

Karamanlica Phonetics

First, the good news. MOST of the letters in Karamanlica are straightforward and more or less the same as Modern Greek. *Later standardized forms of Karamanlica used a system of adding dots on top of letters to make different letters. Unfortunately, those symbols don't exist in unicode so I had to mess around in MS Word to type them.*

In PURPLE are the letters that are the most irregular. There are many different ways of representing these sounds and they can vary from text to text. But if you have an understanding of Modern Greek phonetics it is not that difficult to figure them out from context, usually...

Modern Turkish	Greek Letter
a	α
b	μπ, π̇
c	ι̇ζ, νι̇ζ, δ̇ζ, δ̇ζ̇ etc...
ç	τσ, τζ, τ̇
d	ντ, δ, τ̇, δ̇
e	ε
f	φ
g	γκ, κ̇
ğ	γ, γι, " *"
h	Χ <small>unlike in Greek, where Χ makes a sound like Arabic ح , in Karamanlica, it makes the Turkish "h" sound.</small>
ı	η
i	ι

j	ζ?? (it's super rare anyway so don't worry about it)
k	κ
l	λ
m	μ
n	ν
o	ο
ö	ὀ, ο
p	π
r	ρ
s	σ
ş	ὀ, σι
t	τ
u	ου
ü	ὀου, ου
v	β
y	γ, γι, ι*
z	ζ

Letters “y” and “ğ” are sometimes not written, especially when they are between vowels.
For e.x. “değil” might be written “ντεγιλ” or “ντειλ”

Before the 19th century, when Karamanlica spelling started to become standardized, the dots were not used. Hence, distinguishing between c, ç, ş, j, d, etc., can be a bit tricky, as can be o/ ö and u/ ü. Some texts are inconsistent in how they distinguish these sounds. One older system was to write “σ” for “ş.” (Interestingly enough, the Cypriot Greek dialect, which has the “ş” sound, writes it “σ” as well!)

Watch out!

The Greek iota (*Ι, ι*) looks a lot like the Turkish undotted-I (*ı, i*), but they do **NOT** correspond!

Greek *Ι ι* ⇒ Turkish *İ i*

Greek *Η η* ⇒ Turkish *ı İ*

These letters make the same sound in Modern Greek but they make different sounds in Karamanlica! This rule is not 100% effective but it's pretty close!

THE DOT ON TOP OF THE LETTERS

Remember when we said that it's important to remember the fact that the three consonant sounds in Greek that don't have a letter of their own are all VOICED consonants? Well, in Karamanlica, you can form those sounds ("b," "d," or the hard "g") by putting a dot on top of the unvoiced consonants: π, τ, κ. It's not always consistent, but this might help you remember what the dotted π, τ, and κ represent.

For σ, you just have to remember that dotted σ represents "ş".

For the vowels, you should remember that the single-dot does a similar job to the double-dot over "ö," and "ü" in modern Turkish.

Dotted "δ" is yet another way to spell the "d" sound.

Greek Letters and combinations that generally do NOT appear in Karamanlica

Even though they are not generally used in Turkish words in Karamanlica, **they will sometimes appear in Greek words.** (Names of people, places, and often religious words will be in Greek.)

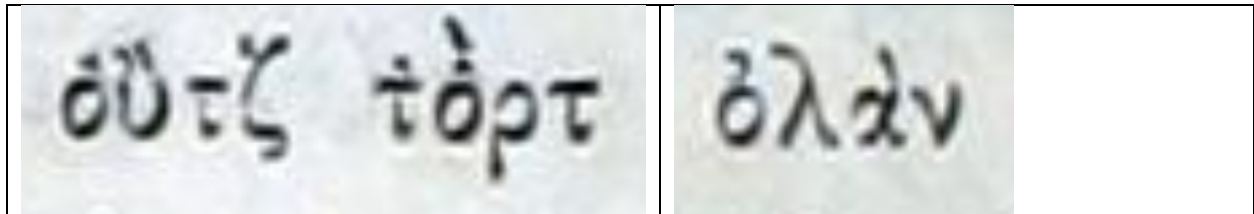
Θ θ	Θήτα, Thita	Unvoiced "Th," like "th" in "think," like Arabic ث
Ξ ξ	Ξί, ksi	"X", "Ks" Occasionally, if a Turkish word happens to have "k" and "s" next to each other.
Υ υ	Ύψιλον, Epsilon	"I" like "ee" in "feet" EXCEPT in double-vowel ou, or ou for "u" or "ü"
Ψ ψ	Ψί, Psi	"Ps" Again, perhaps if a Turkish word happens to have "p" and "s" next to each other.
Ω ω	Ωμέγα, Omega	"O"
ει, οι		"ee" sound. See below
αυ, ευ		"av"/"ev" or "af"/"ef" See below
αι		"e" like letter ε. See below

Diacritics

Greek used to have a complicated system of diacritical markers. Fortunately, in modern Greek, most of these were abolished in the 1980s. They were a relic of how the language had been pronounced in antiquity had no bearing on how a word was pronounced. Unfortunately, in Karamanlıca you will see some of these occasional old diacritical markers which are quite meaningless, but they may get confusing. The MOST important marker to pay attention to in Karmanlıca is the SINGLE DOT. The others you can ignore for the most part.

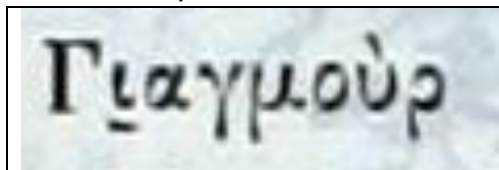
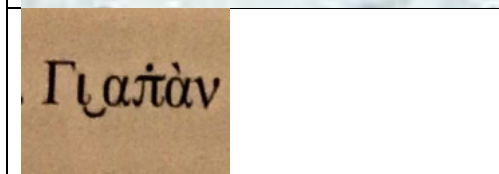
One of the old diacritical markers which has the potential to be confusing are the breath marks, which look like this on top of vowels: ὀ ὁ .

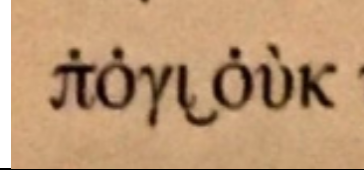
In ancient Greek these markings signified whether a word had a rough or soft breathing at the beginning. For our purposes they are meaningless. These can be confusing since they look very similar to the single dot, but they should be ignored. Consider the following examples. Can you tell which of these marks are a dot and which ones are not?



ALSO: In Greek phonetics, the Greek letter *yiota*, *ι*, when it does not carry the stress, can have the effect of "softening" the sound of the consonant before it. This would explain why it "σι" was sometimes used for the "ς" sound. In Karamanlıca, when the letter *yiota* is used to soften a consonant, it often has a curved line underneath to distinguish it from the Turkish "i" vowel.

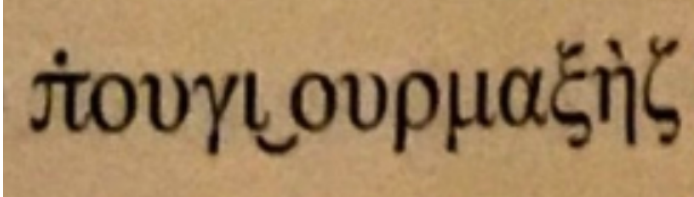

Some examples:

	Yağmur
	Yaban

	büyük
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A few examples (from different texts)

	çocuk
	bir gün
	öyle
	Böylece
<p>^ Source, Αγγελιαφόρος, 19th century American missionary magazine for Karamanli children, 1895 https://archive.org/details/ANGELIAPHOROS_1895/</p>	
	üçüncü
	<p>Ekklisemizi (?) (Notice the Greek word "Ekklesia"- Church, combined with the Turkish suffix. Greek words are not very common in Karamanlica but you will often see them for proper names as well as anything relating to religion.)</p>
<p>^ Karamanlica inscription above Rum orthodox Church in Sille, near Konya, 1833 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karamanli_Turkish#/media/File:Sille_Agia_Eleni_Inscription.jpg</p>	

	buyurmaksız (Ok, never say never, here's the letter ξ! It's a Turkish word that happens to have "k" and "s" together.)
	göksünde (gögsünde)

Can you guess these?

