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Historical Greek Pronunciation

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CONTENTS

Contents

Contents

Contents

"The [Greek] pronunciation commonly used in American colleges and seminaries is an attempt to approximate that used by the Athenians during the classical period of Greece (fifth and fourth centuries B.C.)."

THIS ASSERTION by a New Testament Greek scholar (discussed later) is in reference to the so-called "theoretical," "academic," or "standard" pronunciation of Greek. Invented in the early 1500s, this pronunciation is credited to the Dutch scholar Desiderius Erasmus (1466–1536), so it is commonly known also as Erasmian. The Erasmian pronunciation supposedly approximates the way Plato and Aristotle spoke Greek in classical Athens. As it will be shown in this study, however, Erasmian is artificial and inconsistent and has never been a part of the Greek speech.[1]

In Erasmus' day, while the Greek national voice remained silenced by the Ottoman Turks after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, unprecedented international interest in Classical Greek and in the newly printed Greek New Testament led non-Greek Renaissance intelligentsia to lump together everything Greek from antiquity down to the Christian era under one label: *Ancient Greek.* In other words, Erasmus had no reason to distinguish between the pronunciation of Aristotle's Attic Greek and Paul's Κοινή, for they both spoke "Ancient Greek."

Unlike Erasmus himself, however, Erasmian proponents today view the pronunciation of New Testament Κοινή as being different from that of Classical Greek due to phonological changes they presume Greek underwent before New Testament times as a result of Alexander's spread of Κοινή; yet they indiscriminately apply Erasmian to Classical Greek and New Testament Greek alike. Seen in this light, what the above assertion essentially says is that Aristotle's Erasmian pronunciation of Classical Greek is a more appropriate model for New Testament Greek than Paul's own pronunciation of Κοινή.

This implication raises questions about the pervasive presence of Erasmian—and in recent years, of other quasi-Erasmian varieties of pronunciation—in the study of Biblical and Classical Greek. Close inquiry reveals that Erasmian is more than just a pronunciation issue. Therefore the move being made in this study for the pronunciation warranted by the historical record eventually transcends the very question of pronunciation itself and elicits attention as well to other aspects of the Greek language and learning that are impacted by Erasmian and which as a result are currently at stake.

But let us now bring temporary closure to the above foretaste of the Erasmian issue and resume the topic in chapter 4, that is, after a discussion of the historical background of the Greek language, the formation of Κοινή, and the development of the historical Greek sounds.

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[1] The term *Erasmian* is used here as a blanket term that encompasses all Erasmian-like pronunciations of Greek, including "restored" and other such varieties.

— CHAPTER 1 —

THE DEVELOPMENT OF Κοινή

1.1   The first Hellenes (Greeks)

Several waves of Hellenic-speaking peoples are traditionally known to have migrated southward in the Greek peninsula between 2000 and 1000 BC, the most significant being the Achaeans (οἱ Ἀχαιοί), the Ionians (οἱ Ἴωνες), the Dorians (οἱ Δωριεῖς), and the Aeolians (οἱ Αἰολεῖς).

The Achaeans descended on the mainland of Greece and the islands after 2000 BC. Over time, they subjugated and mingled with the Pelasgians, an indigenous people of uncertain origin—though probably of Hellenic stock. Around 1450 BC the Achaeans also invaded the island of Crete and occupied Knossos, the center of the brilliant Minoan civilization whose origins are traced to the third millennium BC. Subsequently, a fusion of the Achaean and Minoan cultures gave rise to the Mycenaean civilization with its center in Mycenae, a city south of Corinth. The Mycenaeans are as well the Achaeans of the Trojan War (around 1200 BC) as recounted in Homer's the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

Around 1100 BC the Ionians likewise descended and occupied east and central Greece, many Aegean islands, and the central portion of the western coast of Asia Minor, which was named Ionia. Thereafter, the Achaeans and the Ionians became victims of a third and harsher invasion by a Hellenic-speaking people known as the Dorians—e.g., the Spartans were Dorians. The Dorians spread down the mainland of Greece and conquered nearly all of Greece, save Attica and Euboea. This forced many Achaeans to flee to the islands, Attica, Euboea, and to Asia Minor where they became known as Ionians. The Dorian invasion, which presumably submerged the Mycenaean civilization, contributed to the "Dark Age" of Greece that lasted for 400 years,[2] after which classical Greece began to emerge.

1.2   Periods of the Hellenic language

Hellenic is the oldest recorded living language and has been spoken in the Greek peninsula and surrounding islands for well over 4000 years. Based on the written record, Hellenic, an Indo-European language,[3] may be divided into two broad periods: ANCIENT, 1500 BC–AD 600; and MODERN, AD 600–2000. ANCIENT PERIOD: Mycenaean, 1500–1200 BC; Dark

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[2] The 400-year span begins with the fall of the Mycenaean civilization (1200 BC) and the appearance of the Ionic script around 800 BC. Some authorities allude to a 300-year span beginning with the submerging of the Mycenaean culture by the Dorians (1050 BC) and the beginning of some inscriptional records (750 BC).

[3] *Indo-European* is a term applied to a group of cognate languages including the majority of European language groups—Albanian, Baltic, Celtic, Germanic, Greek, Italic, and Slavonic—as well as Armenian, Indo-Iranian (Hindi and Persian), and Sanskrit. English, being a Germanic language, is Indo-European.

Age, 1200–800 BC; Archaic or Epic, 800–500 BC; Classical (Attic), 500–300 BC; and post-Classical, 300 BC–AD 600, comprising Hellenistic period Koine, 300 BC–AD 300, and Proto-Byzantine Koine, AD 300–600. **MODERN PERIOD:** Early Neohellenic/Byzantine, AD 600–1000; Middle Neohellenic/Late Byzantine (Medieval), AD 1000–1500; and Late Neohellenic, AD 1500–2000.[4]

Today's Hellenic is Κοινή Νεοελληνική [kiní neoelinikí] (*Neohellenic Koine*) "Common New Hellenic" (officially as of 1976). The name for *Greece* is Ἑλλάς *Ellas* (*Hellas*), and *Greek* is Ἑλληνική *Elliniki* (*Hellenic*). The English adaptation of *Greek* is derived from the Latin *Graecus*, which originates from Γραικός *Graikos*, the name of a Boeotian tribe in Greece that emigrated to Italy in the 8th c. BC. It is by that name the Hellenes were known in the West. Hellenic here refers particularly to Classical Greek, and Hellenistic[5] to the 600-year period of Greek following Alexander the Great. Thus, New Testament Greek, widely known simply as *Koine* Κοινή [kiní] "common," is Hellenistic Greek.

Note: Henceforth the name *Greek*, rather than *Hellenic*, is used—except in certain cases. Similarly, the name *Neohellenic Greek,* or simply *Neohellenic*, rather than *Modern Greek*, is used—except in select cases—for (a) Νεοελληνική Κοινή *Neohellenic Koine* is the official name of today's Greek language and the language into which the historical Greek speech evolved; and (b) from a phonological perspective, the sounds of Greek are not modern or new but of an unbroken past (3.6). It is in fact this continuity of the Greek speech that makes it technically impossible to investigate the linguistic nature of one of its historical periods to the exclusion of the others. With this bird's-eye view of the development of Greek as a historical backdrop, let us now take a look at the roots and formation of Κοινή.

1.3   Origin of Κοινή

Ancient Greek was diversified into distinct but mutually intelligible dialects—Aeolic, Attic, Doric, and Ionic. It was chiefly in the Ionic dialect and partly in the Aeolic that the epic poems of Homer, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, appeared around 850–800 BC. During the classical period (500–300 BC), and

> **Κοινή did not come directly from the artistic literary Attic but from the Attic vernacular.**

with the rise of Athens to prominence following the defeat of the Persians in Greece (490–479 BC), Attic,[6] the dialect of Athens and an offshoot of Ionic, began to produce masterpieces of literature, a characteristic of the "Golden Age of Athens" (479–404 BC). With its superiority over the other Greek dialects sustained by Athens' undisputed cultural, political and military prowess, Attic prevailed as the standard language of the Greek world, which led to its eventual adoption under Philip II, or earlier, as the language of Macedonia.

The unification of Hellas by Alexander the Great shortly after the beginning of his rule (336 BC), which brought nearly all Hellenes together, led to the amalgamation of the Greek dialects under the predominance of Attic into what became known as post-Classical or Κοινή "common (tongue)." This Κοινή did not come directly from the artistic literary Classical…

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[4] Adapted from the work by Chrys C. Caragounis, *The Development of Greek and the New Testament: Morphology, Syntax, Phonology, and Textual Transmission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 22.

[5] *Hellenistic* is from Ἑλληνίζω [elinízo] *I Hellenize* "I make Greek."

[6] *Attic* comes from Ἀττική *Attica*, the name of the region containing the city of Athens.

Continuation of Κοινή

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         ← BC|AD →
           CHRIST
  300                    300        600          1000          1500              2000
                ← NT →

 Class.   Early/Late          Proto-      Early Neohellenic/  Middle Neohellenic/   Late Neohellenic
 Period   Hellenistic Period  Byzantine   Byzantine          Late Byzantine (Medvl.)   1500–2000
          300-1 BC/AD 1-300                     Byzantine period
                    Κοινή                                                        Neohellenic Κοινή
                                                                                    (as of 1976)
          ← Post-Classical 300 BC–AD 600 →        ← Modern period 600–present →
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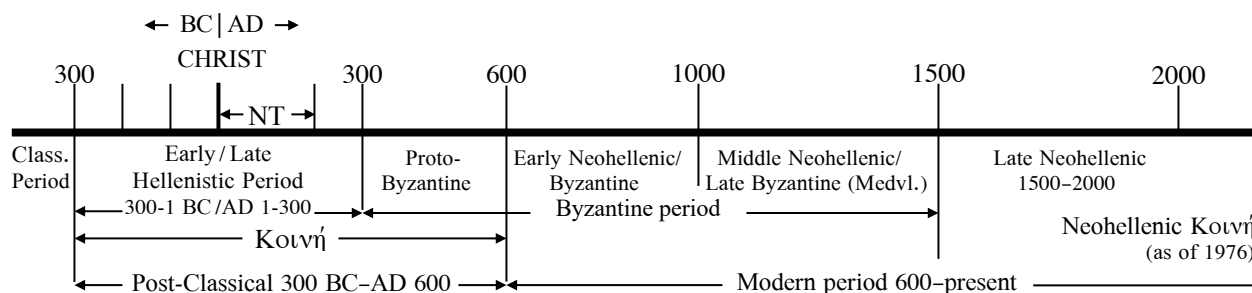
1.9   Neohellenic: a continuation of Κοινή

Because of the pioneer work of philhellenes during the Turkish oppression such as Adamantios Koraës (1748–1833), Διδάσκαλος τοῦ Ἔθνους *Teacher of the Nation*; world-renowned native Greek linguists George Hatzidakis (1848–1941) and Antonios

> **"Few even among professional scholars are aware how small the difference is between the Greek of the N.T. and a contemporary Athenian newspaper."**

Jannaris (1852–1909); and others, it is clear among professionals today that Neohellenic is part of the living stream of the NT Κοινή. As Blackwelder acknowledges, "Modern Greek scholars like Hatzidakis and Professor [Evangelinus Apostolides] Sophocles have done a great deal to show the connection between the Koine, the Byzantine, and the Modern Greek," and assures the student of NT Greek that various points of grammar and syntax are made clearer in the light of today's Greek vernacular.[7]

A comparison of Κοινή and Neohellenic grammar is beyond our scope. Suffice it to say that Neohellenic is simpler at the vernacular, though less so at the Katharevousa, level. As Robertson observes, "Few even among professional scholars are aware how small the difference is between the Greek of the N.T. and a contemporary Athenian newspaper."[8]

On the flip side of Robertson's observation, non-Greek scholars at times cannot differentiate between NT Greek and Modern Greek. On the wall inside an evangelical church in Athens, for example, is an inscription of the Lord's Prayer (see frame below). A prominent modern-day scholar opines that the prayer is in Modern Greek—or, is it?

> ΠΑΤΕΡ ΗΜΩΝ Ο ΕΝ ΤΟΙΣ ΟΥΡΑΝΟΙΣ
> ΑΓΙΑΣΘΗΤΩ Τ᾽ΟΝΟΜΑ ΣΟΥ
> ΕΛΘΕΤΩ Η ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ ΣΟΥ ΓΕΝΗΘΗΤΩ
> ΤΟ ΘΕΛΗΜΑ ΣΟΥ ΩΣ ΕΝ ΟΥΡΑΝΩ ΚΑΙ
> ΕΠΙ ΤΗΣ ΓΗΣ ΤΟΝ ΑΡΤΟΝ ΗΜΩΝ ΤΟΝ
> ΕΠΙΟΥΣΙΟΝ ΔΟΣ ΗΜΙΝ ΣΗΜΕΡΟΝ ΚΑΙ
> ΑΦΕΣ ΗΜΙΝ ΤΑ ΟΦΕΙΛΗΜΑΤΑ ΗΜΩΝ
> ΩΣ ΚΑΙ ΗΜΕΙΣ ΑΦΙΕΜΕΝ ΤΟΙΣ ΟΦΕΙΛΕΤΑΙΣ
> ΗΜΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΜΗ ΕΙΣΕΝΕΓΚΗΣ ΗΜΑΣ ΕΙΣ
> ΠΕΙΡΑΣΜΟΝ ΑΛΛΑ ΡΥΣΑΙ ΗΜΑΣ ΑΠΟ ΤΟΥ
> ΠΟΝΗΡΟΥ ΟΤΙ ΣΟΥ ΕΣΤΙΝ Η ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ ΚΑΙ
> Η ΔΥΝΑΜΙΣ ΚΑΙ Η ΔΟΞΑ ΕΙΣ ΤΟΥΣ ΑΙΩΝΑΣ
> ΑΜΗΝ

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[7] Boyce Blackwelder, *Light from the Greek New Testament* (Anderson, Indiana: Warner Press, 1958), 27–28.
[8] Robertson, 24. In Robertson's time, in fact during most of the 20th century, archaizing Katharevousa in Greece was the standard expression in newspapers, literary works, and academia (cf. 1.10; A-19).

"This is the Lord's Prayer," says Mounce, "inscribed on the inside of an evangelical church in Greece. It is modern Greek. Here it is in Koine, without the textually uncertain ending."[9]

> Πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς·
> ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου·
> ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου· γενηθήτω
> τὸ θέλημά σου, ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ
> ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς· τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν
> ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον· καὶ
> ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν,
> ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις
> ἡμῶν· καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς
> πειρασμόν, ἀλλὰ ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ
> πονηροῦ. ←[shorter ending]

Contrary to Mounce's claim, the upper (framed) rendition of the Lord's Prayer, written in Byzantine uncials (capitals), is not in "modern" Greek; it is actually from the *Textus Receptus* (TR).[10] The lowercase rendition is in modern type. Both renditions are in the Κοινή "Koine" of the New Testament and are identical in wording and spelling. The only difference, besides the letter type, is that the uncial rendition has ἀφίεμεν "we forgive" (TR), while the lowercase rendition has ἀφήκαμεν "we forgave" and a shorter ending (Nestle-Aland). Modern-day Greeks can read and understand the uncial rendition—as well as the lowercase one—though not because it is Modern Greek.

Other scholars espouse the notion that today's Greek differs from that of the NT as does Modern English from Anglo-Saxon or the English of fourteenth-century Chaucer. Such an assumption cannot stem from a close acquaintance with Neohellenic nor with the tenacious nature of the Greek language and its phonology and orthography have displayed for nearly two and a half millennia. As Browning comments:

> Since then [Homer's time] Greek has enjoyed a continuous tradition down to the present day. Change has there certainly been. But there has been no break like that between Latin and the Romance languages. Ancient Greek is not a foreign language to the Greek of today as Anglo-Saxon is to the modern Englishman. . . . Perhaps connected with this continuous identity over some three and a half millennia is the slowness of change in Greek. . . . Earlier stages of the language are thus accessible to speakers of later stages, . . . [a] peculiar situation created by a long and continuous literary tradition which makes all elements of Greek from antiquity to the present day in a sense accessible and "present" to any literate Greek.[11]

Largely as a result of Alexander's conquests, the Hellenic dialects, under the predominance of Attic, were fused into a common tongue. So radical was the unification of these dialects that, in direct contrast to the fate of other Indo-European dialects, particularly . . .

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[9] William Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek Workbook*, 2nd ed. (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI, 2003), 40.

[10] Textus Receptus "Received Text" formed the translation base for the King James Version in 1611.

[11] Browning, vii, 2–3, 13.

— CHAPTER 2 —

THE PHONOLOGY OF Κοινή: DEVELOPMENT AND SIMILARITIES TO NEOHELLENIC

2.1 A specific linguistic period

Attic Greek did not die, nor did it give birth to a new language;[12] rather, it continued to develop through Hellenistic and Byzantine times down to the present. From Alexander the Great until technically AD 600, Greek is known as Κοινή *Koine* [kiní]. Thereafter it may be referred to as Early/Middle/Late Neohellenic (cf. 1.2), and presently as Neohellenic Κοινή or simply Neohellenic. This chapter examines the development of the phonology of Κοινή and compares it with that of Neohellenic. Because certain features of Κοινή had been established by or were initiated within classical times, reference will be made as well to their period of origin or initiation. Of immediate concern then becomes the time period from classical through NT times, as the diagram below shows:
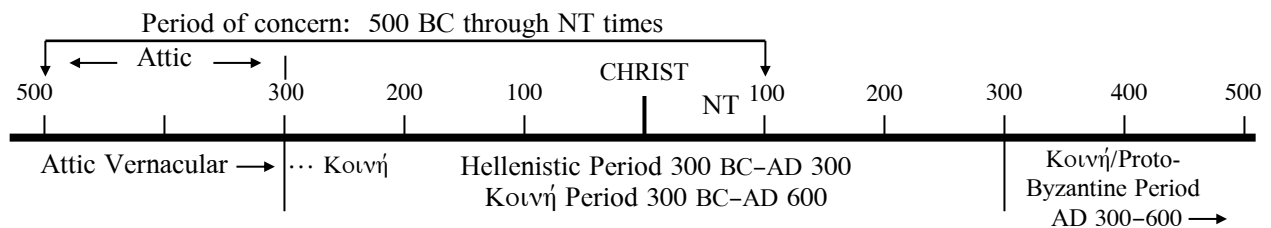
2.2 Iotacism

English-speaking students of NT and Classical Greek are typically told that in Neohellenic the [i] sound is represented six different ways: ι, η, υ, ει, οι, υι; and that this "modern" Greek method of pronouncing these letters and digraphs began to develop around Medieval times. This method, students are further told, could not have been true of Classical Greek as there was no reason for the Athenians, a people of the subtlest intellect, to have assigned the same phonetic value to such a variety of symbols.[13] As it will be shown, however, this variety of spellings for the same sound—that of ἰῶτα *iota* (ι)—is not a modern invention but rather the result of a centuries-old linguistic progression that reached classical Athens.

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[12] Wallace's analogy of a physical but not linguistic birth of Κοινή in 330 BC can be misleading: "Just as a newborn baby does not immediately speak, it took some time before Koine took shape." Daniel Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 18. Such descriptions, regardless of intent, can lead to the erroneous notion that Κοινή was an "infant" tongue, not the continuation of Attic.

[13] Notably, English i-sounds are spelled 30 different ways (5.7).

Numerous mounds of thousands of well-preserved Greek papyri and *ostraka* (potsherds) from the Hellenistic period were discovered in Egypt toward the end of the nineteenth century—personal letters and records, shopping lists, business contracts, wills, etc.—which date between the beginning of the 3rd c. BC and 7th c. AD, i.e., from Alexander's conquest of Egypt onward,[14] and which would have been understood by the NT authors. While the finds included fragments of ancient literary works, the nonliterary papyri formed an overwhelming proportion, the majority having been written by scribes and ordinary individuals with poor orthography skills and who haphazardly interchanged alphabet letters that stood for the same sound. This interchange of letters means that a writer would mis-spell a word using, for instance, ι for ει, η, υ, or οι simply because he spelled not according to prescribed grammatical rules but acoustically. This practice tells us which letters stood for the same sound for Κοινή speakers and which sounds were phonemically distinct. Below are but a few samples of the innumerable Hellenistic-period spelling errors found in papyri dated between the 2nd c. BC and the 1st c. AD.

2.2.1 Interchange of ι-sound letters in Hellenistic papyri

	Misspelled word	Corrected	Interchange shown		
2nd c. BC[15]	πλιστα	πλΕΙστα	Ι	for	ΕΙ
	αναβαινις	αναβαινΕΙς	Ι	for	ΕΙ
	υγΕΙνειν	υγΙαινειν	ΕΙ	for	Ι
	γΕΙνωσκειν	γΙνωσκειν	ΕΙ	for	Ι
1st c. BC[16]	μισθωμΕ	μισθωμΑΙ	Ε	for	ΑΙ
	ΕΙερεΟς	ΙερεΩς	ΕΙ / Ο	for	Ι / Ω
	σΥ	σΟΙ	Υ	for	ΟΙ
	εχΙς	εχΕΙς	Ι	for	ΕΙ
	μισθωσΙ	μισθωσΕΙ	Ι	for	ΕΙ
	τελεσΙν	τελεσΕΙν	Ι	for	ΕΙ
1st c. AD[17]	δανΗων	δανΕΙων	Η	for	ΕΙ
	πΥουμενων	πΟΙουμενων	Υ	for	ΟΙ
	ετΙ	ετΗ	Ι	for	Η
	οφΙλομεν	οφΕΙλομεν	Ι	for	ΕΙ
	χορΕΙς	χωρΙς	Ο / ΕΙ	for	Ω / Ι
	ημΥσον	ημΙσον	Υ	for	Ι

Each misspelled word (above) is pronounced as its corrected counterpart, with the pho-netically interchangeable letters betraying their common sound. Clearly, spelling [i] a half-dozen different ways in the 1st and 2nd c. BC could by no means be viewed as a "modern" Greek invention. As shown, this applies to the equations ω = ο and αι = ε as well.

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[14] Until the Persian invasion of Egypt around AD 618–19, Egypt had been a part of the Byzantine Empire. Egypt was subsequently conquered by the Muslims in AD 639. There were sporadic finds of Greek papyri in Egypt in the early 1800s, but more substantial amounts were found from 1877 on.

[15] Geoffrey A. Deissmann, *Light form the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World*, 4th ed. 1922, rp. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1965), 187.

[16] Fred Jenkins, *The Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists*, Vol. 29, No. 1–2 (1992) 32, 34.

[17] Gerald Brown, *The Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (April 1969) 6.

Greek-invented Υ, was gradually represented chiefly by Ο (for Ionic ΟΥ), which persisted till the 3rd c. BC, while the Υ of ΥΙ, through a preponderance of alternative accentuation (e.g., ΥΊ), became associated with its postpositive Ι. In any event, Ο as [u] can be the result of a contraction (πληροομεν > πληρομεν = πληρουμεν), whereas ΟΥ can be (a) the result of compensatory lengthening due to the loss of a sound (λυο<u>τ</u>σιν > λυο᾽σιν > λυουσιν—with the υ of ου being compensatory), or (b) an original diphthong (φρουδος). Though pre-Eucleidean ΟΥ and Ο can be seen side by side (e.g., ΤΟΥΤΟΣ = τουτους, A-5), post-Eucleidean ΟΥ for [u] is seen standardized (A-11).[18]

2.15 Vowel quantity (length)

Scholars commonly theorize that in Classical Greek certain vowels and syllables required longer time to pronounce than other vowels but that this distinction, known as *quantity*, was lost in Κοινή. Might such an assumption, though, stem from technical concepts of post-classical Greek grammarians and Atticists in connection with artificial prosodic features applied to metrical verse where quantity mattered? This section takes up the discussion on quantity and continues through the next section (2.16).

"[T]here is not a word in the whole classical literature about quantity, as understood by us;" says Jannaris, "nothing about short, long, or common syllables or vowels, . . . all these technical terms having made their first appearance in late grammatical treatises, that is in Greco-Roman times."[19] If, based on this position, vowel length is not a distinctive phonemic feature of Classical Greek, then all vowels and syllables orthophonically pronounced must be *isochronous* "equally timed" (1.12.d). Granted, accented syllables in regular speech may be imperceptibly to noticeably longer and louder depending on the speaker's intonational patterns, background, mood, or occasion. But that is not what quantity with respect to Classical Greek is all about, so some historical background may prove helpful.

Following the Dark Age of Greece (1.1), from the 7th c. BC to the beginning of the inscriptional period (600 BC), the Greeks became aware of the need for a national education system. As the basis for learning, they adopted their ancestral literature, which was chiefly in Homeric verse. As Durant remarks, until 600 BC "nearly all Greek literature had taken a poetic form; education had transmitted in verse the lore and morals of the race; even early philosophers . . . gave their systems poetic dress."[20] "[I]t is of utmost importance," concurs Davidson, "to realize that the intellectual and moral part of [Greek education] has music and poetry for its starting-point."[21]

Right from the outset the Greeks realized that in their own dialect, more notably in Attic, the current pronunciation of their ancestral Homeric literature reflected changes that entailed the loss of consonants and of vowel sequences that caused versification to be phonetically

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[18] On a somewhat related note, Brian Joseph thinks that the sporadic dialectal change [i]>[u] in Ancient Greek and again in Medieval to Modern Greek follows the same pattern. (Brian Joseph, "Irregular [u] in Greek," https://www.asc.ohio-state.edu/joseph.1/publications/1979irregularu.pdf, accessed Jan. 2017). This, however, speaks more of the tenacious diachronic behavior of Greek even among peripheral dialects, rather than—for lack of written record—of any disrupted ancient dialectal pattern that was supposedly resumed in medieval times.
[19] Jannaris, 526.
[20] Will Durant, *The Life of Greece* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1939), 139–40.
[21] Thomas Davidson, *Aristotle: Ancient Educational Ideas* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1897), 73.

and metrically anomalous. Attic contractions, which would have been foreign to Homer, now necessitated artificial lengthening to satisfy meter. Noted below is but an indication of the various types of phonological changes and what schoolmasters early in post-Homeric times did to compensate for sound loss in metrically affected syllables.

2.15.1   Some methods of compensating for Homeric sound loss

A.   The consonant next to (before or after) the missing sound was doubled:

Older form	Consonant loss		Missing consonant (') to be doubled		New Attic form	
*ΑΡΣΗΝ	Σ	>	ΑΡ ' ΗΝ	>	ΑΡΡΗΝ	*male*
*ΘΑΡΣΟΣ	Σ	>	ΘΑΡ ' ΟΣ	>	ΘΑΡΡΟΣ	*courage*
*ΜΕΛΙΤΣΑ	Τ	>	ΜΕΛΙ ' ΣΑ	>	ΜΕΛΙΣΣΑ	*bee*
*ΟΛΝΥΜΙ	Ν	>	ΟΛ ' ΥΜΙ	>	ΟΛΛΥΜΙ	*I destroy*
*ΠΑΝΡΗΣΙΑ	Ν	>	ΠΑ ' ΡΗΣΙΑ	>	ΠΑΡΡΗΣΙΑ	*boldness*
*ΣΥΝΛΕΓΩ	Ν	>	ΣΥΛ ' ΕΓΩ	>	ΣΥΛΛΕΓΩ	*I collect*
*ΑΛΙΟΣ	Λ	>	ΑΛ ' ΟΣ	>	ΑΛΛΟΣ	*other*

> The double consonant spelling of these and other such Attic words is retained in Neohellenic.

B.   A vertical stroke | was inserted by the vowel of the metrically affected syllable:

Older form	Reduced form	Compensatory mark (stroke)		New Attic form	
*ΔΕΕΤΕ	ΔΕ ' ΤΕ	ΔΕ	ΤΕ	>	ΔΕΙΤΕ	*you bind* (pl.)
*ΦΕΡΕΕΝ	ΦΕΡΕ ' Ν	ΦΕΡΕ	Ν	>	ΦΕΡΕΙΝ	*to bring*
*ΒΑΣΙΛΕϜΕΣ	ΒΑΣΙΛ ' ΕΣ	ΒΑΣΙΛΕ	Σ	>	ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΣ	*kings*
*ΕΝΣ	Ε ' Σ	Ε	Σ	>	ΕΙΣ	*into*
*ΑΡΧΑΝΣ	ΑΡΧΑ ' Σ	ΑΡΧΑ	Σ	>	ΑΡΧΑΙΣ	*authorities*
*ΤΟΝΣ	ΤΟ ' Σ	ΤΟ	Σ	>	ΤΟΥΣ	*the* (acc. m. pl.)
*ΕΣΝΑΙ	Ε ' ΝΑΙ	Ε	ΝΑΙ	>	ΕΙΝΑΙ	*to be*

Thus, when the vowels Α, Ε, Ο (list B) occurred before a lost sound (which was not always traceable), schoolmasters wrote Α|, Ε|, Ο|, the added | being a silent vertical stroke.[22] The stroke | originally served as a silent guide, a compensatory mark analogous to the apostrophe (') in *o'er the fields we go*, where the silent apostrophe compensates for the "loss" of *v* while maintaining the rhythm by the positional lengthening of accented *o*.

Over time, however, the compensatory symbol | as a mere conventional mark ended up giving monophthongized *spurious diphthongs* Α|, Ε|, Ο| the appearance of the mono-phthongized *genuine diphthongs* ΑΙ, ΕΙ, ΟΙ. As a result, the two sets became confused. Adding to the confusion was the fact that archaic Ε stood both for [e] and [i] sounds (p. 12; 40, fn.) and which, from around the end of the 5th c. BC on, was represented by Ε(ε), ΕΙ(ει),

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[22]   This vertical stroke | was initially not confounded with *iota* Ι since the latter's archaic Attic form (prior to 6th c. BC) was Ϛ or something similar, until it appeared as Ι(ι) (see A-18).

[T]he study of the pronunciation of Greek from classical times on was based on the study of faulty readings in the inscriptions, particularly the Attic ones ... The mistakes of the stone cutters, which have come down to us unaltered, are the best proof of the actual pronunciation of Greek in those early periods. Those same mistakes we find repeated in the papyri from the IVth century B.C. on. This circumstance shows the unbroken continuity in the tradition of faulty readings, first in the inscriptions and later in the papyri, i.e., from around 600 B.C. to the end of the papyri period, the VIIIth century A.D.[23]

In retrospect, it may once again be pointed out that reading and pronouncing Biblical Greek the Neohellenic way according to which, for instance, the sound [i] may be represented by ι, η, υ, ει, οι, or υι, can scarcely be considered a Modern Greek invention (2.2); rather, it is the result of developments traceable to classical or pre-classical Athens. The 403 BC Eucleidean event therefore marked not the formation of a more phonetic alphabet for a changing sound system, but the adoption of a script that would more efficiently express the grammatical distinctions of the language.

2.22 Summary and conclusions

The foregoing cursory study of the development of Κοινή and its phonology shows the many features Κοινή and Neohellenic share, which may be summed up as follows:

1. an identical 24-letter Classical Attic alphabet
2. a virtually identical orthographical system
3. the iotacization of ει = οι = υι = η = η = υ = ι
4. the equalization of αι = ε and ῳ, ω = ο
5. the monophthongal pronunciation of ει, οι, υι, αι, ου, ᾳ, ῃ, ῳ
6. an orthophonically isochronous vocalic system /i, e, a, o, u/
7. the pronunciation of fricativized υ in αυ, ευ, ηυ as β/φ
8. the identification of β, δ, γ, φ, θ, χ as fricatives
9. the dimorphic (formal/informal) use of π/φ, τ/θ, κ/χ, νδ/ντ, η/ε
10. the use of combinatory variants for euphonic, nonphonemic [b, d, g]
11. euphonic medial or final ν [n] as [m]/[ŋ] or "nasal γ"
12. the sound of ζ as [z], and assimilation of σ/ς into [z] before voiced consonants
13. the nonuse of aspiration
14. phonetically interchangeable allographs that cause diachronically identical misspellings among the less literate
15. pitch-accent patterns tied to trisyllabotony
16. application of intonational patterns for the formation of questions

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[23] Caragounis, 496–97.

The likelihood therefore is high that the Κοινή of the NT and Neohellenic share the same orthophonic pronunciation and in fact overall phonological system. Additionally, and most notably, if we consider one by one the features listed above, we are struck by the brow-raising cognizance that there is hardly any feature listed—in fact, none—that would not apply as well to the daily use of the Attic speech in Alexander and Aristotle's day (3.4).

2.23 Closing remarks

The phonology of Κοινή and its relation to Neohellenic was presented on two parallel evidentiary tracks. One track concerned vowels and vowel digraphs on the premise that faulty readings of an acoustic nature are telling of pronunciation. The origins of those errors coincided chiefly with the transition from the older Attic writing system to a new system known as the post-Eucleidean grammar. This unbroken track of repeated spelling errors, gauged by the same diachronic standard—the same writing system *and* orthography—indicates that the spelling, reading, and pronouncing method Κοινή and Neohellenic share was in place, or originated, in Classical Attic.

   The second evidentiary track, gauged by the same standard, concerned consonants that accounted for such diachronic peculiarities as dimorphic and euphonic pronunciation, the nonuse of aspiration, and other findings such as listed above (2.22), with their origins also being traceable to Classical Attic or earlier. These findings point to Attic sounds entering Κοινή in their definitive value and form and developing into what will henceforth be collectively referred to as the Historical Greek Pronunciation (HGP), discussed next.

be in a position to confirm by documentary evidence any later developments of the pronunciation of Greek in Spain, Crimea, Bactria, Afghanistan, or India; for, granted, some Attic Greek sounds, having spread later throughout the Hellenized world, must have undergone in isolated regions a leveling process that was presumably completed sometime around NT times, though they were still very similar to the Athenian pronunciation, since they reflected the Attic-based pronunciation used in Alexander's empire. This is of no consequence, however, for the issue, again, is not any regional or peripheral application of sounds to Greek, but the Attic sounds of classical Athens, the mainline Hellenic speech sounds that formed the HGP. For once the Attic pronunciation gradually emerged and developed, it became the force that eventually succeeded in prevailing over all other dialectal or peripheral ways of pronouncing Greek.[24]

3.3   The HGP in Κοινή

Scholars typically view Alexander's campaigns as the launching pad for every sound change Attic Greek presumably underwent following the classical period. They allege that exporting the Attic sounds to foreign lands—as though no Attic sounds were left behind—exposed the Attic pronunciation to external linguistic elements and forces that caused it to change and form into a distinct sound system, that of Κοινή. Impressionable students envision Classical Attic sounds being swiftly exported from Athens alongside Alexander's Bucephalus as plosives begin to crunch under friction, tonal harmony succumbs to stress, long vowels become short-lived, and aspiration expires. However expressed, such unsubstantiated notions sound logical to the inexperienced seminarian, lending credence to the theorists' regurgitated "explanations" of how Κοινή took form on foreign lips in conquered lands.

Such assertions lack evidence. First, there is no evidence that φ, θ, χ were plosives in Aristotle's day, nor when and where they began to turn into fricatives, for that matter. Comparative linguistics assumptions (such as Allen's) that in Classical Attic these were plosives to begin with do not amount to evidence (2.10.1). And there are no grounds for treating Attic β, δ, γ as the English plosives b, d, g[25] (2.11). No one can explain how six Attic plosives could have turned into fricatives (φ, θ, χ, β, δ, γ) between the 3rd c. BC and 2nd c. AD so uniformly throughout the immense empire, yet for a disproportionately much longer period—two millennia!—could remain fricatives. The very longevity of these fricatives to date evinces the tenacity of the intrinsic properties with which they entered Κοινή.

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[24]   The Doric dialect resisted the infiltration of Κοινή more than any other Greek dialect in various parts of the Greek world (Peloponnesos, Crete, Kyrene, Rhodes, parts of Asia Minor, some islands in the southern Aegean Sea, and a few other isolated regions), its persistence fading by the 2nd c. AD. Today Tsakonian, a dying form of Doric, is spoken by a handful of people in isolated towns and villages in and near Laconia (Ancient Sparta).

[25]   Attempts to impose on Greek, an Indo-European (IE) language, across-the-board phonological changes noted in other IE languages based on Grassmann's Law will find oneself on a treadmill of skewed speculation. A surer perspective of the development of Greek sounds, based on the *written* record, can be gained from the fact that the HGP has survived for nearly twenty-five centuries as opposed to the sweeping transformations all Germanic and Romance IE languages have undergone in a fraction of that time. Moreover, one should not theorize how Attic Greek was pronounced while leaving Neohellenic out of the loop. Without Neohellenic as a reference point we would probably have no reliable basis for assuming what sounds were represented by what symbols even in Byzantine times, let alone the classical period (1.13).

Second, no evidence has shown on what basis and according to what processes and criteria Classical Attic metamorphosed from a tonal and lyrical speech into a stress language. In fact the strongest evidence available to date amounts to no more than Allen's speculation, who says, "The eventual change from a melodic to a

stress-accent in Greek cannot be precisely dated."[26] Doubtless, such a factual statement rests on the assumption that a change of this type did occur; therefore, that Greek once was melodic and eventually ceased being melodic now appears to be a mere fact. It must be remembered that Κοινή is chiefly the continuation of the Classical Attic vernacular, the everyday speech of the common Athenian, not of the highly refined artificialities applied to metrical verse or to other literary masterpieces of the Golden Age of Athens, although in either case the phonology was one and the same (1.10). Κοινή thus ought to be compared with the Classical Attic vernacular, leaving rhythm, tone, and length related to melodic versification outside the purview of an otherwise unfounded phono-logical comparison.

Third, there is no evidence that Classical Attic had sixteen to eighteen English-like vowels and diphthongs (6.5.2) rather than the five vowels of Κοινή, the same as the five Mycenaean as well as Neohellenic vowels /i, e, a, o, u/ (1.11, 2.5); for there can be no phonological process whereby the five phonemic vowels of the language of a city-state can possibly increase to such a prodigious English-like vocalic system and within a couple of centuries of being spread over distant lands revert to their original status.

Finally, there is no proof that Aristotle used aspiration in speech any more than speakers of Neohellenic just because they use(d) aspiration marks in writing (2.18.1). In short, there is no *hard* evidence that the phonemic sounds of Κοινή, first and foremost in Athens, became different from those of Classical Attic. For just as in pre-Hellenistic times Attic prevailed over all other Greek dialects as the leading speech of the Greek world (1.3), so did Athens serve throughout pre-NT times as the linguistic epicenter that emitted to the Hellenized world waves of her historical sounds. Those were the sounds Alexander and his soldiers took to Egypt and Asia, the HGP, the pronunciation that emanated from Athens during Alexander's time and beyond, as the stark evidence of the inscriptional and papyrical record of repeated spelling errors attests.

3.4   From Septuagint to New Testament

As already seen, the translation of the Septuagint, initially the Pentateuch, commenced around 285 BC (1.5), while the original NT writings were all completed by the end of the first century. Numerous direct quotations from the Septuagint were incorporated into the NT text without the need for any

morphological, syntactic, semantic, orthographical, or other linguistic adjust-ment by the NT authors. Thus, however one slices the pie, the Κοινή of the Septuagint and the Κοινή of the New

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[26] Allen, *Vox Graeca*, 130. Worth noting is that following this opening statement, Allen looks for signs of evidence based not on regular speech but on metered verse and rhythm, especially hymns composed in the 4th c. AD.

But beyond this fact, the eyebrow-raising truth is that today a Greek person reading out aloud orthophonically a part of the original Greek New Testament would have been understood by its author; and Aristotle's writings, by Aristotle himself—all because of the tenacious, diachronically recognizable historical Greek sounds and the support they get from an equally tenacious historical alphabet and consistent post-Eucleidean orthography.

The persistent qualities of the HGP tradition can be seen through a simple comparison of the changes English and Greek underwent in the past five centuries. Allen, for instance, describes the Great English Vowel Shift (in England),[27] a sound change in the English long vowels that had long-term implications

> **"Modern Greek is closer to Ancient Greek than is any other Modern Language to an ancient predecessor of even a few centuries."**

on English spelling, reading, and the understanding of any English text written before or during the shift. It so happened that the process of this massive English change in the 16th century coincided with the effects Greek learning had in Renaissance Europe following the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Allen's discussion of the circumstances surrounding the Great English Vowel Shift is preceded by a list of the characteristic features of Greek around that time as follows:[28]

β, δ, γ (as well as φ, θ, χ) pronounced as fricatives;
ζ pronounced as a single sound [z];
κ, χ, γ, λ, ν palatalized before front vowels;
π, τ, κ voiced after nasals;
υ in αυ, ευ pronounced as [v] or [f];
αι pronounced as a monophthong [e];
and, above all, the single value [i] accorded to ι, η, υ, ει, οι, υι.

What Allen is coincidentally showing here is that, whereas English underwent profound pronunciation changes over the last five hundred years, the pronunciation of Greek during the same period has remained unchanged. This tenaciousness of the Greek pronunciation system speaks as well of the tenaciousness of the HGP five hundred years before the fall of Constantinople, the millennium before then, and the three pre-Christian Hellenistic centuries leading back to Alexander and Aristotle's day. As Brown points out:

Our much vaunted Erasmian, or so-called ancient, pronunciation of Greek [cf. 5.2] is partly to blame for the misconception that Modern Greek is entirely different from Ancient [Greek] . . . Modern Greek is closer to Ancient Greek than is any other Modern Language to an ancient predecessor of even a few centuries.[29]

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[27] Allen, 146.
[28] Allen, 140. Here Allen's list is nearly complete and basically correct, except his across-the-board "rules" regarding palatalization do not particularly apply to λ and ν (e.g., βασιλεία [vasilia] *kingdom*, κοινωνία [kinonia] *communion*). Palatalized λ and ν in such examples is considered substandard pronunciation (see 8.10, fn.). For the voiceness of π, τ, κ after nasals, see 2.12, 8.8.
[29] Carroll N. Brown, "Modern Greek as an Aid to the Teacher of Ancient Greek." *The Classical Weekly* 15, no. 11 (1922), 84.

4.4   Erasmian inconsistencies

The above table shows the main differences between the two pronunciation systems, Erasmian and Greek. Of the total of 34 single letters, digraphs, and one breath mark, at least 19 (listed above) are in dispute, a deviation of nearly 56 percent from the Greek norm. In addition, inconsistencies are noted in the pronunciation of Erasmian from speaker to speaker. For instance, ζ is pronounced [dz] as in *adz* by Black,[30] but [z] as in *daze* by Mounce[31] and [zd] as in *wisdom* by Allen;[32] υ is pronounced [u] as in *boot* or as the German ü by Black, [ju] as in *universe* (also [ʊ] as in *book* or as the German ü) by Mounce,[33] or even [ʌ] as in *hut* by Drumwright;[34] ει is pronounced [eɪ] as in *eight* by Mounce and Stevens,[35] but [i] as in *seize* by Rife[36] and [aɪ] as in *height* by Summers;[37] ευ is pronounced ε+ου [eu] by Rife, but [ju] as in *feud* by Black and Mounce; ηυ is pronounced [eu] (as in *care+soup* or *met+moon*) by Rife and Smyth,[38] but [ju] as in *feud* by Black and Mounce, neither of whom differentiates between the pronunciation of ευ and ηυ; η and ει are pronounced alike as [eɪ] (*late*) by Paine, Mounce, and others, while η is correctly pronounced [i] as in *deep* by Jay.[39] Dobson, on the other hand, gives two pronunciations for η: 'ai' as in *air*, and 'ay' as in *say*[40] but with no explanation as to which to use when, while Allen treats it as a long ε. White suggests [aʊ] as in *hour* for αυ,[41] but Green and Harkness, like Moulton, apparently by association with English spelling, suggest [ɔ] as in *naught*. Furthermore, they suggest [waɪ] as in *wine* for υι (but [wi] as in *suite*, [wɪ] as in *quit*, or [u:ɪ] as in *ruin* by others); and, surprisingly, [aʊ] as in *out* (the same as the αυ by White) for the normally undisputed ου [u].[42] Some consider "long" α to be the *a* in *late* (in which case α and η are the same as ει), but for Goodwin, Smyth, and others it is the [ɑ] in *father*—which is "short" for others. Allen, on the other hand, pronounces α [ʌ] as in *cup* if short—the same as the pronunciation of υ by other speakers, as noted—but [ɑ] as in *father* (though [æ] as in *pass* by Jay) when long.[43] Most scholars pronounce "short" omicron ο [ɑ] as in *cot* (the same as α by Smyth), but Balme and Lawall pronounce it [ʌ] as in *but*,[44] the same as the α by Allen or υ by others, while Thornhill pronounces it [oʊ] as in *oval*, with an alternative pronunciation of [ɑ] as in *hot*;[45] and "long" omega ω [oʊ] as in *tone*, except

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[30] David Black, *Linguistics for Students of the New Testament Greek* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 33–37.
[31] William Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek Grammar*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 8–10.
[32] Allen, 177.
[33] Mounce, *Basics*, 9.
[34] Huber Drumwright, Jr., *An Introduction to New Testament Greek* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1980), 10.
[35] Gerald L. Stevens, *New Testament Geek* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc., 1997), 4.
[36] John Rife, *A Beginning Greek Book* (Amelia, Ohio: The Reiff Press, 1974), 2.
[37] Ray Summers, *Essentials of New Testament Greek* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1950), 1–3.
[38] Smyth, 13.
[39] Eric Jay, *New Testament Greek: An Introductory Grammar* (London: S.P.C.K., 1958), 4.
[40] John H. Dobson, *Learn New Testament Greek,* 3rd ed. (U.K.: Piquant Editions Ltd., 2005), 1.
[41] John W. White, *The First Greek Book* (Boston and London: Ginn & Company, 1896), 3.
[42] Samuel Green, *A Brief Introduction to New Testament Greek* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1911), 10. Similarly, Albert Harkness, *The First Greek Book* (London: D. Appleton and Company, 1866), 6.
[43] Allen, 63, 177.
[44] Maurice Balme and Gilbert Lawall, *Athenaze: An Introduction to Ancient Greek,* Book I, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), xii.
[45] Chadwick A. Thornhill, *Greek for Everyone: Introductory Greek for Bible Study and Application* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2016), 5.

some, like Allen, who pronounce ω [ɔ] as in *broad* or *saw*,[46] the same as Green's αυ (above). As for ι, it is pronounced by some [ɪ] as in *pit* when "short,"[47] but [i] as in *ski* when "long," while Jay treats it as the *i* [aᶦ] in *pile* when "long."[48] Nondistinction of οι ~ οϊ, αι ~ αϊ, αυ ~ αϋ by Erasmian adherents betrays Erasmic mishandling of οι, αι, αυ. With regard to ψ, χ, θ, Mounce says that "technically [they] are not stops but . . . it is easier to view them as stops."[49] This designation is an arbitrary misnomer, for ψ is stop π + continuant σ; and χ and θ are not stops but continuants. For a discussion of α, η, ω and ᾳ, ῃ, ῳ see p. 93.[50]

4.5   Customized pronunciations of Greek

The table below summarizes pronunciation inconsistencies of NT Greek among various authors, none of which reflects the undisputed evidence of iotacization or fricativization. The

> **"No one is consistent in the use of the theoretical pronunciation."**

table shows that within this hodgepodge of arbitrary pronunciation styles the letter ι (*pile*) for one author is αι (*aisle*) or ει (*height*) for another, or that one's α (*cup*) is another's υ (*nut*) or ο (*but*), or one's η (*fate*) is another's α (*hate*) or ει (*weight*), or one's αυ (*out*) is another's ου (*count*), or one's ω (*broad*) is another's αυ (*naught*); and that individual letters are pronounced differently by different authors—e.g., α, like υι, is pronounced four different ways.

4.5.1 Summary of Erasmian pronunciation inconsistencies

Greek letter(s)	Pronunciation examples				# of ways	Pronounced alike		
α	hat	hate [a]	father	cup [b]	4	[a] α	η	ει
η	hair	fate [a]	deep [c]		3	[b] α	υ	ο
ι	hit	keen [c]	pile [d]		3	[c] η	ι	ει
υ	nut [b]	goose [e]	put		3	[d] ι	αι	ει
ο	cot	but [b]			2	[e] υ	ου	
ω	note [i]	broad [f]			2	[f] ω	αυ	
αι	aisle [d]				1	[g] αυ	ου	
αυ	out [g]	naught [f]			2	[h] ευ	ηυ	
ει	weight [a]	seize [c]	height [d]		3			
ευ	feud [h]	get+wet			2			
ηυ	feud [h]	fate+food			2			
ου	food [e]	count [g]			2			
υι	we	wine	quit	ruin	4	**Results vary depending**		
ζ	daze	wisdom	adz		3	**on authors compared**		
14					36			

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[46] Allen, 177.

[47] A. W. Argyle, *An Introductory Grammar of New Testament Greek* (London: Cornell UP, 1965), 1.

[48] Jay, 4.

[49] Mounce, *Basics*, 83.

[50] Most authors treat α, η, ω and ᾳ, ῃ, ῳ alike. Stevens transliterates α=a, η=e, ω=o and ᾳ=āi, ῃ=ēi, ῳ=ōi (Stevens, 11). This obviously leads to a spelling pronunciation that confuses ᾳ with αι, ῃ with ει, ῳ with οι.

— CHAPTER 5 —

ERASMIAN MISCONCEPTIONS

5.1 Two misconceptions about Neohellenic

Before and nearly throughout the Medieval period, the pronunciation of Ancient Greek in the manner Greeks had traditionally pronounced their language was never a questionable issue. The first objections to it were raised early in the 15th century by a handful of non-Greek European scholars. One of their objections was that the Byzantines pronounced certain letters alike: η, υ, ει, οι, υι = ι; αι = ε; ο = ω, a far cry, that is, from the way these letters were supposedly pronounced in ancient times.[51] For 500 years now Erasmian scholars have viewed the Byzantine pronunciation of these letters as a modern development. But while many Erasmian scholars today would probably concede that NT Greek sounded much like Neohellenic, they paradoxically continue to apply to NT Greek what they claim to have been the pronunciation of Classical Greek, arguing at the same time that the Modern Greek method poses pedagogical difficulties. Another argument Erasmians raise is that Modern Greek and NT Greek words are dissimilar, so Neohellenic offers no help in learning NT words. This chapter shows that these two arguments are misconceptions.

5.2 Misconception #1 – difficult pronunciation

Black says, "*The fact that certain diphthongs became monophthongs in the history of Greek creates a problem—that of the pronunciation of NT Greek. The pronunciation commonly used in American colleges and seminaries is an attempt to approximate that used by an Athenian during the classical period in Greece (fifth and fourth centuries B.C.). The pronunciation now used in modern Greece differs greatly from this and is much more difficult for English-speaking students.*"[52] Black apparently believes that (a) the Erasmian method of reading and pronouncing NT Greek is much like Classical Attic, whereas Neohellenic is very different; and (b) the Neohellenic method is difficult for English-speaking students. The latter notion is discussed next, while the former is taken up in Chapter 6.

Thus the focus here will be on how *difficult* it is to pronounce NT Greek the Neohellenic way. Since Erasmian authors typically Anglicize (or Germanize, p. 56) Greek phonology, for a clearer perspective we will make a comparison of the Greek and English phonological and orthographical systems. The aim is (a) to demonstrate that reading and pronouncing Greek the Neohellenic way is much simpler than Erasmians suppose; (b) to point out that English-speaking college students are already familiar with a comparatively much more . . .

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[51] As a rule, Erasmians pronounce the constituents of each Greek vowel digraph individually.

[52] Black, 38. (Black's work is an excellent source for Erasmian views and ideas, as this quotation indicates.)

6.6   Sidney Allen's treatment of the Classical Attic vocalic system

A number of points regarding Black's Erasmian view of the Attic vocalic system are found also in Allen's *Vox Graeca*, notwithstanding the fact that a superficial comparison of the two authors' views reveals that their analyses are in major respects different. For one thing, Black suggests 10 vowels: 7 long and 3 short (6.4), whereas Allen's "double triangle" diagram (below) shows 12 vowels: 7 long (outer triangle) and 5 short (inner triangle).

Additionally, while Black describes υ as a *back rounded* vowel as in *book*, Allen describes υ as a *front rounded short* vowel as in French *lune*, as well as a *front rounded long* vowel as in French *ruse* (Allen, 68). And Black's η and ει are seen on Allen's outer triangle in reverse order, with each author assigning to these symbols different phonetic values. These and other such differences are not surprising given the fact that, as already demonstrated (4.4), there is no consistency in the arbitrary ways Erasmian adherents view the phonology of Classical Attic.

Allen's Classical Attic vowels[53]
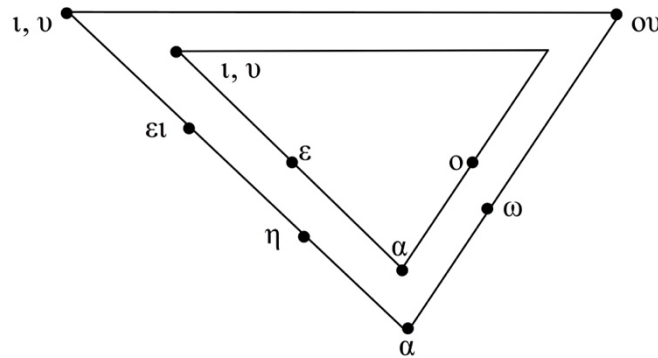
In addition to these 12 vocalic phonemes, Allen holds that Classical Attic had eight (8) phonemic diphthongs: αι, αυ, ευ (= ηυ), οι, υι, ᾳ, ῃ, ῳ. This 20-phoneme Attic Greek vocalic system reflects a 400% increase of the 5-phoneme Mycenaean vocalic system!

This section examines Allen's views of Classical Attic vowels. A fuller discussion would doubtless be long-drawn-out and therefore beyond the scope of this study, as Allen's descriptions typically take meandering paths of multifaceted speculation featuring transliterated words with references to a medley of languages, scant Greek samples, and abrupt personal inferences. Thus Allen's *modus operandi* draws the critic into a maze of interwoven matters that make critiquing difficult. It is hoped nevertheless that the following section will bring about an understanding of the artificial and arbitrary nature of Erasmian or of the so-called "restored" pronunciation of Classical Greek.

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[53]   Adapted from Allen's *Vox Graeca*, p. 62.

η, ει (Allen, 69–75)

While the vast majority of Erasmians pronounce η and ει as the English diphthong [eɪ] in *say* or *eight*, Allen pronounces η and ει monophthongally, with η being long "open mid" [e] as in French *tête* [te:t], and ει long "close mid" [e] as in German *Beet* [be:t]. The difference between these two "long" [e] vowels is measured essentially in terms of the aperture of the mouth [and relative tongue position] during articulation. In addition to the "long" ει and η [e] vowels, Allen sees *epsilon* ε as a "short mid vowel" (Allen, 63). In other words, Allen holds that Classical Attic has three /e/-like phonemes: ει, η, ε.

It is perhaps worth-quoting Allen's account in its entirety to show how he arrives at a conclusion regarding ει and η:

> There is little external evidence to establish positive values for these symbols in classical Attic. That they were different is shown by the fact that they later develop differently, the sound represented by ει soon becoming a close long front vowel [ī], whereas the sound of η remains for some time in the mid region. These developments further indicate that the sound of ει was always closer than that of η. This situation is reflected in the transcription of Greek words in Latin, where η is represented by *ē* until a late date, whereas ει is represented by *ī* (e.g., *sēpia* = σηπία, *pīrata* = πειρατής, and *Aristīdēs* = Ἀριστείδης).
>
> The development of ει to [ī] is revealed by occasional confusion between ει and ι from the late 4 c. B.C., becoming common in the 3 c. But there is no such confusion in earlier times, and the mid value of ει is still indicated by Xenophon's rendering as παράδεισος of an Iranian *par(i)deza-* 'garden'.
>
> Thus the sounds of both η and ει were long mid vowels in classical Attic, but the former was more open than the latter. Since they had to be accommodated on the front axis between open [ā] and close [ī] (see p. 62), they can hardly have been other than open mid […] (= η) and close mid […] (= ει)—i.e., approximately the vowels of French *tête* for η and of German *Beet* for ει. (Allen's emphasis.)

As mentioned earlier, at the time Attic began to use H as the vowel η around the mid-5th c. BC, the Romans were already using the same Chalcidic symbol H, which was familiar to them as the aspirate *h* (p. 67). Latin therefore could not suddenly invent a special new symbol for the Attic vowel H(η); instead, it continued to adhere to the old familiar way of transliterating H(η) as E, which prior to mid-5th c. BC stood both for [e] and [i] sounds. (See p. 12, 40, and A-14.) Thus, that H(η) in σηπία was represented by Latin E does not necessarily mean that σηπία was pronounced [sepia] and not [sipia].

Allen says that Classical Attic η and ει were different in that later they developed differently. The evidence, however, points to the confusion of mainstream Attic ει and η from the very beginning of the adoption of η (p. 18, A-6), with the two spellings (ει, η) being interchangeable down to the present day. This is how ει and η are treated in Neohellenic and, notwithstanding MSS emendations, in Biblical Greek.

The Attic rendering παράδεισος for Persian παρ[ε]ιδεζα *paradise* was no doubt an attempt to follow the Persian original sound, but is no faithful representation of that sound, hence Allen cannot use it to prove anything. Allen's remark that in Xenophon's time there is no confusion between ει and ι ignores the fact that Plato himself, Xenophon's contempo-

rary, bears witness to the confusion of ει, ι, and η (p. 18). And Allen's position that an "occasional confusion between ει and ι [is seen] from the late 4 c. B.C." actually leads one to doubt that his appended phrase "becoming common in the 3 c." is not an attempt to arbitrarily place iotacized ει outside the time frame of the classical period.

Thus, following some brief speculation involving Latin and Iranian, Allen figures that Classical Attic η and ει "can hardly have been other than" long open mid [e] and long close mid [e]. But in order to make Allen's phonetic distinction between French [e] in *tête* and German [e] in *Beet*, especially with a "short" ε [e] vowel thrown into the mix, it would require actual voice recordings and sound analysis using sophisticated technology—after which it would be incumbent upon Allen to show that his three Attic *ē*-sounds are also phonemically distinct.

η, ι (Allen, 74)

Allen holds that Attic inscriptions begin to reflect the confusion of η and ι in post-NT times: "Confusion between η and ι in Attic inscriptions," he says, "begins around 150 A.D." Here Allen, unwilling to accept the stark historical proof of the initial confusion of η and ι in mid-5th c. BC, audaciously pushes the equation into the future by 600 years! The evidence clearly shows that the confusion of η and ι is already seen in the 5th c. BC (2.2.2) and increases dramatically by the 3rd c. BC.

At the same time, Allen's footnote reads: "Startling but quite aberrant is the 5 c. B.C. αθινα αρισ αρτεμισ on a slate of a schoolboy signing himself as διμοσοθενισ" for αθηνα αρησ αρτεμισ – δημοσθενης. There is no doubt that the Athenian schoolboy inscribed his text led by his ear. But if this type of writing on an Athenian schoolboy's slate where ι is used in place of η can be startling to Allen, one can scarcely conceive how staggering multiple such samples ought to be. In this light, one may also wonder if Allen's placing of the initial confusion of η and ι beyond the NT time frame is not an arbitrary attempt to justify the application of the Erasmian "Classical Attic" pronunciation to the Greek New Testament. It is likely for the same reason that Allen places as well the equation ω = ο in post-NT times (Allen, 173).

υ, ι (Allen, 67–68)

Allen's discussion of υ revolves around hand-picked transliterated words from Sanskrit, Latin, and Old Persian, with references to Armenian, Gothic, French, and German and a hint of Boeotian and Laconian. It also includes modern Tsakonian, an isolated extant variant of Doric, and alludes to Quintilian xii.10.27, a passage that entails two Greek letters, one being υ, though he gives no further details of the passage probably because of the questionable transliteration variants of two Greek words in the Latin MSS.[54]

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[54] Quintilian's unclear reference to υ does not necessarily mean that in the 1st c. BC he heard υ as [ü]. A Roman rhetorician from Spain, Quintilian was a contemporary of Peter, whom Jesus addressed as Σίμων ᾿Ιωνᾶ *Simon (son) of Jonas* (John 21:15). Σίμων (Peter) is elsewhere referred to as Συμεών *Symeon* [simeon] (Acts 15:14). It would be absurd to postulate that Quintilian heard Peter's first name Σίμων as [simon] but Συμεών as [sümeon]. As Russell notes, in Quintilian's day υ = ι. Donald Russel, ed., trans., *Quintilian, The Orator's Education*, Vol. I: Bks 1–2 (Loeb Classical Library, 2002), 297, fn. 61.

7.7   Living sounds vs. Erasmian

The essence of the advantages of using the natural and living sounds of Neohellenic for NT Greek rather than Erasmian is captured in the words of Cohen and Sellers:

> One of these [advantages] is that the student is learning the sounds of a living language. A knowledge of the modern pronunciation will make it possible for the student to converse with native speakers, whether in his own country or abroad, . . . [which] makes much more possible an approach (however slight at first) toward the acquisition of language intuition. . . . [T]he constant learning and speaking of a real pronunciation system will undoubtedly facilitate a better intuition for semantic range and grammatical nuance. . . . In the light of the advantages of the modern pronunciation and the easy access to modern Greek materials as well as native speakers of Modern Greek, there seems to be no compelling reason to retain the Erasmian pronunciation system.[55]

But the student can also be assured that in addition to the advantages of "learning the sounds of a living language" and "the acquisition of language intuition," applying the Neohellenic pronunciation takes one in a giant historical step close to New Testament times and to Alexander's day: for if the HGP is preserved in Neohellenic, then the words in a Κοινή text orthophonically pronounced the Neohellenic way would have sounded normal to the first Greek-speaking Christians, to Paul and his contemporary Athenians, to the disciples of Jesus—and yes, to Jesus himself. In fact, the same would have sounded no less intelligible and clear as well to the Septuagint scholars, a number of whom, doubtless, were contemporaries of Alexander and his private tutor, Aristotle (2.22, 3.4, 3.5).

And if, as so lucidly expressed by Cohen and Sellers, there seems to be no compelling reason to retain the Erasmian pronunciation in the study of Biblical Greek, then there should likewise be no compelling reason to retain the same for the study of Classical Greek.

7.8   Closing remarks

Today a worldwide precedent is being set, as an increasing number of scholars and students adopt the Neohellenic pronunciation—at times alongside Erasmian. This unprecedented phenomenon is largely owed to the rapid growth of online offerings of NT Greek by various entities and individuals that use or incorporate the Neohellenic pronunciation. It could very well be that this trend, globally fanned by the unbridled employment of social media, will precipitate an ever-increasing awareness of the advantages of the HGP and eventually cause the Erasmian preponderance to be overturned.

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[55] Gary G. Cohen and C. Norman Sellers, "The Case for Modern Pronunciation of Biblical Languages," *Grace Theological Journal* 5.2 (1984), 200–01. https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/gtj/05–2_197.pdf (accessed Oct. 22, 2017).

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

By way of recapping this study, the following chapter summaries are given, after which appropriate conclusions are drawn.

Chapter 1. This opening chapter gives a historical overview of the development of the Hellenic language into the dimorphic (artistic and vernacular) Attic dialect of Athens. Following Alexander, the Attic vernacular spreads throughout the Hellenized world and becomes the Κοινή "common" speech of Hellenistic and Roman times, and further evolves through Byzantine times into Neohellenic.

Chapter 2. Numerous Hellenistic papyri contain orthographical errors by inadequately schooled individuals who are led by their ear to euphonic spelling practices and to inter-changing graphemes that stand for the same sound. The sounds behind such errors, as well as all disputable Κοινή sounds, are traced back to mid-5th century BC when older Attic writing begins to clash with Athens' newly adopted Ionic alphabet, *the post-Eucleidean grammar,* officially in 403 BC. The ensuing confusion, accentuated by the dimorphic nature of Greek, leads to misspellings that take root and which will be repeated by the less literate throughout subsequent centuries. Yielding phonemically evidentiary values, these errors are examined diachronically, their unbroken record bearing testimony to the preservation of the historical Greek sounds in Neohellenic. Referenced are works by native and nonnative Greek scholars as well as Erasmian scholars in order to show their respective treatment of the evidence of these historical sounds, herein collectively referred to as the Historical Greek Pronunciation (HGP).

Chapter 3. The focal point in this chapter is the emergence of the HGP. Formed by or initiated within classical times, the historical sounds make their entrance into the Hellenistic era, loyal post-Eucleidean orthography by their side. Barely four decades past Aristotle's death, 72 Jewish emissaries steeped in a Κοινή molded by the HGP and the orthography of Aristotle's day commence the translation of Hebrew Scriptures. Paul's speech to the Athenians some three centuries later speaks of Κοινή's tenacious HGP, the mainstream Greek sound system that prevails through Hellenistic and Byzantine times over all other potential pronunciations of Greek.

Chapter 4. An investigation of the politically orchestrated origins and spread of Erasmian in the 1500s, followed by an examination of the basis of its application by various scholars today, shows that as a pronunciation system Erasmian is artificial and inconsistent, whereas the Greek pronunciation is natural, consistent, and euphonic.

Chapter 5. Refuted are two misconceptions: reading and pronouncing the ι-sound Greek letters and digraphs the Neohellenic way presents difficulties for English-speaking students; and Κοινή and Neohellenic words are dissimilar. A comparison of Greek and English phonemes and conventional alphabets demonstrates that the English way of spelling, reading, and pronouncing is much more complex for learners of English than the Greek way is for

English-speaking students, thereby rendering the concern of difficulty in language learning pointless. The chapter moreover shows that a high percentage of the Κοινή vocabulary in the New Testament is used or understood well by speakers of Neohellenic.

Chapter 6. This chapter is a critique of the far-fetched extent to which Erasmian scholars go in applying English phonological concepts to Attic Greek and Κοινή alike. As a case in point, the chapter analyzes the description of the pronunciation of Classical Greek by two Erasmian scholars, one being Sidney Allen, author of *Vox Graeca*, and shows that the Erasmian pronunciation of Classical Greek, which Erasmians indiscriminately apply to Hellenistic Κοινή as well, is untenable.

Chapter 7. This chapter describes Erasmian as the barrier that for five centuries now has inhibited viewing the Greek language holistically and diachronically, therewith preventing the light of the later Greek from illuminating exegetically the Greek NT text. This barrier is sustained by leading Erasmian advocates and other acolytes operating in accountability-free scholastic environments with respect to the pronunciation of Greek. The chapter shows that Neohellenic can shed light on NT usage, exegesis, and textual transmission; and that the application of the HGP can serve as the remedial force that may eventually cancel out the Erasmian effects on Greek scholarship.

Chapter 8. Tips on key differences between Greek and English phonologies help point out the features most crucial in pronouncing Greek. The chapter also summarily describes the features of the Greek phonemic sounds.

Appendixes. Annotated Attic decrees from the fifth and fourth centuries BC lend visual support to the basic premise in this book regarding Greek sounds: that the repeated misspellings seen in Hellenistic, Byzantine, and modern-day writings are traced to Attic Greek; and that such errors, judged diachronically by the same alphabet and orthography, are the strongest proof of the historical Greek sounds and their preservation in Neohellenic.

CONCLUSIONS

AS POINTED OUT earlier in this study, it is from around the mid-5th c. BC that we can more confidently rely on the *written* evidence to track the sounds of Attic Greek (p. 12). The evidence, discussed in Chapter 2, formed the basis for the Historical Greek Pronunciation (2.23), which was further expounded in Chapter 3. In light of these discussions, and with the definition of orthophonic pronunciation in mind (1.13), the following key conclusions may be drawn, which also address the focal questions posed in the introductory section (p. v):

1) The Historical Greek Pronunciation was formed by, with certain of its elements initiated within, the Classical Attic period prior to entering the Κοινή period.

   Wherefore, no pronunciation system comes closer to the orthophonic pronunciation of Classical Attic than that of Κοινή.

2) Neohellenic, the latest phase of Attic Greek, preserves the historical sounds of Κοινή.

   Wherefore, no pronunciation system comes closer to the orthophonic pronunciation of the Κοινή of New Testament times and the Christian era than that of Neohellenic.

3) The Historical Greek Pronunciation advances a holistic view of the Hellenic language and literature and a full diachronic approach to New Testament usage, exegesis, and textual transmission. Erasmian does not.

   Wherefore, Erasmian is disadvantageous to the study of the Greek language and literature.

CLOSING REMARKS

All Languages Change. Why not Greek ?

"All languages change, so Greek has changed also." Such wholesale comparisons of Greek to other languages are eloquently expressed by a scholar at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) who, having watched one of my videos on the development of the pronunciation of Greek, wrote, "Very nice, indeed! Latin and English haven't changed over the centuries, and so Greek hasn't either. Right?"

Granted, all languages change. Like any living organism, languages develop, grow, change, and even die. As they evolve, they change not only phonologically—as remarks such as the above primarily imply—but also morphologically, lexically, syntactically, semantically, graphically, and orthographically. Not all languages change at the same pace, however, nor do they all change within allotted amounts of time and in all these areas or to the same degree. Some languages may change more radically in less time than other languages. Behind such changes are geopolitical, cultural, sociolinguistic, technological, ideological, and other forces. Amassed, these forces can bring about tectonic linguistic shifts and changes in a relatively short time. Take, for instance, the historical events that led to the formation of all Romance and Germanic languages (p. 10), or to the Great English Vowel-shift in 16th century England (p. 59).

Greek is not exempt. It, too, has changed since primordial times. By the classical period, changes such as discussed early in this work (the fricativization of postpositive υ of αυ, ευ, ηυ or the iotacization of diphthongs) had already taken place or been initiated. But since classical times Greek has changed minimally compared to the way Latin or the Germanic languages have changed in one-third that number of years. For one thing, Neohellenic, the latest phase of the Attic dialect, still uses the same 24-letter alphabet *and* spelling, a circumstance that renders the centuries-old unbroken record of interchangeable letters (misspellings) a prized diachronic evidence of its historical sounds. Additionally, in its continuous evolution through Κοινή, Byzantine, and Medieval times, today the Hellenic tongue still preserves all its basic grammatical categories intact. As Brown remarks, "[I]n the preservation of the inflectional endings of noun, pronoun, adjective, and verb, in its approximation to the Ancient Greek order of words in phrases, clauses, and sentences,… Modern Greek is closer to Ancient Greek than is any other Modern Language to an ancient predecessor of even a few centuries."[56] These factors, coupled with a continuous literary tradition that makes antiquity "present" to any literate Greek (p. 7), have variously shielded Greek from drastic changes.

With respect to the pronunciation of Attic Greek in particular, we cannot know exactly the speech patterns or intonational peculiarities of an Athenian in classical Athens. However, the historical evidence at hand enables us to trace the mainstream historical phonemic sounds from Neohellenic to the Κοινή of Hellenistic times and from there to Alexander and Aristotle's day, the latter being barely two dozen years before the conventional beginning of the Hellenistic period (p. 56).

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[56] Brown, "Modern Greek as an Aid to the Teacher of Ancient Greek," 84.

Thus, just because Latin and the Germanic languages changed so drastically since Dante and Chaucer, it does not necessarily follow that Greek underwent a similar or commensurate amount of change since Archon Eucleides. One cannot project the type and rate of changes of other Indo-European languages onto Greek just because Greek is an Indo-European language. Across-the-board comparisons of the development of Greek to that of other languages, even by the well educated, are uninformed and follow an *argumentum ad populum* logic that lacks scholarly merit.

THE HGP TODAY

T ODAY THE HISTORICAL GREEK PRONUNCIATION (HGP) is moving forward in strides a an increasing number of scholars and students around the world advance its application even while favoring greater familiarity with Neohellenic. It is hoped that the HGP will eventually be viewed by the majority as a step in the right direction, a departure from the confines of the Erasmian dichotomy of Greek and the grip of its anachronistic tradition, and into a linguistically sound approach to Hellenic studies. This could only invigorate interest in the Greek language and literature, lead to deeper New Testament insights, cultivate close articulation and academic commerce with the Greek-speaking world, and engender greater appreciation for the millennia-old authentic sounds of the Hellenic tongue.

It is also hoped that some parts in this book will seize the interest of students and scholars who might take the HGP to new heights of linguistic competence, thereby vindicating the tongue whose 400 years of silence during captivity, and for nearly half that number of years since, created a vacuum in countless centers of Hellenic learning around the world only to be filled with discordant sounds in place of her genuine voice.

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SUBJECT INDEX
Pages 1-117

APPENDIXES

A1 - A11

DECREES OF CLASSICAL ATHENS
AND HISTORICAL SOUNDS

A-12 to A-17

CHANGES IN ATTIC WRITING
AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

A-18

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE CHANGES
IN THE ATTIC ALPHABET

A-19

GREEK DIMORPHIA

A – 20

TIMETABLE OF THE GREEK LANGUAGE

IG I³ 34 (EM 13044, p. 61) Decree of Kleinias (448/7 BC)

1	Θ Ε Ο Ι	← OI = OI = οι proper diphthong
	ΕΔΟΧΣΕΝΤ**ΕΙ**ΒΟΛ	← EI = HI = ῃ spurious diphthong
	ΜΟΙΟΙΝΕΙΣΕΠΡΥ	↑
	ΔΙΑΣΕΛΡΑΜΜΑΤΕ	same spelling associated with same sound
		↓
5	ΕΠΕΣΤΑΤΕΚΛ**ΕΙ**Ν	← EI = EI = ει proper diphthong
	ΟΛΕΝΚΑΙΤΟΣΑΡΧ	
	ΙΠΟΛΕΣΙΚΑΙΤΟΣ	
	ΠΙΜΕΛΕΣΘΑΙΗΟΠ	
	ΛΕΤΑΙΗΟΦΟΡΟΣΚ	
10	**Ε**ΚΑΣΤΟΝΚΑΙΑΠΑ	H(h) is missing (line 10):
	ΙΕΧΣΥΜΒΟ**L**ΑΔΕΠ	ΕΚΑΣΤΟΝ for ΗΕΚΑΣΤΟΝ
	ΡΟΣΤΑΣΠΟΛΕΣΗΟ	⊐ = Ζ
	ΕΙΑΔΙΚΕΝΤΟΙΣΑ	L = Λ
	ΟΡΟΝ**Λ**ΡΑΦΣΑΣΑΔ	Λ = Γ
15	ΛΡΑΜΜΑΤΕΙΟΝΤΟ	
	ΝΑΜΕΝΕ**ΤΟΙ**ΣΥΜΒ	OI = ΩI = τῷ spurious diphthong
	ΠΑΛΟΝΤΑΣΑΠΟΔΟ	
	ΝΑΛΝΟΝΑΙΗΟΤΑΜ	
	ΥΤΑΝΕΣΜΕΤΑΔΙΟ	
20	ΣΗΕLLΕΝΟΤΑΜΙΑ	
	ΕΟΝΤΑΣΑΠΟΔΟΣΑ	
	ΣΑΣΧΟΡΙΣΗΟΣΑΙ	
	ΝΟΣΑΝΔΡΑΣΤΕΤΤ	
	ΙΛΡΑΦΣΟΜΕΝΟΣ	
25	ΤΕΣΟΝΤΑΣ**ΤΟΜΜ**Ε	TON + M = TOMM*
	ΟΜΕΝΔΥΟΠΛΕΝΕ	(assimilation)
	ΡΙΕΡΟΣΤΑΧΕΙΑΣ	
	ΙΕΠΙΘΡΑΙΚΕΣΕ	
	ΒΟΛΕΝΚΑΙ**ΕΣ**ΤΟ	← E = EI = ε_ις_
30	ΛΕΥΕΣΘΑΙΠΕΡΙΤ	↑
	ΕΙΕΑΝΔΕΤΙΣΑΘ	different spelling, same sound
	ΝΦΟΡΟΝΗΟΝ**ΔΕΙ**	↓
	ΟΝΤΟΙΣΑΠΑΛΟΣ	← EI = EI = δε_ι_
	ΡΑΦΕΣΘΑΙΠΡΟΣ	
35	ΙΟΝΚΑΙΤΟΝΧΣ	
	ΕΣΤΕ**ΜΒ**ΟΛΕΝ	N + B = MB* [ην] την βουλην
	ΥΝΕΣΘΟΔΟΡ	(assimilation)
	ΚΑΤΑΛΝΟΙΗ	
	ΦΕΡΕΤΟΕΣΤ	
40	Ν**Λ**Ν**Ο**ΜΑΣΠΟ	O = Ω > γνωμας
	Ο**ΜΠ**ΑΘΕΝΕΑ	N + Π = ΜΠ* [mb]
	ΝΤΕΣΒΟΟΣΕ	(assimilation) (Cf. A-7; p. 32, fn.)
	ΙΚΑΤΑΥΤΟ	

In pre-Eucleidean writing, pronunciation and grammatical distinctions between homographs are determined by the context.

Θ Ε Ο Ι
εδοχσεν τει βολ
μοι Οινεις επρυ
διας εγραμματε
επεστατε Κλειν
ολεν και τος αρχ
ι πολεσι και τος
πιμελεσθαι hοπ
γεται hο φορος κ
εκαστον και απα
ξε χσυμβολα δε π
ρος τας πολες hο
ει αδικεν τοις α
ορον γραφσασα δ
γραμματειον το
ναμενε τοι συμβ
παγοντας αποδο
ναγνοναι hοταμ
υτανες μετα Διο
ς hελλενοταμια
εον τας αποδοσα
σας χορις hοσαι
νος ανδρας τεττ
ι γραφσομενος
τεσοντας τομ με
ο μεν δυο πλεν ε
ριερος ταχειας
ι επι Θραικες ε
βολεν και ες το
λευεσθαι περι τ
ει εαν δε τις Αθ
ν φορον hον δει
ον τοις απαγοσ
ραφεσθαι προς
ιον και τον χο
ες τεμ βολεν
υνεσθο δορ
καταγνοι h
φερετο ες τ
ν γνομας πο
ομ παθεν ε α
ν τες βοος ε
ι κατ᾽ αυτο

*See *Phonopathy*, A-15.

Decrees of Classical Athens and their Historical Sounds

SEG 25:149 – EM 12749 (303/2 BC)

```
        Τ Ο Ι Σ Ε Θ Ε Λ Ο Ν Τ Α Ι Σ Ε Π
   Μ Ε Γ Α Σ Α Φ Ι Κ Ο Μ Ε Ν Ο Σ Ε Ι Σ Τ Η Ν
  Μ Ε Ω Σ Τ Ο Υ Σ ΥΠΕΝΑΝΤΙΟΥΣ Τ Η Ι Δ
  Χ Ω Ρ Α Ν Τ Η Ν Α Θ Η Ν Α Ι Ω Ν Κ Α Ι Τ Ω Ν Α Λ
  Ρ Α Γ Ε Γ Ο Ν Ε Ν Β Ο Η Θ Η Σ Ω Ν Μ Ε Τ Α Δ Υ Ν
  Γ Ε Ν Ο Μ Ε Ν Ο Σ Π Ο Λ Λ Α Σ Μ Ε Ν Η Δ Η Π Ο Λ
  Β Α Σ Ι Λ Ε Ι Α Ι Κ Ι Ν Δ Υ Ν Ο Ν Κ Α Ι Π Ο Ν
  Τ Ο Υ Τ Ι Μ Ω Ν Κ Α Ι Π Ε Ρ Ι Π Λ Ε Ι Σ Τ Ο Υ
  Κ Α Ι Δ Ε Η Θ Ε Ν Τ Ω Ν ΗΓΕΙΣΘΑΙ Τ Η
  Κ Α Τ Α Π Ε Λ Ο Π Ο Ν Ν Η Σ Ο Ν Π Ρ Α Ξ Ε Ω Ν Π Ο
  Κ Τ Ο Ι Σ Ε Ξ Ε Β Α Λ Ε Ν Ε Κ Τ Η Σ Χ Ω Ρ Α Σ Τ Ο
    Θ Α Ι Τ Ο Ι Σ Ε Θ Ε Λ Ο Ν Τ Α Ι Σ Ε Π Ι Λ Ε Κ Τ Ο
    Η Μ Η Τ Ρ Ι Ο Ν Α Ν Τ Ι Γ Ο Ν Ο Υ Β Α Σ Ι Λ Ε Α Β
    Φ Ι Π Π Ο Υ Ε Ν Α Γ Ο Ρ Α Ι Π Α Ρ Α Τ Η Ν Δ Η Μ Ο
    Ο Υ Σ Α Λ Λ Ο Υ Σ ΕΛΛΗΝΑΣ ΙΔΡΥΣΑΣΘΑΙ
    Θ Ι Σ Τ Α Μ Ε Ν Ο Υ Σ Ε Ι Σ Τ Α Σ Θ Υ Σ Ι Α Σ Τ Α Σ
  Ρ Ι Ο Υ Κ Α Ι Δ Η Μ Η Τ Ρ Ι Ω Ι Σ Ω Τ Η Ρ Ι Θ Υ Ε Ι [Ν]
  Ν Ω Σ Σ Ε Μ Ν Ο Τ Α Τ Α Κ Α Ι Κ Α Λ Λ Ι Σ Τ Α Κ Α
  Τ Ω Ν Ε Π Ι Λ Ε Κ Τ Ω Ν Τ Ω Ι Β Α Σ Ι Λ Ε Ι Δ Ε
  Ο Ν Τ Ε Τ Ι Μ Η Κ Α Σ Ι Ν Τ Ο Υ Σ Ε Υ Ε Ρ Γ Ε Τ
  Μ Α Ι Σ Τ Ι Μ Ω Σ Ι Ν . . . . .
```

This Athenian decree is a sample of the definitive post-Eucleidean writing system at the threshold of the Κοινή period. Grammatical forms are distinct, and orthographical errors and phonopathy effects are absent. Notice the absence of aspiration in the four underlined words.

The decree is at a formal literary Attic level, yet from a Neohellenic standpoint the spelling is correct and the wording is well understood.

Note: From around the 12th c. AD, adscript Ι(ι) as in ηι, ωι, αι became subscript as in ῃ, ῳ, ᾳ.

```
      τοις εθελονταις επ
   μεγας αφικομενος εις την
   μεως τους υπεναντιους τηι δ
   χωραν την Αθηναιων και των αλ
   ραγεγονεν βοηθησων μετα δυν
   γενομενος πολλας μεν ηδη πολ
   βασιλειαι κινδυνον και πον
   του τιμων και περι πλειστου
   και δεηθεντων ηγεισθαι τη
   κατα Πελοποννησον πραξεων πο
   κτοις εξεβαλεν εκ της χωρας το
    θαι τοις εθελονταις επιλεκτο
    ημητριον Αντιγονου βασιλεα β
    φ ιππου εν αγοραι παρα την Δημο
    ους αλλους Ελληνας ιδρυσασθαι
   θισταμενους εις τας θυσιας τας
   ριου και Δημητριωι Σωτηρι θυει[ν]
   ν ως σεμνοτατα και καλλιστα κα
   των επιλεκτων τωι βασιλει δε
   ων τετιμηκασιν τους ευεργετ
   μαις τιμωσιν.....
```

CHANGES IN THE ATTIC ALPHABET AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

The foregoing annotated Attic decrees lead to a number of observations regarding certain letters and the historical sounds they represent.

CONSONANTS

Upon the ratification of the Ionic alphabet in 403 BC, the form of a number of Attic consonants becomes markedly different. The table below shows perhaps the most notable of those changes.[57]

5th c. BC		4th c. BC	5th c. BC	4th c. BC
Λ	became	Γ	ΧϚΥΛΛΡΑΦϚΕΙ	ΣΥΓΓΡΑΨΗΙ [χ]συγγράψῃ
Ͱ, L	became	Λ	ALLA	ΑΛΛΑ ἀλλά
I	became	Ζ	ΝΟΜΙƧΟΜΕΝΑ	ΝΟΜΙΖΟΜΕΝΑ νομιζόμενα
ΧϚ, ΚϚ	became	Ŧ, Ξ	ΕΔΟΧϚΕΝ	ΕΔΟΞΕΝ ἔδοξεν
ΦϚ, ΠϚ	became	Ψ	ΦϚΕΦΟϚ	ΨΗΦΟΣ ψῆφος
Ϛ	became	Σ		

(For a chronological development of Attic letter forms, see A-18.)

VOWELS

A more radical alphabetic change was effectuated by the adoption of Η and Ω. The Athenians began using these two symbols from about the mid-5th c. BC first as compensatory marks in verse, and later in the century as regular letters in composition. This means that Η and Ω may also be seen in 5th c. pre-Eucleidean inscriptions. The left column in the table below shows the letters in the 5th c. BC that stood for the same sounds that the letters in the second column represented in post-Eucleidean 4th c. BC.

5th c. BC		4th c. BC		5th c. BC Example	Possible grammatical form and meaning
E	stood for	E, EI, H, HI	as in	ΒΟΛΕ	βολή, βούλει, βουλή
				ΦΕΡΕ	φέρε, φέρει, φέρῃ
EI	stood for	EI, HI	as in	ΒΟΛΕΙ	βούλει, βουλῇ,
O	stood for	O, Ω, OY	as in	ΔΟΛΟΣ	δόλος, δόλους, δοῦλος, δούλους
				ΔΟΛΟΙ	δόλοι, δόλῳ, δούλῳ, δοῦλοι
OI	stood for	OI, ΩΙ	as in	ΑΝΘΡΟΠΟΙ	ἄνθρωποι, ἀνθρώπῳ

---

[57] A detailed discussion of older Attic letter shapes and forms would be beyond the scope of this study. The purpose here is to simply show that the transition from the older Attic script to the new was impacted by more than just the introduction of Η and Ω.

Greek Dimorphia

The literary masterpieces of the classical Greek period marked the crowning age of a glorious history, an age that raised literary excellence of Greek to the limit. As a result, a greater gap was created between the artistic and literary form of the language (the form used in works by professionals and the well educated) and the Demotic or vernacular (the form used by ordinary citizens). The illustration below shows the dimorphic nature of Greek and the relation between the levels of the language, a diachronic characteristic of Greek from classical times to the present. It also shows that Κοινή developed from Demotic Attic, though Κοινή received influences form all levels of Classical Attic.

    Note: The size of boxes and gray areas is arbitrary. Gray areas indicate the overlapping of literary levels, and broken arrows the low-to-high or informal-to-formal vernacular levels.

	Classical Times		**NT Times**		**Neohellenic Times**
LITERARY	*Artistic Attic*[1]	*Atticistic*[4] →	*Imitative of Artistic Attic*	*Kathare- vousa*[8] →	*Rooted in Artistic Attic*
CLASSICAL ATTIC	*Literary*[2] *Demotic*		*Literary*[6] *Κοινή*		*Literary Dimotiki*
DEMOTIC	*Colloquial*[3] *Demotic*	*Κοινή*[5] →	*Colloquial*[7] *Κοινή*	*Dimotiki*[9] →	*Colloquial Dimotiki*

---
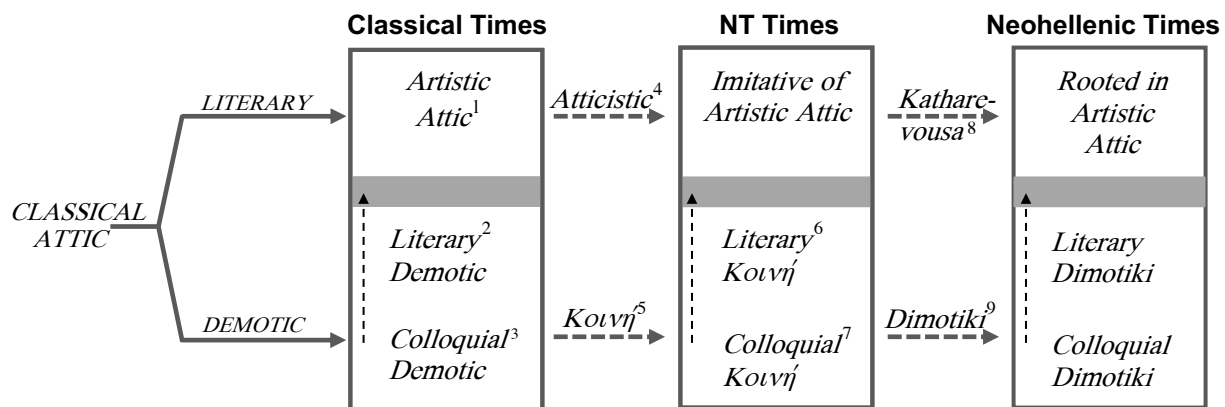
[1] *Artistic Attic.* Literary Attic was the language of a highly artistic expression used by classical authors (philosophers, orators, tragedians, writers, versifiers, comedians) to create masterpieces of Attic literature. Unlike the well-educated, ordinary Athenians could not converse in artistic Attic, yet they could understand it.

[2] *Literary Demotic Attic.* A medium between the ordinary vernacular and the highly artistic literary Attic, literary Demotic Attic was used by educated Athenians who could write and speak at this formal level. The language of the court, decrees, government records, professional documents, academia, etc. was at this level.

[3] *Colloquial Demotic Attic.* The popular expression of ordinary Athenians was in informal, colloquial Attic. Many inscriptions were written at this level also.

[4] *Atticistic.* The imitation of the artistic Attic expression, begun by the Atticists in the 1st c. BC, continued through Byzantine and modern times.

[5] *Κοινή.* Κοινή is thought to have moved toward simplification respecting lexical, morphological, and syntactical forms, but one must use caution when comparing features of the Κοινή of the NT with those of artistic Attic, all the more so because no substantial literary works in Hellenistic Κοινή by non-Helleninized mainline Greek authors are available from NT times.

[6] *Literary Κοινή.* A number of NT books are at this level: Hebrews, parts of Acts, most of Paul's writings, and much of Peter, James, and Jude, albeit there is no clear level demarcation from the other NT writings.

[7] *Colloquial Κοινή.* Most of Mark, Revelation, and parts of the other gospels and NT books range between the colloquial and an intermediate literary level, albeit there is no clear level demarcation from the other NT writings. The vast majority of Hellenistic papyri found in Egypt are within this range.

[8] *Katharevousa* "Purifying" is a conservative form of Neohellenic that emerged in the late 18th century as a compromise between Ancient Greek and Dimotiki.

[9] *Dimotiki.* Rooted in Demotic Attic, Dimotiki is a component of Neohellenic dimorphia. In academic, polit-ical, religious, and other professional circles, Dimotiki and Katharevousa are notably mixed.

Timetable of the Greek Language

First Greek Migrations:

Achaeans

Later migrations:
Ionians
Aeolians
Dorians

Phoenician Alphabet

Homer

Athens ratifies 24-letter Alphabet
(still the same today)

2000 BC

Linear B
1500

Troy
1200

"dark age" of Greece

1000

800

500

403

300 | 285 LXX *Septuagint*

CHRIST | **NT**

Mycenaean Greek

no uniform writing among dialects …

Archaic or Epic

Classical Greek (mainly Attic)

"Golden Age"

Hellenic

Ancient Greek

"Koine"

Hellenistic

300

600

1453
1500

1800s
AD 2000

Fall of Constantinople

Turkish Occupation of Greece

Byzantine Greek

Neohellenic

Modern Greek

The translation of the LXX began around 285 BC, or within 40 years of Aristotle's death. Some of the translators must have been educated in Greek while Aristotle was still living, or were taught Greek by Aristotle's contemporaries. Either way, their orthography was post-Euclidean and their Greek sounds those of Alexander and Aristotle's Greek.

Alexander's death 323
Aristotle's death 322

40 years

285

Commencement of Septuagint

300

200

100

CHRIST 0

Sophocles.............
Socrates.............
Plato.............
400 Aristotle.............
Alexander

Classical Greek (Attic Greek)

literary
vernacular

Hellenistic Greek "Koine"
(evolved from the Attic vernacular)

500 BC

Because of Alexander, an amalgamation of Greek dialects (Attic, Aeolic, Doric, Ionic) was developed under the predominance of Attic, thus giving rise to a *Koine* [Kiní] "common" Greek tongue. The highly artistic Classical Greek and its vernacular shared the same phonemic stock.

Well-preserved Hellenistic-period Greek papyri covering the period from Alexander to AD 600s were discovered in Egypt in the 1800s. These papyri would have been understood by the NT writers. Since classical times and throughout this 9-century period, repeated patterns of identical spelling errors by the less literate (who interchanged various letters for the same sound) show the unbroken transmission of the historical Greek sounds.