Ancient Greek Phonology

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1 Basic Inventory

	Labial	Dental	Velar	Glottal
Voiceless	p	t	k	
Voiced	b	d	g	
Aspirated	pʰ	tʰ	kʰ	
Fricative		s		h
Nasal	m	n		
Liquid		l,r		
Semivowel	(w)			

In terms of vowels, Greek dialects were either "5-Vowel Dialects" or "7-Vowel Dialects," the number refering to the number of *long* vowels. 5-Vowel dialects had /i, e, a, o, u/ in long and short varieties, while 7-Vowel dialects additionally had vowels something like /æ/ and /ɔ/.

2 PIE Correspondences

General diachronic rules:

1. /k, g, gʷ/ and /ḱ, ǵ, ǵʷ/ merge. (Centum merger)

2. PIE labiovelars /kʷ, gʷ, gʷʰ/ lose their labial quality before /u/, become dentals before /i/ and /e/, and elsewhere become merge with the labials.

    i. /kʷ, gʷ, gʷʰ/ > /k, g, gʰ/ /_ u
    ii. /kʷ, gʷ, gʷʰ/ > /t, d, dʰ/ /_ i, e
    iii. elsewhere: /kʷ, gʷ, gʷʰ/ > /p, b, bʰ/

3. Then, voiced aspirates become devoiced. /bʰ, dʰ, gʰ/ > /pʰ, tʰ, kʰ/

4. /s/ > /h/ /_V

5. /y/ becomes either /h/ or zeta (pronounced /dz/ or /zd/ dialectally) initially, but is otherwise lost.

6. Syllabic nasals /m̥, n̥/ become /a/.

7. Epenthetic /a/ added to avoid syllabic liquids. /r̥, l̥/ > /ar/ra, al/la/

Note that vowels are just about the same as they would've been in late PIE, as are non-aspirated stops.

Dialectal rules

- /w/ > ∅ in Attic and Ionic. Combined with Rule 5, these dialects are glideless.

- /ti/ palatalizes to /si/ in Attic-Ionic and others.

- In various sporatic dialects, /h/ > ∅ (called psilotic dialects)

- /u/ > /y/ in Attic (that is, the actual /y/, not the IE /y/ which is really /j/)

- /ā/ > /ē/ in Attic.

3 Synchronic Phonological Rules

- Brugmann's Law:

- Secondary effects: *-onti* > *ūsi* in Attic