

# The *alphabet* package

Günter Milde

2020/10/30

The *alphabet* package makes the standard macros for Greek letters in mathematical mode also available in text mode. This way, you can input Greek letters “by name” everywhere in the document. The mode determines whether the characters are taken from the text or math font.

With 8-bit TeX and *greek-inputenc*, literal Unicode characters can also be used in mathematical mode.<sup>1</sup>

## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Requirements and Conflicts</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Usage</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1	options . . . . .	3
2.2	symbol variants . . . . .	4
<b>3</b>	<b>Limitations</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Tests and examples</b>	<b>5</b>
4.1	Greek alphabet . . . . .	5
4.2	Diacritics . . . . .	5
4.3	normalize-symbols . . . . .	5
4.4	Ἑλληνικά in PDF strings . . . . .	5
4.5	Greek in maths $\Gamma = \sin \alpha / \cos \beta$ . . . . .	6
4.6	Greek Unicode characters in math . . . . .	6
<b>5</b>	<b>Character Tables</b>	<b>6</b>
5.1	Greek and Coptic . . . . .	6
5.2	Greek Extended . . . . .	7

---

<sup>1</sup>This document was compiled with LuaTeX using the [font encoding TU](#) (Unicode fonts). For a version using 8-bit fonts, see [alphabet-doc.pdf](#).





**normalize-symbols** merges “letter” and “symbol” variants of some Greek letters (cf. Table 1 and section 2.2 below) to the “letter” character: Without this option, the symbol variant characters cannot be used in text under 8-bit LaTeX, because they are not supported by the Greek 8-bit font encoding LGR.

**Attention:** Be careful in cases where the distinction between the symbol variants may be important (e.g. in a mathematical or scientific context). Use XeTeX/LuaTeX with Unicode fonts or the respective characters in mathematical mode (e.g.  $\pi$  vs.  $\varpi$ ).

**keep-semicolon** prevents conversion of the semicolon to an *ano teleia* in 8-bit TeX (see [textalpha-doc](#)).

Both options are ignored in text set using Unicode fonts.

## 2.2 symbol variants

Mathematical notation uses variant shapes of some Greek letters as additional symbols. The variations have no syntactic meaning in Greek text and text fonts may use the variant shapes in place of the “regular” ones as a stylistic choice.

Unicode defines separate code points for the symbol variants. TeX supports some of the variant shape symbols in mathematical mode, but its concept of “standard” vs. “variant” symbols differs from the distinction between “GREEK LETTER ...” vs. “GREEK ... SYMBOL” in the Unicode standard.

The *alphabet* package defines generic macros for these variants that are short forms of the set defined in `tuenc-greek.def` (cf. [test-tuenc-greek](#)):

```
\<name> selects the Unicode GREEK LETTER ... variant,  
\<name>symbol selects the Unicode GREEK ... SYMBOL variant,  
\var<name> selects the variant shape according to TeX’s mathematical mode
```

See Table 1 at the end of this document for the full list.

## 3 Limitations

With 8-bit TeX, the limitations described in the [textalpha documentation](#) apply (see also section 4.2). These limitations do not apply, if the text language is switched to “greek” with Babel<sup>4</sup>, the text part is wrapped in `\ensuregreek`, or set using Unicode fonts with XeTeX/LuaTeX.

With XeTeX/LuaTeX and Unicode fonts, literal Unicode characters cannot be used in formulas (the log file reports missing characters) This is a generic TeX limitation which *alphabet* overcomes if used under 8-bit TeX. Under XeTeX/LuaTeX it may be circumvented using the [unicode-math](#) package. Mind, that *unicode-math* conflicts with *alphabet*.

---

<sup>4</sup> Setting the correct language for Greek text parts with the *babel* package additionally ensures correct hyphenation and upcasing.

## 4 Tests and examples

### 4.1 Greek alphabet

Greek letters via generic “name” macros without language/font-encoding switch (active font encoding TU):

Α Β Γ Δ Ε Ζ Η Θ Ι Κ Λ Μ Ν Ξ Ο Π Ρ Σ Τ Υ Φ Χ Ψ Ω    Ϝ ϝ Ϟ<sup>5</sup> ϟ Ϡ  
α β γ δ ε ζ η θ ι κ λ μ ν ξ ο π ρ σ ς τ υ φ χ ψ ω    ϝ Ϟ<sup>6</sup> ϟ Ϡ ϡ

Greek letters via Unicode literals (active font encoding TU):

Α Β Γ Δ Ε Ζ Η Θ Ι Κ Λ Μ Ν Ξ Ο Π Ρ Σ Τ Υ Φ Χ Ψ Ω    Ϝ ϝ Ϟ ϟ Ϡ  
α β γ δ ε ζ η θ ι κ λ μ ν ξ ο π ρ σ ς τ υ φ χ ψ ω    ϝ Ϟ ϟ Ϡ ϡ

### 4.2 Diacritics

According to Greek typographical conventions, diacritics (except the dialytika and sub iota) are placed before capital letters and dropped in UPPERCASE. Since 2022, `\MakeUppercase` only drops diacritics from Greek literals when the text language is set to greek with Babel or Polyglossia. Diacritics input as standard accent macros are only dropped if the Greek language is defined with Babel (i.e. not in this document). For an example using *babel-greek* see [char-list-alpha-beta.pdf](#).

ά έ ί ῆ ὄ ὕ ὶ ῶ → Α Ε Ϊ Η Ο Υ Ω  
Α `Ε `Ι `Η `Ο `Υ `Ω → Α Ε Ϊ Η Ο Υ Ω

Certain **limitations** apply **if** Greek LICRs are **used in a non-Greek font encoding** (e.g. T1).<sup>7</sup>

### 4.3 normalize-symbols

The `normalize-symbols` option merges “letters” and “symbol” variants of some Greek letters to the “letter” character. It is ignored, if the document uses Unicode fonts and is compiled with XeTeX or LuaTeX (this document is compiled using LuaTeX).

The source of this quote uses both variants for beta (β|β), epsilon (ε|ε), phi (φ|φ), kappa (κ|κ), pi (π|π), rho (ρ|ρ), theta (θ|θ), and Theta (Θ|Θ).

### 4.4 Ἑλληνικά in PDF strings

With the `alphabet` package, you get Greek letters in both, the document body and PDF metadata generated by *hyperref* if the input uses Unicode literals or macros. Wrapping in `\ensuregreek` ensures the right placement of the accents and breathings (before, not above capital letters).

<sup>5</sup>In LGR, there is no separate glyph for uppercase Koppa.

<sup>6</sup>There is no separate Unicode code point for a stigma variant symbol, `\varstigma` is not defined with Xe/LuaTeX and similar to `\stigma` in some fonts.

<sup>7</sup>This document is typeset using Unicode fonts, for details see the version using 8-bit fonts [alphabet-doc.pdf](#).



## 5.2 Greek Extended

symbol accent macros

ά ά ά ά ά ά ά Ά Ά Ά Ά Ά Ά Ά Ά Ά Ά  
έ έ έ έ έ έ έ Έ Έ Έ Έ Έ Έ Έ Έ Έ Έ  
ή ή ή ή ή ή ή Ή Ή Ή Ή Ή Ή Ή Ή Ή Ή  
ί ί ί ί ί ί ί Ϊ Ϊ Ϊ Ϊ Ϊ Ϊ Ϊ Ϊ Ϊ Ϊ  
ό ό ό ό ό ό ό Ό Ό Ό Ό Ό Ό Ό Ό Ό Ό  
ύ ύ ύ ύ ύ ύ ύ Ύ Ύ Ύ Ύ Ύ Ύ Ύ Ύ Ύ Ύ  
ώ ώ ώ ώ ώ ώ ώ Ώ Ώ Ώ Ώ Ώ Ώ Ώ Ώ Ώ Ώ  
ά ά έ έ ή ή ί ί ό ό ù ù ώ ώ  
Ά Ά Έ Έ Ή Ή Ϊ Ϊ Ό Ό Ύ Ύ Ώ Ώ  
ή ή ή ή ή ή ή Η Η Η Η Η Η Η Η Η Η  
ώ ώ ώ ώ ώ ώ ώ Ω Ω Ω Ω Ω Ω Ω Ω Ω Ω  
ᾶ ᾷ ῀ ῁ ῂ ῃ Ᾱ Ὰ Ά Ἀ Ἀ Ἰ Ἰ  
~ ῆ ῆ ῆ ῆ ῆ ῆ ῆ ῆ ῆ ῆ ῆ ῆ ῆ ῆ ῆ ῆ  
ϊ ῖ ῖ ῖ ῖ ῖ ῖ ῖ ῖ ῖ ῖ ῖ ῖ ῖ ῖ ῖ ῖ  
ϋ ϋ ϋ ϋ ϋ ϋ ϋ ῤ ῥ ῥ ῥ ῥ ῥ ῥ ῥ ῥ ῥ  
ϖ ϖ ϖ ϖ ϖ ϖ ϖ Ὀ Ὀ Ὀ Ὀ Ὀ Ὀ Ὀ Ὀ Ὀ Ὀ

named accent macros

ά ά ά ά ά ά ά Ά Ά Ά Ά Ά Ά Ά Ά Ά Ά  
έ έ έ έ έ έ έ Έ Έ Έ Έ Έ Έ Έ Έ Έ Έ  
ή ή ή ή ή ή ή Ή Ή Ή Ή Ή Ή Ή Ή Ή Ή  
ί ί ί ί ί ί ί Ϊ Ϊ Ϊ Ϊ Ϊ Ϊ Ϊ Ϊ Ϊ Ϊ  
ό ό ό ό ό ό ό Ό Ό Ό Ό Ό Ό Ό Ό Ό Ό  
ύ ύ ύ ύ ύ ύ ύ Ύ Ύ Ύ Ύ Ύ Ύ Ύ Ύ Ύ Ύ  
ώ ώ ώ ώ ώ ώ ώ Ώ Ώ Ώ Ώ Ώ Ώ Ώ Ώ Ώ Ώ  
ά ά έ έ ή ή ί ί ό ό ù ù ώ ώ  
Ά Ά Έ Έ Ή Ή Ϊ Ϊ Ό Ό Ύ Ύ Ώ Ώ  
ή ή ή ή ή ή ή Η Η Η Η Η Η Η Η Η Η  
ώ ώ ώ ώ ώ ώ ώ Ω Ω Ω Ω Ω Ω Ω Ω Ω Ω  
ᾶ ᾷ ῀ ῁ ῂ ῃ Ᾱ Ὰ Ά Ἀ Ἀ Ἰ Ἰ  
~ ῆ ῆ ῆ ῆ ῆ ῆ ῆ ῆ ῆ ῆ ῆ ῆ ῆ ῆ ῆ  
ϊ ῖ ῖ ῖ ῖ ῖ ῖ ῖ ῖ ῖ ῖ ῖ ῖ ῖ ῖ ῖ  
ϋ ϋ ϋ ϋ ϋ ϋ ϋ ῤ ῥ ῥ ῥ ῥ ῥ ῥ ῥ ῥ ῥ  
ϖ ϖ ϖ ϖ ϖ ϖ ϖ Ὀ Ὀ Ὀ Ὀ Ὀ Ὀ Ὀ Ὀ Ὀ Ὀ

## 6 PDF Strings

Generic LICRs and symbol accent macros. (Check the ToC in the PDF sidebar to see how PDF strings are handled.)

## 6.1 Greek and Coptic

6.1.1 ´ ˆ A · E H I O Y Ω

6.1.2 í A B Γ Δ E Z H Θ I K Λ M N Ξ O

6.1.3 Π Ρ Σ Τ Υ Φ Χ Ψ Ω Ī Ÿ á é ħ í

6.1.4 ú α β γ δ ε ζ η θ ι κ λ μ ν ξ ο

6.1.5 π ρ σ τ υ φ χ ψ ω ï ü ó ú ó

6.1.6 ϐ ϑ ϕ ϗ Q Ϝ ϝ F Ϛ ϛ

6.1.7 ἦ ϣ κ ϱ Θ ε

## 6.2 Greek Extended

6.2.1 á â ã ä å Æ Å Ā Ā Ā Ā Ā Ā Ā Ā

6.2.2 é ê ë ì í ĩ ĩ ĩ ĩ ĩ ĩ ĩ ĩ

6.2.3 ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ

6.2.4 ï ï ï ï ï ï Ī Ī Ī Ī Ī Ī Ī Ī

6.2.5 ó ó ò ò ò ò Ó Ó Ó Ó Ó Ó Ó Ó

6.2.6 ù ù ù ù ù ù Ÿ Ÿ Ÿ Ÿ Ÿ Ÿ Ÿ Ÿ

6.2.7 ώ ώ ò ò ò ò ò ò Ω Ω Ω Ω Ω Ω Ω Ω

6.2.8 à á â ã ä å Æ Å Ā Ā Ā Ā Ā Ā Ā Ā

6.2.9 ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ

6.2.10 ï ï ï ï ï ï Ī Ī Ī Ī Ī Ī Ī Ī

6.2.11 ó ó ò ò ò ò Ó Ó Ó Ó Ó Ó Ó Ó

6.2.12 ù ù ù ù ù ù Ÿ Ÿ Ÿ Ÿ Ÿ Ÿ Ÿ Ÿ

6.2.13 ώ ώ ò ò ò ò ò ò Ω Ω Ω Ω Ω Ω Ω Ω

6.2.14 à á â ã ä å Æ Å Ā Ā Ā Ā Ā Ā Ā Ā

6.2.15 ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ ħ

6.2.16 ï ï ï ï ï ï Ī Ī Ī Ī Ī Ī Ī Ī

If this document is compiled with a post 2022 LaTeX and *Babel*, a test for `\MakeUppercase` follows.



### 6.3 MakeUppercase

6.3.1 ' `A·EHI OYΩ

6.3.2 ĨABΓΔEZ HΘIKΛMNΞO

6.3.3 ΠΡΣΤΥΦΧΨΩĨÿAEHI

6.3.4 ŸABΓΔEZ HΘIKΛMNΞO

6.3.5 ΠΡΣΣΤΥΦΧΨΩĨÿOYΩ

6.3.6 ΒΘΦΠQ QζζFFζζ

6.3.7 ηηΚΡΘΕ

6.3.8 AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA

6.3.9 EEEEEEEEEEEEE

6.3.10 HHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH

6.3.11 IIIIIIIIIIIIIII

6.3.12 OOOOOOOOOOOO

6.3.13 YYYYYYYYYYYYY

6.3.14 ΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩ

6.3.15 AAEEHHIIOOYYΩΩ

6.3.16 Aι Aι Aι Aι Aι Aι Aι Aι Aι Aι Aι Aι Aι Aι Aι Aι

6.3.17 Ηι Ηι Ηι Ηι Ηι Ηι Ηι Ηι Ηι Ηι Ηι Ηι Ηι Ηι Ηι Ηι

6.3.18 Ωι Ωι Ωι Ωι Ωι Ωι Ωι Ωι Ωι Ωι Ωι Ωι Ωι Ωι Ωι Ωι

6.3.19 ĂĂ Aι Aι Aι A Aι ĂĂ A A Aι ι

6.3.20 ~ `Ηι Ηι Ηι Η Ηι E E H H Ηι

6.3.21 ĨĨĨĨĨĨĨĨĨ

6.3.22 ŸŸŸŸPPYŸŸŸYYP ~~~

6.3.23 Ωι Ωι Ωι Ω Ωι O O Ω Ω Ωι ´

macro	text	math
<code>\beta</code>	β	$\beta$
<code>\varbeta</code>	β	∅
<code>\betasymbol</code>	β	∅
<code>\epsilon</code>	ε	$\epsilon$
<code>\varepsilon</code>	ε	ε
<code>\epsilonsymbol</code>	ε	ε
<code>\phi</code>	φ	$\phi$
<code>\varphi</code>	φ	φ
<code>\phisymbol</code>	φ	φ
<code>\kappa</code>	κ	$\kappa$
<code>\varkappa</code>	κ	κ
<code>\kappasymbol</code>	κ	κ
<code>\pi</code>	π	$\pi$
<code>\varpi</code>	ω	ω
<code>\pisymbol</code>	ω	ω
<code>\rho</code>	ρ	$\rho$
<code>\varrho</code>	ρ	ρ
<code>\rhosymbol</code>	ρ	ρ
<code>\sigma</code>	σ	$\sigma$
<code>\varsigma</code>	ς	ς
<code>\finalsigma</code>	ς	ς
<code>\theta</code>	θ	$\theta$
<code>\vartheta</code>	ϑ	ϑ
<code>\thetasymbol</code>	ϑ	ϑ
<code>\Theta</code>	Θ	$\Theta$
<code>\varTheta</code>	Θ	Θ
<code>\Thetasymbol</code>	Θ	∅

Table 1: Macros for Greek [symbol variants](#) (∅= symbol only available with additional packages). With 8-bit TeX and the `normalize-symbols` option, the output for both variants in text mode is the same (8-bit Greek text fonts contain only one symbol variant).