

Classicists have struggled with the question of how to enter, read, and print Greek characters for decades. The advent of the microcomputer in the early 1980s provided a solution. Classicists took advantage of the opportunity and a number of fonts as well as keyboards were developed before long. But the exchange of documents remained problematic because the keyboard mapping of fonts was not standardized.

The idea of the Unicode Standard was the answer to the hopes of all scholars who work with multilingual scripts, as it provided the framework and technology for a uniform approach to dealing with non-Roman characters. The implementation of the Standard for each particular script, however, is a rather complex process which requires careful study and documentation of each character and its use in modern typography. From 1990 to 2003, the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (TLG) undertook the task of developing a series of proposals to the Unicode Consortium in order to encode all the characters needed for the accurate representation of Greek. With a large corpus of texts at its disposal, 30-year experience in encoding characters using beta code, and generous support from members of the profession, the Project identified a large number of characters (including epigraphical and papyrological sigla, archaic characters, ancient numbers and metrical symbols, etc.) which occur in extant Greek texts. The identification of non-alphabetic characters was only the first step to be followed by extensive research and documentation of each one of the characters, as required by the Unicode Technical Committee. To date the TLG has successfully proposed some 174 characters that are now part of the Unicode Character Set and have been approved by the International Standards Organization (ISO). Most Unicode fonts already include these characters in their repertoire. A reference guide has been developed and posted online at <http://www.tlg.uci.edu/quickbeta.pdf>.

This paper will discuss the history of encoding Greek texts at the TLG and the process of expanding the repertoire of Unicode characters needed by classical scholars. It will also discuss resources available for those who need to find specialized Unicode characters and what remains to be done to complete the Unicode set for both Greek and Roman characters.