A PANORAMA OF
INDO-EUROPEAN
LANGUAGES

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LONDON
This branch of the Indo-European family, philosophically so important by reason of its great antiquity and rich documentation, is to all intents and purposes represented by a single language, Greek. Moreover, the language has remained essentially the language of one country, for its colonies, numerous and influential though they once were, have now vanished or are on the point of doing so.

Although the speech of Greece today is the direct descendant of the tongue used in antiquity, far-reaching evolutionary changes have taken place and Ancient Greek is no longer comprehensible to the speaker of Modern Greek. It is certain that if Plato were to walk the streets of Athens today, he would fail to recognise as Greek the language he heard spoken around him. On the other hand, he would often be able to make something of the printed word, since the script is the same and the spelling conservative in spite of root-and-branch changes in the pronunciation. Moreover, the literary language has always exerted a significant influence on the development of the spoken word and this has preserved a sense of continuity.

Ancient Greek:
At what date the Greeks entered the country to which they gave their name is not known, but there is ample evidence that the new arrivals found a civilization materially superior to their own, see 'Pelasgian' below. Epigraphical records, attested from the seventh century B.C. onwards, show that each city-state employed its own dialect officially. Above such local differences, four main dialect types may be distinguished: Attic, Aesch, Doric and Ionic, distributed in a complex manner over the mainland of Greece, the islands and the coast of Asia Minor as the result of internal migrations. Attic, the speech of Athens and its capital Athens, forms part of Ionic. The classical works
of Greek literature are written in one or other of these dialects, Attic taking the lead from the 6th century onwards. An exception, how-
ever, is the poetry ascribed to Homer. The Homeric or Epic dialect, as it is called, is not based on any one organic dialect, but is an arti-
cficial style evolved as the medium for the national epic. The chief
constituents are, however, Ionic and Aeolic. The work stands at the
beginning of Greek tradition and is dated to about 800 B.C.
With the rise of the Athenian Empire under Pericles at the middle
of the 5th century, Attic spread rapidly as the state form of Greek,
non-Attic Greek being reduced to the status of patois. Following the
conquests of Alexander the Great (died 323), contemporary Attic, by
then known as the koine (koinè ‘common’ dialect), became the
official medium of a far-flung administration. It was something of an
international medium, too, and not surprisingly the early Christians,
themselves mostly Aramaic speakers, compiled their New Testa-
ment in Hellenistic Greek, as the koine may also be termed.
The Hellenistic period is regarded as coming to an end in A.D. 330, the
date at which Constantinople became the capital of the Empire.
During this period, the koine virtually obliterated the non-Attic
dialects as spoken media also, so that Medieval and Modern Greek
represent the further evolution of the koine. Only the Taikosian
dialect (below) contains a significant proportion of non-Attic forms.

Macedonian
Even in antiquity there appears to have been some doubt as to the
ancestors of the Macedonians. Herodotus reports that Alexander I
of Macedon was hurled from taking part in the Olympic Games as
he was a non-Hellen, but the same author describes the Macedonians
as being akin to the Dorians. A number of Macedonian glosses and
proper names have survived in ancient sources, but the material is
too scanty to permit a positive identification of affinities. Some of
the glosses have no correspondences in Greek, while others are close
to it. It is generally held that the evidence suggests rather an aberrant
form of Greek than an independent language. Since Macedonian
was in contact with Illyrian and Thracian, borrowings from these
languages could account for the exotic traits. Macedon was being used
at the Macedonian court by the fifth century and it is to be assumed
that the Macedonian dialect (or language) succeeded to Attic Greek,
like Ionic and the rest, during the Hellenistic Age.

Medieval and Modern Greek
Medieval or Byzantine Greek covers the period (from the founding of
Constantinople (until then Byzantium) as the capital of the Empire
down to the sacking of the city by the Latins in 1204. The language since then is termed Modern Greek.

The sources for Medieval Greek are most meagre, since the written language of the age was essentially Attic, see ‘Atticism’ below. But the living, evolving language is attested in a few scraps of popular song and in some papyrus letters, the letter from Egypt. Documentation becomes fuller from the thirteenth century onwards, though continuing Atticism tradition meant that texts in the current language are still a great minority. Significant early prose texts are Jewish translations of Hebrew originals, e.g. the ‘Yevanic’ below. Modern Greek did not begin to come into its own as a written medium until towards the end of the last century. Creative writers led the movement for a national language based on the usage of the living tongue; their goal was almost in sight.

Takitian

Takitian is the outlandish dialect of perhaps as many as 16,000 speakers in an area difficult of access along the forbidding coast of the Peloponnesus between the Patras Range and the Gulf of Argos. It is generally agreed that this vernacular preserves a considerable number of features steamming directly from the local Laconian (Spartan) dialect of antiquity. Other; modern dialects are derived essentially from the koine (see below).

Yevanic

The Jews have a place of note in the history of Modern Greek. They were unaffected by Atticism (see below) and employed the current colloquial which they transcribed in Hebrew letters. There is a small literature in this Hebrew-Jewish Greek, which may be termed Yevanic (Hebrew Tannaitic ‘Greeks’, i.e. ‘Yonians’); it dates from the early part of the modern period, the most extensive document being a translation of a portion of the Pentateuch. In its context, this exceptional cultivation of the vernacular has its analogue in the choice of Hellenistic Greek by the translators of the Septuagint—and in the New Testament.

Atticism

In the second century B.C. certain writers began to imitate the Attic style of Classical Period, despising the then living koine as too debased for literary composition. This development is called Atticism; it became usual and has continued in principle ever since. Attic Greek has played a role in Eastern Europe comparable to that of Latin in the West. But whereas Latin was largely replaced by the vernaculars about the beginning of modern times, Atticism persisted down to the early years of the last century as the habitual literary
form. Liberation in 1829 brought no decisive break with the past, though by now a certain amount of Modern Greek was being regularly written. The official medium of the new Greek state was the katharévousa, the 'puri.st' style based on ancient models. True, this style, even at its most austere, now made concessions to the living language, especially in idiom and syntax. Nevertheless, from about 1880 more and more writers took to démotiké, the 'popular' language in its contemporary form. Greece had thus two literary languages. Each had its own protagonists who struggled acrimoniously, even violently, as in the Gospel riots of 1901 when demonstrating students demolished the printing works where a translation of the New Testament into Démotiké Greek had just come off the press. Animi.sies in this, the language question, are as extreme now as formerly, but meanwhile the two styles have drawn closer together. The Démotiké has taken the lead and will, most likely in the not too distant future, become the sole national standard. But it has absorbed a number of purist elements, especially from the lexicon of its rival.

The Greek-speaking area, past and present

As we have said (p. 5) the beginnings of the hellenisation of Greece cannot be dated, though one may confidently assume that Greek had become dominant throughout the area by 1000 B.C. The process was not confined to the mainland and adjacent islands. By 600 B.C., at the latest, Greek-speaking urban centres were flourishing along the Aegean littoral of Asia Minor. By way of Rhodes, colonists reached Cyprus. The area of Greek speech in antiquity was thus bounded to the north by Illyrian, Macedonian (see above) and Thracian, across the Hellespont again by Thracian, and various local tongues, such as Lydian, Carian, Ilyrian. Within the central area, enclaves of Pelasgian will existed.

About the middle of the eighth century, Greek was carried by colonies to southern Italy and Sicily. In 639 B.C., a colony was established at Cumae—here Greek was presumably in contact with Berber—and about 600 B.C. the city of Massalia, the modern Marseille, was founded in Liguria. From the seventh century onwards, important colonies came into being along the Illyrian coast and about the same time other settlements were arising at points on the shores of the Euxine (Black Sea).

In the Hellenistic Age, expansion was chiefly confined to the East where, in Asia Minor especially, Greek extended its range at the expense of Thracian and Anatolian languages. A notable event was the founding of Alexandria as a Greek-speaking centre in 331 B.C. We have already spoken of the role of the home as an international medium. With the rise of Rome, however, the Greek colonies in the
West lay open to Romanisation. Marseilles and Naples (Gk. Νέα Πόλη 'New Town') appear to have remained predominantly Greek until the third and fourth centuries A.D. respectively. In the extreme south the language survived even better. In Sicily, Greek appears to have still been spoken along the east coast in later medieval times, while in Calabria and Apulia pockets of Greek speech are found to this day, see 'Back Greek' below.

In the post-Hellenistic period, Greek continued to extend its range in the East, a development encouraged when Byzantium (renamed Constantinople) became the capital of the Empire in A.D. 330, even though Latin remained in official use for another two hundred years. Thracian was eliminated and Greek made great headway in Asia Minor, obliterating many local languages and only coming to a halt in face of Armenian and Iranian. Greek continued to be used in Alexandria and other Egyptian centres of Hellenism, though Coptic remained the tongue of the mass of the population of the country as a whole. Then, in 639, the Arab invasion dramatically reversed all previous linguistic trends: Greek, and eventually Coptic, too, had to give way to the speech of the conqueror. The Greek colony of Cyrene was likewise overrun by the Arabs two years later with analogous consequences.

A little later, Greek suffered another set-back, this time in its very heartland. Slavonic tribes broke into Mainland Greece in the eighth century and established themselves in strength in many parts of the country, not least in the Peloponnese. For a time, it may have looked as though the newcomers were to become the dominant linguistic force, but as it turned out, the Greeks in due course assimilated the Slavs.

But while Greek was thus reassimilating itself in Greece proper, it was suddenly overwhelmed in Asia Minor. Following military victory north-west of Lake Van in 1071, Turks began to flood in from the East, and by the thirteenth century had crossed the Bosphorus so that Turkish now began to replace Greek in Eastern Thrace, too. Constantinople itself fell in 1453. All the same, some enclaves of Greek speech remained in the now predominantly Turkish territory. Greek continued in use in Cappadocia and on the Pontus down to the present century. It similarly survived in areas along the Aegean coast. But the explosion of a million and a quarter Greeks in 1922 and 1923 left only a mere 100,000 survivors, by now largely assimilated.

In the eighteenth century and later, the Greeks on the Pontus were strong enough to send colonists across the Black Sea to Russia, and in the 1930s about 100,000 villagers in the Rostov district were using Pontic Greek. Not far away another, slightly smaller colony, of uncertain origin, existed in the Mariupol (now Zhdanov) region. At
the time referred to, a fair amount of publishing in Greek, including school books, was taking place, some of it in these two local forms of the language, both very different from the language of Greece itself, in this respect comparable to Italiot (below).

During the period of Ottoman rule from 1461 to 1829, many Turkish settlements were made in Greece, and an even greater number of Albanians were brought in. Most of the Turks were transferred to Turkey in 1920 and 1923, while the Albanians have by now generally been assimilated. The Arvanities in Greece, too, are a declining entity, so that Greece is today much more homogeneous linguistically than before.

Greek is the native language of well over nine millions: upwards of eight and a half in the Kingdom of Greece, including a few thousands in the frontier areas of Albania and other neighbouring countries, with a further 480,000 in the Republic of Cyprus.

Cyprus

Writing in Cyprus is attested as far back as the middle of the second millennium B.C. When the first Greek colonists arrived a not known, but they were evidently ignorant of the alphabet, since the earlier Cypriot Greek inscriptions, from the seventh to the third centuries B.C., employ a cumbersome syllabary taken over from the autochthonous inhabitants. This syllabary is most unsuitable for the writing of Greek and was apparently constructed for a non-Indo-European language. The pre-Greek inhabitants, whatever their affinities, preserved their identity for some centuries, as inscriptions in their language continue until the fourth century B.C. These cannot as yet be interpreted; the language is provisionally known as Euboeo-Cypriot. With the extinction of this language and of Phoenician, which gained a foothold in the island in antiquity, Cyprus remained to all intents and purposes purely Greek-speaking until the establishment of Turkish rule in 1571. Turkish hegemony lasted until 1878, when Cyprus passed under British control. During this time, Turkish poissants and arzungs settled widely throughout the island. Their descendants have generally retained their native language and today number 120,000 or one-fifth of the population. Owning to the troubles of the last two decades, the Turkish minority has tended to congregate so forming predominantly Turkish neighbourhoods. British rule ceased in 1960 when the present republic was proclaimed with Greek and Turkish as its official languages.

Italiot Greek

The Greeks in southern Italy were still significant enough to be known to Roger Bacon in the thirteenth century, who recommended that
Greek books be acquired there. But the Greek-speaking area has greatly diminished since then and the language is today heard only in two small enclaves in Calabria and Apulia, in the 'toe' and 'heel' of Italy respectively. The former comprises Bova and four neighbouring hamlets. Here the language is disintegrating as it rapidly yields to Italian, being now used by hardly more than a thousand people. Yet Greek is much stronger in the other enclave, where quite 20,000 persons living in Cilento and eight surrounding villages retain it as their patois. Italian Greek is not officially recognised today and plays no part in church or school, where proceedings are conducted in Italian. Nevertheless, occasional publications in the Apulian dialect appear; they employ the Latin character.

Since Italian Greek has for so long evolved independently of other Greek and has been much influenced by Italian, it occupies a special position among Greek dialects. It is scarcely comprehensible to a speaker of Balkan Greek. We would characterise Italiot Greek as a separate language, falling into two quite considerably differentiated dialects, Calabrian and Apulian.

Greek alphabet

The Greek alphabet was borrowed from a North Semitic type used by the Phoenicians. The earliest Greek inscriptions are assigned to the seventh century B.C. with the exception of a graffiti incised on a vase jug (the Dipylon amphora) regarded as belonging (to the late eighth century. The shape of the letters, however, is considerably different from the Phoenician prototype indicating a period of independent evolution. Just how the vowelless Semitic script was transmitted and adapted is not known but borrowing appears to have taken place early in the first millennium.

Two main types of alphabet developed in Greece: Ionic, from which the standard Greek alphabet is derived, and Chalcidic. The latter died out in its homeland, but survived in the colonial West, where it was eventually employed to write local Italian languages (p. 25).

Text in linear script

Inscriptions in Crete, especially at Knossos (1900-1906) and on the Greek mainland at Pylas (since 1939) and Mycenae (since 1952) have brought to light over 3,000 clay tablets, and a still greater number of segments, inscribed with both ideograms and linear writing. As the texts are accompanied by numerical signs, they appear to be accounts or inventories. They have been dated archaeologically to the period from the fifteenth to the twelfth centuries B.C. and are thus witnesses to Minoan-Mycenaean culture. Two forms of linear writing occur, at older one, called Linear A and a development of this, Linear B.
Most of the tablets are inscribed in the latter. It consists of 80 different signs, too high a number for an alphabet, but about right for a syllabary. The texts also contain some 130 ideograms.

In 1953, M. Ventris and J. Chadwick surprised the learned world with a publication which offered, at one stroke, a virtually complete decipherment of Linear B. The language was declared to be an early form of Greek and named Mycenaean. Most scholars accept these findings, but there are some dissenters. The minority holds that the syllabary, as deciphered, presents an intolerable number of homograms; for instance, pa-te can stand for (later Gk.) pa-te 'father' or plan-te m-pl. 'all'. Ideograms may have a peculiar function. Thus a drawing like a pot on three legs is stated to be preceded by syllables spelling out 'tripod', a redundancy unparalleled in other scripts of this age. It may be emphasised that only a fraction of the material—of the order of, say, one–cent—has been interpreted more or less. Not one of these brief documents could as yet be explained in its entirety and new finds of tablets have not led to any general improvement in the understanding of the materials. In view of such difficulties, it would be important to learn exactly by what steps Ventris, the prime mover, achieved his decipherment in the first place. This information, however, has never been fully presented. Most unfortunately, Ventris lost his life just after he had sprung into fame and before he could answer his critics. Chadwick, his collaborator in the latter stages, has been content to argue 'It is no longer of any consequence to know how the values were obtained; the words they yield constitute their own proof' (Decipherement of Linear B, 1958 and various issues since, p. 93).

In this predicament, the outsider may prefer to regard the Ventris decipherment as conjectural and reckon with the possibility that the language behind the mysterious script could in fact be pre-Greek, as is usually thought to be the case with texts in Linear A, and also in various other pre–alphabetic inscriptions found here and there by archaeologists both in Mainland Greece and on the islands.

Pelasgian

There is abundant evidence for a pre-Greek population both in the toponymy of the country and in the ordinary vocabulary of Greek. The Greeks themselves called these people Pelasgians, and Herodotus specifically states that the original inhabitants of Attica were Pelasgians who had adopted the Greek language. Pelasgian was apparently a living language locally in the Aegean until the fifth century B.C.

Modern investigators, however, are inclined to posit the existence of several ethnic groups in pre-Hellenic Greece. It is seen that many place names contain elements not known in Indo-European, as
THE STRUCTURE OF HELLENIC

ANCIENT GREEK

We quote below Classical Attic forms. The Homeric poems in particular contain a considerable number of archaic elements, but these do not significantly affect the overall picture and are accordingly omitted here.

Phonetics

There are five vowels: α, ε, ι, ou, o, each long or short, and numerous diphthongs: αι, ου, etc. Differences in length are indicated in the native script by special letters in the case of ε and ο; we transliterate ι, ο. The consonants transcribed ph, th, kh, were pronounced p + h, θ. The glottals denote type of pitch accent.

Accent

There are three genders, three numbers and five cases, and the Indo-European declensional classes are easily recognisable. IE *ekwis *hne appears as ἀκών or, much more commonly, as ἀκών. Paradigm:
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<tr>
<th>Infin.</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Imperative</th>
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<td>phédres</td>
<td>phédristhe</td>
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**ACTIVE**

**PASSIVE**

Infin. *phédron* 'to bear (in one's own interest)' or 'to be borne'
The Indo-European character of Greek shows unmistakably in the major part of the word stock, as "aorē 'bull': Lat. taurus, Ir. torb, Welsh tor, Icel. fjör, also Lith. raus, Russ. tor with the specialised meaning 'asaurus'".
Matthew vi.9-13

Pater hëmn, ho en tois ooroumëis: hagiastrhita tôn anamou sou father of us the in the heavens be-hallowed the name of thee

ειλαθε βαισελεα του. Σωμεραθη το σεθλημα του, the image the of thee-became the will of-thee as in

ευρων και επι εις. Τον δεσμων ανθρων την επιλογισι δια, your in bond the of-man the election through of the

και δε εορτασε το ανθρωπον θεον. Το γεμισε ομηρω την ανθρωπον and give to-us the daily to us the

today and forgive to us the debters of-us and not into us

πετραμίν, αλλα ραθισ της χειριν επι τον πόνον. Ηδη το τη εξα της temptation but deliver us from the evil for the

h η χρηστέως ου δεμας και h η δωμάτιος εις τοις αιμαται, the kingdom and the power and the glory into the ages
The spelling of Modern Greek is the traditional one, giving the language a superficially archaic appearance. The ancient vowel system has been drastically simplified. The phonemic distinction between short and long has vanished, differences today being purely phonetic in that any vowel is lengthened somewhat in stressed position. Moreover, ο, ο, ω and various dipthongs, notably οι and ου, have fallen together as [i], ου and οι are now both [i], ου and ου are [ou, ov], ου is [u]. The consonants transliterated ph, th, kh have become voiceless spirants, while b, d, g have become the corresponding voiced spirants, kh and g having a palatal pronunciation before front vowels. Voiced occlusives are now less common and are written nh, nh, gh, i.e. [h-Ag]. The aspirate h is lost. The modern accent is predominantly one of stress.

The language preserves the three genders, but has lost the dual number and the dative case. It continues the ancient word for 'horse', though only as a literary form. We therefore substitute aderphos 'brother'. Paradigm:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sg.nom.</th>
<th>aderphos</th>
<th>Pl.</th>
<th>aderphoi</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>voc.</td>
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<td>aderphés</td>
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<tr>
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<td>aderphó</td>
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<tr>
<td>gen.</td>
<td>aderphhó</td>
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<td>aderphhón</td>
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</table>

The adjective has retained a comparable inflectional system.

The morphology of the verb has been simplified. The infinitive system and the optative conjugation have gone. The subjunctive is further reduced to the present and aorist, indeed in the former only orthographic differences distinguish it from the indicative. New subjuncives have developed for the future and perfect. Middle verbs as such has given way to passive use. Ancient phrēv survives in the modern language as phérē and has been generalised throughout the conjugation. Sample paradigm:

**Active**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indicative</td>
<td>Indicative</td>
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<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>phérē</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>phérēs</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>phérē</td>
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<th>Aorist</th>
<th>Subjunctive</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indicative</td>
<td>Subjunctive</td>
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<td>a</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>phérēs</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>phérē</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Hellenic

Texts

From G. Oikonomoudes, Homerou Odisea 'Homer's Odyssey', Athens, pp. 181-2

Ilē Fëmelëp nòth the tāth aitilōsa kai ege stoia mnēstēres: the Penelope came into the room and said to-the suitors

'Ακόλυθα me, mnēstēres, aphō tēgmēntas kēpōna nō listen to-me suitors since you-also someone in-order-that

παραδόμεν απο σὺν ἀκοκομαί I-marry from you (you insist that I marry one of you) I-comme

δίπλα nō σῆμα tēptēchē hēma aqōtēma. Edē einat tō then in-order-that to-you I-propose a content here is the

μεγάλα τὸξο τοῦ Ὀδυσσέα. Ἡρώδης mnērēzē-akōka na tānichīn mé great bow of-the Odysseus whoever is able easily to draw with

tē bhorōδ kai nō pëstē tō the hands of-him (with his hands) the string and to shoot the

ionē miēa k' ast' tō diēkeka pelēsia, anēc thē gētē datras draw right-through the twelve axes he shall become husband

mou, avtōn θ' akouloudērē, tō spēi tō suneugēkō mou of-ante him shall I-follow the house the conjugal of-me

aphēmosa, pōu oine stōn hēpno mou, tharē, dē thē tō having which even in-the sleep of-me I-think not shall it

Iμηνομένη.

Iōnēt.

Matthew vi.9-13

Pūtra mas, pōu eka stoia ouranōs: ēb ēkagisti tō' ἐanomē

father our who art in-the heavens be-hallowed the name

tou. As érrō tē batelleia tou. As gōnē tō thellēmdou, ou

in the kingdom of-thou be-done the will of-thou

kēpōn in the heavens are kai tō gē. To pōsēmī mas tō in-the heaven so also on-the earth the bread of-us the
καθόμενοι διότι μας σήμερα. Καί συνοριστεί μας τὰ ἱερὰ μας, 
daily give us today and forgive us the debts of-us
ἡσύχα σ＇ ενεχειλούμενα τὰς κηρύξεις μας. Καί μὲ μῖας
also we forgive the debts of-us and not us
προθέσεις αὐτοναμομένη ἀλλὰ θεώνομεν μας εὐφράτει τὸν ἀνθρώπον.  Τοῦτο
lead into temptation but deliver us from the evil-one for
διὰ του ἐνακτεῖ τὰ βασιλεία ὁ Θεός ἐνακτεῖ ὁ Θεός ἐνακτεῖ ὁ Θεός
thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory into-the
ἀγένεια.