematically, thus producing the first 'true' alphabet. During the 4th century BC the version of the alphabet initially developed in Ionia (the western coast of Asia Minor and the adjacent islands), having been adopted in Athens in 403/2 BC, gradually assumed the status of a standard throughout the Greek-speaking world, a status which it has retained ever since. It will be useful at the outset to present this alphabet for reference purposes, along with the customary reconstructed pronunciation of the Athenian dialect of the 5th/4th centuries BC (cf. Sturtevant (1940), Allen (1987a)) and the standard modern pronunciation. Digraphs and diacritics are appended:

Greek letter		Ancient pronunciation (5th/4th century BC)	Modern pronunciation
Αα	(alpha) ¹	[a]	[a]
Ββ	(beta)	[b]	[b]
Γγ	(gamma)	[g]	[ɣ, j]
Δδ	(delta)	[d]	[ð]
Εε	(epsilon)	[e]	[e]
Ζζ	(zeta)	[zd]	[z]
Ηη	(eta)	[e:]	[i]
Θθ	(theta)	[t ^h]	[θ]

Greek letter		Ancient pronunciation (5th/4th century BC)	Modern pronunciation
Ιι	(iota)	[i, i:]	[i, j]
Κκ	(kappa)	[k]	[k, c]
Λλ	(lambda)	[l]	[l]
Μμ	(mu)	[m]	[m]
Νν	(nu)	[n]	[n]
Ξξ	(xi)	[ks]	[ks]
Οο	(omikron)	[o]	[o]
Ππ	(pi)	[p]	[p]
Ρρ	(rho)	[r]	[r]
Σσ/ς	(sigma) ²	[s]	[s]
Ττ	(tau)	[t]	[t]
Υυ	(upsilon)	[y, y:]	[i]
Φφ	(phi)	[p ^h]	[f]
Χχ	(chi)	[k ^h]	[x, ç]
Ψψ	(psi)	[ps]	[ps]
Ωω	(omega)	[o:]	[o]

1. The distinction between capital and lower-case letters is not ancient; the former are now conventionally employed in printed texts of ancient authors both for the initial letter of proper names and for the initial letter of the first word of a passage of direct speech, but not to mark the first word of each new sentence. The modern conventions are as for English.

2. σ is used at the beginning or in the middle of words, ς word-finally.

Digraphs		Ancient pronunciation (5th/4th century BC)	Modern pronunciation
αι		[ai]	[e]
αυ		[au]	[af, av]
ει		[e:]	[i]
ευ		[eu]	[ef, ev]
οι		[oi]	[i]
ου		[u:]	[u]
αι	(with ι subscript) ¹	[a:i]	[a]
ηι	(with ι subscript)	[ε:i]	[i]
ωι	(with ι subscript)	[ο:i]	[o]
γγ		[ŋg]	[(ŋ)g]
γκ		[ŋk]	[(ŋ)g]
γχ		[ŋk ^h]	[ŋx]
μπ		[mp]	[(m)b]
ντ		[nt]	[(n)d]

1. Iota in these 'long' diphthongs is standardly written subscript in modern texts of ancient authors, but was originally written on the line (adscript) in antiquity. This residual graphic retention after loss in actual pronunciation was due to later 'archaizing/puristic' tendencies.

Diacritics¹	Ancient pronunciation (5th/4th century BC)	Modern pronunciation
ˊ (smooth breathing)	[null]	[null]
ˋ (rough breathing)	[h]	[null]
ˊ (acute accent)	{rise (+ fall on following syllable)}	{stress}
ˋ (grave accent)	[absence of rise]	{stress}
ˋˊ (circumflex accent)	[rise-fall]	{stress}

1. These were retained in the writing of Modern Greek (despite their redundancy in the case of the breathings and their equivalence in the case of the accents) until the orthographic reform of 1982, which introduced the 'monotonic' system whereby the breathings were abandoned and stressed vowels were consistently marked by means of the acute accent alone.

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