

OUR EVERYDAY GREEK

Spelling Tips for the Greek ε's: AI, αι, and E, ε

By Dr. Dimitra Pontoporou

The letter E, ε and the diphthong AI, αι are both pronounced as the letter ε = e (-e-nergy). Are there any slight differences in their pronunciation? Are there any grammatical rules for the use of and in the words?

Though the diphthong AI, αι is composed of two vowels, A, α and I, ι these letters haven't kept their original sound, but they are pronounced as one, e. Ancient Greeks had the short E, ε and the long diphthong AI, αι. That means that while speaking, the duration of the sound e in the long diphthong AI, αι was almost the double compared to the short E, ε. The only exception was, when AI, αι was found in the ending syllable of the words. Then it was also a short e. For example, in ancient Greek the ending of the feminine grammatical gender words in the plural was αι, as well as the feminine gender article in the plural: αι ωραίαι (E oREe= the beautiful), αι αρχαίαι (E arHEe= the ancient), αι νέαι (E Nee= the young). In modern Greek we say instead: οι ωραίες (EE oREes), οι αρχαίες (EE arHEes), οι νέες (EE NEes). In modern Greek we haven't kept these values and we keep the same duration for both E, ε and AI, αι.

SPELLING TIP

E, ε is more common in the Greek words than AI, αι. Therefore, if you are puzzled about the spelling of a word, just write it with E, ε, if the e is inside the word and not in the ending syllable. Nevertheless, there are a few cases, regarding the ending syllable of the verbs, that you need to take into consideration.

GRAMMATICAL RULE ONE

The ending syllable of the first (I), the second (you) and the third (he/she/it) person in the singular number of the verbs' passive voice, as well as the ending syllable of the third person plural (they) are always written with αι. (All Greek verbs ending in -μαι are considered as passive voice verbs.)

Greek phrase	Pronunciation	Meaning
Εγώ πλέν-ομαι	eYO pLEnoMe	I wash myself
Εσύ πλέν-εσαι	eSEE pLEneSe	You wash yourself
Η Μαρία πλέν-εται	EE maREEa pLEneTe	Maria washes herself

Τα παιδιά πλέν-ονται	TA peDIA pLEnoNte	The kids wash themselves
Εγώ κοιμ-άμαι	eYO kiMame	I am sleeping
Εσύ κοιμ-άσαι	eSEE kiMase	You are sleeping
Ο Πέτρος κοιμ-άται	O PETros kiMate	Petros is sleeping
Τα παιδιά κοιμ-ούνται	TA peDIA kiMOOnTe	The kids are sleeping

GRAMMATICAL RULE TWO

In the first- and second-person plural (we, you), both in the active and passive voice the ending syllable is always written with ε.

Greek phrase	Pronunciation	Meaning
Εμείς πλέν-όμαστε	eMEES pleNOmaste	We wash ourselves
Εσείς πλέν-όσαστε	eSEES pleNOsaste	You wash yourselves
Εμείς κοιμ-όμαστε	eMEES kiMOmaste	We are sleeping
Εσείς κοιμ-όσαστε	eSEES kiMOsaste	You are sleeping
Εμείς κάν-ουμε	eMEES kAnoome	We are doing
Εσείς κάν-ετε	eSEES kAnete	You are doing
Εμείς θέλ-ουμε	eMEES THEloome	We want
Εσείς θέλ-ετε	eSEES THElete	You want
Εμείς τρώ-με	eMEES TRome	We eat
Εσείς τρώ-τε	eSEES TRote	You eat

GRAMMATICAL RULE THREE

In the Past tenses, both in Simple Past and in Past Continuous, in the active and passive voices, Greek verbs usually begin with an ε in front of the first syllable.

Present Tense	Past Continuous Tense
Τρέχω (TREho= I run), γράφω (YRAfo= I write)	Ή-τρεχα (Etreha = I was running), έ-γραφα (Egrafa= I was writing)
Simple Past Tense	Ή-τρεξα (Etrexa = I ran), έ-γραψα (Egrapsa = I wrote)

PRONUNCIATION KEY

i (ill), ee (beer), e (ever), o (organ), oo (boot), y (yes), h (helium), th (theory), d (the). The capitalized syllables are accented.

Η αρχαία Σπάρτη (EE arHEa SPArTi) (= Ancient Sparta).

LITERARY REVIEW

Eleni Theodorou Presents Noko the Knight 2 in NYC

By Christodoulos Athanasatos

Psychologist and author Eleni Theodorou presented Noko the Knight: What's Your Tribe's Treasure?, the second book in her Noko the Knight children's book series, at the Consulate General of South Africa in New York on October 11.

With dozens of guests in attendance, including many of her young friends who are fans of Noko, Theodorou spoke about the new elements she introduces in the second book, illustrated by Jani Walker, with the little hedgehog as its protagonist, teaching children in a fun and easy to read story about accepting and embracing diverse cultures.

"The second book is the continuation of the story of Noko the Knight. This time we focus on the diversity of culture, as well as the differences, but also the common points we share. We live in a beautiful world, we have so much to share with each other and, personally, I am delighted with the process of exploring all these elements that make each one of us unique. At the end of the book, we have a relevant questionnaire," Theodorou told The National Herald.

The idea of Noko the Knight as a children's book arose from Theodorou's academic work, as a vehicle that would urge children to reject, as consciously and from a very early age, the notorious bullying that has become a plague in the past decades and has come to a point, directly or indirectly, where it costs human lives.



Noko the Knight is available in English, Greek, Spanish, and Afrikaans. The cover in Afrikaans is shown here.

Eleni Theodorou signed books for her young fans at the presentation in New York.

"In the time since the release of the first book, I have realized that children have grown to love Nokos, Theodorou said." Many schools invite me to work with children from the first to the fifth grades, in order to communicate the message that they should show magnanimity and sympathy, appreciate diversity, and be able to forgive. The same will be done with my new book, which shows that there is acceptance from the children."

Noko the Knight 2 has been published in four languages (English, Greek, Spanish, and Afrikaans), while the same author points out that she is very interested in a possible adaptation for television or comics since the response from children is particularly encouraging.

"I never say 'never.' They have approached me on several aspects of the character of Nokos. I would like to get his message across, and certainly TV is a very powerful way to do that."

Theodorou was born and raised in South Africa. She studied psychology at the University of Pretoria and earned a master's degree in Sports Psychology from Capella University.

She has worked with children and their parents in different parts of Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States, administering brain-based learning assessments and related coaching in pursuit of educating and empowering them academically, socially, and emotionally.

Theodorou is also a dedicated volunteer for special needs children and senior citizens, and is an active supporter of non-profit organizations dedicated to preventing cruelty to animals. She currently lives in the United States.

Her Greek heritage is from her father, who was born in Ioannina and immigrated to South Africa for a better life, becoming a well-known member of the Greek community.

Her uncle is the singer Stavros Theodorou.

"I love Greece," she said. "It may be several years since I've gone, but I speak the language - though I could speak it better - and I always have it in my mind."

Noko the Knight, books 1 and 2, are available on Amazon and elenitheodorou.com.

GREEK GASTRONOMY

Chestnut & Tsipouro Festivals, Kastanopita Recipe

By Eleni Sakellis

The 10th Annual Chestnut and Tsipouro Festival took place in Rodavgi, Arta, Greece, organized by the Cultural Association of Rodavgi in collaboration with the local community, the Women's Association, and the Friends of Ammos, in the village square.

Chestnuts (grilled and boiled), tiganites (pancakes), and Rodavgiotiko tsipouro were offered to all who attended. The traditional distillation cauldron for tsipouro was on display and visitors had the opportunity to see how tsipouro is made. The fragrant tsipouro is made from zampela – a local grape variety, which everyone enjoyed against the majestic backdrop of Pindus mountain range and the man-made Lake Arachthos.

Chestnut and tsipouro festivals take place in many regions of Greece. Ano Chora in the mountainous Nafpaktia region holds its festival in early October.

- 4 beaten eggs
- 1/2 cup cold unsalted butter, cut into cubes
- 1 lb. boiled or roasted chestnuts, peeled and roughly chopped
- 1/2 cup butter, melted and cooled slightly, for brushing the phyllo
- 1 lb. package phyllo dough, thin pastry sheets

For the syrup:

- 2 1/2 cups water
- 2 1/2 cups sugar
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 shot almond liqueur

In a large saucepan, bring the milk up to a boil with the sugar over medium high heat. Once the milk comes to a boil, reduce the heat to medium and stir in the semolina, continuing to stir until it thickens slightly. Remove from heat and add the vanilla extract and the beaten eggs, stirring constantly. Stir in the cold butter and the chest-



PHOTOS: EUROKINISSI/GIORGOS EFSTATHIOU

Chestnuts roasting at the Chestnut and Tsipouro Festival in Rodavgi, Arta, Greece.



Rodavgiotiko tsipouro being served at the Chestnut and Tsipouro Festival in Rodavgi.

Braziers to roast chestnuts and distillation boilers for tsipouro are set up early in the day in the village square and in the afternoon local ladies offer traditional pies and sweets such as pancakes, loukoumades, baklava, ravani, kourambiedes, and spoon sweets.

The chestnut festival in Mavrilo village on the east slopes of Mount Velouchi is held in late October. Visitors can enjoy the local chestnuts and traditional pies with a glass of tsipouro under the shade of age-old plane trees. Livadi, Thermi, near Thessaloniki also holds a chestnut festival in its main square with a centuries-old plane tree. The beautiful chestnut forest trails offer lovely views of Anthemounta valley and the horseshoe-shaped Thermaikos Gulf.

Among the many recipes with chestnuts, kastanopita (chestnut pie) is a classic in these regions, especially in the winter months.

Kastanopita

- 5 1/2 cups milk
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 cup fine semolina
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

ARTS

Aphrodite Désirée Navab Solo Exhibition Opens in SoHo

By Eleni Sakellis

NEW YORK – History, memory, body, language, and immigration are the featured themes of the solo exhibition by artist and writer Aphrodite Désirée Navab which opened at Coco-Mat in SoHo on October 12, sponsored by AGAPW, ALLILONnet, and Coco-Mat USA.

On display in the exhibition, which runs through January 12, are five pieces from the She Speaks Greek Farsi (2009) series and 14 pieces from the Mother's Milk (2018-now) series. The opening featured an artist talk with Navab moderated by fellow artist Negin Sharifzadeh.

Navab spoke about the work and the inspiration she draws from her roots. Born in Istfahan, Iran to an Iranian father, Dr. Ali Navab, and Greek-American mother, Katina (née Armenakis) Navab, who had met in New York while Dr. Navab was completing his residency in Cardiology, she and her 3 siblings, Alexander, Pericles, and Demetra grew up



LEFT: Artist and AGAPW Vice President Aphrodite Navab, AGAPW Treasurer Irene Sarri, AGAPW Founder and President Olga Alexakos, and Coco-Mat sales manager in New York Zographos Zografou. RIGHT: Artist Aphrodite Navab, at right, spoke about her work at the opening of her solo exhibition.

spending summers in Greece.

She explained that in the "series, She Speaks Greek Farsi (2009), my abdomen serves as the site of language. An expression in Greek, to speak any language in a 'Farsi way,' is a com-

ment on how fluent and well someone speaks that language. So to speak 'Greek Farsi' or 'English Farsi' is to speak Greek or English well. By implication and inspiration, if such a compliment exists today (despite the ancient



TNH/ELENI SAKELLIS

history of war between the Greeks and the Persians), then other similar signs of respect between antagonistic nations might be possible."

The thoughtful and thought-provoking images on display of-

fer a powerful intersection of themes relating to culture and language, and highlight the artist's impressive skills. A Q&A session followed the artist talk during which many expressed their enthusiasm for the works

and asked about the continuing series that Navab is working on. AGAPW Founder and President and local coordinator of ALLILONnet for the USA- NY, Olga Alexakos, gave the welcoming remarks at the event and thanked all those present for their support.

Among those present, the artist's parents, daughter Katerina, Coco-Mat sales manager in New York Zographos Zografou, Nektarios Antoniou, and many art enthusiasts and members of the community.

Navab completed an EdD in Art Education in 2004 at Columbia University. She earned a BA magna cum laude in Visual and Environmental Studies from Harvard College in 1993. Her art has been featured in over 100 exhibitions and is included in a number of permanent collections including: the Lowe Art Museum, the Ham Museum of Fine Arts, Casoria Contemporary Art Museum, Naples, Italy, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Arkansas State University.