

# A NEW CHINESE-LANGUAGE TEXTBOOK OF ANCIENT GREEK; WITH A HISTORICAL OUTLINE OF TEACHING GREEK AND LATIN IN CHINA<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

In this paper we present the project of a new Chinese-language textbook of ancient Greek. This textbook is intended for students majoring in philosophy. In the first part of the paper, we provide an introduction to the historical circumstances in which ancient Greek literature and philosophy were originally introduced to China. We draw an outline of the cultural significance of the studies of ancient Greek in China, especially from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This helps explain the reasons why studies of ancient Greek were tightly connected to those of ancient Greek philosophy — and hence shed light on the intended focus of our textbook. In the second part of the paper, we present the textbook properly speaking: its intended audience and general structure, and an overview of the linguistic difference between ancient Greek and modern Chinese. This overview will reveal the types of issues faced by native Chinese speakers when learning ancient Greek and show that in some cases, such as the verbal aspect, Chinese has better resources to translate Greek sentences than

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was written in collaboration by Yi Zeng (who focused on the first part of the paper) and Xavier Gheerbrant (who focused on the second part). We thank James Mire for editing the English of this contribution and for his other suggestions. For the sake of clarity, we limit the use of Chinese characters to a minimum in this paper (essentially, for proper names and for the transliteration of Greek names; and for linguistic purposes in the second part of the paper, when necessary). When we quote a work in Chinese, we provide the English translation of the title and a transliteration of the publishing company and place of publication (in the bibliography). We choose to use the Chinese word order for proper names in Chinese (the family name precedes the given name). For the sake of clarity, we divide the bibliography into three parts: works in Chinese, works in English and other European languages, and an overview of the tools currently available in Chinese to learn ancient Greek.

English. We provide the example of a sample chapter to make the discussion more material and also to illustrate how the specific resources of Chinese language allow the translator to render the uses of subjunctive in ancient Greek.

#### Key words

*Didactic of ancient Greek, ancient Greek philosophy, Chinese language, translation, history of scholarship, reception of ancient Greek culture in China.*

*Se dijo (sin demasiada fe) que suele estar muy cerca lo que buscamos...*

(Jorge Luis Borges, *La busca de Averroes*).

This paper is a presentation of a Chinese-language textbook of ancient Greek. It is the first volume of this sort proposed in Chinese: it will provide a complete grammar for all levels, with exercises, as well as insights in the methodology for translating and interpreting ancient Greek philosophical texts. For now, Chinese students learning ancient Greek have two main options available: textbooks in Chinese<sup>2</sup> and textbooks in English. The former are mostly introductory works. The latter are not only written in a third language, but they also explain morphology, grammar, and syntax from the point of view of English (or let us say, more widely, from that of modern European languages). Chinese, however, is structurally different from European languages (see below). Our project aims to create a tool to facilitate the acquisition of ancient Greek by Chinese students directly in Chinese, and by explaining ancient Greek by a direct comparison with the main features of Chinese.

In writing our textbook, we have considered our primary audience to be Chinese-speaking students majoring in philosophy. For historical reasons, the learning of ancient Greek was mainly connected to that of ancient Greek philosophy, which has been studied for decades in several universities in China as a subject of its own. For this reason, this paper is divided into two parts. The first part presents a historical outline of the conditions in which ancient Greek and Latin were introduced and taught in China. As we are summarizing a history of several centuries in a few pages, we omit a number of interesting facts and pieces of information; our aim is to give an overview of the historical context by focusing on their relationship to philosophy. Providing the general

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<sup>2</sup> See the titles listed under the third section of the bibliography.

academic context in which writing the textbook takes place allows us to explain and justify the choices in its content and organization. Where possible, we have tried to provide English versions of the source materials, and in general to provide concise information about the historical characters mentioned for readers who are not familiar with Chinese history. The second part of the paper presents the textbook itself: we elaborate on the intended audience, stress the main features of the linguistic difference between ancient Greek and Mandarin, present the structure of the textbook and the content of a typical chapter. Lastly, we provide parts of a sample chapter on the subjunctive with elements of comparison between ancient Greek and Chinese. This last part of our paper also sheds light on the specific resources available in Chinese to translate ancient Greek, especially when verbal aspect is concerned.

#### 1. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE EDUCATION IN ANCIENT GREEK IN CHINA

We first provide a historical introduction to the study and translation of ancient Greek language and literature in China. This history is important to explain today's situation, in which the study and teaching of ancient Greek is strongly connected to approaches to ancient Greek philosophy, whether it is studied for itself or through modern and contemporary philosophers' approaches to ancient Greek philosophy (essentially Hegel and Zeller, Schleiermacher, and Heidegger<sup>3</sup>). It also helps explain why studies of ancient Greek can be perceived as part of the Chinese philosophical tradition.

After briefly enumerating the first cultural exchanges between the Greek world and China (section 1), we focus on four important chronological landmarks: 2. The times of the missionaries, where the study of ancient Greek was undertaken for religious purposes and based on a Latin translation; 3. The pioneering activity of three Chinese scholars who translated the Greek originals into Chinese at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; 4. Debates about the role and meaning of ancient Greek civilization among groups who debated in the 1910s and 1920s whether China should be modernised and how; 5. The development of

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<sup>3</sup> The German tradition makes strong sense here partly because of Marx. Marxist studies were introduced in China for society reformation before becoming part of the ideology of the governing party. As a consequence, German idealism tradition also became influential in academic works.

academic activities in teaching ancient Greek and translating ancient Greek texts, and the results of this situation today.

### 1. First contacts (before the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries)

We find scarce information in the Chinese sources about the first cultural exchanges between the Greek and Roman worlds and China; they often consist in a few factual data without detailed information about the nature of the exchanges involved. The cross-cultural communication between the Chinese and Greek worlds originated in practical aspects, essentially in the domain of commercial trade and medicine. Presenting the whole story is outside the scope of this paper; rather, we focus on a few important events from the standpoint of the Chinese sources<sup>4</sup>.

The starting-point of the history of Graeco-Chinese communication could be dated as early as the Han Dynasty, between 139 and 126 B.C.E. This date is based on the landmark event that Zhang Qian<sup>5</sup> arrived in the main part of Bactria, to which he refers as *DaXia* (大夏). This Chinese diplomat was in charge of an exploratory mission, both diplomatic and military. Stronger evidence for this communication is provided by the historical recording in *Hsin Tang Shu*<sup>6</sup>, and in the

<sup>4</sup> The topic of the communication between China (and Asia in general) and the ancient Mediterranean world has increasingly attracted attention of scholars in the recent years. We are only mentioning here a few prominent studies among the most recent ones. See Kolb and Speidel (2015) for Eastern assessments on the Roman Empire. See for the relationship between Greece and Extreme-Orient the articles gathered by Jouanna, Schiltz, and Zink (2016). For religious, material, and historical aspect of the communication, see Lieu and Mikkelsen (2016); for mentions of Chinese silk in Pausanias (3.12.4; 6.26.6-10; 9.21.5-6), see Sánchez Hernández (2016). Finally, for a survey of studies on the relationship between Rome and China published in Chinese, see Wang Naixin (2002).

<sup>5</sup> The life of Zhang Qian (张骞, 164–114 B.C.E.) was initially recorded in “The Ranked Biographies of Da Yuan” in *The Records of the Grand Historian* (p. 3157-3160), or in the original: 史记 (for an English translation, see Burton 1961). Zhang Qian was the first Chinese envoy to bring reliable information about Central Asia. The possibility that Bactria was dominated by the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom at that time is a matter of contention.

<sup>6</sup> In the *New Book of the Tang Dynasty* (新唐书), p. 6261 (there is no extant English translation; see references of the Chinese version in the bibliography). This book is a history in ten volumes of the Tang Dynasty (618-907 C.E.), which is based on a modernisation and rework of the *History of the Tang Dynasty* ordered by Emperor Renzong of Song Dynasty in 1044. It was completed in 1060.

Muslim Pharmaceutical Prescriptions, where the names of Galen and Hippocrates are mentioned in connection with a skillful brain surgery<sup>7</sup>. The Chinese sources also use the name ‘Tazig’<sup>8</sup> to refer to the Eastern part of the Roman Empire in connection with the Ottoman world<sup>9</sup>. We even find traces of an individual from the West who migrated to China and who is known in the Chinese sources under the name of Li Yansheng<sup>10</sup>. He was commissioned by the Tang government and fully integrated into Chinese society so as to spread his native culture.

## 2. The time of the missionaries

As we can see, the first contacts summarized above are limited and not very well documented. Better-recorded interactions began with the arrival of the Christian missionaries in China, from the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>11</sup>. The first Christian missionary documented in the Chinese sources was Aluoben, who was affiliated with Nestorianism, from ancient Syria<sup>12</sup>. The second Christian missionary was a Catholic: Giovanni da Montecorvino was a Franciscan and arrived in China during

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<sup>7</sup> This is a mere mention of the surgery and transliterations of the names of Galen (as 先贤扎里奴西) and Hippocrates (as 卜忽刺忒). *The Muslim Pharmaceutical Prescriptions* have not yet been translated into English (see the bibliography under the title of the book; e.g. p. 302 and 308). For more details about the history of medicine communication studies, see (in Chinese): Xiang Da (1957); Chen Ming (2013). For further reading on this topic (in English), see the helpful article by Christopher I. Beckwith (1979).

<sup>8</sup> The earliest mention of Tazig (大食) in the Chinese official historical sources is found in the “Basic Annals of Gao Zong” in the *Old Book of Tang* (旧唐书): “In the second year of Yonghui (651 C.E.), the kingdom of Tazig started to send diplomats to pay tributes” (p. 69; there is no English translation; see the bibliography under the title of the book). Tazig is a Chinese transliteration of the Persian word for the Arab Empire which occupied the Eurasian steppe and reached out westward to the Eastern Roman Empire.

<sup>9</sup> From the stand point of the Chinese sources, the historical tradition between the Eastern part and the Ottoman conquest is continuous.

<sup>10</sup> See Zhang and Zhu 2003, 719-720 (in the Chinese part of the bibliography).

<sup>11</sup> In general, for the interactions with the missionaries and Chinese culture in the Renaissance, see Standaert (2003).

<sup>12</sup> Aluoben (阿罗本) was praised in the Nestorian Stele (大秦景教流行中国碑) erected in the Tang Dynasty that recorded 150 years of early Christianity in China (in 781 C.E.). It is noteworthy that the Roman Empire was called Daqin (大秦) in this stele.

the Yuan Dynasty<sup>13</sup>. Franciscanism and Nestorianism were referred to, without distinction, as the Belief of Yelikewen by the Yuan officials.<sup>14</sup> The presence of the missionaries in China not only provided a basis for the teaching of languages, but also contributed to the shaping of the approach to ancient Greek and Roman culture in the long term.

A letter written in 1305 C.E. by Giovanni da Montecorvino, in which he describes his activities in China, is the first reliable direct historical testimony to how the education of classical languages was organized<sup>15</sup>. In this letter, he mentions that he built a second Catholic church in Beijing in 1305<sup>16</sup>. This place could offer seminars and lodging for about two hundred people. Montecorvino gradually collected forty boys from heathen families; they were from seven to eleven years old. He instructed them in Latin and Greek, composed psalms and hymns for them to sing, and then trained them to serve the Mass by singing in the choir.

The Catholic missionaries played an important part in establishing education in ancient Greek and Latin in China, but the linguistic details of the matter are difficult to assess. It is certain that they came from various countries and that they used Latin to communicate with each other; some of them who read ancient Greek could translate it and were involved in teaching it, at least up to a point. The missionaries, however, translated the Greek and Latin texts into Chinese, and their translations were checked by Chinese individuals. Furthermore, before the Qing Dynasty (1636–1912), the Chinese received all these ancient Greek elements through a first Latin translation. As we can access only the results of such a process today, it is not easy to assess to what degree each of the individuals involved had a command over the relevant languages, although it is certain that there was a progressive exchange

<sup>13</sup> Giovanni da Montecorvino (若望·孟高维诺, 1246–1328 C.E.) was also the founder of the earliest Roman Catholic missions in India and China, and once was the Archbishop of Peking. He was a member of the *Ordo Fratrum Minorum*, who had been sent by the Vatican.

<sup>14</sup> *Yelikewen* (也里可温教) is the Chinese transliteration of the Mongolian transliteration (*Erkeunor Arkaim*) of the Hebrew word for God.

<sup>15</sup> See Soothill (1930).

<sup>16</sup> The Church was supposedly located opposite to the Imperial Palace, and it was the second Church after Khanbaliq's Church (Khanbaliq is the capital city of Yuan Dynasty; its Chinese name is *Dadu* and it was located in the centre of modern Beijing).

of linguistic abilities on both sides. This exchange was probably focused on Latin and Chinese; we have no evidence for Chinese individuals who had direct access to ancient Greek texts from the beginnings of this period. It is not surprising then that the first formal school was established in Latin, by the Emperor Yongzheng (reign 1723-1735) for instructing noble students, whereas the earliest formal education of ancient Greek in China was provided at Peking University in the period of the Republic of China (1921-1949)<sup>17</sup>.

The work of the missionaries not only had effects in terms of linguistic ability and theology, but also in terms of the vision of the ancient Greek and Roman worlds that their activity conveyed to the Chinese world. In this respect, the role that philosophy played at the time of the missionaries was twofold. First, the missionaries translated Aristotelian treatises into Chinese. The standpoint of some prominent members of the missionaries<sup>18</sup> was that in order to be taught Christian faith, the Chinese had to develop two features that the missionaries perceived as essential to Christian faith as opposed to Paganism: logical thinking and the concept of transcendence<sup>19</sup>. For this reason, they first translated Aristotle's treatises on astronomy and cosmology, such as *On the Heavens*, and his treatises on logic, such as the *Categories*<sup>20</sup>. The reasoning behind the choice of astronomy was that according to Aristotle's theory, the heavenly bodies are ungenerated and

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<sup>17</sup> At Peking University in the period of the Republic of China, the courses in ancient Greek literature, and especially in Greek tragedy, were all given on the basis of English translations.

<sup>18</sup> See Needham 1956; Fang 1966; Gernet 1982; Chen 2005.

<sup>19</sup> A lot has however been written since the end of the 20th century to reappraise the relationship between the Chinese language, logical thinking, and abstraction. See, among others: from the point of view of mentalities, Lloyd (1990, 105-134); for language and logic, see Wardy (2000, esp. the first chapter).

<sup>20</sup> These two works were translated into Chinese from 1625 by Francisco Furtado (a Portuguese Jesuite missionary, 1589–1653) and the Chinese *literatus* Li Zhizao (李之藻, 1565-1630). *On the Heavens* was translated under the title 寰有詮 (*Huan2 Yu3 Quan2*; Li 1628) and the *Categories* under the title 名理探 (*Ming2 Li3 Tan4*; Li 1631). The latter was published posthumously and only three copies have survived; a reprint was published in Taipei in 1965. For an assessment of Li's and Furtado's work on Aristotle's logic, see Wardy (2000, esp. 70-72 for a presentation of the work, and 79 for the general context in which the two translations were elaborated and published). For translations of Aristotle in China, see the synthetic presentation by Corsi (2008, esp. 178-179 for the missionaries period).

indestructible; astronomy can therefore prepare the reader to grasp the notion of transcendence.

The second role played by philosophy is connected to the standpoint of the Chinese cultural elites of the time and to their take on the definition of knowledge. They were interested in acquiring knowledge in the widest sense, without limiting the range of their interests to religion and theology. The two classical languages, Greek and Latin, were treated as tools to access ancient textual materials that were perceived as sharing the same cultural origin. In this regard, the Chinese cultural elites of the time operated with a wide notion of ‘philosophy,’ subsuming in this category not only philosophy in the technical sense of the term, but also a wide range of subjects from theology to the study of civilization.

Since then, this attitude has remained almost intact, so that nowadays Chinese scholars would have no difficulty in respecting the modern idea of ‘Classical Studies’ or ‘*Altertumswissenschaft*’ that was invented in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and was further elaborated in 19<sup>th</sup> century Germany. Whatever its presuppositions, Chinese intellectuals of the 19<sup>th</sup> century connected this approach with the Confucian take on the notion of history, as a sum of human knowledge, in a very positivist sense<sup>21</sup>. In this respect, the historical significance of these textual materials comes first, and other academic disciplines with more specific objects actually play only an auxiliary role. This situation also characterizes the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the two steps we will present next: the first wave of translation by Chinese scholars, and the significance of Ancient Greek culture to the New Culture movement.

### 3. The first wave of translation by Chinese scholars

Before and during the Qing Dynasty (1636–1912), the interest in ancient Greek and Latin was based on the personal enthusiasm of individuals. This situation started to change in the 1930s, when the first Chinese translators began translating the Greek originals directly into Chinese, although their work remained independent and individual. According to statistical data in a file of the Society of Literature

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<sup>21</sup> The turning point for the fashioning of this connection between the *Altertumswissenschaft* and the Confucian notion of history in China is the 19<sup>th</sup> century, during the Qing dynasty.

Studies<sup>22</sup>, there were three individuals who could read ancient Greek at the time: Zhou Zuoren, Xu Dishan, and Ye Qifang<sup>23</sup>. Zhou Zuoren focused his work on ancient Greek tragedy<sup>24</sup>. He later collaborated with Luo Niansheng, the first Chinese scholar to study ancient Greek in Greece<sup>25</sup>, who contributed significantly to the translation of ancient Greek literature into Chinese<sup>26</sup>. Along with his disciple Shui Jianfu<sup>27</sup>, he published the first ancient Greek-Chinese dictionary, which is still the only reference today in China<sup>28</sup>.

The activity of these scholars was the basis for the next waves of translations of ancient Greek originals in China, and it is important to point out that this enthusiasm is not purely academic. Today, this initial enthusiasm continues to encourage the development of education in ancient Greek. Almost all the above-mentioned translators saw ancient Greek culture as a resource to enlighten Chinese people and to bring

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<sup>22</sup> It was founded in Peking in 1921 by a group of famous writers and scholars in China. Its purpose was to study the world literature, to reorganize traditional literature, and to build a new epoch of Chinese literature.

<sup>23</sup> Zhou Zuoren (周作人, 1885-1967) is a Chinese essayist and translator who learned ancient Greek in Japan. Xu Dishan (许地山, 1894-1941) is a novelist and translator who learned ancient Greek, among other languages, at Oxford University (from which he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in 1926). Ye Qifang (叶启芳, 1898-1975) is a famous translator and professor of journalism.

<sup>24</sup> His translations of the tragedies of Euripides are included in his collected translations in four volumes (Zhou 2012). He also translated, in terms of original works: Apollodorus' *Bibliothèque* (translated 1937-1938, but progressively published in the journal *Yiwen Zazhi* (艺文杂志) and *Aesop's Fables* (translated in 1950-1951, first published in Zhou 1955). In terms of secondary literature, he translated the book on Greek gods, heroes, and men by W.H.D. Rouse (original published in 1934; a first version of the translation was published before 1950; the edition available today was published in 1950, see the bibliography under Zhou 1950).

<sup>25</sup> In Athens in 1933.

<sup>26</sup> Luo Niansheng (罗念生, 1904-1990) is a Chinese translator who had a command of ancient Greek and Latin that he learned in American Universities. He translated Aeschylus (1961), Sophocles (1961), Euripides and Aristophanes (1957, 1954 respectively), as well as Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and *Poetics* (1962), *Aesop's Fables* (1981), and Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* (2004, in his *Complete works*). He was the first to perform a Greek play in China, Sophocles' *Antigone* (in Chinese translation). Those translations are gathered in Luo 2004-2007.

<sup>27</sup> Shui Jianfu (1925-2008) was a translator and a scholar who specialized in ancient Greek literature.

<sup>28</sup> Luo 2004.

vitality to the old Chinese civilization. For this reason, this situation had concrete effects on the selection of the works to be translated: the translators chose the works that they perceived as most closely connected to humanism and to ethics and political philosophy, or to the aspects that they considered to be compatible with the Chinese tradition. This led to translating texts that are philosophical in the technical sense (as we could say that Plato's dialogues or Aristotle's treatises are) and a wider range of original works, which were seen as having value from a humanist perspective.

Although the translators of this period saw non-philosophical Greek texts as valuable from a humanistic perspective, they nevertheless saw philosophy as the most primary subject. They operated with a definition of philosophy, in the technical sense, as a subject aiming to supreme knowledge or to grasp the most fundamental principles of being. That is to say, what Aristotle would call the 'first philosophy.' From the standpoint of the Chinese elites in this period, ancient Greek philosophy was seen as what is basic to all other fields of human knowledge including literature, drama, theology, mythology and mythography, and so on. In this humanistic framework, studies of ancient Greece and the project of translating Greek works into Chinese were connected with different interpretations of modernity by the elites in the 1930s: the way to relate to ancient Greek texts and culture was perceived as an element of the wider issue of how China could relate to Western culture and to the notion of 'modernity.'

#### **4. Ancient Greece and the New Culture Movement**

This period of interest in translating ancient Greek originals into Chinese occurred at the same time as the New Culture Movement (from the mid 1910s and 1920s)<sup>29</sup>. Several important journals and publishing houses were founded in order to promote ideas of social reformation in the frameworks of both literary writing and debate practices. This is of

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<sup>29</sup> The New Culture Movement of the mid 1910s and 1920s sprang from the disillusionment with traditional Chinese culture following the failure of the Chinese Republic, founded in 1912 to address China's problems. Scholars like Chen Duxiu, Cai Yuanpei, Li Dazhao, Lu Xun, Zhou Zuoren, He Dong, and Hu Shih, had classical educations but began to lead a revolt against Confucianism. They called for the creation of a new Chinese culture based on global and Western standards, especially democracy and science.

interest for our purposes because two different approaches to ancient Greek were elaborated in this context. The two factions who opposed each other at the time were the *New Youth* and *Xueheng*. Intellectuals of the former were the leaders of the New Culture Movement: they were in favor of modernizing China, based on the principles of science and democracy. The proponents of the latter advocated the preservation of Chinese traditions and had a critical standpoint towards radical reformation. In spite of their ideological disagreements, both sides shared an equal admiration for ancient Greek culture, which they interpreted as the origin of human civilization.

The conservative *Xueheng School* was paradoxically the first to open up to so-called ‘Western’ civilization. Their proponents published a series of translations of philosophical works: Plato’s dialogues, and the ethical treatises of Aristotle. From their standpoint, the problem of modernization did not consist in a historical conflict — neither between the Western and Eastern traditions nor between an old tradition and a new one. Instead, they elaborated it as a radical conflict between civilization and barbarity. Within the framework of their project to reform of Chinese civilization and preserve its traditional culture, they were committed to promoting knowledge of ancient Greek civilization because they perceived it as an expression of the original spirit of human civilisation. In summary, their standpoint was to promote the influence of ancient Greek thought on the humanistic grounds of a shared human history — which they inherited from the conjunction of the spirit of *Altertumswissenschaft* and Confucian history, in the wake of the 19<sup>th</sup> century approach of the ancient Greek world in China that we depicted above.

The *New Youth* movement had a different take on the matter. At the core of their conceptual framework was a respect for modern science, which led them to reject the traditional Confucian view of history. Consequently they saw antiquity and modernity as strictly opposed, and favored the latter over the former. However, they acknowledged that the notion of ‘modernity’ they operated with was a construct inherited from the West — in this respect, they considered the ancient Greek roots of Western culture to be interesting up to a point, even within the framework of the general opposition that they accepted between ancient times and modernity. As a consequence, they acknowledged studies of the ancient Western world as relevant up to a point on the one hand but favored modernity on the other.

A third side appeared a few years later: *Fiction Monthly Magazine*<sup>30</sup>. Their standpoint on ancient Greek texts was presented as depoliticized and based on a universal humanistic spirit. They took an active role more in the field of literature than in that of teaching the language: they proposed general introductions to, and presentations of, the ancient sources on the basis of a translation (either in Chinese or in English). They tended to operate within the framework of the traditional erudite Chinese style of study.

In summary, only the members of *Xueheng School* and their followers had a strong motive to engage in teaching ancient Greek. For example, Guo Binhe collaborated with Zhang Zhuming for his translation of Plato<sup>31</sup>; Zhang Zhuming himself stayed in Nanjing University as a teacher. Their works are an important reference for scholars nowadays. The three Chinese scholars Zhou Zuoren, Xu Dishan, and Ye Qifang were also connected to the three movements depicted above, but their connections were complex and changed over time — it is beyond the purpose of the present article to reconstruct them in detail.

## 5. Ancient Greek in Chinese academia

In the academic field, there was a focus on ancient Greek philosophy as a technical subject, even though the general cultural background was still the wide humanistic approach presented above. The most active area of research related to Ancient Greece is philosophy, and as such, classes in Ancient Greek are offered predominantly in philosophy departments. As such, other fields (such as literature, mythography, or tragedy) were no longer perceived to be tightly connected to the study of philosophy in research and teaching programs. Even though the academic focus is on philosophy as a subject, the driving force towards its study is still rooted in problems that are universal and shared by all cultures. Following American and European scholarship, Chinese academics are

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<sup>30</sup> It was actually founded in 1910 but became active in this movement only in 1921.

<sup>31</sup> Guo Binhe (郭斌和, 1900-1987) translated five dialogues of Plato. They were published separately in *Xue Heng* (Shanghai: Zhonghua Shuju) from 1934. He then translated the *Republic* of Plato (1986). Zhang Zhuming (张竹明, 1932-) is his student and an expert of Greco-Roman culture. He translated Hesiod's *Work and Days* and *Theogony* (Zhang 1991); *The Complete Greek Tragedies and comedies*, in collaboration with Wang Huansheng (Zhang and Wang 2007).

nevertheless increasingly interested in the non-philosophical aspects of Ancient Greek literature and culture<sup>32</sup>. However the teaching of ancient Greek continues to be offered in philosophy departments.

Two pioneers in the pedagogical genealogy of philosophy as a technical subject, and of ancient Greek language, are Yan Qun and Chen Chung-Hwan, who both studied abroad<sup>33</sup>. As such, they contributed to the joint development of courses in ancient Greek philosophy and language in China, and were the starting point of this dynamic in Chinese academia.

Yan Qun was a professor in Hangzhou and was essentially interested in Plato and in Hellenistic philosophy; he founded the Center for Hellenistic Studies in Hangzhou<sup>34</sup>, where the studies focus not only on the major Hellenistic philosophies (Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Skepticism) but also on the interrelationships with Neoplatonism and with Christian thought. The first generation of his disciples include Chen CunFu<sup>35</sup>, One of his later disciples, Wang Xiaochao, translated the entire corpus of Plato into Chinese and opened another center in Beijing<sup>36</sup>.

Chen Chung-Hwan once taught a course in ancient Greek at the Associated University in Kunming. His interests focused on Aristotle,

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<sup>32</sup> See for instance the work undertaken by the Institute for the History of Ancient Civilizations at the the Northeast Normal University in Changchun (see the Journal of Ancient Civilizations, which has been published since 1986).

<sup>33</sup> Yan Qun (严群, 1907-1985) took his BA and MA from Yanjing University and then studied abroad (in the USA) until 1952, when he became a Professor at Zhejiang University. Chen Chung-Hwan (陈康, 1902-1992), took his BA from Dongnan University in 1924 and later studied abroad: first in England and then in Germany (for philosophy). He came to China during the Second World War in 1940, then worked at several Chinese universities (in Chong Qing in 1944; then he went back to the National South West Associated University in Kunming in 1945-1946; in 1947 he went to Beijing; in 1948 to Taiwan). He then worked at several universities in the US : Emory University, the University of California, the University of Texas, the University of South Florida. He died in California.

<sup>34</sup> It was founded in 1947, when Yan Qun came back from the United States.

<sup>35</sup> Chen Cunfu (陈村富, 1937-) took his BA and MA at Beijing University in 1960 and 1964; from 1965 he worked at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS); from 1976 at the university in Hangzhou.

<sup>36</sup> Wang Xiaochao (王晓朝, 1953-) took his BA and MA in Hangzhou (in 1984), where he became a Lecturer before taking a PhD from the University of Leeds in 1993. He now teaches in Beijing, at Qinghua University. He translated Plato's dialogues (Wang 2002).

and more marginally on Plato and the Platonic tradition (during Antiquity and beyond). The successive generations of his disciples strengthened his historical position, by founding research centers in Peking and in Chengdu. His disciple Miao LiTian founded in 1956 a centre for the classical period of ancient Greece at Renmin University in Peking.<sup>37</sup> He also directed a translation group on the works of Aristotle. Miao LiTian's student Xu KaiLai (徐开来) opened another centre, in Chengdu. He first developed this study in the Department of Philosophy, then, in 2003, founded the Research Institute for Ancient Greek and European Medieval Philosophy of Sichuan University.

In this short overview of how ancient Greek language and culture were introduced and how the study of them developed in China, we have emphasized the following aspects:

1. The introduction of ancient Greek cultural material was first connected to the Christian missionaries' religious purposes. This situation led to the first translations of ancient Greek philosophical texts, predominately Aristotle. It also led to the integration of ancient Greek philosophy into a wide notion of humanistic knowledge, although philosophy was still perceived within this framework as the most fundamental subject. This is because it was perceived to provide an explanation of the ultimate nature of things, as in the sense of Aristotle's 'first philosophy.'

2. From the 1910s to the 1930s, this humanistic take on ancient Greek culture was globally maintained in the debates on the modernization of China, although the different sides in the debate had different views on the role that ancient Greek culture could play in the relationship between (modern) Western and Chinese cultures. In any case, this period is still characterized by the idea that philosophy is the most fundamental knowledge that manifests in all other fields — hence the emphasis on translating works of literature, tragedy and mythology during this period.

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<sup>37</sup> Miao Litian (苗力田, 1917-2000) took his BA in Chongqing Center University (named today Nanjing University) in 1944; he then continued his studies in Beijing until 1949. He first taught at Nanjing University, then at Beijing University. After the foundation of Renmin University in Beijing in 1956, he taught there in the Department of Philosophy where he directed studies in Western Philosophy as an expert of ancient Greek philosophy.

3. The academic approach takes philosophy as a technical subject, focusing on authors that are considered to be philosophers in the technical sense, with a focus on teaching ancient Greek. The study of Greek literature or drama is not central in this respect.

## 2. PRESENTATION OF THE TEXTBOOK

In this part of the paper, we offer a preliminary presentation of the ancient Greek language textbook that we are writing in Chinese. This presentation is organized into five parts: 1. The aim and audience of the textbook. 2. The specific features of ancient Greek that pose challenges for Chinese-speaking students of ancient Greek. 3. The sort of difficulties Chinese students actually met, based on my teaching experience in China. 4. The structure of the textbook and the general outline of a given chapter. 5. As an example, a provisional state of the chapter on the subjunctive.

### 2.1. Aim and audience

Because the vast majority of Chinese students studying Ancient Greek do so in service of a philosophy major, we have written our Chinese-language textbook with their particular needs in mind. However, we also aim to make it useful to students in other majors and with different interests. As it stands, the focus on philosophy essentially consists in three aspects.

1. The authors from whom the exercise texts and sentences are excerpted belong mostly, but not exclusively, to the non-fragmentary philosophical tradition in prose: Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle, Plutarch, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, Plotinus, and others. We are also including biographers of philosophers, such as Diogenes Laertius. There are three points of importance:

1. The main linguistic focus is Attic Greek (typically, Xenophon and Plato).
2. We will not include sentences or texts when understanding their literal meaning requires prior technical knowledge in philosophy. We will for instance include a text of Plato that argues that “virtue can be taught,” but not an extract of the book 8 of Aristotle’s *Physics* on the first mover. In general, prior philosophical knowledge in the technical sense will not

be a requirement to translate the exercise sentences or more generally to use the textbook. The opposite view would be counter-productive not only with regard to our secondary targeted audience but also with regard to our primary intended audience. Students majoring in philosophy are also in the process of learning philosophy, and learning a language such as ancient Greek, with all its dissimilarities to Mandarin Chinese, is already a challenge on its own.

3. Of course, the textbook will cover aspects of the methodology of the interpretation of Greek philosophical texts in relationship to the questions of grammar, syntax, and so on. In such respect, technical texts such as those of *Physics* 8, or others, could be taken as example of how parsing, translation, and interpretation are interconnected — but this would be only in the later parts of the textbook, with no direct connection to the acquisition of morphology, grammar, and syntax.

2. The wordlist proposed in each chapter will reflect the choice of exercise texts and sentence. They will contain philosophical vocabulary (with a comparison with the usual meaning of the words in everyday language if they have one), non-technical philosophical vocabulary and basic general vocabulary.

3. The textbook will emphasize some frequent features of philosophical language, such as the substantivization of adjectives (τὸ ἀγαθόν, ‘what is good,’ ‘the good’), of participles (τὸ ὄν, ‘what is’), or of infinitives (τὸ καλῶς πράττειν, *litt.* ‘the fact of reaching success’). Extra attention will be paid to particles and conjunctions, since their analysis sheds light on the structure of an argument.

In summary, the sort of philosophical focus that our project entails in no way means that the textbook could be only used by students who major in philosophy, although they are our primary audience. We wish to create a tool to learn Greek that makes sense in today’s scholarly situation in China, but which will also hopefully remain useful in the future. For this reason we do not only aim at including basic linguistic information, but at providing a reasonably high level of technical information. For instance, the chapter on the subjunctive (presented below) will cover not only the main uses of this mood in both main and dependent clauses, but also rarer uses, such as μή + subjunctive expressing caution assertion (or

μή οὐ + subjunctive for a cautious negation) and οὐ μή + subjunctive expressing an emphatic future.

## 2.2. The linguistic difference: an outline

The linguistic difference between Chinese and ancient Greek raises specific challenges for native speakers of Chinese learning ancient Greek<sup>38</sup>.

Most features of morphology and syntax of one language have no equivalent in the other: Chinese has no alphabet, no tense, no moods, no inflection of any sort (for nouns, adjectives, or verbs). There is no gender and no plural. Although some words can take a suffix expressing that several persons are involved (including the personal pronouns)<sup>39</sup>, Chinese has nothing comparable to nominal or verbal inflections that we find in most Indo-European languages. Chinese is normally a SVO language that is generally left-branching. There is an equivalent of the verb ‘to be’ to express identity<sup>40</sup>, but this verb is normally not used in predicative structures involving adjectives<sup>41</sup>. The most important difference with ancient Greek is probably the nature of the words. The notion of nature is constructed differently in Chinese than in most Indo-European languages: the same sequence can act as a noun, a verbal adjective, a verb, or sometimes a preposition. The first problem faced by Chinese speakers in acquiring ancient Greek therefore consists in apprehending morphological and grammatical categories that are not operative in Chinese itself, at almost all levels.

A difficulty connected to this issue is that most of the meta-vocabulary used to describe a language such as ancient Greek in Chinese must also be acquired by the students and is for the most part new to them. This problem is made less prominent insofar as ancient Greek is generally not the first Indo-European language acquired by Chinese speakers—which generally is English. However in several

<sup>38</sup> The presentation that follows borrows elements from Jeroen Wiedenhof (2015).

<sup>39</sup> Ex. 我 *wo3* ‘I, me’, 我们 *wo3 men* ‘we, us’; 你 *ni3* ‘you’ (sg.) 你们 *ni3 men* ‘you’ (pl.); 他 *ta1* ‘he’; 他们 *ta1 men* ‘they, them’; 她 *ta1* ‘she, her’; 她们 *ta1 men* ‘they, them.’

<sup>40</sup> This verb is 是 *shi4*.

<sup>41</sup> However note the phrase 是 ... (verbal adjective)... 的, which puts emphasis on the verbal adjective.

regards many modern Indo-European languages are not as complex as ancient Greek; English itself presents a lesser degree of complexity for there are no genders, no declensions, fewer morphological models for conjugations, and so on. The nature of words in general is maybe more flexible in English than in Greek.

Chinese has nonetheless at least one important similarity with ancient Greek: verbal aspect<sup>42</sup>. The aspectual systems are differently structured. In Chinese, the three most common uses of aspect are to show the achievement of an action at the time of its enunciation, or to emphasize a change of state; the action's happening prior to the time of enunciation with a focus on personal experience; its happening during the time of enunciation<sup>43</sup>. Those uses of aspect only partly correspond to those of ancient Greek, although we may occasionally use them to render, in Chinese, a given aspectual value of the Greek (see examples below, for general prohibitions expressed in Greek with μή and imperative present; and for specific prohibitions, with μή + subjunctive aorist).

As we clearly see from this brief sketch, the numerous linguistic differences between Chinese and ancient Greek make it difficult to teach ancient Greek with English textbooks (even if they were translated into Chinese): an English textbook can obviously not be expected to explain linguistic notions that are already available in English (such as verb tense or predication using the verb 'to be'). Such notions require an explanation on the basis of a comparison between Chinese and ancient Greek; more generally, an introduction to ancient Greek designed for Chinese-speaking students should take into account all relevant linguistic differences. I (XG) progressively realized the importance and significance of these differences as I was learning Chinese myself and as I started teaching ancient Greek to Chinese-speaking students (as explained below). It does not escape my notice that, after having made all these points on the linguistic differences, there is a kind of paradox in presenting a sample chapter on the subjunctive in English. I chose to propose this sample chapter, however, to give the non-Chinese

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<sup>42</sup> Other features in common are the importance of dialects in modern Chinese, and melodic tone and There are four melodic tones and a neuter tone. See Wiedenhof (2015) 12–29.

<sup>43</sup> Respectively expressed by the particles 了 *le*, 过 *guo*, and 着 *zhe*. See Wiedenhof (2015), 220–232, who also distinguishes two other aspects (that he calls 'refreshing' and 'situational' aspects; 2015, 233–239).

speaking reader a concrete idea of what the textbook will look like; we have included insights on the translation of ancient Greek usages of the subjunctive into Chinese so that the reader can nevertheless form their own views on the translation options offered by Chinese.

### **2.3. A semester of teaching ancient Greek in China**

By the writing of this paper, I (XG) had taught ancient Greek to post-graduate students for one semester at Sichuan University. Although it was an advanced class, some students were beginning Greek and were taking the beginner class at the same time. The course I gave was in English and the students were expected to translate into English. Most of the students had English as a secondary language; some of them German as a third language. As a result, they did not face the general problems explained above, but faced instead difficulties similar to those of the students I taught in France: problems in parsing the Greek sentence, in morphological analysis, in assigning the right function to the right case, in using the dictionary, and a tendency to translate the words in the order in which they appear in the text.

Teaching this course also made it clear that the regular practice of prose composition was an absolute necessity in this specific learning context, because the morphological and syntactical processes of ancient Greek are completely different from those of Chinese. It not only helps the students learn and remember the forms, but also help acquiring the general features of the process of suffixation. It also provides them with a first-hand experience of the problems connected with word order.

All these issues were made even more prominent by the class taking place in English, and by the relative shortage of grammars and dictionaries of Greek available in Chinese.

### **2.4. The structure of the textbook**

For the reasons stated above, it appears to us necessary to provide a textbook in which the explanation of ancient Greek is based on a progressive account of the differences with Chinese.

The textbook will be divided into three volumes. The first volume will contain morphological and grammatical explanations (to be used by the teacher and students) and will also cover the methodology of

translation and similar information; the second, the exercises; the third, the correction of the exercises. The general structure of the learning program will be divided into thirty-four chapters, with a turning-point after the seventeenth chapter. This division into two-times-seventeen chapters is meant to fit the structure of the academic year in China, where each semester has seventeen weeks.

The first set of seventeen chapters aims at introducing the basics of ancient Greek language and the categories and terminology used to describe ancient Greek, with comparison with Chinese. The first third of this first volume will introduce to the main features of ancient Greek morphology, grammar, and syntax: the nature of the words, function, stem, ending, prefix, suffix; declension, conjugation; gender, quantity, verbal persons; tenses, moods, voices. The objective of this first third is to acquire the basic notions and terminology listed above, while limiting morphology to the present indicative of non-contract verbs and εἰμί, the first two declensions, and the first class of adjectives. In the general introduction, a short overview of each mood will be provided, as well as a sketch of the morphological system. Progressively, differences in moods, tenses, and nominal and verbal paradigms will be introduced. By the end of the first set of seventeen chapters, the students will be expected to have mastered:

1. In terms of verbal morphology: in all three voices, the indicative, infinitive, participle, and imperative moods; the present, imperfect, aorist (athematic and thematic), and future (sigmatic and contract) tenses. This for all non-irregular thematic verbs and for εἰμί.

2. In terms of nominal/adjectival morphology: the main paradigms of the three declensions, the three classes of adjectives, comparative and superlative; most prepositional phrases, the three demonstrative pronouns, personal pronouns, and so on.

This leaves the more complex syntactic structures for the second set of seventeen chapters, especially subordination and the moods associated with it (subjunctive, optative), relative pronouns and relative clauses, and so on.

Each of the thirty-four chapter will associate aspects of morphology and aspects of syntax as tightly as possible. The general structure will be as follows:

1. Morphology:

- a) Explanations and tables.
- b) Short exercises in declension or conjugation.

2. Syntax:

- a) Explanation in the syntax/use of the point of morphology under study, with examples from authors.
- b) Short exercises (such as associating a given Greek sentence with a given use, without providing a translation).

3. Word list, extracted from the sentences in the syntax and exercise parts. This part also includes a focus on a conjunction or sequence of particles (μὲν γάρ, καὶ δὲ καί, etc.) and on a preposition.

4. Exercises:

- a) Translation of a few short artificial sentences.
- b) Translation of sentences excerpted from various authors, with a focus on philosophical corpora.
- c) Other exercises whenever possible (e.g. in the chapter on the relative clause, transform two Greek sentences into one, without proposing a translation).
- d) Prose composition. One exercise will consist in translating individual sentences into Greek, another a small text (to allow better work on the coordination between sentences).
- e) Translation of an ancient Greek text (in the first chapters, the text will be adapted, but the idea is for the students to very quickly confront the sorts of issues we face when reading an actual text).

## **2.5. Example: the chapter on the subjunctive**

Below, we provide a provisional version of the chapter on the subjunctive, to give an outline of the content and exercises proposed in the textbook (we do not include the word list in this provisional version). An earlier version of this chapter was actually handed out to the students in the advanced Greek course mentioned above in the spring semester 2017–2018. This earlier version included the current introductory

section, section on morphology and syntax, and a simplified version of the ‘exercises’ section.

In the part on morphology, the explanation provided for each tense will include an account of the general morphological processes and a list of forms that are identical to those of other moods and/or tenses. For instance, that in the sigmatic aorist active subjunctive, the first person singular  $\lambda\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\omega$  is identical in form with the first person singular future indicative active. We chose not to reproduce all the morphological tables here, for the sake of clarity; we are only raising the example of the subjunctive aorist active, to give an overview of the general approach.

The part on syntax is deliberately presented as an analytical classification of the uses of the subjunctive mood. This choice is meant to help the students memorize all the main syntactical options in the use of subjunctive by directly providing them with a systematic explanation. This option may be more demanding to the learners than fragmenting the information through several chapters, but it is ultimately more rewarding. It seems to us of paramount importance that, given the language difference, the students are provided as clear and systematic a picture as possible from the start. To help them form a synthetic picture, a table is provided to summarize the various uses and the criteria on which they can be distinguished. This way, the exercises could also focus on how the syntactical uses of the subjunctive should be sorted out when reading an actual text. We also include here an overview of how those grammatical structures could be translated into Chinese and an explanation of the specific problems that it raises (in brackets, after the explanation of each use of the subjunctive). Sometimes, the aspectual system of Chinese enables the translation to reflect the meaning of the Greek better than the English, for instance in rendering the difference between a general prohibition ( $\mu\acute{\eta}$  + present imperative) and a specific prohibition ( $\mu\acute{\eta}$  + aorist subjunctive).

The exercises give examples of the various uses, with a specific focus on the final clauses, future conditions and present iterative, because they are likely to be more often represented in philosophical corpora than prohibitions, deliberative subjunctives, or cautious assertions. We have not included here an example of prose composition exercises, since it would of little relevance to see English texts rendered into Greek here.

In this sample chapter we also include some comments in brackets for the sake of clarity. They are not meant to be accessible to the students in the final version of the textbook.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The subjunctive is one of the six moods that exist in Greek (in addition to the indicative, imperative, optative; and to the infinitive and participle, which are nominal forms of the verb). Its general meaning is to express **will** and **possibility**. In a general fashion, the subjunctive expresses an action that is not actual or has yet to be accomplished, whether because it is hypothetical or because it will occur in the future (as opposed to the indicative).

## 2. MORPHOLOGY

The morphology of the subjunctive is based on a lengthening of the thematic vowel. For instance, whereas we find in the present indicative active λύ-ο-μεν ('we release'), the subjunctive will be λύ-ω-μεν.

### *Example: the morphology of the aorist subjunctive active*

In the aorist, the stem used to construct the subjunctive is the same as the stem used to construct the indicative. There is no augment (which we find only in the indicative). The endings used are those of the present active, with a lengthening of the thematic vowel. We therefore find:

Type	Aorist indicative active	Aorist subjunctive active
sigmatic aorist	ἔλυσσα	λύσω
thematic aorist	ἔμαθον	μάθω
-μι verbs with reduplication	ἔστην	στῶ
long vowel aorist	γινώσκω	γνῶ

The long-vowel aorists tend to form their subjunctive aorist like the -μι verbs with reduplication, and they will be studied together.

### 1. Sigmatic aorists: ἔλυσσα > λύσω

The general formation is:

*Stem — σ — lengthened thematic vowel - endings (of the present active)*

λύω > ἔλυσα	ποιέω (-ῶ) > ἐποίησα	τιμάω (-ῶ) > ἐτίμησα	δηλόω (-ῶ) > ἐδήλωσα
<u>λύσω</u>	<u>ποιήσω</u>	<u>τιμήσω</u>	<u>δηλώσω</u>
λύσης	ποιήσης	τιμήσης	δηλώσης
λύση	ποιήση	τιμήση	δηλώση
λύσωμεν	ποιήσωμεν	τιμήσωμεν	δηλώσωμεν
λύσητε	ποιήσητε	τιμήσητε	δηλώσητε
λύσωσι(ν)	ποιήσωσι(ν)	τιμήσωσι(ν)	δηλώσωσι(ν)

NB: The first person singular (underlined) is morphologically identical to the first person future indicative.

In this category also belongs the aorist subjunctive of a few -μι verbs:

ἔστησα 'I placed'	δείκνυμι > ἔδειξα	φημί > ἔφησα
<u>στήσω</u>	<u>δείξω</u>	<u>φήσω</u>
στήσης	δείξης	φήσης
στήση	δείξη	φήση
στήσωμεν	δείξωμεν	φήσωμεν
στήσητε	δείξητε	φήσητε
στήσωσι(ν)	δείξωσι(ν)	φήσωσι(ν)

### Exercise1: fill in the following table

Form	Parsing
δικάσητε	
	3 <sup>rd</sup> sg. aorist subjunctive active of φιλέω
τρίψης	
	1 <sup>st</sup> sg. aorist subjunctive active of ἐπιδείκνυμι
δουλώσωμεν	

## 2. Thematic aorists: μάθω, μάθης, etc.

The general formation is:

*strong aorist stem - lengthened thematic vowel - endings*

μανθάνω 'I learn' > ἔμαθον	ἄγω 'I lead' > ἤγαγον	λέγω 'I say' > εἶπον
μάθω	ἄγαγω	εἶπω
μάθης	ἄγαγης	εἶπης
μάθη	ἄγαγη	εἶπη
μάθωμεν	ἄγαγωμεν	εἶπωμεν
μάθητε	ἄγαγητε	εἶπητε
μάθωσι(ν)	ἄγαγωσι(ν)	εἶπωσι(ν)

**Exercise2: fill in the following table:**

Present indicative	Aorist indicative	Aorist subjunctive
λείπω	ἔλιπον	
ἐσθίομεν		φάγωμεν
τίκτετε	ἐτέκετε	
τυγχάνουσι(v)		τύχωσι(v)
βάλλει	ἔβαλον	

**3. -μι verbs with reduplication; long-vowel aorists**

The general formation is:

*Stem (Short version) + thematic vowel – endings*

In these forms, the short version of the stem, normally used in the aorist indicative (στα-, θε-, δο-, ἐ-), is contracted with the lengthened thematic vowel: \*στάω > στῶ; \*θέω > θῶ; \*δόω > δῶ; \*ἔ-ω > ῶ. Note that the contraction of o and η is ω.

ἵστημι > ἕστην 'I stood'	τίθημι > ἔθηκα 'I put'	δίδωμι > ἔδωκα 'I gave'	ἵημι > ἤκα 'I sent'
στῶ	θῶ	δῶ	ῶ
στῆς	θῆς	δῆς	ῆς
στῆ	θῆ	δῆ	ῆ
στῶμεν	θῶμεν	δῶμεν	ῶμεν
στήτε	θήτε	δῶτε	ῆτε
στῶσι(v)	θῶσι(v)	δῶσι(v)	ῶσι(v)

In this category also belong long vowel aorists; note however that the -υ- stems do not contract with the ending (φύω > ἔφυν > φύω):

γινώσκω 'I know' > ἔγνων	βαίνω 'I walk' > ἔβην	φύω 'I grow' > ἔφυν
γνῶ	βῶ	φύω
γνῶς	βῆς	φύης
γνῶ	βῆ	φύη
γνῶμεν	βῶμεν	φύομεν
γνώτε	βήτε	φύητε
γνώσι(v)	βῶσι(v)	φύοσι(v)

**Exercise3: translate the following aorists directly into the Greek subjunctive**

We stood; they gave; you knew; she sent; you put (plural); I gave; you put (singular); they stood; we walked; they grew.

### 3. USES OF THE SUBJUNCTIVE

The subjunctive has several very different uses that are all somewhat connected to the notions of will and possibility. In the following presentation, the uses are classified according to their syntactical contexts.

#### 1. In main or independent clauses.

##### 1. *Deliberative subjunctive*

The deliberative subjunctive is used in an interrogative clause, when the speaker is wondering what s/he is going to do. This use is normally restricted to the 1<sup>st</sup> person (singular or plural). The negative is μή.

ex. Εἴπωμεν ἢ σιγῶμεν; “Should we speak or remain silent?”

ex. Τί λέγω; “What am I to say?” (Here the present subjunctive active is identical in form with the present indicative active)

ex. Τί πράξω; “What am I to do?” (Here the aorist subjunctive active is identical in form with the future indicative active)

The interrogative clause may be dependent on another verb:

ex. Βούλεσθε ταῦτα εἶπω; “Do you wish that I should say this?”

[A Greek deliberative subjunctive can be translated in Chinese by using the auxiliary verb 要 *yao4*. For instance, τί λέγω; could be translated 我要说什么呢? (*wo3 yao4 shuo1 shen2 me ne?*). The auxiliary verb 要 *yao4* here conveys the notion of a light obligation. This option opposes to two other possibilities, which are in our opinion not as good: 1. merely translating by a future, which does not render as closely the meaning of the subjunctive in the Greek (with a future the sentence would be 我会说什么呢? *wo3 hui4 shuo1 shen2 me ne?*). 2. Translating with a strong notion of obligation, because the Greek would convey it differently, e.g. with the expression of necessity (in Chinese, it would be for instance 我必须说什么呢? (*wo3 bi4 xu1 shuo1 shen2 me ne?*, litt. “what is it is necessary that I say?”)].

##### 2. *Order and exhortation*

The subjunctive expresses orders or exhortations in verbal persons that do not exist in the imperative—that is to say, in the 1<sup>st</sup> persons singular and plural:

ex. Ἴωμεν. “Let us go!”

ex. Ἴδωμεν. “Let us see.”

[The Greek ἴωμεν would be translated in Chinese in a neutral way by 我们走 (*wo3 men zou3*, litt. ‘we go’). The imperative value of ἴωμεν could be emphasised by translating 让我们一起走 (*rang4 wo3 men yi4 qi3 zou3*): the auxiliary verb 让 *rang4* implies that something external is compelling us or encouraging us to perform the action; the adverbial phrase 一起 *yi4 qi3* (‘together’) is added to underline the number of the grammatical subject. To emphasize the exhortative force, the Chinese could translate by 我们走吧 (*wo3 men zou3 ba*), where the particle 吧 *ba* has an exhortative force and makes the sentence sound like a proposal.]

### 3. Prohibition

The aorist subjunctive may be used with μή to express a prohibition. Both terms are important: we normally find neither another tense nor οὐ. In this use, the aorist has an aspectual force: this aorist subjunctive with μή expresses a specific prohibition, as opposed to μή + present imperative, which expresses a general prohibition.

ex. Μὴ δικάσητε παρὰ τοὺς νόμους. “Do not judge against the laws” (*scil.* now, or in the present situation).

*vs.* Μὴ δικάζετε παρὰ τοὺς νόμους. “Do not judge against the laws” (*scil.* in general).

In the example above, the present imperative δικάζετε gives a general or habitual force to the prohibition: we may imagine that a magistrate is prescribing judges *never* to judge against the laws whatever the particulars of the situation. In the aorist, δικάσητε, the meaning is different: the speaker asks the judge not to judge against the laws in this particular case they are soon going to judge.

ex. Μὴ εἴπητε. “Do not speak” (*scil.* now, or in the present situation).

*vs.* Μὴ λέγετε. “Do not speak” (*scil.* habitually).

In this example too, the first sentence (with an aorist subjunctive) expresses a specific prohibition—the order takes effect at the moment when it is pronounced. The second sentence (with a present imperative) is a general prescription to remain silent.

[Chinese has various ways to express prohibition, and it can also convey the difference in aspect that exists in Greek by using its own aspectual particles. Let us take the example of μή εἴπητε as opposed to μή λέγετε. The latter could be translated 不许说话 (*bu4 xu3 shuo1 hua4*): 不许 (*bu4 xu3*) expresses the prohibition and 说话 (*shuo1 hua4*) means ‘to speak’ (the first character is the verb, the second the object). This can be used for a prohibition with general force (e.g. “do not speak in a library”). The prohibition with an aorist subjunctive can be rendered by adding the modal particle 了 *le* at the end of the sentence: 不许说话了 (*bu4 xu3 shuo1 le*). The modal particle 了 *le* here denotes a change of state as the consequence of the action expresses in the clause; the speaker expects an immediate reaction from the addressee. This sort of use of the particles is particularly important to explain to the students, for in this case a translation by 不许说话 (*bu4 xu3 shuo1*) would be too literal and would precisely not render the aspectual force of the Greek clause. Another option with similar meaning is 不再说话 (*bu4 zai4 shuo1 hua4*), as opposed to 不再说话了 (*bu4 zai4 shuo1 hua4 le*); the nuance is that introducing the prohibition with 不再 *bu4 zai4* conveys the idea of *do not speak anymore*.]

## 2. In dependent clauses

### 1. Final clause

After primary tenses (= present, future, gnomic aorist), final clauses take the subjunctive. Final clauses are generally introduced by subordinate conjunctions such as ἵνα, ὄφρα, ὅπως (their usual translation is “in order that”, “in order to”, “so that”). The negative is μή.

ex. Εἶσιν ἵνα τοῦτο ἴδῃ. “He will come in order to see this.”

ex. Παρακαλεῖς ἰατροῦς, ὅπως μὴ ἀποθάνῃ. “You call in physicians, so that he may not die.” (Xenophon)

Nota bene: this use of the subjunctive with ὅπως or ὄφρα must be distinguished from object clauses after verbs of striving and of caring. Such clauses begin with ὄφρα or ὅπως, followed with future indicative (negative: μή):

ex. Φρόντιζε ὅπως καλῶς πράξεις. “Take heed that you behave well.”

Attic writers, however, sometimes use the subjunctive (or oblique optative) after a verb of striving.

ex. Ἄλλου του ἐπιμελήσει ἢ ὅπως ὁ τι βέλτιστοι πολῖται ὤμεν;  
“Will you care for anything except that we may be the best possible citizens?” (Plato)

[The Greek εἶσιν ἵνα τοῦτο ἴδῃ could be translated in Chinese by 他为看这个而来 *ta1 wei4 kan4 zhe4 ge er2 lai2*. This literally means ‘he comes in order to see this,’ or if we respect the word order in Chinese: *he in-order-to see this so comes*. This option in Chinese is opposed to two others, which are not as good with respect to the Greek: 1. a mere expression of the future, 他会来看这个 *ta1 hui4 lai2 kan4 zhe4 ge* (litt. “he will come (to) see this”); the problem is that the final force is not explicitly rendered. 3. A reversal into a causal structure, 他来是为了看这个 *ta1 lai2 shi4 wei4 le kan4 zhe4 ge* (litt. “he comes for the reason of seeing this”). The problem is obviously that the Greek could have reversed the meaning of the final clause into a causal structure but did not do so.]

## 2. Object clauses after verbs of fearing

After verbs expressing fear, caution, or danger, in the primary tenses, the dependent clause beginning with μή takes the subjunctive.

ex. Φοβοῦμαι μή τοῦτο γένηται. “I am afraid that this will happen.”

Nota bene: Here μή is **not** a negative but a subordinate conjunction. The negative is οὐ:

ex. Φοβοῦμαι μή τοῦτο οὐ γένηται. “I am afraid that this will **not** happen.”

[The Greek φοβοῦμαι μή τοῦτο γένηται can be translated in Chinese by 我怕会这样 *wo3 pa4 hui4 zhe4 yang3* (litt. “I fear that <it> will <happen> this way,” i.e. “I fear that it will be so”). The verb ‘to happen’ (发生 *fa1 sheng1*) is normally omitted in Chinese in such a situation; it can be made explicit, but the clause is less natural.]

### 3. Future condition

To express future conditions, the Greek uses the subjunctive (generally in the aorist) with ἄν in the dependent clause, and the future indicative (without ἄν) in the main clause. Negative: μή.

ex. Ἐὰν ἔλθῃς, καὶ ἐγὼ ἐλεύσομαι. “If you go, I will go too.”

[The best option in Chinese consists in translating with a conditional relative structure, but with a main verb in the present: 如果你去, 我也就去 *ru2 guo3 ni3 qu4, wo3 ye3 jiu4 qu4*. The conjunction 如果 *ru2 guo3* expresses hypothesis and introduces the dependent clause (before the comma); in the main clause, the adverb 就 *jiu4* expresses the consequence connected to the completion of the hypothesis. This sentence has therefore a strong conditional value in Chinese. Using a future in the main clause in Chinese is less natural: 如果你去, 我也将会去 *ru2 guo3 ni3 qu4, wo3 ye3 jiang1 hui4 qu4* (where 将会 *jiang1 hui4* expresses the future). This sounds more like a literal translation of the Greek than a genuinely Chinese sentence. In summary, the second option is formally closer to the Greek but the first one is better for the meaning].

### 4. Present iterative

To express the repetition of an action in the present, the Greek uses the subjunctive (generally in the aorist) with ἄν in the dependent clause, and the present indicative (without ἄν) in the main clause. Negative: μή.

ex. Ὅταν ἀπίῃ, εὐδαίμων εἰμί. “Every time (/When) he leaves, I am happy.”

ex. Ἐὰν ἔγγυς θάνατος ἔλθῃ, οὐδεὶς βούλεται θανεῖν. “When death draws near, nobody wants to die.”

Nota bene: Εἰ with ἄν may take the following forms: ἐάν, ἦν, ἄν.

Ὅτε with ἄν may take the form: ὄταν.

Ἐπειδὴ with ἄν may take the form: ἐπειδάν.

[The Greek ὄταν ἀπίῃ, εὐδαίμων εἰμί can be translated in Chinese by saying literally “every time he leaves, I as-a-consequence <am> happy”: 每次他走, 我就开心了 *mei3 ci2 ta1 zou3, wo3 jiu4 kai1 xin1 le*. We find in the second clause the adverb 就 *jiu4*, which emphasizes that this

clause expresses the result of the first clause. We also find the modal particle 了 *le*, which here expresses a change of state resulting from the action that the “he” leaves (cf. above, the expression of prohibition). This translation therefore matches the Greek in both form and meaning. A less accurate translation could be 他一走我就开心 *ta1 yi1 zou3 wo1 jiu4 kai1 xin1* (litt. “as soon as he leaves, I am happy”; the structure 一 *yi1* + verb/verbal adjective... 就 *jiu4* + verb/verbal adjective, which we translated by “as soon as”, has actually both temporal and consecutive meanings. For this reason, the former option matches the meaning of the Greek better.]

##### 5. After temporal conjunctions: ‘until’

The subjunctive can be used after temporal conjunctions whose general meaning is ‘until’ to express the moment until which an action lasts. This meaning is found with ἕως ἄν:

ex. Μαχούμεθα ἕως ἄν δούλους θῶμεν τοὺς ἐχθρούς. “We will fight until we make slaves of our enemies.”

This use generally follows the principles for future conditions. We may also find this use with πρίν, but only after a negative:

Ex. Οὐ χρή με ἐνθένδε ἀπελθεῖν, πρίν ἄν δῶ δίκην. “I must not depart from here until I am punished.” (Xenophon)

We normally find πρίν ἄν in this use, but sometimes πρίν alone.

[The first example, μαχούμεθα ἕως ἄν δούλους θῶμεν τοὺς ἐχθρούς, could be translated in a similar way as the Greek: 我们将战至把敌人变成奴隶 *wo3 men jiang1 zhan4 zhi4 ba3 di2 ren2 bian4 cheng2 nu2 li4* (litt. “we will fight until we make them slaves”). “ἕως ἄν is translated by 至 *zhi4*, which is here a conjunction; the subjunctive is not literally translated in this sentence. The phrase δούλους θῶμεν τοὺς ἐχθρούς is rendered with a typically Chinese phrasing: 把 *ba3* anticipates the verbal object (τοὺς ἐχθρούς, 敌人 *di2 ren2*) before the verb (θῶμεν, here 变 *bian4*, litt. ‘make, transform’); the verb is followed by a post-verbal particle, 成 *cheng2*, followed by the result of the transformative process (δούλους, 奴隶 *nu2 li4*).]

### 3. Other uses of the subjunctive

The subjunctive may be used in other, rarer contexts. Cautious assertion and emphatic futures derive from II.2 (the subjunctive in object clauses after verbs of fearing).

#### 1. Cautious assertions

The subjunctive in independent clauses may be used after μή to express a cautious assertion or a suspicion that something may be true. The negative is οὐ: the phrase μή οὐ... + subjunctive then expresses a cautious *negation* or a suspicion that something may *not* be true.

ex. Μὴ ἀγροικότερον ἢ τὸ ἀληθὲς εἰπεῖν. “I suspect that the truth may be too rude a thing to tell.” (Plato)

ex. Ἀλλὰ μὴ οὐ τοῦτ' ἢ χαλεπὸν. “But <I rather think that> this may **not** be a difficult thing.” (Plato)

This use derives from the subjunctive in object clauses after verbs of fearing insofar as it behaves exactly as though there was an implicit verb of fearing before μή.

[The first example sentence, μὴ ἀγροικότερον ἢ τὸ ἀληθὲς εἰπεῖν, could be translated by: 恐怕说出真相太莽撞 *kong3 pa4 shuo1 chul zhen1 xiang4 tai4 mang3 zhuang4* (litt. “<There is> fear <that> speaking out the truth <is> too rash.”). Here, the meaning of the Greek must be elicited by the addition of a verb such as ‘to fear’ (here, 恐怕 *kong3 pa4*) or ‘to suspect.’ However, as in Greek, the Chinese sentence can omit explicit mention of the speaker, contrary to English: the ‘I’ in ‘I fear’ is left implicit.]

#### 2. Οὐ μή + subjunctive = emphatic future.

The subjunctive in independent clauses after οὐ μή is the equivalent of an emphatic future. The phrase Οὐ μή + subjunctive literally means “There is absolutely no reason to fear that...”, as though the Greek had said: Οὐ <φοβοῦμαι> μή + subjunctive.

ex. Οὐ μὴ πίθηται. “He will not obey” (Sophocles)

ex. Οὐ ποτ' ἐξ ἐμοῦ γε μὴ πάθης τάδε. “You will not suffer this, at least not at my hands.” (Sophocles)

ex. Οὐ μὴ ἀρετὴ διδακτὸν ἦ. “There is no way that virtue could be taught!”

[The first example sentence can be translated by a mere future, as in the English translation proposed above: 他不会服从 *ta1 bu4 hui4 fu2 cong2* (litt. “he will not obey”). It is possible to translate by making the verb ‘to fear’ (怕 *pa4*) explicit in Chinese and negating it (with 不 *bu4*): 不怕他会屈服 *bu4 pa4 ta1 hui4 qu1 fu4* (litt. “no fear that he will obey”). However this sentence has a slightly different meaning than the Greek, since it emphasizes the involvement of the speaker (who has made everything he could for the action in the dependent clause not to happen, including taking counter-measures for unexpected cases). It is therefore better to translate along the lines of 不用过虑他会屈服 *bu4 yong4 guo4 lu4 ta1 hui4 qu1 fu4* (litt. “no need to worry unnecessarily (/to fear that) that he obeys”). In this sentence, the emphatic force of οὐ μὴ + subjunctive is rendered by 不用 *bu4 yong4* (‘no need’), which does not have the psychological connotations of the former sentence.]

#### 4. Summary table

Criterion		Uses	
Subjunctive in independent/main clauses	Verb in the 1 <sup>st</sup> pers. sg/pl		
	Deliberative subjunctive		
	Exhortative subjunctive		
	With μή	Verb in the aorist	Specific prohibition
		Any tense	Cautious assertion (suspicion that something may be true).
With μή οὐ		Cautious negation (suspicion that something may <i>not</i> be true).	
With οὐ μή		Emphatic future	
Subjunctive in dependent clauses	With ἄν	Main verb in the present indicative	Present iterative
		Main verb in the future indicative	Future condition
	After ἵνα, ὄφρα, ὅπως... (not following a verb of striving!)		Final subordinate clause
	After μή following a verb of fearing		Object clause after a verb of fearing
	After ἕως ἄν, after πρίν following a negative		‘Until’

## 4. EXERCISES

**1. Translate [artificial sentences]**

1. Ποῦ ἀφῶμεν τὸ ἀργύριον ;
2. Ἐπιτίθεσθαι ἔγνων τοῖς τῆς πόλεως πράγμασιν, ἵν' ἀνὴρ δυνατὸς γένωμαι.
3. Οὐ μὴ οἱ συμμάχοι προδοῦσιν τὴν πόλιν.
4. Μὴ οὐ οἱ φίλοι με ἀφιῶσιν.
5. Ἴνα τὴν τῶν Ἑλλήνων γλῶτταν μάθῃς, προσήκει σοι πάνυ ἐργάζεσθαι.
6. Ἐὰν ἀργύριόν αὐτοῖς δωθήσεται ὑφ' ἡμῶν, αὐτὸ δαπανῶσιν.

**2. Associate each sentence with its correct description. Then translate the sentences.**

[For the sake of clarity in this paper, I have underlined the subjunctive forms and I have not modified the order of the descriptions (sentence 1 is described in description a; sentence 2 in description b; and so on).]

1. Ὀρῶσι τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους οὐ πρόσθεν ἀπιόντας, πρὶν ἂν ἀφῶσιν οἱ ἄρχοντες. (Xenophon)
2. Εἰ ἀπεκρίνω, ἱκανῶς ἂν ἤδη ἐμεμαθήκη.
3. Ἐγὼ δὲ σὲ τιμῶν μὴ τιμῶντα πλοῦτον δόξω θαυμάζειν τε καὶ διώκειν, τοῦτο δ' ἴσμεν ὅτι παρὰ πᾶσιν ὄνομα οὐ καλὸν ἔχει. (Plato)
4. Φεῦ φεῦ, τί εἶπω παρθένου μέγαν λόγον κλύων; (Euripides adapted)
5. Ἄπας λόγος, ἂν ἀπῆ τὰ πράγματα, μάταιόν τι φαίνεται καὶ κενόν. (Demosthenes)
6. Εἵπερ δὲ οὐκ ἄλλως ἔστιν ἐλληνίζειν ἐὰν μὴ παρὰ γραμματικῆς μάθωμεν τὸ ἐλληνικόν, ἤτοι ἐναργές ἐστι τοῦτο καὶ ἐξ αὐτοῦ βλεπόμενον ἢ ἀδηλότερον. (Sextus Empiricus)

- a. Πρὶν ἂν + subjunctive.
- b. No subjunctive but a middle indicative aorist and a plu-perfect.
- c. No subjunctive but a future indicative.
- d. Deliberative subjunctive.

- e. Present iterative.
- f. Present iterative in the negative.

### 3. Translate [sentences from authors]

1. Οἶον διὰ τί περιπατεῖ; ὅπως ὑγιαίνει. (Aristotle) [Final clause]
2. Αὐτάρκης ἔση, ἂν μάθῃς τί τὸ καλὸν κάγαθόν ἐστι. (Plutarch) [Future condition]
3. Μίαν φωνὴν οἱ Ῥωμαίων παῖδες ἀληθῆ παρ' ὅλον τὸν βίον προΐενται, τὴν ἐν ταῖς διαθήκαις λέγων, ἵνα μὴ ἀπολαύσωσι τῆς σφετέρας ἀληθείας. (Lucian) [Final clause in the negative]
4. Ἀτὰρ καὶ ἐγὼ σὲ παρακαλῶ, μὴ ἡμῖν ὁ Πρωταγόρας τὸν Σιμωνίδην ἐκπέρσῃ. (Plato) [Prohibition in the aorist subjunctive]
5. Ἐπειδὴν οὖν ἄρξωνται τῆς θεωρίας, νόμος ἐστὶν αὐτοῖς ἐν τῷ χρόνῳ τούτῳ καθαρεύειν τὴν πόλιν καὶ δημοσίᾳ μηδένα ἀποκτείνουσαι. (Plato) [Present iterative]
6. Ἀλλὰ πολὺ μᾶλλον φοβοῦμαι μὴ αὔριον τηνικάδε οὐκέτι ἢ ἀνθρώπων οὐδεὶς ἀξίως οἷός τε τοῦτο ποιῆσαι. (Plato). [Object clause after verbs of fearing]
7. Καί μοι, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, μὴ θορυβήσητε, μηδ' ἐὰν δόξω τι ὑμῖν μέγα λέγειν. (Plato) [Prohibition in the aorist subjunctive; future condition]
8. “Γάμον,” εἶπεν, “ἤδη σοι δίδωσιν ὁ πατήρ; Τί γὰρ ἠδίκησας, ἵνα καὶ πεδηθῆς; [...] Ὡ πάντα τολμῶσαι γυναῖκες· κἂν φιλῶσι, φονεύουσι· κἂν μὴ φιλῶσι, φονεύουσιν. (Achilles Tatius) [Final clause; iterative clauses in the positive and negative].

### 4. Translate this short text from Xenophon

[For the sake of clarity in this paper, I have underlined the subjunctives. This text is meant to check whether the students can properly recognize conditional clauses and properly distinguish between present iterative and future conditions.]

*Socrates depicts how much wine should be drunk during the symposium, and how it should be drunk.*

Ὅταν μὲν ὁ θεὸς αὐτὰ ἄγαν ἀθρόως ποτίζη, οὐ δύναται ὀρθοῦσθαι οὐδὲ ταῖς αὔραις διαπνεῖσθαι· ὅταν δ' ὅσῳ ἥδεται τοσοῦτον πίνῃ, καὶ

μάλα ὀρθά τε αὔξεται καὶ θάλλοντα ἀφικνεῖται εἰς τὴν καρπογονίαν. Οὕτω δὲ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἂν μὲν ἀθρόον τὸ ποτὸν ἐγγεώμεθα, ταχὺ ἡμῖν καὶ τὰ σώματα καὶ αἱ γνῶμαι σφαλοῦνται, καὶ οὐδὲ ἀναπνεῖν, μὴ ὅτι λέγειν τι δυνησόμεθα· ἂν δὲ ἡμῖν οἱ παῖδες μικραῖς κύλιξι πυκνὰ ἐπιπακάζωσιν, ἵνα καὶ ἐγὼ ἐν Γοργιεῖσις ῥήμασιν εἶπω, οὕτως οὐ βιαζόμενοι μεθύειν ὑπὸ τοῦ οἴνου ἀλλ' ἀναπειθόμενοι πρὸς τὸ παιγνιωδέστερον ἀφιξόμεθα.

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