

THE INTELLIGENT PERSON'S GUIDE TO GREEK

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PREFACE

There are many kinds of people who want to know something about ancient Greek. Some are interested in learning Greek in order to read some of the Classical authors, and want to work on their own at their own speed, rather than take an Introductory term or year course in the language. They need a compact and descriptive outline of the main features and functions of the Greek language, and advice how and where to begin their reading. My essay on the Web about the feasibility of learning Greek on your own in order to read Homer, has apparently appealed to a number of people who have reached me for advice. I am convinced that they need a compact introduction, instead of a traditional lesson-by-lesson textbook approach, to get them ready to start Homer. This essay is written as a compact grammatical "Prolegomenon to Greek" with an eye to going directly to Homer. You will notice right off that Homer has grammatical forms which are earlier than the contracted forms of Attic (as given here), but you pick these up easily in the course of reading the epic language. In fact they are in many cases easier to follow than the later contracted forms.

What books will you need after working through this Grammar? I suggest going right into real text, and nothing could be better than Homer. The excellent edition of "Iliad Book I" by P. D. Draper (Univ. of Michigan Press 2002) has all the grammar a beginner could possibly need conveniently arranged on the same page as the Greek text, no clumsy notes at the back and Vocab. at the end. I consider working with this as the ideal first step after familiarizing yourself with the basic Grammar

functions and forms. Cunliffe's detailed Homeric Lexicon is not needed at this point but I want to mention it as a fine reference dictionary which outlines examples of usage in Homeric language, available from the Univ of Oklahoma Press.

Others working in the field of Linguistics are interested in the structure of a distant, highly inflected language like Greek, and wonder how it compares with Latin, a Romanic language or their own English. For people interested mainly in the linguistics of Greek, I have printed the basic classes of Greek grammar in Roman letters first, so the survey of Greek can be done quickly just the basic phonemic information laid out clearly. After each grammatical Class, I place a display of further related material in Greek characters with the full panoply of the "accents" and diacritics, with advice about what is really needed for a basic reading knowledge of a Greek text. For the Linguistic reader, I have inserted touches of Indo-European Historical Grammar, mainly to introduce historical thinking as a special kind of linguistic information.

READING HOMERIC GREEK

I nominate Homer as the best author to start with, both for quality of his poetry, for his overshadowing influence on all of the subsequent Greek literature, and furthermore because his language is in an early stage of development and is linguistically much more logical than Attic grammar, the standard introduction, which has gone through many complex changes. In terms of sheer importance in the later Hellenic world, Homer was "the Bible of Greece", since his epics were used throughout the Hellenic and Hellenistic periods as a first Reader in Greek schools, and at the same time as a book inculcating the proper stance for a man in life situations.

Some would respond to the ideal of Achilles and arete, forever striving for excellence above all, while others following the infinite survival techniques of the wily (if less admirable) Odysseus, could manage to deal with real life situations realistically and above all, could survive. What our Old and New Testaments have urged on Christians for millennia as a "way of life", is what Homer pressed into the subconscious of the youth of Greece for an equal range of centuries. Homer is an education for life and no book of decorative Poetry!

In this educational process, Homer stands out as a poet who represents the ultimate of precise configuration, for whom the exactness and clarity of each line is essential. More than half of Homer is virtual drama with men speaking to men precisely, in a tough and exacting world. Even the famous figures of speech are no more than momentary shifts of sight, as one looks away

to the dawn arising, or remembers the words of an ancient elder for a second. This exactness of mind and word is the very opposite of Vergil's use of the Epic format.

Vergil internalizes everything, hints and intuits continually while telling the story on another level. He is forever and magically internal, writing as if between the lines, a great art indeed, but no Homer in any sense. Vergil himself said that lifting a line from Homer is harder than stealing the club from Heracles. If Vergil is intuitively "implicit", then Homer is the master of being perfectly "explicit", and it is this explicitness which makes him more than a good book of poetry to read. Homer represents a way of life. Homer is good for your mind.

Homer has a large vocabulary but words must be learned one by one, and that is less of a problem than the intricate structure of the inflectional grammar of Greek. I have suggested on the web in an enthusiastic and protreptic article [Reading Homer](#), that Homer is the best doorway into Greek. I mention there good books which will help the beginner, so perhaps take a look at that article now and see if it makes sense to you. Then come back to this basic 'Compact Linguist's Grammar' of the language when you are ready to proceed.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The traditional approach to Greek has been to lay out the grammar Prescriptively, since in the 19th c. it was standard to train students to write Latin and Greek prose imitating the manner of Classical authors. This means putting Rules and Exercises into lessons at every stage of the learning, and does not address the more important matter of getting a Reading Knowledge of the language. Every school and college student knew vast amounts of grammatical detail, but few achieved the kind of reading knowledge which would lead them to read Greek in later life. By 1910 this was obvious, and the Loeb Library was created, with Greek text facing and English translation, in the hope that adults long after school would go back to the Classics for their private reading. People had the grammar, but lacked the reading skills, which were being stressed even then in the Modern Languages.

In my book ["The Intelligent Person's Guide to Latin"](#) I approach Latin "Descriptively", describing what the reader will have to know in order to read an ancient text the way he might read modern French or Spanish, without Translation and especially without word for word Parsing. I am approaching Greek in the same spirit here, in a more compact format for on-line-use, but anyone interested in more about Language can get information

on my website at a brief overview of [Linguistics](#) .

Since the standard introductions to ancient Greek proceed on a "lesson format" system, it is usually hard to get a picture of the whole of Greek grammar in a synoptic view. It is assumed that after you have gone through a term or a year of lessons, you will have a sense of the shape of the whole, but the segmentation of the grammar to fit into lesson-format usually leaves the learner with a fading and patchy memory of the system. I believe it is important to get a sense of the whole grammatical layout at the start, perhaps like examining a national road map before you plan your trip around the country. Later you will want detailed information focusing on specific parts, but you should know what they lay of the land is, and where you are going at the end.

How to go ahead.....

This highly compressed little manual is intended to give an overall view of Greek Grammar without examples and exercises. Then each section will correlate with some point on the larger schema, and bit by bit you can fill in the detailed grammatical information you need, all in the right places in the synoptic view of the system.

If you need more information you can go to any Greek textbook, you can even use one of the many from the last century, scanning the individual lessons for actual FORMS, and ignoring much of the examples and translation exercises, which are not necessary at the start. As soon as you have coursed through any of the textbooks, and reviewed this paper putting things into a continuous perspective, you will want to start to read a genuine and authentic original Greek text. Nothing is more suitable linguistically, or more worthwhile intellectually than starting off with Homer.

If you are cautious by nature and want to go slow and sure, you can take a first year course in Attic Grammar, but if you are working without a course or teacher and want a faster pace, I believe you will do as well to go through my overview below, and then have a quick dash at reading the Iliad while the structure of the language is still in your mind in one piece. I am including the standard paradigms (Greek for "examples") here, but for more any textbook will fill out the picture. The ancient textbooks from 1900 are as good as new "Methods" so far as the forms go, since they are the same. But do avoid a reference grammar, like Goodwin's or Smyth's, which have another function and will overload the beginner with mountains of infinite detail. Looking for a hill from which to scan the territory, one does not want to pile Pelion on Ossa.

I repeat: The trouble with the "lessons" textbook approach is that the grammar is segmented into little pieces, so you don't get a grasp of the whole layout until the course is done, by which time the early parts of probably in a dim and distant patch of your memory. Here I will try to put it all together.

THE GREEK LETTERS

Diacritics and their Meanings

When you first look at a page of Greek, you will feel you are in very unfamiliar territory. First, the letters are different from the Roman characters used in many of the languages of Western Europe and the rest of the English speaking world, and further reinforced by the use of English with Roman characters as the new lingua franca of the computer world. In fact most of the Greek characters, which were borrowed early from Semitic writing around the ninth century BC., are quite similar to Roman letters, over half are identical or only slightly different, the rest can be learned without much effort. But it takes a few months to become easy with them while learning the language at the same time. So I am going to use Roman characters in the first statement of each grammatical class, but right below there will be a paradigm in Greek as a set of examples, the easiest way of getting familiar with the Greek alphabet as you go. For those primarily interested in the linguistic material in ancient Greek, using Roman letters alone will be a clear advantage.

Before approaching the grammatical classes, you will find information about the Greek alphabet, its shapes and sounds, and some suggestions about possible confusions for a Roman font reader. For the linguistic student attending primarily to the shape of a language employing a complex inflectional system, this can be deferred to later, of course.

But there are other things in this Homeric display page, which are actually unnecessary for reading and in good measure quite meaningless. By setting these aside, we can proceed to the "grammar" of Greek more adroitly, but I must offer some explanation first.

The little apostrophe-like mark, like a high comma facing left, which you see at the start of many words, is called a "smooth breathing", a curious term which means that at that point you do NOT have a rough breathing. Why in the world would the Alexandrian Greeks in the centuries BC. have thought of such a device? Surely it was the tendency of non-native speakers to aspirate vowel-starting words, something the Romans were

famous for. Witness the poem of Catullus about one Arrius, who probably called himself Harrius, and Ionia "Hionia", an ancient Cockneyism of some odd strain. Ignoring the "smooth breathing" is common sense since it doesn't mean anything.

The "rough breathing" however is entirely phonemic, which means it can make a difference in word-meaning, it an aspiration like our char -h-, and although a diacritic is as much a "letter" as any of the other Greek characters. . Turn the (smooth breathing) apostrophe mark with open side to the right, and it means "aspirate" or speak the word as if with the sound -h-. Perhaps the weakness or lightness of ancient aspiration seemed better marked by a diacritic rather than a new character. But whatever the reason, from Alexandrian times on this was used as "phonematic", which means that it could differentiate the meaning of words. This diacritic is important, and I will note it in Romanized text with an apostrophe.

Then there are the three "accents", the Grave, Acute and hat-shaped circumflex, which unfortunately represent very confused notions. Without question Greek had musical pitches on most words, with a range between a music third and fifth in our diatonic musical system. We see evidence for this in related languages like Sanskrit and Lithuanian later. The acute (in Greek oxy or 'high') indicated a slide upwards, while the circumflex used on overlong syllables, slid up and then down, perhaps like the sound of a Bergman Swedish movie actor. But the grave (baru meaning 'low') means either a high converted in a word sequence to low, or as in Hellenistic school papyri, it demonstrates that all syllables not high or circumflex, were marked "low" as a reminder to keep the tone down. So the grave means nothing more than "not high", and has no special meaning of its own.

When you learn standard school Attic Greek of the 5 th c. B.C., you are told to pronounce EACH of these three accents with a stress, that is with a louder pronunciation. There is no sense at all to this, because these were clearly for the Greek these were musical pitches! So I must say to you early before you get corrupted: Ignore the Accents. Do not use them at all as Stresses or amplitudes, unless you are willing to use them musically as pitches. This is at the start quite hard to do, but a very good idea once you are further along into reading Greek poetry. Sappho who sang per poems accompanied by the lyre, with the pitches guiding the shape of each line, is very lovely when done with the musical pitches, not surprisingly. But perhaps this is for later....

Length and the Vowels

But another thing comes up as a problem. Greek has five vowels, which can be long or short, and while -a- -e- and -o- have different letters for length, the -i- and -u- do not. This means you have to figure out the "length" from a dictionary, or better from actual use in a line of poetry. In all Greek poetry, the cadences of the metrical "feet" which are the minimal configurations, are based on length, meaning how long the syllable is, and Greek poetry MUST be read that way to make sense. That means that the "accent" stresses learned in your first-year Attic textbook now have to be laid aside, and a new length-based system introduced if you are going to read poetry in proper meter and cadence..

Yet another problem arises: For Some odd reason, we have decided for many centuries to use stress or loudness, instead of short and long syllabic length, in reading Greek poetry. So poetry often gets a hobby-horse kind of loud-soft rocking accentuation. This absolutely destroys the sound of Greek poetry with its sensitive attention to syllable length, and must be avoided at all costs, before it becomes a (bad) habit.

Add one more problem: Even if we read Homer right with really long (2 x duration) sounds for the long vowels, we should be superimposing on this long-short rhythmic system, the musical pitches as indicated by the "accents". This can be done, but it takes real concentration, and since Greek is not taught that way in the Western countries, we have a difficult choice. Either learn to do length and pitch simultaneously, an excellent but difficult procedure, OR simplify the situation by ignoring the pitch "accents" completely. You don't lose anything, since they are there in every printed Greek text, if you want to experiment with them later. But you must think about syllabic length from the start, since that will be the way to read Homer and all Greek poetry. Pronounce long vowels as actually twice as long as the short ones. This is absolutely needed for the proper reading of any line of Homeric epics.

SUMMARY OF THE ABOVE

We are going to use Roman characters in the first display of a grammatical Class, so you can have a look at this highly inflected language even before learning to read the Greek letters naturally, something which does take time. But since each section has also a full display in Greek characters, if you are aiming for reading Greek, move back and forth between the Romanization and the Greek as the easiest way to familiarize yourself with the Greek.

We are going to forget all the accents except the aspiration at the beginning of a word, which is phonematic. It is true that in

some situations the pitch-accent can distinguish a word meaning, but these are infrequent and can be noted separately.

As we turn to a description of the Greek inflectional system of Grammar, we must recall how far different it is from our English "grammar-less" Grammar, which working virtually without inflection, uses Subject Verb Object order to denote the basic of word-functions. For a study on how this difference of structure affects English speaking students who are beginning Latin, which is a cognate and similarly inflected language as compared to Greek, you might like to read an [Essay](#) which examines the hidden reluctance of an English speaker to learn an inflected language. This applies equally well to Greek.

THE GREEK CHARACTERS

I am using Roman transcription of the words initially in the paradigms for two reasons: So you can get the gist of Greek grammatical layout before going further, and see if this is something you can work with in its complexity. But also there are students of Linguistics who want to get the grammatical schema of Greek, whose interest is in the language itself rather than learning to read Greek literature. But in order to satisfy the person aiming to learn to read Homer as I said before, the Greek paradigms will be necessary, so at each confrontation with a new grammatical class, I link to a page of these and more forms in the same class, in traditional Greek typography and format.

We should remember that the letters you see in a modern Greek textbook are by no means anything like what Greeks wrote in the fifth century BC or even in later Hellenistic times. Our font is based on the handsome handwriting of Richard Porson (1759-1808), a scholar of infinite patience and remarkably detailed commentary, who after a lifetime with the Classics ended up as a chronic alcoholic. But the Porson Hand is not the only modern font, there is a European font based on the squarer appearance of older MSS, and a Teubner German font with shaded strokes and some extra twirls. Those trained in absolute-Porson can these find hard to read. And nobody can now read a 16th c. printed Greek text, which uses an infinite supply of abbreviations, ligatures, and strangely formed letters. I mention this to avoid the notion that in studying Greek you are reading a page as Plato wrote it. For Homer this represents no problem, since the epics were totally oral around 750 BC and only written down a century and a half later, by Attic copyists!

We should take a look at the actual letters you will see on a page of printed Greek, and make some notes on how they stand in relation to the derivative Roman characters. It is the minuscule or small letters which we want to learn in a sequence

so we can look up words in a dictionary. If it seems cumbersome to use the names derived from Hebrew/Phoenician when Cadmos brought letters over (alpha beta gamma etc.), you can use modern pronunciation for them perfectly well. Do not bother with the capital letters at first, since they are used in Greek only for Names and Places, not even at the start of a sentence, and will not be seen often. You can pick them up as you do, only a few will appear in names in the Epics.

THE CHARACTERS

This will give you a rough idea of the shape and English pronunciation of the Greek letters.

THE GREEK ALPHABET

FORM	SOUND	NAME	NAME
Α α	a in <i>far</i>	ἄλφα	alpha
Β β	b	βῆτα	beta
Γ γ	g in <i>go</i>	γάμμα	gamma
Δ δ	d	δέλτα	delta
Ε ε	ě in <i>met</i>	εἶ, ἕ ψιλόν	epsilon
Ζ ζ	dz	ζῆτα	zeta
Η η	German <i>ü</i>	ἦτα	eta
Θ θ	th in <i>thin</i>	θῆτα	theta
Ι ι	i in <i>prigue</i>	ιώτα	iota
Κ κ	k	κάππα	kappa
Λ λ	l	λάμβδα	lambda
Μ μ	m	μῦ	mu
Ν ν	n	νῦ	nu
Ξ ξ	ks, x in <i>wax</i>	ξεῖ, ξῖ	xei, xi
Ο ο	ō in <i>obey</i>	οῦ, ὀ μικρόν	omicron
Π π	p	πεῖ, πῖ	pei, pi
Ρ ρ	r	ῥῶ	rho
Σ σ ς	s in <i>see</i>	σίγμα	sigma
Τ τ	t in <i>to</i>	ταῦ	tau
Υ υ	French <i>u</i> , Germ. <i>ü</i>	ῦ, ῷ ψιλόν	upsilon
Φ φ	ph in <i>Philip</i>	φεί, φῖ	phei, phi
Χ χ	German <i>ch</i>	χεῖ, χῖ	chei, chi
Ψ ψ	ps	ψεῖ, ψῖ	psei, psi
Ω ω	ō in <i>no</i>	ῶ, ῷ μέγα	omega

Now take a look at a discussion of the letters, some problems reading them and the beginner's typical confusion of some of the letters..

a = alpha is hardly different from a modern -a-, except for the crossing of the line since it is started at the top. I can be written as a handwritten -a- with no trouble.

b = beta is always written larger, starting from bottom up, and it looks like the capital letter. No problem reading it.

g = gamma confuses at first since it looks like a -y- (which Greek doesn't have), so consider it a -g- which failed to close the circle.

d = delta is virtually a handwritten modern -d-, although the capital is a triangle used in math.

e = e psilon or smooth-e, is just a short -e-

z = zeta is larger and more flowing than our -z- but once you see it, it is clearly a -z-. In sound it represents a -ds-.

E = eta is always confusing for the beginner since it looks like a -n- and must be watched carefully. It is a long -e- as against the -e- above, and pronounced somewhat sharper as well. Its capital is H, which confuses further. Watch this one.

th = theta, originally a circle with a cross-bar, sounding like an English -th- probably, to the distress of French students who read it as a -z-.

i =- iota, a short and little sound like our -i- in "it", the original of the King James "jot (iota) and a tittle".

k = kappa looks and sounds like our English -k-.

l = lambda was originally shaped like a New England barn roof at a high pitch, handwriting somehow kept one stroke going higher, hence the curious and unfamiliar shape. But if you turned the capital lambda 90 degrees counter clockwise, you get a Roman capital L.

m - mu is nothing more than a capital Greek M which is the same as our capital M, with the left leg stroked down and the right leg gone. If you hand write a capital M many times,

starting low, you may well after a few centuries get this form.

n = nu has the same problem as mu, up stroke from the bottom, then the loop, and forget about that right leg as a down stroke. Trouble is this looks like a Roman -v-, which Greek doesn't have. Watch out.

x = xi and represent nothing more than "-k- + -s-", it is indeed an odd one, but if you see three squiggles, this is the one you are dealing with.

o = o micron or Little O, it is a short sound, as against O MEGA below, which was originally just two -oo-'s together.

p = pi, is sufficiently well known as the formula for area of a circle, and the comment that "pie are square" is an oxymoron.

r = rho and always confuses, since it looks pretty much like a -p-. But if you think of it as a letter which has lost the little thing sticking out from under the belly on the right, you will see that it is quite like the Roman R, and perhaps that will help....?

s = sigma, and it comes in two forms, an -o- shaped circle with a tail at top to right distinguishing it from short -o-, but at the end of a word it has a more or less modern -s- shape, a little distorted. Ancient use preferred the "lunate sigma" which is C.

t = tau and immediately recognizable, no problemo...

u = u psilon, or soft u, quite like our letters, it is only the capital which looks like a palm tree in Florida.

ph = phi is in sound a -p- with a good dose of aspiration, and certainly should not be pronounced the way we all do it, like a Roman -f-. But the exact pronunciation of Greek is clearly unclear, if we heard ancient Greek as spoken, we would probably think it was Ethiopian.

ch = chi is another bothersome one, it looks like a -x- (see x above) but is a guttural with aspiration, like German "ach!".

ps = psi, looks like a large -u- with a vertical strike-through on it, but it is phonetically no more than "-p- + -s-".

O = o mega or Big O, which we pronounce as a LONG o as against the short -o- above. Originally two -oo- were written together giving when handwritten the -w- shape of a Greek omega.

VOWEL LENGTH IN POETRY

Although there is a distinction of length (not stress!) between short and long -e-, and between short and long -o-, the letters -a- and -a- and -u- can be either long or short, which can be verified for a given word by the dictionary. For prose reading this is unimportant, but for poetry where length of a vowel determines how the line of verse will be read, this is critical.

But the verse schema and the metrical context will usually give some hints for the lengths for these three vowels, and once you get the sound of Homer's "dactylic hexameter" in your mind, reading epic poetry should become easy and almost automatic. BUT the sound must be got in your ears first, and no amount of traditional scanning with little pencil marks above the vowels will ever teach you how to read a Homeric line as it should be read. A word to the wise!

THE NOUN

THE CASE FUNCTIONS

Greek has only four "cases" or distinct noun-functions, as against the Indo-European display of eight.

The Subject (called Nominative in the terminology of the late Latin grammarians, curiously standardized for Greek) is parallel to what comes first in an English SVO statement, the Object (Accusative) is parallel to what comes third. Incidentally it is the Verb which is sandwiched in-between. The relatively free word-order of Greek works easily with an inflected language, where position is not a critical importance other than stylistically. For English, the iron-clad rule of SVO is critical, and for those of use brought up with SVO grammar, a considerable shift of mind is needed for learning Greek.

There are so many notions which the Nouns can embrace that it seems hardly worthwhile to compile a list, but the old statement about "person places and things...(and ideas as well as collectives)" is initially workable .

THE CASES

Subject and Object are two of the most basic Greek cases. These

are largely parallel of English grammars' Subject and Object.

A "Genitive" or roughly possessive category, has more uses, ranging from an actually possessive "of" to "areas of concern or influence". It is widely used as the core notion of the "Genitive Absolute", an encapsulated, explanatory phrase sutured into the structure of a sentence, as stating a related but separate statement. This is similar to the Latin Ablative Absolute, but used far more widely with many subtle variations.

Then there is a "Dative" case which covers "to" and "for" relationships, not unlike the Dative of Latin or Sanskrit. Uses may not be like Latin or English "to/for" and only by reading will you grasp the many dative functions well.

Usually these are paradigmmed in a specific order, Nominative, then Genitive followed by Dative and then the Accusative. This traditional order is followed in all textbooks, although the Nominative is generally more similar to the Accusative in form and use. But tradition has a way of imprinting itself...

These CASES occur in a Singular group, faced with a Plural group, but there are no similarities of the endings which tag a word as belong to either class. In other words, there are eight possible endings grafted onto a basic ROOT or STEM (root plus a connecting vowel if any), half of which are Singular and half Plural. Compared to the English plural in "-s" or the Turkish regular plural in "-ler", this seems wasteful and confusing. But languages have no needs for either simplicity or complexity, their original and evolution can go in either direction, odd as that seems.

Two sets of forms exist which we need not examine now. There is a DUAL for both Noun and Verb Classes, which is so rare and unusual that it would be a waste of time to note the forms. Not only are Duals rare, but they can usually be deduced from the use, as in Homer "her two eyes (osse) shone brightly", or "he grasped him with his two hands (xeipoiv = cheroiv). There are also Verbal Duals, even more rare than those of the Noun, and most will occur in Homer in fixed phrases with a clearly Dual context.

In the Noun there is also a "Vocative" for directly addressing someone, but these are generally used with a personal name so you can understand the changed form easily. Class I Feminines use the Nominative, which emans no special form in a patriarchal society. But for Class II words ending in -os, the -os is replaced by a short -e, and so used for addressing Class II social inferiors (if I may pun, Second Class Citizen). And Greek uses an addressing-word "" when speaking to someone, e.g. to

Theseus one says " O Theseu". Note Class III nouns in Vocative will tend to lose a final consonant, as above, or weak a long vowel to short, as patr to Voc patr, daimon to daimon. No vocatives in the plural. By and large we could say Greek really doesn't have a working Vocative case at all. .

THE NOUN CLASSES

There are three basic classes of nouns, which are different from each other not in function, but only in the inflectional endings used. Why this is so is not clear, but it is inherited from an ancient Indo-European language of perhaps tenth millennium BC.

TYPE I has words which are grammatically (and also personally) called Feminines or collectives.

Grammatical gender is an arbitrary assignment of gender-type to all words in the language, which must be defined grammatically as Masculine Feminine or Neuter. This does not work with just Men Women and Things, but also with everything else on what seems a random assignment basis. Collective notions are always Feminine.

Look at the word for goddess, "thea", a good example because it antedates the conversion of -a- to -long e- which under Ionian influence marked Attic as distinct from earlier usage.

CLASS I has a stem ending in the vowel "-a", which is the original inherited vowel ending, retained in Doric and certain words, otherwise converted to "-E" or eta in Ionic and Attic.

Singular		
Subject	(Nominative)	thea "goddess"
Possessive	(Genitive)	theas
To/for	(Dative)	heAi (i-under)
Object	(Accusative)	thean
Plural		
Subject	(Nominative)	theai
Possessive	(Genitive)	theOn
To/for	(Dative)	theais (i)
Object	(Accusative)	theas

Class I Feminines in -a-

STEM		ἡμερᾶ-	σκιᾶ-	μοίρᾶ-
MEANING		<i>day</i>	<i>shadow</i>	<i>share, fate</i>
Sing.	N.	ἡ ἡμέρᾱ	σκιᾶ	μοῖρα
	G.	τῆς ἡμέρᾱς	σκιᾶς	μοίρᾱς
	D.	τῇ ἡμέρᾱ	σκιᾷ	μοίρᾱ
	A.	τὴν ἡμέρᾱ-ν	σκιᾶ-ν	μοῖρα-ν
	V.	ὧ ἡμέρᾱ	σκιᾶ	μοῖρα
Plur. N. V.	N. V.	αἱ ἡμέραι	σκιαί	μοῖραι
	G.	τῶν ἡμερῶν	σκιῶν	μοιρῶν
	D.	ταῖς ἡμέραις	σκιαῖς	μοίραις
	A.	τὰς ἡμέρᾱς	σκιᾶς	μοίρᾱς

Singular
Subject (Nominative) timE "honor"
Possessive (Genitive) timEs
To/for (Dative) timE (i- under)
Object (Accusative) timEn

Plural
Subject (Nominative) timai
Possessive (Genitive) timOn
To/for (Dative) timais (i)
Object (Accusative) timas

Feminines in long -e- eta

STEM		τιμᾶ-	νικᾶ-	θαλασσᾶ-
MEANING		<i>honor</i>	<i>victory</i>	<i>sea</i>
Sing.	N.	τιμῆ	νίκη	θάλασσα
	G.	τιμῆς	νίκης	θαλάσσης
	D.	τιμῇ	νίκη	θαλάσση
	A.	τιμῆ-ν	νίκη-ν	θάλασσα-ν
	V.	τιμῆ	νίκη	θάλασσα
Plur. N. V.	N. V.	τιμαί	νικαι	θάλασσαι
	G.	τιμῶν	νικῶν	θαλασσῶν
	D.	τιμαῖς	νικαῖς	θαλάσσαις
	A.	τιμάς	νικάς	θάλασσαι

CLASS II has a stem ending in the vowel "-o-" as follows:

Singular
Subject (Nominative) logos "word"
Possessive (Genitive) logoio (Att. -ou)
To/for (Dative) logoi (i-under)
Object (Accusative) logon

Plural		
Subject (Nominative)		logoi
Possessive (Genitive)		logOn
To/for (Dative)		logoisi
Object (Accusative)		logous

Class II: Masculine and Neuter

STEM . . .	(ὁ) βίο-	(ὁ) ἄνθρωπο-	(ἡ) ὁδο-	(τὸ) δῶρο-
MEANING .	<i>life</i>	<i>man</i>	<i>road</i>	<i>gift</i>
Sing. N.	ὁ βίος	ἄνθρωπος	ἡ ὁδός	τὸ δῶρον
G.	τοῦ βίου	ἀνθρώπου	τῆς ὁδοῦ	τοῦ δώρου
D.	τῷ βίῳ	ἀνθρώπῳ	τῇ ὁδῷ	τῷ δώρῳ
A.	τὸν βίον	ἄνθρωπον	τὴν ὁδόν	τὸ δῶρον
V.	ὦ βίε	ἄνθρωπε	ὦ ὁδέ	ὦ δῶρον
Plur. N.	οἱ βίοι	ἄνθρωποι	αἱ ὁδοί	τὰ δῶρα
G.	τῶν βίων	ἀνθρώπων	τῶν ὁδῶν	τῶν δώρων
D.	τοῖς βίοις	ἀνθρώποις	ταῖς ὁδοῖς	τοῖς δώροις
A.	τούς βίους	ἀνθρώπους	τὰς ὁδούς	τὰ δῶρα
V.	ὦ βίοι	ἄνθρωποι	ὦ ὁδοί	ὦ δῶρα

CLASS III is a curiously mixed group, there are all sorts of different stems used here, and the Nominative Singular is often so disguised that we can hardly give a stable inflectional ending for it. But the words in this class constitute a great part of Greek vocabulary, and the "endings" which can be abstracted from this single example are stable and fairly typical.

Singular		
Subject (Nominative)		phulax "guard"
Possessive (Genitive)		phulakos
To/for (Dative)		phulaki
Object (Accusative)		phulaka
Plural		
Subject (Nominative)		phulakes
Possessive (Genitive)		phullakOn
To/for (Dative)		phulakessi (Att. xi)
Object (Accusative)		phulakas

But we would not guess that the word for a lamp "lampas" in the Nominative, would have a Genitive "lampados" with the "-d-" going through the paradigm. Least of all that the word for "thread" which is in Nom. Sg. "thriks" would have a Genitive "trichos" although this conforms perfectly to the Sound Laws of Historical Grammar. What about all the "pod-" words from tripod to Podiatrist (foot), having a Nom. Sg. "pous" as in Oidipous "Mr. Swell-foot"? Each of these seemingly irregular words

has a linguistic logic of its own, and each must be learned by reading, finding the forms and meaning of the word. File it away in your personal RAM, a kind of memory patch which the human brain has in great and even excessive supply.

Class III

STEM MEANING	(ὁ) ἄλ- <i>salt</i>	(ὁ) μην- <i>month</i>	(ὁ) ἀγων- <i>contest</i>
Sing. N. V.	ἄλ-ς	μήν	ἀγών
G.	ἄλ-ός	μην-ός	ἀγών-ος
D.	ἄλ-ί	μην-ί	ἀγών-ι
A.	ἄλ-α	μήν-α	ἀγών-α
Plur. N. V.	ἄλ-ες	μήν-ες	ἀγών-ες
G.	ἄλ-ῶν	μην-ῶν	ἀγών-ων
D.	ἄλ-σί	μη-σί	ἀγῶ-σι
A.	ἄλ-ας	μήν-ας	ἀγών-ας

cont'd

STEM MEANING	(ὁ) φυλακ- <i>guard</i>	(ἡ) αἰγ- <i>goat</i>	(ἡ) φαλαγγ- <i>battle-line</i>
Sing. N. V.	φύλαξ	αἶξ	φάλαγξ
G.	φύλακ-ος	αἰγ-ός	φάλαγγ-ος
D.	φύλακ-ι	αἰγ-ί	φάλαγγ-ι
A.	φύλακ-α	αἰγ-α	φάλαγγ-α
Plur. N. V.	φύλακ-ες	αἰγ-ες	φάλαγγ-ες
G.	φυλάκ-ων	αἰγ-ῶν	φαλάγγ-ων
D.	φύλαξι	αἰξί	φάλαγξι
A.	φύλακ-ας	αἰγ-ας	φάλαγγ-ας

cont'd

STEM MEANING	(ἡ) ἐλπίδ- <i>hope</i>	(ἡ) χάριτ- <i>grace</i>	(ὁ, ἡ) ὄρνιθ- <i>bird</i>
Sing. N. V.	ἐλπίς	χάρις	ὄρνις
G.	ἐλπίδ-ος	χάριτ-ος	ὄρνιθ-ος
D.	ἐλπίδ-ι	χάριτ-ι	ὄρνιθ-ι
A.	ἐλπίδ-α	χάριν	ὄρνιν
Plur. N. V.	ἐλπίδ-ες	χάριτ-ες	ὄρνιθ-ες
G.	ἐλπίδ-ων	χαρίτ-ων	ὄρνιθ-ων
D.	ἐλπί-σι	χάρι-σι	ὄρνι-σι
A.	ἐλπίδ-ας	χάριτ-ας	ὄρνιθ-ας

cont'd

STEM	(τὸ) σωματ-	(τὸ) τέρατ-, τερασ-
MEANING	<i>body</i>	<i>portent</i>
Sing. N. A. V.	σῶμα	τέρας
G.	σώματ-ος	τέρατ-ος
D.	σώματ-ι	τέρατ-ι
Plur. N. A. V.	σώματ-α	τέρατ-α
G.	σωμάτ-ων	τεράτ-ων
D.	σώμα-σι	τέρα-σι

There are many more variants in Class III in the stem formation, which the following examples with make clear. Note especially the Neuters as a variant class with no distinction between Subject and Object.

THE ADJECTIVE

Adjectives are noun modifiers in Greek much like English. They fall into two general classes, those which are based on Noun Class I and II, with three genders of Feminine, Masculine and Neuter. As an example of this very common Adjective type:

ADJECTIVE Class 1-2

STEM	σοφο-, σοφᾶ-	δικαιο-, δικαῖᾱ-
MEANING . . .	<i>wise</i>	<i>just, upright</i>
Sing. N.	σοφός σοφή σοφόν	δικαίος δικαῖᾱ δίκαιον
G.	σοφοῦ σοφῆς σοφοῦ	δικαίου δικαίᾱς δικαίου
D.	σοφῶ σοφῇ σοφῶ	δικαίῳ δικαίᾱ δικαίῳ
A.	σοφόν σοφῆν σοφόν	δίκαιον δικαῖᾱν δίκαιον
V.	σοφέ σοφή σοφόν	δικαίε δικαῖᾱ δίκαιον
Pl. N. V.	σοφοί σοφαί σοφά	δίκαιοι δικαῖαι δίκαια
G.	σοφῶν σοφῶν σοφῶν	δικαίων δικαίων δικαίων
D.	σοφοῖς σοφαῖς σοφοῖς	δικαίοις δικαῖαις δικαίοις
A.	σοφούς σοφᾶς σοφά	δικαίους δικαῖᾱς δίκαια

There is also a standard Adjective based on Noun Class III formations, which use one form for the Masculine/Femine and another for the Neuter. (A very few words had three genders...)

ADJECTIVE Class 3

		ταχύ-, ταχεῖα- <i>swift</i>		
		M.	F.	N.
Sing.	N.	ταχύ-ς	ταχεῖα	ταχύ
	G.	ταχέ-ος	ταχειῶς	ταχέ-ος
	D.	ταχεῖ	ταχειῶ	ταχεῖ
	A.	ταχύ-ν	ταχειῶν	ταχύ
	V.	ταχύ	ταχεῖα	ταχύ
Plur.	N. V.	ταχεῖς	ταχειῖαι	ταχέ-α
	G.	ταχέ-ων	ταχειῶν	ταχέ-ων
	D.	ταχέ-σι	ταχειῖσι	ταχέ-σι
	A.	ταχεῖς	ταχειῶς	ταχέ-α

PRONOUNS and THE ARTICLE

Pronouns are much like the Pronouns of English, the little words for "I, me, he/she/it" and a few others. We list this in a separate class less for a semantic reason than because they have a different set of inflectional Endings, in fact an ancient inflectional system which goes back to the IE stage of linguistic history. Since these words are used frequently, and short, I will print them in Greek paradigm format:

PRONOUN

Sing.	N.	ὄδε	ἤδε	τόδε	οὗτος	αὕτη	τούτο
	G.	τοῦδε	τῆσδε	τοῦδε	τούτου	ταύτης	τούτου
	D.	τῷδε	τῇδε	τῷδε	τούτῳ	ταύτῃ	τούτῳ
	A.	τόνδε	τήνδε	τόδε	τούτον	ταύτην	τούτο
Plur.	N.	οἶδε	αἶδε	τάδε	οὗτοι	αὗται	ταῦτα
	G.	τῶνδε	τῶνδε	τῶνδε	τούτων	ταύτων	τούτων
	D.	τοῖσδε	ταῖσδε	τοῖσδε	τούτοις	ταύταις	τούτοις
	A.	τούσδε	τάσδε	τάδε	τούτους	ταύτας	ταῦτα

The **ARTICLE** is in use much like the English Article "the" and normally used with all nouns, even with personal names at times. Curiously the Nominative forms are derived from a original *s-o/e-, where the initial -s- will always disappear leaving only an aspiration or -h- in its place. But the other forms in all the other cases comes from a dental *t-e/o-, which is historically cognate with English "this / that" by the transmutation of the historical Sound Laws. Having two forms for the single idea of an Article may seem odd, but no less curious than a different word for "me" and "us" in English, Latin, Greek and Sanskrit. I find odd very interesting...

ARTICLE

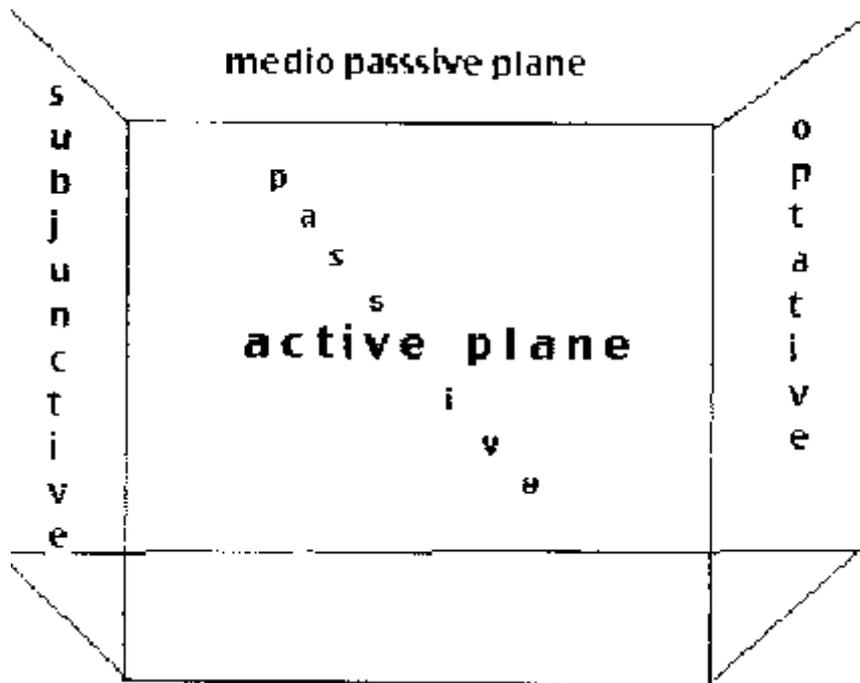
SING.	M.	F.	N.	PL.	M.	F.	N.	DUAL	M.F.N.
N.	ὁ	ἡ	τό	N.	οἱ	αἱ	τά	N. A.	τώ
G.	τοῦ	τῆς	τοῦ	G.	τῶν	τῶν	τῶν	G. D.	τοῖν
D.	τῷ	τῇ	τῷ	D.	τοῖς	ταῖς	τοῖς		
A.	τόν	τήν	τό	A.	τούς	τάς	τά		

THE VERB

It is the Verbs not the Nouns which are the core of Greek writing, even Greek thinking and perceiving. Greek unlike modern English and Medieval Latin which are "noun-languages" and stolidly satisfied with lists of "things", to the detriment of motion in Style as an art. Greek swings on its Verbs and the Verbal Classes are much harder to grasp than the Nouns. In order to see the range of what Greek Verbs can do, we have to take a few slices through the fabric of the Verbal System, and consider these quasi microtomed sections as planes lying within the parameters of a three dimensional body.

If I project the above information onto a cubic drawing laid out in the style of Byzantine perspective to show side planes simultaneously, it might look somewhat like this drawing. If you notice that the CUBE is badly drawn, please be aware that this is intentional, as a comment on the irregularity of the Greek verb on the one hand, and on the other as an indication that the Greek Verb was not designed by Divine Providence.

THE VERBAL CUBE



On the front face of a hypothetical Verbal portrayed above, we have the verbal forms which tell something factual, in active (not passive) terms. This is easy to understand, verbs like English "talk" and "walk" and "obfuscate" and "territorialize" are active, they denote something which is being done, a factual situation, so we call this plane the Indicative Class. They point to or "indicate" something, from Latin "index" as pointing with the finger.

Go around to the back of this Verbal Cube mentally, and you have these same words Passivized, or converted to the grammatical Passive mode. So quite naturally we find "obfuscated" and "territorialized" (but "talk-ed" and "walk-ed" in English use the same "-ed" for Past Tense and also for Passive). We can even lose the distinction of a single word in two uses, as "he hurt him" as active, while passively "he was hurt" with the same word. Greek does not do this at all.

Consider the top face of our Cube now, one which at the front edge touches on the plane of the Active Verbal forms, and at the back edge touches the Passive plane. These are the Greek "Medio-Passives", something we do not have to deal with in English as a verbal class. Words on this plane are sort-of passive, but not entirely so. The nearest things I can cite as similar are the Latin Deponents ("active in meaning but passive in form..."), and the Romance Reflexives, but these are by no means exact matches. It is as if a verb were trying to say "I do this for myself...", or "I find myself a seat, get myself seated". These are hard to imagine right now, but in a context they appear with a fairly distinct meanings. In fact many of the

Medio-Passive forms are the same as Passive forms, so the core-meaning must often be drawn out of the context. This is our first contact with something in Greek which is outside our linguistic range as a word class.

Now on the left side of our Verbal Cube we have many of the same verbal ideas but recast into a non-Indicative or non-Factual mold, which linguistics call the "irrealis". Classicists dub it "Sub-junctive" merely because Roman schoolmasters had Latin students write these forms on the notepad below (subter) the Indicatives. But like many silly things, the word Subjunctive stuck.

These correspond to our use of the Modal Verbs like "may, might, could, would" etc. while the English Subjunctive survives only in phrases like "If I were you", or "if it be so" as subjunctival historical relics. Instead of using auxiliary "modal" verbs, Greek changed the final vowel in the direction of lengthening it, so a First Plural "we..." which is Indicatively "-omen" will become with a long vowel "-Omen", although some of the other Subjunctives are masked in the hidden vowel lengthening of -a- -i- and -u-. Remember this in this quick overview, we establish that left face of the Cube represents a less-than-real set of possibilities.

Now turn in your imagination to the right face of the Cube, which displays still another set of possibilities, the "Optative" mode. This is in a general sort of way, another Subjective which resides a little further back in time and absolute reality. In other words, when a Subjunctive finds itself in a time-receding situation, the Optative can replace it effectively. As a sign of its past-ness, the Optative uses endings of the past-time sequence. And the Optative (as the name implies) has an option as a Wish Form, like English "let it be", like the Latin Subj. "Requiescat in pace" or the Papal "Imprimatur". But this is a specialized use of the Optative.

But we have not yet talked about the TENSES which lie on each face of our Verbal Cube. (We laid out the patterns on each of five faces, the front Active, backside Passive, connecting top as Medio-Passive between active and Passive. We defined the Left side as Subjunctive, and Right face as Optative.) There are invisible lines scribed out on each of these faces, but nothing written into these lines. This will be the business of the following section, devoted to the TENSES

THE TENSES OR "TIME-BASED" FORMS

First take a look at the range of the six "Tenses", which are groups of the three "Personal Endings", in Singular and Plural.

All tenses have these six items, and the five tenses are as follows.

I will put the transliterated forms and discussion of all the forms first. Below this you will find a full set of the Paradigms in traditional format, which demonstrates all the forms in Greek chars. Since these "Paradigms" are synoptic and highly compressed, they are only useful when you know something about the individual forms, so I believe these will be easier to understand after reading through these introductory sections. For the person interested in the linguistic layout of the Greek grammar, the transliteration with discussion will be more interesting.

PRESENT TENSE

The Present has much the same general meaning as an English Present or Latin Present tense, since it refers to the time frame in which the writer or speaker is actually living. To make this a little clearer, I might say that "Present" can be defined in Euclidean wise as that which cannot be proved to be either Past Time or Future Time, since these are in fact easier to define. WAS and WILL BE are much easier to grasp than what IS in the narrow space of the present moment.

The Greek Present has a great deal of flexibility, it can be used as Historical Present, or can imply that it is something past which is still going on at the present moment. But these are for later, now Present is just like the conventional English Present schoolbook notion.

In the following paradigms, the singular and plural will be given on the same line:

Verb "lu-" free, release	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1 st Person	luo	luomen
2 nd Person	lueis	luete
3 rd Person	luei	luousi

The first thing you might notice is that there is an -o- vowel in the 2nd singular, 1st plural, and 3rd plural, while the other forms use an -e- vowel. This is a good example of the vowel variation which in Historical Linguistics is called by the German name of "Ablaut", or Vowel Gradation. This is a characteristic of all the older Indo-European languages, and even comes down to such forms as English "bear / bore", as used as a tense distinguishing mark. In the above Greek examples it confers no special meaning. But is often used to in Greek differentiate between a verb "phero" I bear, as against

"phoros" which is tribute, payment (as a load). Somehow "luousi" looks different as indeed it is, since it represents an earlier *lu-onti with a normal vowel in the -o- range, and palatalization of the -t- through the following -i- to "tsi" and finally "si". But this explanation is only illustrative, the word is used regularly just as it stands.

While here with the Present, we should note that there are two formations which are associated with each tense, the Participle which is a kind of verbal noun/adjective (like English "go/going")

The Infinitive, as parallel to English "to go". But Greek has a full range of Participles and Infinitives, which go with each of the Five Tenses, in the three voices of Indicative, Medio-Passive and Passive. So we are going to list them with each tense as we proceed:

PRESENT PARTICIPLE will be a Type 3 Noun formation, using Noun Class III endings :

Nominative Singular "luon", Genitive "luontos"but there will be a Feminine and a Neuter form, as in the examples below. etc.

Present INFINITIVE is simpler, a single form "luein", and that is all there is to it at this point.

IMPERFECT TENSE

This tense refers to a continued or continuative actions in past time, specifically one which is NOT terminated. This presents no special problems of understanding, it is parallel to the English "he was walking" or Latin "ambulabat". But there are some details in the way this tense is made up which might seem unusual.

First, an Imperfect is marked by an "Augment" which is an -e- vowel before the stem, so "lu" will start off with "e-lu-" to which a new set of endings different from those used in the Present above will be employed.

Verb "lu-" free, release		
	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1 st Person	eluo	eluoimen
2 nd Person	elues	eluetete
3 rd Person	elue	eluoimen

The sharp eye will note that 1 singular and 3 plural are alike, but in historical perspective they have entirely different origins. The

1 singular represent *e-luo-m with an -m- ending widely used for "me", while the 3 plural represents an older *e-lu-ont with an ending seen in Latin (amabant) and even modern French (parlent) for 3 plural. But here once cannot tell them apart, as context will, the best definer of any uncertainty.

FUTURE TENSE

Of all tenses the Future in Greek is the easiest to spot, since it is in essence a Present form with a -s- or sigma inserted between stem and ending, so we come up with this arrangement.

Verb "lu-" free, release		
	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1 st Person	luso	lusomen
2 nd Person	luseis	lusetē
3 rd Person	lusei	lusousi

Sanskrit has exactly the same Sigmatic Future, which Latin has only retained in vestige forms like the old "faxit" of the XII Law Table. Probably the sigmatic future is one of the latest tense developments in IE, since it does not show up in the other non-Mediterranean languages. It is formed exactly like the Present Participle, except it will have the characteristic -s- of these sigmatic forms. Thus beside "luso" etc we have:

Nominative Singular "lusOn" and Genitive "lusontos" etc, and of course the three grammatical Genders, in the above Present. These follow the Type 3 noun formations exactly.

For the Future Infinitive, it is a mere "lusein", just what would be expected, but we have a problem with its meaning. English has no Infinitive meaning "to be about to go" or "to be going to go", so we have to extend our tense-sense somewhat to encompass the Greek range of infinitival expressions. This may be confusing, but it is of course one of the good things about learning a foreign language.

AORIST TENSE

Now we come to something new and hard to grasp. Aorist is the unusual grammatical term used for this past tense in Greek, but it means exactly what Linguistics calls "Perfective" in other languages. This perfective use is a part of "Aspect" and refers to an action being completed, absolutely and finally, and that action must reside in a specific point in time. We don't have anything quite like this in English, while the Semitic languages use this Perfective / Imperfective "Aspectual" characteristic of any verb as essential to verbal expression. If I say in English "He dropped dead", that is aoristic, as against "he was sick and

finally passed on". "The mouse was trying to escape, but the cat GOT him." On the other hand in Arabic from the base form "kataba" with typical triple consonantal root, we have "iktaba" as a past tense "It has been written (i.e. in the Quran), which really means "It IS written...", its has been and of course it is still there....

We can define the Aorist here in abstract terms, but when you see it alive in a context, it will have special meaning, so remember the word ASPECT and all will be come contextually clear.

Verb "lu-" free, release

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1 st Person	elusa	elusamen
2nd Person	elusas	elusate
3 rd Person	eluse	elusan

You see here a Sigmatic Aorist, which is used with one class of verbs, those which have a stable root like "lu-" which does not admit Ablaut change. But with a verb capable of Ablaut, we do it quite differently. Let me take the common verb "leipo", where the diphthongs "-ei" can be reduced to "-i-" as another way of conforming an Aorist tense, as in this example.

Verb "leip-" leav

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1 st Person	elipon	elipomen
2nd Person	elipes	elipete
3 rd Person	elipe	elipon

This follows the with endings of the Imperfect tense as above, but cannot be confused with the Imperfect since the vowel is different. Present is "leipo", Imperfect "eleipon" and so the Aorist "elipon" is clearly different. For some odd grammatical reason, this Ablauting aorist is called the "Second Aorist", the sigmatic form being considered primary! But the difference lies in the nature of the original verbal stem, nothing more.

AORIST PARTICIPLE

Here we again will follow the Type 3 noun formations, but with some changes. The forms will be -s- sigmatic, and based on a -nt- stem, which is hidden in the Nom. Sg., but runs through the rest of the paradigm.

Nominative Singular "lusas" but Genitive "lusantos" and from there on all forms have the -nt- of this stem, onto which are grafted the regular endings of this (First?) Aorist.

Present **INFINITIVE** is simple, but based on a different

infinitival ending which works with Aorist and Perfect forms, an "-ai", we have "lusai".

FOOTNOTE on the Aorist: Until you get the central idea of Perfective as against Imperfective, you can't really grasp the structure of Greek grammar properly. Some regular experimentation with these two concepts which are so weakly represented in English, should be a part of your approach to Greek, and I would note this as one of the harder points in dealing with ideas in the Greek language.

THE AUGMENT

Now we must go back to the idea of the "Augment" the little -e- vowel which precedes certain past tenses. Curiously, in Homer it can be either used or omitted, which makes some past tenses a little harder to sight immediately. In Attic it will always be used in prose, although in later verse following Doric language use can vary. The later peculiarities are less important than the Homeric use, which marks the Augment as a insecure development in the history of Greek. Since we are aiming at Homer here, make a note of this vanishing -e-. Incidentally none of the Infinitives although consider "verbal", will have this "Augment".

THE PERFECT TENSE

If the Aorist tense was your first introduction to something foreign and strange in Greek Grammar's time sequencing, the Perfect Tense will confirm your suspicions that Greek is in fact very different from English and the Western European languages.

First of all, the Greek Perfects have a special feature which we call "Reduplication". This means that to make a Perfect from a simple stem like "lu-", you take the first consonant which is -l- and make a syllable of it with the vowel -e-, and then glue this onto the beginning of the new Perfect Active verbal formation. Let me give an example:

Starting with our familiar stem -lu-, we form a new syllable -le-, and combining with the original stem -lu-, we add an unexpected guttural consonant -k- followed by a new set of endings characterized by a lead-in vowel -a-. As an example:

Verb "lu-" free, release		
	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1 st Person	leluka	lelukamen
2 nd Person	lelukas	lelukete
3 rd Person	leluke	lelukasi

The -a- vowel is familiar enough from the sigmatic aorists like "elusa", but whether the aorist was based on the perfect, or the Perfect influenced by Aorist as a past-time tense, is historically unclear. Even less clear is the guttural consonant -k-, used in some verbs but not all, which thus can not be a clear marker of Perfect Active forms (Beware: Reduplication is standard in the Present Tense in another class of verbs, the "-MI verbs", but we come to that later...)

Now when we get past the surprise of this very different looking Perfect Tense, there will be more to say about its use and meaning. If we think Perfect, as in English, means simple past-time, that will be wrong for the Greek Perfect. It does have a meaning like "I have released,..." but it also means that: since I have done it, it is not done and over-with like the Aorist, but done then and still going on. In other words, the Perfect is actually in good part an Imperfective verb, and a Tragic actor can exclaim on the stage "ol-ol-a" from the verb "ol-" meaning "die". We might want to translate this as "I have died", but that would be completely silly on the stage, and the real meaning would be more like "I am a dead man, it is all over...". He has started to die, is it still going on, and although you see him there still strutting on the stage, you know that he had had it. Fini! Kaput!

Now you remember there can also be an **Ablauting verb stem** in Greek. We had the example of "leipo" 'leave', and this represents a still different kind of Perfect formation. It lacks to -k- which is found with many Perfect verbal forms, but it follows the pattern of initial reduplication, and then shifts the internal diphthong from and -e-based, to an -o-based diphthong "oi". So we end up with "le-loipa":

Verb "leip-"	free, release	
	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1 st Person	lelioipa	leloipamen
2 nd Person	leloipas	leloipate
3 rd Person	leloipe	leloipasi

If the 3 plural in -asi- looks odd, a word of historical explanation may help. It should have been -nti, but the -n- in this position after a consonant was remade into "consonantal -n-" which in Greek always comes out as -a-. (The Noun accusative singular in -a-, as "poda" Acc. Sg. 'foot', is the same, as compared to Latin pedem.) Now the -t- is palatalized by the following -i, which turns it into a -tsi- which the Greek wrote down as -si. Strange evolution but quite within the historical rules of development

This variation in the Perfect possibilities takes time to adjust to, only by a lot of reading of text does one become familiar with this tense, or with the Perfect Active PARTICIPLE, which has even less meaning to an English speaker.

PERFECT PARTICIPLE

Start with the Active Forman "leluka" and add a dental stem to make a noun Type 3 participial formation, which will be in the Nom. Sing. "lelukOs" (Nominatives are often deceptive, here the dental -t- has been lost!) but the Genitive is the key to the rest of the group: "lelukotos", Dative "lelukoti" etc. following Type 3 nouns.

If we want to stretch out a linguistic net for similar formations in other languages, we could note from a verb *eid- "see", which has a common Aorist "oida" I know (have seen!), actually formerly *woida with the disappeared F shaped digamma, and thus parallel to Latin "vidi". This turns up as a surprise form in 3 c. A.D. Gothic as a true analog to the Greek Perfect Participle "eidos, eidotos..." with Goth. "weidwots" as a priest, seer, one who has seen, (and still) knows. If the Greek verbs seem (as they are) irregular and full of surprises, the roots of still odder developments stretch out from the trunk of the great Indo-European family of developing tongues.

PERFECT INFINITIVE, as a single form with a new ending is easy to spot: "lelukenai". So now you have three Infinitive endings to watch for --- the Active Indicative verb: Present -en, Aorist -sai, and the Perfect -nai. But there are other Moods and Voices, so you shouldn't be surprised that Veitch's 19 th c. book "The Greek Verb", which catalogues all variants in printed texts and MSS, ran to almost five hundred pages. But for a reading knowledge of Greek this is clearly NOT NEEDED.

Now we can look at the forms of the above Verbal tenses all together, with **Active, Middle, Passive, Subjunctive and Optative** forms in a synoptic view. If you are reviewing previously studied Greek, this is a good place to see forms in order, but if new to Greek this will seem crowded and confusing. Use it as a reference table, and try to connect these forms with the above discussions, a process which will take some time and effort. The sheer amount of forms in these "Tables" is initially staggering, but remember that most of these forms are "Formula Generated Forms", and the important thing is to grasp the "key" to each groups's formula, which describes that individual group. It is these individual "keys" which you will be using to read or "decode" Greek writing, and the old way of memorizing table after table was a sure way to guarant3e that you would enver attain a Reading Knowledge of the language.

(How many tables of uses of the Modal Verbs in English can you recite, offhand...?)

VERBAL SYNOPSIS

	INDICATIVE			SUBJUNCTIVE	OPTATIVE	IMPERATIVE	INFINITIVE AND PARTICIPLE	
	PRIMARY TENSES	SECONDARY TENSES						
PRESENT AND IMPERFECT	Si.	1	παύ-ω	ἔ-παυ-ο-ν	παύ-ω	παύ-ε παυ-έ-τω	Inf. παύ-ειν	
		2	παύ-εις	ἔ-παυ-ε-ς	παύ-ῃς			
		3	παύ-ει	ἔ-παυ-ε	παύ-ῃ			
	Pl.	1	παύ-ο-μεν	ἔ-παύ-ο-μεν	παύ-ω-μεν		παύ-ε-τε παυ-ό-ντων ¹	Ptc. παύ-ων παύ-ουσα παύ-ον
		2	παύ-ε-τε	ἔ-παύ-ε-τε	παύ-ῃ-τε			
		3	παύ-ουσι	ἔ-παυ-ο-ν	παύ-ωσι			
FUTURE	Si.	1	παύ-σω		παύ-σοι-μι		Inf. παύ-σειν	
		2	παύ-σεις		παύ-σοι-ς			
		3	παύ-σει etc. as in the pres.		παύ-σοι etc. as in the pres.			Ptc. παύ-σων παύ-ουσα παύ-σον
AORIST	Si.	1		ἔ-παυ-σα	παύ-σω	παύ-σον παυ-σά-τω	Inf. παύ-σαι	
		2		ἔ-παυ-σα-ς	παύ-σῃς			
		3		ἔ-παυ-σε	παύ-σῃ			
	Pl.	1		ἔ-παύ-σα-μεν	παύ-σω-μεν		παύ-σαι-μεν παύ-σαι-τε παύ-σεια-ν, -σαιε-ν	Ptc. παύ-σᾶς παύ-σᾶσα παύ-σαν
		2		ἔ-παύ-σα-τε	παύ-σῃ-τε			
		3		ἔ-παυ-σα-ν	παύ-σωσι			
PERFECT & PLUPERFECT	Si.	1	πέ-παυ-κα	ἔ-πε-παύ-κη, -ειν	πε-παύ-κω	πε-παύ-κοι-μι πε-παύ-κοι-ς etc. as in pres. or πεπαυκῶς εἶην,	Inf. πε-παυ-κέ-ναι	
		2	πέ-παυ-κας	ἔ-πε-παύ-κη-ς, -εις	πε-παύ-κῃς			
		3	πέ-παυ-κε	ἔ-πε-παύ-κει	etc.			
	Pl.	1	πε-παύ-κα-μεν	ἔ-πε-παύ-κει-μεν	as in pres. or			Ptc. πε-παυ-κῶς πε-παυ-κυῖα πε-παυ-κός
		2	πε-παύ-κα-τε	ἔ-πε-παύ-κει-τε				
		3	πε-παύ-κᾶσι	ἔ-πε-παύ-κε-σαν	πεπαυκῶς ᾧ,			

cont'd

		INDICATIVE		SUBJUNCTIVE	MIDDLE		INFINITIVE AND PARTICIPLE		
		PRIMARY TENSES	SECONDARY TENSES		OPTATIVE	IMPERATIVE			
PRESENT AND IMPERFECT	Si.	1	παύομαι	ἐπαύομην	παύωμαι	παυοίμην	Inf. παύεσθαι Ptc. παυόμενος παυομένη παυόμενον (See 78)		
		2	παύῃ, -ει	ἐπαύου	παύῃ	παύοι-ο			
		3	παύεται	ἐπαύετο	παύηται	παύοι-το			
	Pl.	1	παύομεθα	ἐπαύομεθα	παύωμεθα	παυοίμεθα		παύου παυέσθω	
		2	παύεσθε	ἐπαύεσθε	παύησθε	παύοι-σθε			παύεσθε παυέσθων
		3	παύονται	ἐπαύοντο	παύωνται	παύοι-ντο			
FUTURE	Si.	1	παύσομαι			παυσοίμην	Inf. παύσεσθαι Ptc. παυσόμενος παυσομένη παυσόμενον		
		2	παύσῃ, -σει			παύσοι-ο			
		3	παύσεται etc. as in the pres.			παύσοι-το etc. as in the pres.			
AORIST	Si.	1		ἐπαύσαμην	παύσωμαι	παυσαίμην	Inf. παύσασθαι Ptc. παυσάμενος παυσαμένη παυσάμενον		
		2		ἐπαύσω	παύσῃ	παύσαι-ο			
		3		ἐπαύσατο	παύσῃται	παύσαι-το			
	Pl.	1		ἐπαύσαμεθα	παυσώμεθα	παυσαίμεθα		παύσαι παυσάσθω	
		2		ἐπαύσασθε	παύσῃσθε	παύσαι-σθε			παύσασθε παυσάσθων
		3		ἐπαύσαντο	παύσωνται	παύσαι-ντο			
PERFECT & PLUPERFECT	Si.	1	πέπαυμαι	ἐπέπαυμην	πεπαυμένος	εἶην	Inf. πεπαύσθαι Ptc. πεπαυμένος πεπαυμένη πεπαυμένον		
		2	πέπαυσαι	ἐπέπαυσο	πεπαυμένος	εἶης			
		3	πέπαυται	ἐπέπαυτο	πεπαυμένοι	εἶη			
	Pl.	1	πεπαύμεθα	ἐπέπαύμεθα	πεπαυμένοι	εἶμεν		πεπαυμένοι εἶημεν	
		2	πέπαυσθε	ἐπέπαυσθε	πεπαυμένοι	εἶητε			πέπαυσθε πεπαύσθων
		3	πέπαυνται	ἐπέπαυντο	πεπαυμένοι	εἶσαν			

cont'd

	INDICATIVE			SUBJUNCTIVE	OPTATIVE	IMPERATIVE	INFINITIVE AND PARTICIPLE	
	PRIMARY TENSES	SECONDARY TENSES						
PRESENT AND IMPERFECT	Si.	1	παύομαι	ἐπαύομην	παύωμαι	παυοίμην	Inf. παύεσθαι	
		2	παύῃ, -ει	ἐπαύου	παύῃ	παύοιτο		
		3	παύεται	ἐπαύετο	παύηται	παύοιτο		
	Pl.	1	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.	Ptc. παυόμενος
		2						
		3						
FUTURE	Si.	1	παυθήσομαι			παυθήσοίμην	Inf. παυθήσεσθαι	
		2	παυθήσῃ, -ει			παυθήσοιτο		
		3	παυθήσεται			παυθήσοιτο		
	Pl.	1	παυθήσομεθα			παυθήσοιμεθα	Ptc. παυθήσομένη παυθήσομένων	
		2	παυθήσεσθε			παυθήσοισθε		
		3	παυθήσονται			παυθήσονται		
AORIST	Si.	1		ἐπαύθη	παυθῶ	παυθείην	Inf. παυθῆναι	
		2		ἐπαύθης	παυθῆς	παυθείης		
		3		ἐπαύθη	παυθῆ	παυθείη		
	Pl.	1		ἐπαύθημεν	παυθῶμεν	παυθείημεν, -θείμεν	Ptc. παυθείς παυθείσα παυθέν	
		2		ἐπαύθητε	παυθῆτε	παυθείητε, -θείτε		
		3		ἐπαύθησαν	παυθῶσι	παυθείησαν, -θείεν		
Du.	2		ἐπαύθητον	παυθῆτον	παυθείητον, -θείτον	Ptc. παυθέντων παυθέντων		
	3		ἐπαύθητην	παυθῆτην	παυθείητην, -θείτην			
PERFECT & PLUPERFECT	Si.	1	πέπαυμαι	ἐπέπαυμην	πεπαυμένος	πέπαυμένος	Inf. πεπαυσθαι	
		2	πέπαυσαι	ἐπέπαυσο		πέπαυσο		
		3	πέπαυται	ἐπέπαυτο		πέπαυσθω		
	Pl.	1	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.	Ptc. πεπαυμένος	
		2						
		3						

THE REDUPLICATING -MI VERBS

After all the intricacies of the common-type verbs we have been examining above, it may come as a shock if not a surprise to find that there is another class of verbs which is in many respects different from this "normal" verb. We call this the "-mi" verbs, because one of their characteristics is the use of the ending -mi in 1 Person Sg instead of the usual -O-. Further complicating the situation, there are peculiarities within this class, which on the one hand contains only a limited number of verbs, yet on the other hand these verbs are in very common use and will be found everywhere.

The -mi verbs are an ancient Indo-European class, and are curiously shared in large part by Greek also and Sanskrit, where all verbs have the ending -mi in the 1st Sg. of Present Tense as the normal ending. Greek and Indic have many similarities, which is surprising since they cross the hypothetical "satem/centum" line, which defines in a western group the languages which treat IE gutturals hard (Lat. centum = 100, Gr. heKaton) as against Skt. chatam, OPers. satem. But there are so

many structural affinities, from parallel verb forms down to musical pitches, that some special connections must have existed between these two groups. On the other hand, while Sanskrit is normally considered solidly IE, Greek vocabulary is less than forty percent from IE roots, so there must be other factors involved.

The -mi verbs like the -o verbs will have Reduplication, which is standard in Sanskrit Perfects, and found in a small number of Latin perfects, like tutudi from tundo "beat", old tetuli from a stem tul- which suppletes the forms of Latin. fero (Gr. pherO).

Going back to the "MI VERBS", they are characterized by a special set of endings, although the 2nd and 3rd plurals are curiously the same as the "regular" verbs. But most striking is the use of Reduplication in the Present tense, a feature we had previously seen restricted to the Perfect formations. Best now take a look at these verbs in closer view:

PRESENT MI VERBS

Verb "stE-" place, put		
	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1 st Person	histEmi	histamen
2 nd Person	histEs	histate
3 rd Person	histEsi	histasi

Once you have accepted -mi in place of the usual -o of Present 1 Sg. (like Gr. luo and Latin do etc.) the second Sg. will look normal with its -s-, but the third Sg. in -is should be seen as an original *histe-ti, where the -t- has been palatalized by the front vowel -s- into -tsi- which is a sound Greek find easy to glide into -s-. Beware: this -s-i- is NOT a 2 Sg. but a third singular in -s-. One gets used to this, and the same happens with the 2 Pl. in -asi, which was originally sonant -n-ti. (This vowel -n- always turns to -a- in Greek, discovered in 1886 by the master Karl Brugman in Vol VI of Curtius' Studien.). The other -a- forms in the plural must be analogically derived from this 3 Pl. since they have no historical authenticity.

You may have noticed that the Reduplication in this verb is not correct, as compared to "ti-thE-mi" which follows the rule for "first consonant of the stem, plus and -i- vowel". So we should have had from the stem "stE" a proper form *si-ste-mi. But as a unequivocal Sound Law for Greek, initial -s- disappears leaving a "rough breathing" or aspirate sound, which is what we have here. Most "irregularities" have some linguistic history behind them.

The Passive is no surprise with 3 Sg histatai and a quite normal

3 Pl. histantai. And the Present Subjunctive will simply lengthen the -a- vowel to a long -A-, where length can be evidenced only by a circumflex accent (one of the cases in which the pitch accent is accidentally phonematic).

IMPERFECT MI VERBS

The Active Indicative of -mi verbs does not use the regular Augment, but goes the opposite way by dropping the Reduplicating syllable, so we have:

Verb "stE-" place, put		
	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1 st Person	histEn	histamen
2 nd Person	histEs	histEte
3 rd Person	histE	histEsan

I cite only 3 rd Sg. since the rest follows normally, and of course it is the third person which accounts for the verbal forms you find most often in authors. The others can be deduced here on pattern.

FUTURE MI VERBS

It will be no surprise to find a future active stEsO, stEseis, etc. is formed in the pattern of the lu-type verbs, with a middle form stEsomai etc. These are pattern-perfect paradigms and the only thing to watch for in reading, is that characteristic and telltale -s- sigma before the inflectional ending..

AORIST MI VERBS

Verb "stE-" stand		
	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1 Person	estEn	estEmen
2nd Person	estEs	estEte
3 rd Person	estE	estEsan

Now we have removed the Reduplication, which was seen only by the changed Aspirate for -s-, and dropped the last token mark of the Present Reduplication which is the -i- vowel. So we are dealing with a stripped stem Aorist, with an Augment as normal for Aorists. But notice that the stem -e- vowel is long throughout (etE), so I need give only the 3 rd Person forms, as the rest will be extrapolated from these.

But we can also have from this one verb a **second aorist form**, which is sigmatic with -s- and has a different meaning, an active "stand, set, place"

Verb "stE-" place, put

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
3 rd Person	estEsa	estEsasi

SUBJUNCTIVES of these -mi Verbs will have the typical long vowel: Present is a mere histO ,and for an -e- grade Ablaut form 2 Sg. histEs and so forth quite regularly. It will clearly be the long vowel which indicates the Subjunctive (and in this case the stripping away of the reduplicating syllable).

OPTATIVES will follow the usual Diphthongal pattern (with -ei- -ai -oi-) with forms like Present 1 Sg. staiEn and a 3 rd Sg. staiEsan with an additional syllable representing an original (sigmatic) *-s-nti to *-s-atsi to -si, with a final euphonic -n- (Nunation) which Greek often uses to close weak open syllables!

PERFECT OF -MI VERBS

Verb "stE-" free, release

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1 st Person	hesteka	hestekamen
2 nd Person	hestekas	hestekate
3 rd Person	hesteke	hestekasi

Curiously the -ka- syllable can sometimes be omitted in the Plural forms only, so you will actually find a 3 Pl. hestasi. There are some dozen verbs which offer this option (sometimes called Second Perfect as if it were a separate tense!). So merely watch out for unusual Perfect forms without the characteristic -k-, although they will have the reduplication and -e- vowel.

FURTHER THOUGHTS ABOUT GRAMMAR

Much additional lore surrounds many details of the Irregular Verbs and the ancient class of the -MI Verbs, which can best be learned from wide reading and watching what actually appears in the texts. Homer has additional variants which are not seen in Attic Grammar of the later period, and these constitute a special "Homeric Grammar" for the Homeric variants. But most cases of Greek irregularity, and those places where Homer pre-dates Attic with variants of his own, are less of a block to reading that you would think. If you find one inexplicable word in a dactylic line of eight words, you will probably be able to deduce its

grammatical function from either the information I have been giving in this article, or by the use of "linguistic horse sense" and checking with a reference Grammar, e.g. Goodwin's from 1894 or any later revision.

But one does not want to get lost in the infinite intricacies of the Reference Grammar, it is the intricacies of the Homeric text which you want to keep your eye on. The Grammars are simply a restatement in classified form of what authentic texts have been saying. Learning by heart everything the Grammar lists will not enable you to read a page of Homer, but on the other hand if you can manage to work your way through even one book of the Iliad, you will have stored in your mind the largest part of what the Grammars state. Grammar did not teach you English, and it will not teach you Greek beyond opening the door partway, so you can look into the room where the Greek texts are stored.

Reading Greek, you will be read Meanings, which are simultaneously "decoded" in the unconscious part of your mind, as furnished by grammatical experience. Translating or "transverbalizing" is the sure way to prevent yourself from ever getting a Reading Knowledge of Greek or of any language. And as a final warning, always read Homer aloud, because Greek is an aural language and your aural access also leads directly into a different compartment of Memory from your usual visual access. Heard sounds are what language is built on, and sounds are better recalled than the quick grasp of sight on graphemic materials. We live more and more in a print-culture, but our interior mind is still most emphatically served by sound.

READING HOMERIC VERSE

Speaking of sound and the business of reading Greek aloud brings up the difficult matter of "How to Read Homeric Dactylic Verse". You can NOT learn to read it by scanning out short and long marks above the Greek text, although many teachers have no better method to advocate. Access must be musical, you must have the sound of a dactylic line in your mind first, then you can note various check points as you read the line, and when you find a line that reads "wrong" somehow, you go back and play with it acoustically, check some more long and short vowel-syllables, until what you are reading aloud conforms to the swing and lilt of a true Dactylic Line. Hearing someone who reads dactyls well is a first step, then you have to do it for yourself, like most other important things in life.

A few hints can help:

a) Every line starts with a long syllable, which means a long

vowel must be first in that first word. Pronounce it LONG, meaning twice as long as a short syllable, and NOT with stress of increased loudness. That is totally wrong and loses the sense on rhythmic Greek poetry.

(If you learned to stress the "accents" now you have to abandon that foolish method which traditional teaching has always approved, which you should never have done in the first place. Chatter when you have the long/short sounds under control, you can try the acute accents as a 'sliding-up', the circumflexes as 'up-and-over-and-down', and all the graves as base-level equally low with everything unaccented. This is completely authentic, but hard to do and you might have to reserve some of this for later...)

b) The first word of a line must be either a dactyl - u u (named after the three bones of the finger) or a spondee which is - -. Once you have made a choice, you finish the first "foot" or metrical cadence, and starting the next one, you will again have a long to start with. (Dactyl and spondee both start with a long).

c) Now on your second foot, you have a choice of one long or two shorts, so this is the time to look for an eta or omega, since the other vowels don't show length. But any vowel circumflexed is long, so you have one additional tool here.

d) And now you proceed through the line, until you come toward the end, where there is a special consideration. There is a special cadence at the end of most lines, which is a dactyl followed by a spondee, so you have a rhythmic cadence like: - u u / - -.

If you are getting this you fairly certainly have done the rest of the line right. But there are a few lines, perhaps one in fifty, which end with two spondees: - - / - - , often written thus so as to convey a heavy, dark or ominous tone to the line. So my "dactylic test" for correctness must not be considered iron-clad, there may be a line which does not respond. But there will by only two percent occurrence of double spondees, so my Rule is still worth using.

e) Since the vowels -i- -a- and -u- do not show length (unless circumflexed, which really mean over-long, i.e. 3 x length) the way -e- and -o- do with different chars, how can you tell? You can always look in a dictionary which has length marked with the macron, as a last resort. But I find that if you get most of the syllables right, you can guess the remainder, and it is often wise to read not only by the "longs", but go back and read by the "shorts". Sometimes this will clear up a resistant line.

f) Speaking of Shorts, remember that if you find one, there must be another next to it. And after two shorts, there must be a long as initial syllable to the next foot.

g) You will notice in reading certain pauses which arise naturally from the sound of line as it is read. There may be a word-break coinciding with a foot-break, and there are several kinds of these breaks, called from the Latin "caesurae" or "cuts". There is a lot of scholarly information about these interruptions within the line. They are certainly a conscious part of how the line was originally constructed, a hint from the poet about the sound and even sub-meanings which the line should evoke. However I suggest ignoring this complex lore, and waiting until your own reading suggests a pause, something like a breathing space or a comma in our punctuation. In other words let the acoustic effect come to the fore, go with it and enjoy it as part of the poetic art. Later if you are curious, you can find a great deal of academic research on these caesural breaks, and can decide if the scholarship aids or restricts the poetic sense of the lines. The basic rule is forever: Stick first and always close to the Greek text!

h) There are various recordings of Homeric reading on old 33 RPM discs, cassette and now CD , some of which are afflicted with a hobby-horse rocking cadence coupled with loud and soft sounds, while other will get the lengths right and give you a good sense of Homeric metrics.

Some new recordings even apply music pitches from the "accents" to ride above the long and short syllables, which is of course the best way to hear Greek poetry. It does really make a difference to do this all together, and some younger Greek teachers are getting their students to do it this way. But it is hard, and you really need a teacher or a recording to get the sound in your ears. On the other hand, reading sensitive verse like Sappho's without lengths AND pitches is completely insensitive, and loses the whole musical import of Lyric poetry. If you are after the best qualities of the poetry of Ancient Greece, no effort at reconstructing authenticity should be too much trouble, even though we do know in our hearts that we are not going to reconstitute Greek literature as the Greeks knew it.

Richard Bentley in the 18 th c, a man who knew probably more Greek than any man alive then or since, said that he thought he knew about as much Greek as an Athenian blacksmith. Our knowledge is on the fringe edge of a much larger and much grander chapter from the ancient Mediterranean world than we can imagine. But it does us good to try to visualize what the rest of that rich phenomenon might have been, just as it did the 15 th century sailors good to try to imagine what lay beyond the cliff

which they thought was the drop-off margin of the then known world.

SYNTAX

At this point someone might remark along with the little old lady of the hamburger ads a few years back:

Where's the Syntax...?

That brings us back to my previous discussion of a Prescriptive Grammar which sets out for us all the ways words can be configured in groups and sentences, quite different from a Descriptive Approach designed to present just enough information for you to start to decipher and linguistically decode texts. SYNTAX should be in this sense a personal library of what you come away with in your memory, having read a good amount of Greek text.

It is this "invisible syntax", grounded on an understanding of the basic "forms" of Greek words, which enables your brain to decode foreign language material in the unconscious operation of your mind, while you are consciously reading letters, words, and sentences. To "read" you operate on these two levels: the conscious act of reading a book, line by line and page after page, while your mind is "working in the background" as the computer manuals put it, wordlessly decoding the forms and configurations, and simultaneous storing "Meanings" in your working-memory or RAM.

Put concisely, Syntax is what you have learned about a language by reading in it a great deal. You cannot learn it separately without working on a text, you certainly cannot learn it first and then expect to read fluently. Like everything else in language, there is a still rather mysterious process of hearing sounds or reading graphemics, and somehow making sense out of this in real-time, on the fly. Anything which falls short of this is mere puzzling out words by parsing, justifying items you are reading into a format based on your own native-speech patterns, and in the end doing something like crawling on all fours in a world where bipedalism is standard.

Of course as you read there are many places where you get stumped, there are structures like the Genitive Absolute, or the "Accusative of the Inner Object" which simply won't make sense without some explanation. Here is the place to go to a teacher or a reference Grammar, which will have more than you

need in terms of comprehensive detail, but somewhere in there the kernel of the solution to your problem. Unlike the standard Lesson Book Grammar which proceeds by segmented chunks, a Reference Grammar like Goodwin's will have an index which leads to your problem. Remember that this Grammar explanation will be Descriptive and list all the things which pertain to writing correct imitation Classical Greek, but the question from your reading will certainly have an answer in there.

Writing a Grammar of Greek is a doubly hopeless project. The language had changed in many ways between the times of Homer and Lucian. Furthermore when we say "Syntax" we really mean the conventional way things are put together in Prose, and it is clear that much of this does not apply at all to the entirely different language of Poetry.

Is there actually a conceivable "Syntax of Greek Poetry" at all?

In which dialect would that be operating, in the Aeolic of Sappho's verse, or the semi-Doric of the Choral passage of the drama, the Ionic of Herodotos and some fragmented relics, or the partly re-Atticized Ionic of Homer? For each of these there will be differences, wider than the regional differences outlined in the Atlas of U.S. dialects done decades ago under Hans Kurath. It may surprise us that Athenians sang choruses in Doric, while speaking Attic in public affairs, and surely a different sub-Attic in the street, the Peiraios and the home.

But we in the U.S. accept without thought the notion that our Country Music must be in a quasi-Southern dialect, Banjo music accompanied with a Tennessee accent, Old Jazz and now Rap with separate black intonations. Not only are the pronunciations of the sounds different from one to the other, the syntax of how things are put together will also follow a maze of local conventions. Even the poetry of the Hyper-Educated of Academe has structural arrangements of its own, with cryptosemantic allusions, aposiopetic lacunae, and the intentional obfuscations which imply deep lucubration.

Yes, there is such a thing as SYNTAX, which must be a growing body of awarenesses in your mind, as you dip page after page into the books of Homer, into the Drama, into the incomparably beautiful prose of Plato. It is like the recollections of a tour through a foreign country. It resides in your memory forever, and enables you to at the same future time come back and know your ways around the streets of Paris or Athens, or find your way around in towns which have no name, where you have never been before. If grammatical forms are like the signs for street names and house numbers, Syntax will be the map of a

whole township, where you need to go down one street and across another, to get from here to there.

You learn it by walking the streets, there is no other way.

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