

**INTRODUCTION TO GREEK
PROSE COMPOSITION;
WITH EXERCISES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649089093

Introduction to Greek prose composition; with exercises by A. Sidgwick

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
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GREEK PROSE COMPOSITION
With Exercises

By A. SIDGWICK, M.A.

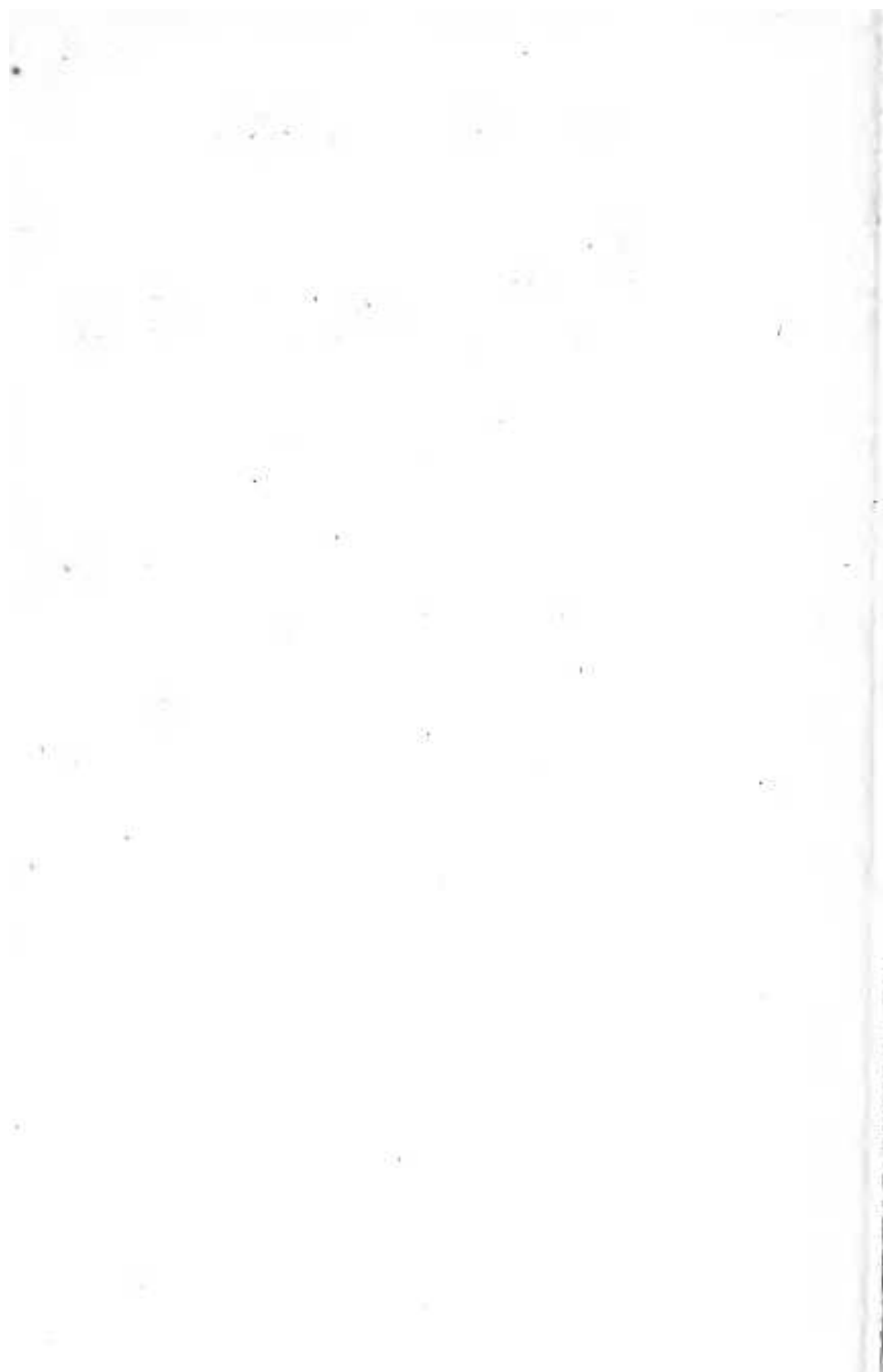
LATE READER IN GREEK TO THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

THIRTEENTH EDITION (1907)



GINN & COMPANY
BOSTON, NEW YORK, CHICAGO, LONDON

1908



PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

IN composing in any language, the various difficulties to be surmounted may be summed up in three classes—Accidence, Syntax, and Idiom.

The Accidence is the first step, and must be learned from the grammar. These exercises will perhaps be of use to practise the learner in the cases and inflexions, but a fair acquaintance with them is presumed before starting to write Greek Prose at all.

The Syntax must also in the main be learned from the grammar; but as the grammar is intended primarily for other purposes than to assist in composition, it has been thought advisable to give here some notes on Greek constructions, arranged so that the learner may readily refer to them, and find what he is likely to want more easily than he could in a grammar.

Some hints on Idiom, also, have been given here, so as to guide the student in those places where he is most likely to go wrong, and to suggest to him, without going too much into detail, some ideas on the leading differences between the methods of expression adopted respectively in the English and Greek languages.

A few words must be said about the Exercises. It is sometimes the practice to teach composition in the earlier stages entirely by short sentences illustrating special constructions. There is a note on the special construction, an example or two, and then an exercise upon it. Then you pass on to another construction similarly illustrated. This is very systematic; and it seems as though when

the learner has been through a course of such exercises, he ought to know a good deal about the language.

The great objection to this plan is that it is *dull*. No interest in *composing* can possibly be inspired in the learner who has detached clauses to translate about 'the Christian duty of shearing sheep rather than flaying them,' or 'the lion eating the gardener and the gardener's aunt.' On the other hand, a connected tale need not be any harder than detached sentences; it may illustrate Greek constructions quite as fully and clearly, and with far more variety; and it is certain to be more lively. And every schoolmaster knows—what, indeed, is only common sense—that in teaching, dullness of method is a more serious obstacle to progress than all others put together. On this system, moreover, the boy gets to feel at once, what he never can feel about sentences, that he is really composing, writing something, and that it is within his power, if he takes pains, to do really good work, in which he may take pride and pleasure; it is not a task to be done, but a chance for the exercise of a faculty. And when this idea gets hold of him, progress is certain.

I have therefore given the exercises from the first in the form of separate tales, complete in themselves. Many of the stories are not new, but I have endeavoured to put them into a more or less lively shape, and yet one adapted for turning into Greek. The first two parts consist entirely of tales thus written, Part III. containing passages from histories of a kind adapted for more advanced students; while in Part IV. I have given a few passages of rhetorical prose to be done in the style of Demosthenes, and a very few at the end, of a dialectic or philosophical kind, for those more advanced boys who have read a little Plato.

For similar reasons, I have put the Notes on Construc-

tions and Idiom all together at the beginning, in order that the learner may not be wearied with exercises illustrating special points, but may have all the materials at hand (ready sorted) to solve any difficulty of construction or idiom that may arise. In this way, it is hoped, he will find much less sameness, and at the same time, by constant reference to the notes, will gradually learn a good deal more Greek, and in a more permanent way, than he might do by taking up point after point by itself. In this way, also, he learns in a more *natural* (and not really less systematic) manner, and gets to be more *independent* than if he is kept in the leading-strings of special exercises illustrating only special points. A further advantage of this arrangement is that the book may still be useful to the student, when he has ceased to do these exercises.

The vocabulary is meant to supply all the common Greek words required in the exercises; any uncommon ones being given in the notes to each exercise. But the learner should specially attend to one or two points.

(1) Always have a Greek-English lexicon at hand, to see what the usage of the *Greek* word is. Greek composition will be learned five times as quickly if the lexicon is kept as much in use as the English-Greek vocabulary.

(2) When a word is not given, think of synonyms at once; do not give it up. If you cannot find 'astonishment,' look out 'surprise,' and so on.

(3) Often you have no need to look out the word at all; when you have recast the sentence into the simple shape fit for Greek Prose, you will find you know the words already. This is especially the case with the later exercises (Parts III., IV.); and will account for the fact that the vocabulary will be found more complete in the earlier. For example, words like 'wolf,' 'dog,' 'table,' require looking out. There is one, and probably only one, Greek

word corresponding to them; but in sentences like 'he inquired into the source of her inability,' 'he poured out invective of the utmost virulence,' a little thought discloses to us that we only want the Greek for 'asked why she could not,' 'blamed very dreadfully,' which we probably know.

The lists given before the vocabulary are intended to assist the student to find pronouns, conjunctions, particles, and prepositions, and also the references to the Notes on Constructions, as easily as possible. It is a constant complaint about grammars, that 'it is so hard to find the place.' I have done my best to make such a complaint impossible here. If everything else fails, let the Table of Contents be tried. The List of Conjunctions is practically an index to the Notes on Constructions: for example, the learner looks out there 'so that,' and not only finds the Greek for it, but is referred to the full explanation in sections 49-55. The Scheme and Index of Moods are intended to give a general view, to clear the student's mind when he has learned many details. The necessary information about the *Article* will be found on page 220.

A hint in conclusion. The one unfailing way to learn composition—to which all notes, and lists, and books are but secondary—is careful, constant study of the great Greek writers. Whatever Greek books you read, always have them at hand when you are doing composition, and constantly refresh your mind and taste by reading a few lines or sentences. In this way progress will be made, almost unconsciously, with surprising rapidity.

A. S.