

1.5 : PUNCTUATION IN GREEK TEXTS

The punctuation you see in ancient Greek texts has been added by modern editors. Greeks of the classical period did not use punctuation marks (in many texts, THEREWERENTEVENSACESBETWEENWORDS!)

Nowadays those who publish or teach Greek use the four punctuation marks invented in Hellenistic times in order to give clues to readers about the structure of the texts. When you learn enough Greek to study ambiguous passages, if you disagree with the punctuation given, you will have the option of changing it according to your own interpretation.

The four punctuation marks are:

1) PERIOD, like the one we use in English to mark a pause at the end of a sentence.

2) COMMA, like the one we use in English for a shorter pause.

3) DOT ABOVE THE LINE: equivalent to our colon or semicolon.



ἀληθές ἐστι· οὐ μέντοι σοὶ δοκεῖ.

It is true; yet you do not believe it.

4) QUESTION MARK: it looks like the semicolon in English.



τί δοκεῖ σοι;

What do you think?

To summarize:

- Question mark is like the English semicolon.
- Semicolon (or colon) is a raised period.
- Period and comma are the same in Greek and English.