

**MODERN GREEK  
GRAMMAR: FOR THE USE  
OF CLASSICAL STUDENTS**

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Modern Greek grammar: for the use of classical students by James Donaldson

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BY

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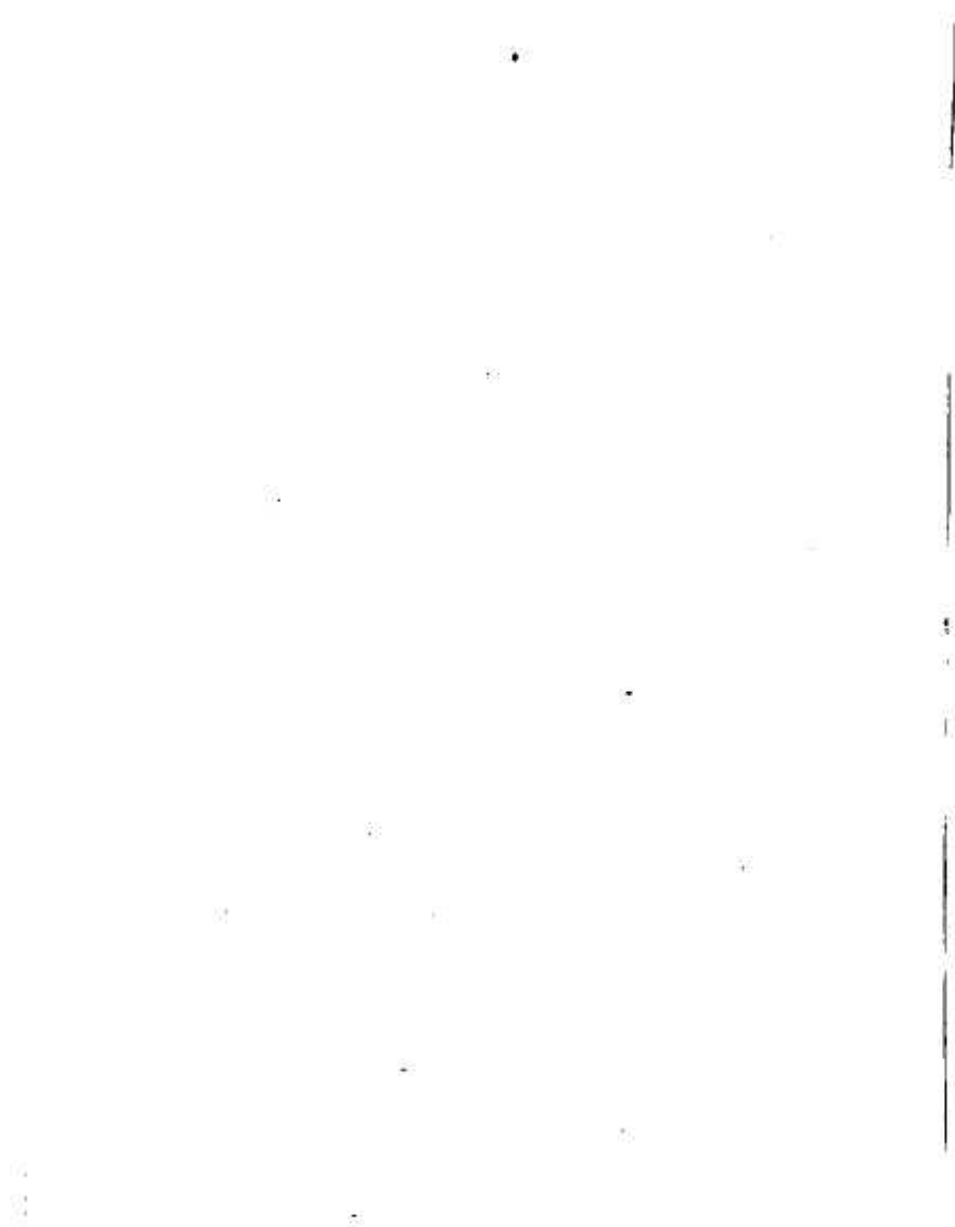
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## P R E F A C E.

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THIS Grammar is sent forth in the hope that it may attract the attention of Scholars to an interesting field of Hellenic literature, which is almost entirely unknown to British Students. All that the Compiler had to do was to take five or six of the modern Greek Grammars, extract what was peculiar to the modern Greek, and present it in as condensed a form as possible. The Classical Student is thus saved time and expense; for modern Greek Grammars necessarily contain a great deal of matter with which he is already acquainted. The present Grammar, too, might have been compressed into smaller dimensions, if those irregularities, which are now banished altogether from the written language, had been omitted. But as one of the most interesting departments of modern Greek literature is the Ballad poetry, and as the changes which characterise modern Greek form a part of the history of the Greek language, for the benefit also of travellers in Greece wishing to converse with the common people, I have given a copious list of the popular variations. This is the more needed, that Corpe's Modern Greek Grammar, though otherwise very good, is here remarkably deficient.

In regard to the part of this Grammar which relates to the comparison of ancient with modern Greek, I have been left almost

entirely to my own resources, not having seen the *Æolo-Doric Grammar of Christopoulos*, nor the *Grammar of Bamvas*. The Grammars which I used were—

1. *Nova Methodus* of Father Thomas (Paris, 1709), of which there was a partial translation by H. Robertson, M.D.

2. A Translation of M. Jules David's *Parallel of the Ancient and Modern Greek Languages*, by John Mitchell, London, 1824.

3. *Grammatica Linguae Græcæ Recentioris, Romæ*. In Collegio Urbano, 1837. (By Franz.)

4. *An Introduction to Neo-Hellenic*, by Henry Corpe; London, Groombridge & Sons, 1861.

5. The Grammar in Col. Leake's *Researches*.

I have also examined Sophocles' *Modern Greek Grammar*, but had not the book beside me while compiling.

I have compared the statements of these Grammars with the results of my own reading, and with what I have observed in conversation with Greeks whom I met in London. I have also added a few things which I did not find noticed in the Grammars.

In the sketch of Greek literature, I am indebted—

1. To Col. Leake's *Researches in Greece*—London, 1814— which contains a *Modern Greek Grammar*, and an account of *Modern Greek Literature*, with extracts from several of the earlier



poems. All honour to Col. Leake, for he is the only Englishman who has worked properly in this field.

2. To a small Tractate by Alex. Negris, called, "The Literary History of Modern Greece."

3. To Christian August Brandis's *Mittheilungen über Griechenland*. Vols. II. & III.

There is also a list of early modern Greek writers in Ducange's *Gloss. Med. et Infimæ Græcitatæ*.

In all cases where I have pronounced an opinion on modern Greek works, except in the case of Germanos, whose character I take from Brandis, and Tricoupi's historical work, the reference to which in § 15 *infra*, is added by Professor Blackie, I have read the books themselves, or large extracts.

Some say that modern Greek is quite different from ancient. Let such devote an hour or two to this Grammar, and then give judgment. It is really astonishing to notice the number of forms which, differing from Attic Greek, coincide with the proper forms as seen in verbs in *μ* or in Sanscrit. Altogether, there are very few forms that do not find their parallel in the ancient language. As to words, there is no doubt that the language was corrupted by intermixtures; but these foreign elements have been systematically expelled; and now I think it may be said with truth, that there is not a purer language in Europe. For, owing to the flexibility and scope of the language, every new idea which this progressive age creates, and which, when transplanted into such languages as English and French, or even German, retains the form

(sometimes Greek, as phonography) given it in its birthplace, is clothed with a Greek dress on its reaching a Greek mind. Thus, for a steam-boat they have *ἀτμόπλοιοι*; for a railway-carriage, *ἀρμαμάζα*; for a balloon, *ἀερόστατον*; for a toilette, *καλλυντήριοι*; for daguerreotype, *ήλιογραφία*, &c.

Apart from its excellencies as a language, modern Greek deserves the careful study of the Scholar. It abounds in illustrations of the Classic Writers, and already, though very little has been done, several words, such as *ἀνάγω*, to get into the open sea, in Xenophon's Hellenica, have been explained by its help. A knowledge of it is also of the utmost importance to Greek etymologists, and it has been used for etymological and lexical purposes, though sparingly, by Pott, Donaldson, Liddel and Scott, and others.

It is the Theologian, however, who will find the greatest help in modern Greek. And the reason is obvious. The present language of the Greeks is the result of oral tradition, and is therefore a representative of the ancient conversational dialect of the Greek people. Accordingly, it contains many ancient forms, just as we find in Scottish or in some of the dialects of the counties of England, words and expressions occurring in Shakspeare, but now obsolete in written English. It also contains numerous Doric, Æolic, and Ionic, as well as Attic forms; as might have been expected, for there is not the slightest reason to suppose that the Attic was the conversational dialect of any but the smallest portion of the Greeks. Now, on looking over the field of Greek literature, the remains of the use of a conversational dialect are to be found principally in Homer, the comic poets, and the writers of the New Testament; and accordingly modern Greek

bears most analogy to these. Thus, for instance, the form *ἀσραχὺς* is common to Homer, the New Testament, and modern Greek. But as the dialect of the New Testament is nearest in time to the Neo-Hellenic, it resembles the Neo-Hellenic in the greatest number of points. It, too, takes forms from almost all dialects, as *ἀπίστωται*, &c. (See Winer, Gram. § 4.) It abounds in verbs which insert a *ν* after the vowel, as *ἀλλοιόνω* for *ἀλλοιόω*. And even particular expressions, such as *ἀπὸ μιᾶς*, at once, are common both to Hellenistic and Neo-Hellenic. There are also multitudes of words peculiar to these two dialects. Of the similar grammatical forms, numerous instances are given in this Grammar, but the passages quoted might have been multiplied indefinitely. A vast deal has yet to be done in illustrating the New Testament dialect from modern Greek; and I have no hesitation in asserting, that next to a knowledge of Aramæan, perhaps before it, the most essential requisite to a proper comprehension of the New Testament dialect, is a thorough acquaintance with the present language of the Greeks.

It may be remarked also, that modern Greek is now beginning to receive that attention which it deserves. Pennington makes use of it in his *Book on Greek Pronunciation*; Professor Blackie has gone still farther into the matter in his "*Pronunciation of Greek*;" and the *Athenæum* (on Corpe's Grammar), and the *Times* (on Tricoupis's Greek Revolution), have pronounced favourably on the language. So that we may confidently hope that the time will soon come when no man can be pronounced a Greek scholar, who is not master of Neo-Hellenic, and when that language will be taught in our schools and colleges. Continental Scholars in this as in many other matters, have gone far ahead of us. Many Germans, such as Ross, Brandis, Thiersch