Chapter 1

Ancient Greek and its dialects

1.1 Introduction

The Mycenaean civilization in Greece, so called after the Bronze Age palace of Mycenae near Argos in the Peloponnese, dates from the second half of the second millennium BC, and is now seen as the product of the impact of the brilliant "Minoan" culture of Crete (named after the legendary king Minos) on the civilization of the mainland sometime towards the end of the sixteenth century BC. Mycenaean Greece had a highly developed command economy, the detailed administration of which was recorded on clay tablets by officials installed in palaces which controlled their surrounding regions. The destruction of these palaces by fire (c. 1200 BC in mainland Greece) led to the accidental baking and preservation of collections of tablets at Pylos on the western coast of the Peloponnese, Mycenae and Tiryns in the Argolid, and Thebes in Boeotia.

The original language of Minoan Crete remains unknown, but the script used to write it is called 'Linear A', since this was the earlier of the two linear syllabaries discovered to have been in use at the palace of Knossos in Crete by the British archaeologist Sir Arthur Evans. In the period when the Mycenaean civilization of the mainland was still developing under Minoan influence, this script was apparently adapted as 'Linear B', presumably to facilitate the writing of the Mycenaean language which, thanks to Michael Ventris's brilliant decipherment in the early 1950s, we now know to have been Greek (see Chadwick (1967) for an account of the decipherment, Ventris and Chadwick (1973), Chetw Erick (1976a), Hocker (1980), and Monemvas Davies and Deloug (1985) for surveys of the script, language and content of the tablets, together with relevant bibliography). Interestingly, the administrative documents which come from the period of the final destruction of the palace at Knossos (now believed to be c. 1250-1200 BC, see Olivier (1993)) are also written in Linear B, and not in Mycenaean Linear A as might have been expected. This points to a Mycenaean takeover of the territory of their erstwhile mentors probably following an earlier destruction of the principal Minoan sites in the fifteenth century BC.

Mycenaean has thus emerged as the earliest dialect of Greek, which now boasts the longest recorded history of any European language (from the thirteenth century BC to the present day). Unfortunately, writing disappeared with the collapse of the Mycenaean civilization, and the Greek world entered a 'Dark Age'. But during the late ninth or early eighth century, writing was reintroduced in the form of an adaptation of the Phoenician alphabet, in which reduplication convenient signs
were re-employed for the first time to represent vowel sounds. The earliest surviving alphabetic inscriptions can be dated to the latter part of the eighth century, and the volume of epigraphic material increases steadily thereafter, with large collections of inscriptions on stone and bronze available from most parts of the Greek world after 400 BC. It was at this time that the Ionic version of the alphabet was standardized, and the modern version used in this book derives ultimately from that source (see THE GREEK ALPHABET, page 60, for details of classical and modern pronunciation).

A sample Linear B document from Pylos (PY Ta122) is given below in the conventional transcription of the Linear B syllabary, followed by the probable phonetic interpretation (based on our knowledge of later Greek, supplemented by internal and comparative reconstructions), which vividly reveals the inadequacies of the script. An item-for-item gloss is given beneath, together with a free translation:

(1) Ta-ra-nu a-ja-me-no e-re-pa-te-go a-tro-o-no i-qo-ze pe-ro-po-de-go pe-n-ke-ze

FOOTSTOOL 1

[πρόσθιον αἰαμέντοι οἴδ' ὀκτώ' ὀτε ἀκακτοὶ -κε


πολυτελεῖς -κε [τοῦ] [τοῦ] [τοῦ] [τοῦ] καινοτο[ν] καινοτο[ν] καινοτο[ν]

'marrying', i.e. apocope of -τον and γείτονα/παντοτοκόν ψάλω

'One footstool inlaid with a man and a horse and an octopus and a griffin/palm tree in ivory'.

FOOTSTOOL transcribes an ideogram; the ancient 'pitch' accent marked in the transcription was in reality a conjunction involving either a monosyllabic root-fall on a single long vowel or dipthong (marked ~), or a rise (marked ~) on one syllable followed by a fall (unmarked) on the next, in certain circumstances, not exemplified here, the rise was neutralized in some way (marked .). See Allen (1973, 1987a) for details.

In the course of nearly three and a half thousand years since this tablet was written, Greek has obviously undergone many changes, but speakers of the modern language might still recognize in (1) extremely ancient correspondents of a number of contemporary words:

(2) θύρα (θῦρα) 'door/form'

eλέπδοντος (ελεφαντός) 'made of ivory'

dέμαρχος ('δέμαρχος') 'chief'

cἀτος ['κατ'] 'horse' (when talking of 'horse power')

πολυτείς [πολυτοίς] 'polypod, polyp'

φοίνιξ [φοίνικας] 'palm/tree'

Just as surprisingly, perhaps, the Athenian dialect equivalents of these modern Greek words were already spelt in very much the same way at the end of the fifth century BC (especially if we discount morphological changes), though they were pronounced rather differently at that time:
This very simple example, based on just six vocabulary items, can serve as a token illustration of the essentialSyntax of Greek. But the data in (2) and (3) also demonstrate how a highly conservative orthography, which represents the reconstructed pronunciation of the fifth-fourth centuries BC quite accurately, is clearly much less appropriate for the modern language, effectively concealing the sometimes major sound changes of the last 23 centuries.

The series of changes involved and the reasons for this orthographic conservatism will be explained in the chapters that follow. Here we should simply note that the overwhelming prestige of Athens and its Ionian dialect in the classical period of the fifth and fourth centuries BC had a remarkable 'fossilizing' effect on the form of written Greek throughout the subsequent history of the language, not merely orthographically, but in every other respect. The resulting problem of 'classicism' (cf. Furguson 1958) for a classic account has therefore dominated the history of the language from around the first century BC almost to the present day, with the spoken language, particularly of the standardized, evolving in a 'natural' way, and the orthography, grammar, and lexicon of the learned written language changing very slowly or, in certain styles, hardly at all.

This exhibiting emphasis on the supposed 'perfection' of the written text in its classical form has allowed the fact of sound change to be very largely ignored, and Greeks throughout their history have simply read the texts of earlier periods using whatever the current pronunciation of the language happened to be. It has also inflated and perpetuated the view among those who had mastered the scholastic written language that change in spoken Greek represented a form of linguistic decay that should not be reflected in writing.

The historical linguist, working exclusively with written documents, is therefore faced with severe difficulties in trying to detect and date the changes that took place in spoken Greek. Conclusive evidence is often available only in the form of orthographic errors and grammatical or lexical departures from classical usage in texts which, whether by accident or design, exhibit some degree of compatibility with the contemporaneous spoken language. Corroborative evidence of authentic imitation and capability, as well as of generic conventions, are therefore paramount, and only when we have answered the question of how for a particular matter was attempting, or indeed capable of, a 'classicalizing' style can we turn to issues concerning the incidence and chronology of change. An archaising writer of the later Middle Ages, for example, would continue to use classical φίλος (through by then pronounced [filoi]) long after modern φίλος [filos] had become standard in both spoken and syllabary written styles. Thus despite the unknown syllabary and the massive volume of documentary material from the time of the first alphabetical inscriptions down to the
present day, many uncertainties still remain concerning the dating of, and motiva-
tion for, a considerable number of key linguistic developments. Many histories of the Greek language treat the archaic/written language as an artificial construct devoid of interest for the historical lingual, a "dead" language which persistently stifled creativity because of its ever greater remoteness from the realities of spoken Greek (cf. Browning 1983). This point of view accurately reflects the sympathies of most linguists with respect to the great language debate of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Greece between the merits of the traditional written language and the natural spoken language as a basis for the development of a modern national standard (cf. Section III), but it involves an anachronistic projection of near-contemporary issues into ancient and medieval worlds with rather different perceptions and preoccupations.

Furthermore, since those who have learned to write in these traditional ways also spoke Greek in a contemporary way, interference between written and spoken varieties among the educated was an inevitable fact which the historian of Greek must not, and should not, ignore. Ideology apart, there is no good reason to assign a uniquely privileged position to the development of the spoken language of the illiterate. Instead, efforts should be made to understand the norms for the persist-
ence of diglossia and to evaluate its profound impact on the development of the Greek language over the last 2,060 years. It is, after all, emphatically not the case that contemporary standard modern Greek represents the 'pure' product of the evolution of the spoken language in communities unaffected by the deleterious effects of literacy in a dead and semi-foreign language.

This book will therefore look at the language in all its varieties, and in the context of the changing social and historical circumstances of its speakers/writers. In this way, it is possible not only to explain, summarise and exemplify the prin-
cipal facts of change, but also to render comprehensible a long-term language situation that has often been dismissed as the product of reprehensible folly and slavish imitation on the part of those fortunate enough to have enjoyed the benefits of a 'proper' education.

Given that the principal purpose of this book is to present the development of Greek in a broad historical context, the first step towards that objective is to exam-
ine the array of Greek dialects in the period up to the fifth century BC. Against this background we can then seek to account for the emergence of the Attic dialect of the region of Athens (Attica) as the preeminent form of Greek in the fourth century. This prestigious dialect was the principal foundation for the so-called Hellenistic Koiné (Koine, koine: koine), modern [ki'ni:], "common (dialect)", which was carried throughout the East by the conquistors of Alexander the Great in the latter half of the fourth century BC, and subsequently formed the basis for the develop-
ment of the dialects of medieval and modern Greek.

1.2 The prehistory and early development of Greek

If a group of travellers had set out from Athens in the early fifth century BC and made their way westwards in the direction of Megara they would, as they left the
region of Attica (cf. Map I for this and subsequent "trips"), have encountered forms of speech strikingly different from the Attic dialect of Athens and its environs. Megarian was a member of the "Peloponnesian Doric" subgroup of dialects, spoken in fact not only in the Peloponnese (with the major exception of the remote central region of Arcadia), but also on the islands of the southern Aegean (e.g. Melos, Crete, Thera, Cote, and Rhodes), and in many of the Greek cities of Magna Graecia ("Great Greece", the heavily colonized regions of Southern Italy) and Sicily. These dialects, along with those of North West Greece, together formed the "West Greek" family (so called from the general geographical distribution of the majority of its members).

If on the other hand, our travellers had made their way northwards from Athens into Boeotia, they would again have heard dialects very different from that of Attica, but this time also distinct from those of the West Greek family, including the specifically North West Greek varieties spoken immediately to the west of Boeotia. Continuing northwards, however, they would have perceived a clear relationship between Boeotian and the dialects of Thessaly. But if they had instead boarded a ship in the Piraeus and made their way eastwards, island-hopping across the central and northern Aegean to the central regions of the coast of Asia Minor, they would have encountered a continuum of very closely related forms of speech, the Ionic dialects, with at least the western variants (on the island of Euboea) displaying a close affinity with the Attic of their point of departure.

The Ancient Greeks, like speakers of any other language, were sensitive to such dialectal differences, and had divided themselves into three principal "tribes": Ionians (comprising speakers of Attic and the Ionic dialects); Dorians (speakers of the North West Greek and Peloponnesian Doric dialects); and Arcadians (speakers of Boeotian and Thessalian, together with speakers of the dialects of Lesbos and the adjacent territory on the northern Aegean coast of Asia Minor). Within these broad groupings, however, many local dialects existed, and since the Greek world in this period was politically fragmented, with each major city forming, together with its surrounding territory, an autonomous state, it was usual for local dialects to enjoy "official" status as written languages and to be employed, in a slightly elevated or refined form, to record both public and private business. Nonetheless, in areas where larger political units began to emerge, as with the major Ionian cities of Asia Minor, a "regional" written standard, transcending the most obvious local peculiarities quickly began to emerge. As we shall see (Chapter 3), it was precisely the emergence of such larger political units in the fifth century BC which lay behind the initial development of Attic as an administrative language outside Attica.

Greek is therefore one of the few ancient languages for which we have a reasonably detailed picture of the overall dialect situation. Modern research has, overall, confirmed the validity of the ancient dialect divisions, though it is usual now to recognize a fourth dialect group comprising Arcadian (spoken in the central Peloponnese) and Cypriot, and further to divide Ionic into Western, Central and Eastern varieties, treating Attic as a closely related but distinct member of a superordinate Attic-Ionic group. Attic-Ionic and Arcado-Cypriot are collectively known as "Bast Greek", just as Peloponnesian Doric and North West Greek
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together constitute 'West Greek', the labels reflecting their general distribution in the period when they are first documented. Aeolos is now widely seen as fundamentally of West Greek type, but to have undergone an early period of independent development before undergoing renewed West Greek influence on the mainland and East Greek influence in Lesbos and neighboring territory (Garcia-Ramon 1975; see below for a more detailed account).

Work on Ancient Greek dialectology has tended to fall into two broad types. The first stresses the importance of the compilation of comprehensive descriptive texts and analyses of the evidence provided by the surviving documents in all its: chronological, spatial, and social diversity, as an essential prerequisite for a successful classification of the dialects and a proper understanding of their historical development (see, for example, the reviews of recent work in Bizhe (1985, 1988)). Since most traditional handbooks (e.g. Beck (1938/1955)) have based their descriptions on phenomena attested in relatively small corpora of inscriptions, a great deal has been achieved in recent years to improve our knowledge of the make-up and diversity of the different dialects.

The other approach has emphasized the way in which different sets of selected inscriptions (i.e. points of agreement between dialects at a given point in time) can be interpreted as having arisen through linguistic innovations that took place at different times in the past. Such a relative chronology can then serve as a basis for reconstructing the prehistory of Greek (see, for example, Bleich (1955), Chadwick (1956), Garcia-Ramon (1975)). To be successful, such an approach requires a very careful evaluation of the reasons for the emergence of any given inscriptions.

Thus inscriptions may in principle result from the fact that the dialects which share them have descended directly from a 'common ancestor' which had the features in question. In other words, we may interpret synchronic agreements as evidence for an earlier unity, so that Attic-Ionic, for example, becomes not only the name of a group of historical dialects sharing certain characteristics but also the name of their putative prehistoric ancestor. By dating the emergence of different groups of inscriptions to different periods, a dialect 'family tree' can be constructed. Consider, for example, the diagram in (4) (which is presented here simply to illustrate the point at hand and is not intended to be in any way definitive):
Here the isoglosses linking Megarian etc. (i.e. the Peloponnesian Doric dialects) are assumed to have been inherited from a prehistoric "Peloponnesian Doric" dialect. The features linking this group with the North West Greek group are then assumed to have been inherited in an earlier period from a prehistoric "West Greek" dialect. And the characteristics shared by both West Greek and East Greek dialects are assumed to have derived earlier still from an undifferentiated "Common Greek" (distinguished in turn by a set of characteristic "Greek" innovations from Proto-Indo-European).

This kind of model, central to traditional studies of Greek dialectology and deriving from standard methodological assumptions of nineteenth-century work on Indo-European comparison, is obviously based on the view that periods of common development are followed by later divergence initiated by innovation on the part of subgroups within a previously uniform whole. Only shared innovations resulting from a period of common development prior to such splits are therefore relevant to the construction of the tree diagram.

It is obvious, however, that isoglosses of this kind have to be distinguished from those that arise through convergence caused by the "accidental" contact in subsequent periods of dialects which are, genetically speaking, remote from one another, since the latter are of no value in the determination of the structure of a family tree like that in (i). Equally clearly, other isoglosses may be due simply to "accidental" independent innovation, and so again lack evidential value for the family tree. Finally, other isoglosses may still represent archaic residues of the supposed common source of all the dialects. These are likely to be scattered rather randomly among its descendants (the conservative varieties displaying more or less the innovative ones), and so again lack significance for the grouping of the dialects into "subfamilies". The obvious consequence, given that isoglosses do not come with labels and dates attached, is that scholars often disagree about the significance of any particular point of agreement with respect to the reconstruction of prehistory.

Furthermore, since convergence cannot simply be ignored in considering the prehistoric development of a language, it is obvious that any family-tree account must in any case be "corrected" in the light of a more realistic model which does not simply assume the existence of clean and permanent splits (clearly implausible in the case of Greek, evolving within the confines of the Balkan peninsula) but which allows for "mixed" dialects, partial divergences, and periods of parallel development promoted by contact.

The application of "modern" dialectological methodology has led, through the seminal works of Porzig (1954) and Risch (1955), to a radical reappraisal of the prehistory of Greek. None the less, the detailed reconstruction of the developments behind the geographical arrangement of dialects seen in the fifth century BC remains an issue of controversy. Since the issues involved are not strictly relevant to the major theme of this book, what follows is simply an attempt at a "consensus view", based on key works of the last 40 or so years, among which we may note the following:
(c) The origins and development of the West Greek dialects: Chadwick (1976c); Barthene (1972); Meeke-Doumbas (1963); Risch (1986).
(d) The emergence and development of Aegina: Garcia-Rumon (1975); Ruzig (1978a); Blumel (1982).

The spread of Peloponnesian Doric westwards to Italy and Sicily and eastwards across the Aegean, the presence of Aeolic speakers in Lesbos, the close relationship between Arcadian and geographically remote Cypriot, and the existence of an Ionic dialect continuum across the central Aegean extending into central and southern regions of the Asia Minor littoral can all be explained by reference to the extensive colonization movements from the Greek mainland which began during the so-called Greek “Dark Age” following the collapse of the Mycenaean civilization and continued down to the sixth century BC.

Some difficult issues, however, remain, especially the question of how far back in time the familiar dialect divisions go, and, if things were indeed radically different in the Dark Age and beyond, what pattern of dialect distribution preceded them. A major obstacle to the development of clear-cut answers to these questions is the relative dearth of alphabetic material from before the sixth century BC and the complete absence of documentary evidence from the period between the earliest alphabetic inscriptions (eighth century BC) and the time of the latest Linear B tablets.

The traditional solution to the problem of the distribution of the Greek dialects was provided by means of a theory of three successive “waves” of invaders (Kretschmer 1896, 1935); according to this, Greek was supposed to have developed as a separate branch of the Indo-European family somewhere outside the Balkan peninsula and to have split into dialects prior to the settlement of the Greek mainland. First the ancestors of the Ionians (c. 2000 BC); then the “Achaeans” (c. 1700 BC; this group comprising the ancestors of the Aeolians and Arcado-Cypriots, who were thought to represent the northern and southern branches respectively of an originally unity dialect group), and finally the Dorians (c. 1200 BC) allegedly swept into Greece in turn, with each invasion leading to displacements of the established population. In this way the overthrow of the Mycenaean and the isolated position of Arcadian in historical times could be explained as the result of a massive influx of Dorians into the Peloponnesus which left only a small pocket of the earlier population in the remote central mountains.

This approach, however, has now been shown to entail quite serious archaeological and linguistic difficulties. First, it soon became clear that there was little evidence in the archaeological record for the influx of Dorians that the theory required. Secondly, it was noted that all Greek dialects had adopted place names and borrowed other vocabulary from the pre-Greek languages of the Aegean islands,
but that many of the words concerned had undergone dialectally diagnostic sound changes. The borrowed word for 'sea', for example, has the following forms:

(6) (a) Attic/Boreotian κυμάτα (kumata)
(b) Other dialects κυμάτη (kumado)

both of which reveal dialectally standard products of the palatalization of an original dental or velar by a following semi-vowel (normally *-[j]*, see Allen 1987 for further details). Consider the example in (7):

(7) (a) Original *φύλακας* [φυλάκας] 'a guard'
    (cf. Attic φύλαξ [φυλαξ], Boreotian φυλάκας [φυλάκας] 'a guard, showing the root-final velar')
(b) Attic/Boreotian φύλακα [φυλάκα] 'a guard'
(c) Other dialects φυλάκιο [φυλάκιο] 'a guard'

The fact that loanwords undergo developments identical to those undergone by native vocabulary (even though we cannot, of course, discover the exact form in which such words were first borrowed) strongly suggested that the division of Greek into the historical dialects attested in literature and alphabetic inscriptions had taken place only after all the speakers of prehistoric Greek had become established in the Aegean area.

Furthermore, just as the old questions of Greek dialectology began to be re-examined, the language of the Linear B tablets was successfully deciphered by Michael Ventris, thus adding an important new dimension to the problem of revealing a form of Greek many centuries older than anything hitherto attested. It was very quickly apparent that, although the tablets from Knossos and Pylos came from sites quite remote from one another, the Mycenaean dialect employed was in general remarkably uniform, presumably reflecting a 'standard' written language which differed in some respects from ordinary spoken varieties of the period. It is, however, a dialect which is already clearly of East Greek type, displaying, for example, the characteristic innovatory 'assimilation' of original [i] before [l] (i.e., [it] > [it] > [it]; in a variety of contexts including the original primary (non-post) 3pl. suffix λατι, which is preserved intact in West Greek:

(8) (a) Mycenaean κουλα [koula] 'they have'
(b) Arcadian λυκάνθη [lykanthi] Attic-Acarnian λυκάνθη [lykanthi]'
(c) West Greek λύκανθη [lykanthi]'

The group [ους] has here been simplified, and the preceding vowel lengthened in 'computation' to maintain the original 'heavy' syllabic quality. The ancient archaic accent was associated with a predominantly syllable-timed rhythm, reflected directly in poetry, which required fixed metrical sequences of light and heavy syllables, the latter being 'closed' (by a consonant or length), the former 'open' (i.e., not so closed). See Allen (1977) for a full discussion of the issues.

Furthermore, Mycenaean was apparently in use in large parts of control and southern Greece. wherever either West Greek (the Peloponnesian and Cretan) or Attic (Boreotian) were spoken in later times.
Clearly, then, dialects ancestral to West Greek/Aeolic must have co-existed with Mycenaean and other East Greek varieties in the Mycenaean period, and the collapse of the Mycenaean civilization must have entailed considerable population movement, if we are to explain successfully the changes of dialect involved in several areas of the mainland. One obvious possibility is that Mycenaean central and southern Greece were ‘West Greek’-speaking (note that, on this view, the traditional terminology is no longer appropriate for the earlier period, and some writers have therefore substituted ‘South’ or ‘South-East’ Greek), while non-Mycenaean northern, and more specifically north-western, Greece was ‘West Greek’ in speech (again, some writers have substituted ‘North’ or ‘North-West’ Greek). West Greek speakers from the north might then have moved into the power vacuums as the Mycenaean civilization failed, leaving pockets of East Greek speakers in the Attic peninsula and the mountains of Arcadia (with many others emigrating to the Aegean islands and Asia Minor).

This remains the standard view, but in the continued absence of convincing archaeological evidence for a large-scale Doric invasion, Chadwick (1976b) has suggested that many West Greek speakers were already living in the south as a ‘working class’ to serve the Mycenaean aristocracy. If correct, this would mean that the former underclass simply took control in areas where it had always lived. In support, Chadwick noted that some variation of usage in the tablets had already been interpreted as evidence for the existence of two Mycenaean dialects (Risch 1966, Naggi 1968, Woodward 1988). But where Risch argued that this ‘special’ Mycenaean reflected the spoken East Greek of the lower classes and constituted the source of the Ionic and Cypriot (‘nominal’ Mycenaean having died out with the overthrow of the Mycenaean aristocracy). Chadwick argued that certain features of this ‘special’ variety in fact correspond to West Greek and so proposed that the Mycenaean lower classes were in fact speakers of West Greek.

But the whole theory of dialect variation in the Linear B tablets has now been seriously challenged (cf. Reedit 1941 and Thompson 1995). If well-founded, this new scepticism undermines both Risch and Chadwick to the extent that the ‘lower class’ language which they postulate (whether of East- or West-Greek type) would no longer be attested even sporadically in the documentary record. It does not of itself rule out either theory, of course, since we should not necessarily expect any non-prestigious spoken variety to influence official documents composed by a scribal elite, but the absence of Doric names is striking, given that the non-Greek names of indigenous peoples appear in some numbers.

Whatever the truth of the matter, much of the dialect division of the Classical age is now widely taken to be of post-Mycenaean origin. The old assumption of successive waves of invaders has been abandoned in favour of the view that the ‘Greeks’ came to Greece in a single, though possibly gradual, population movement around the end of the third millennium BC, and that Greece in itso is the product of the contact between the Indo-European dialect(s) of the incoming population and the language(s) of the indigenous populations.

The division into East- and West-Greek varieties had clearly taken place by the late Bronze Age, as the dialects of the Linear B tablets shows, perhaps as a simple
function of geographical and political separation, perhaps under different substrate influences. Much necessarily remains uncertain about this remote period, but when we turn to the later historical dialects it is clear that Arcadian remains the closest to a direct descendant of the weakly differentiated “East Greek” varieties assumed to have been spoken in southern Greece. The closely related Cypriot must represent the later development of the East Greek dialect of early Bronze Age colonists, and it is surely significant that Cypriot is the only dialect of the classical period still written with a syllabary (apparently representing an independent development of the Linear A system). The North West Greek dialects are correspondingly taken to represent the more or less direct descendants of the weakly differentiated “West Greek” dialects of the Bronze Age.

Other cases, however, are more complex. The Ionic dialects, for example, including here Attic, share typical East Greek innovations with Arcado-Cypriot (e.g., assimilation of original [t] and so must in origin represent co-descendants of the East Greek group in the Bronze Age. They have, however, undergone a number of characteristic innovations to the exclusion of Arcado-Cypriot, many of which are demonstrably post-Mycenaean, including the shift of original [æ] to [ə] (complete in Ionic, more restricted in Attic, so that Attic-Ionic μαργαρίτας [mæɾɣarɪtʰà] “mother”, for example, corresponds to μάργαριτας [mâɾɣarɪtʰas] elsewhere, including Mycenaean (cf. the place name μαργαριτας [mâɾɣarɪtʰas] [marpilas]). Many therefore now regard Attic-Ionic as a dialect group that acquired a strongly independent identity only after c. 1000 BC, probably in an area comprising eastern Attica and, following colonization, the western and central Aegean basin.

Interestingly, Attic-Ionic also shows a number of innovations with Peloponnesian Doric to the exclusion of both Arcado-Cypriot and North West Greek. The preposition ἐν (en), for example, was used originally both locatively with the dative (= “in”) and alluvially with the accusative (= “into”), an archaism preserved in both Arcadian and North West Greek. In Attic-Ionic and Peloponnesian Doric, however, a final [-a] was added when the preposition was used alluvially, giving originally ἐνω [enō] but subsequently forms such as ἐνι [eni] and εἰς [eis] through simplification of the cluster and “compensatory” lengthening, i.e., the tone appended to (θ) above; ἐνι [eni] and εἰς [eis] were originally preconsonantal and prothetic contextual variants, with different dialects then making different choices. Thus both East Greek and West Greek seem to have divided in the early post-Mycenaean period into conservative and innovative members, i.e., Arcado-Cypriot (conservative) vs. Attic-Ionic (innovative) on the one hand, and North West Greek (conservative) vs. Peloponnesian Doric (innovative) on the other. Beginning with Rüsch (1953), this has been interpreted as evidence for a significant period of parallel development on the part of the innovative dialects, perhaps originating in southern Boeotia and northern parts of Attica as Dorians, making their way to the Peloponnese, passed through and/or settled in formerly East Greek-speaking lands. These innovations cut across the earlier and more general East-West division, thus making Attic-Ionic and Peloponnesian Doric “mixed” varieties. Subsequently, however, particularly with the advent of colonization, the two groups must be assumed to have gone their separate ways.
The Aeolic dialects are also now commonly regarded as being largely pre-
Mycenaean developments (Garcia-Ramon 1975, critically reviewed by Raubitschek 1979a), originally only weakly differentiated from West Greek in the Bronze Age. One possibility is that Aeolic formed a kind of bridge between southern "East" Greek and northern "West" Greek at that time, since there is evidence that pre-Aeolic had already incorporated a number of East Greek features (e.g. Igl. verb infection -ser [-men] in place of West Greek -ser [-met] into its otherwise broadly West Greek make-up. Many distinctively Aeolic features, however, can be shown to be innovations dating from the early post-Mycenaean era. A crucial example is the uniform development of initial reflexes of the labial series (k*, g*, k̂*) inhibited (with some modification) from Proto-Indo-European and still preserved in Mycenaean. All non-Aeolic dialects, in contrast, show dental reflexes before front vowels (via palatalization): thus Boeotian φθερον [pθerono] 'fear', contrasts with Attic φθερον [pθerono], while Mycenaean ςετω-ςοι [k̂eto-] (attested only in compounds) still shows the initial [k̂*].

Since the dialect of western Thessaly best preserves these Aeolic innovations, this area is the most likely locus for the initial development of the dialect. It must, however, have been quite widely diffused at one time, even though, in the his-
torical period, Thessalian and Attic are already geographically separated by North
West Greek, and the dialects of western Thessaly and Boeotia both show clear signs of West Greek convergence and geographical restraint. In Boeotia, for example, we begin to find the substitution of the typically West Greek velar suffix -kua [ka-] for "true" Boeotian -vo [tul in the aorist (post perfective) of verbs with an original dental stem: e.g. θυγατρικας [θυγατρικας] for θυγατρικας [θυγατρικας] < *[e-komis-sa-mer] 'we carried away'; the extension of the velar being based on the existence of preverbs in λω [lo]- (un-both of dental [t̂*]-) and velar [ĝ*-] stems, with subsequent paradigmatic confusion). Within this overall approach, Lesbian represents the dialect of colonists from Thessaly who made their way across the Aegean around 1000 BC and whose speech subsequently underwent a period of development under the influence of neighboring Ionic, producing yet another mixed variety, but this time with a heavy East Greek component. Particularly significant in this connection is the Lesbian, infinitive of athematic verbs (i.e. those in which inflectional endings are added directly to the root without the "themabetic" or stem-forming vowel [e.o.]: contrast θθρεώ [θθεω-] 'we are', with μεθθρομ [meθ-throm] 'we persuade'). This has the suffix -μεν [men], which seems to combine the original West Greek/Aeolic -μεν [men] with the East Greek -μα [-ma].

1.3 Attic
This brief and selective overview is intended to do no more than supply the back-
ground against which to present the later history of Greek. Many scholars would c餐具ly wish to challenge aspects of the account which has been presented here, particularly by insisting on a greater degree of dialect differentiation in the Bronze Age than has been allowed for. Obviously, no view is wholly unproblematical.
since all are necessarily based on partial knowledge and on particular selections and interpretations of sunglassess.

We have, however, left open the question of Attic and its 'aberrant' relationship with Ionic. This dialect certainly shares most of its characteristic innovations with Ionic, as noted, but, significantly, it also has important innovations in common with Boeotian. We may note, for example, the history of palatalization, which seems in its early phases to have followed Ionic (both dialects having, e.g., τότος [tótos] 'so much', against Boeotian τότος [tótos], all from *τοτοῦς), but subsequently to have fallen into line with Boeotian Ionic having, e.g., ἀδελφός [adelpós] 'guard', against Attic/Boeotian ἀδελφός [adelpós] [adelpóς], all from *ἥδελφος, cf. (7) above). The most likely explanation is that western Attica, separated by high mountains from the eastern area, came under Boeotian influence in the post-Myceenian period some time after Ionic, which included at least eastern Attica in its developmental domain, had begun to evolve as a distinct variety. The subsequent political unification of Attica would then have produced the 'mixed' dialect of the classical period, a dialect of broadly Ionic type, but with a number of strikingly discordant features vis-à-vis the Ionic norm.

An evolved form of Attic was soon to play the dominant role in the subsequent development of Greek, a history from which all other ancient dialects eventually disappeared virtually without trace. This story will be taken up in detail in Chapter 3, but first we must consider the role of the ancient dialects in literature, and in particular the emergence of specifically literary dialects, since this issue lies at the heart of the 'problem' of diglossia which has characterized Greek for most of its history.
The rise of Attic

3.1 Attic as a literary standard

By the time of Herodotus' History Ionia had long lost its independence to Persia. Athens, however, as a leading city of the Ionian world, had not only supported an unsuccessful Ionian revolt but also played a leading role in defending Greece proper against the consequential Persian aggression of the early fifth century BC. The city emerged from these confrontations as a major maritime power, with most of the islands of the Aegean and a number of important cities around its coasts falling under Athenian domination. By the mid-fifth century Athens was an imperial city which could rival Delian Sparta, the established military power, for the leadership of Greece, a rivalry which extended also into the political sphere, since Athens was the foremost democratic city of the age, while Sparta retained a more traditional oligarchic form of government.

At the same time, and partly as consequence of its new pre-eminence in other spheres, Athens was rapidly becoming a major centre of learning, attracting leading intellectuals (the so-called 'sophists'), peripatetic teachers of various skills and theories who provided higher education for the well-to-do from all parts of the Greek world, and beginning the development of its own cultural and educational institutions. Most importantly, in this atmosphere of growing national pride, the Athenians developed a literature in a version of their own dialect, particularly in the fields of tragedy, comedy, history, oratory and philosophy.

The core of the language of Athenian tragedy, as noted in Chapter 2, is essentially Attic, despite the overlay of traditional and Ionic 'distancing' features. But the colloquial (i.e. non-parodic) language of comedy, familiar from the plays of Aristophanes, is, as far as we can tell, quite close to the educated colloquial of the period. Similarly, rhetoric, one of the most notable "inventions" of the fifth-century Greek enlightenment and the key instrument of democratic political life, achieved its definitive form in the dialect of Athens. Many sophists laid great emphasis on the importance of effective speaking as a means of managing one's affairs and manipulating circumstances to one's advantage and found many willing customers for their educational services in a society which gave free rein to the exploration of such skills. Notable names in this connection include Protagoras, from Abdera in Thrace, Gorgias of Leontini in Sicily, and Thrasymachus from Chaeroneon on the Asian side of the Bosphorus. The evolution of a specifically Attic prose style is certainly due in part to the influence of these mainly Ionic-speaking visitors, an influence which manifested itself both in the style and organization of argument.
and in the use of language, particularly through the introduction of Ionic technical terminology and the semantic extension of existing vocabulary.

Unsurprisingly, then, the historian Thucydides, who was born around 460 BC and exited in 424 BC for his failure as a general during the ‘Peloponnesian’ war between Athens and Sparta (421–404 BC), wrote his account of that conflict in a rather old-fashioned Attic, which, as noted, suppressed the most characteristically Attic features in favour of Ionic equivalents. His style was perhaps typical of the sophisticated generation of pre-war days in that nothing in the work (which includes ‘speeches’ put in the mouths of key figures at critical moments) suggests the direct influence of the highly specific codification of rhetorical practice initiated by Gorgias from 427 BC onwards. This latter involved what is, to a modern sensibility, a rather unnatural striving for impact through rhetoric, formal parallelism, and the routine exploitation of auxiliary rhetorical and phonetic ‘special effects’. Thucydides’ narrative, in contrast, is quite straightforward, and even the speeches, though often broadly, archaically in their articulation of material, display none of the precise matching and equalization of clauses espoused by Gorgias, but instead aim for a deliberate variety of phrasing and syntax. What is perhaps most characteristic of Thucydides’ speeches is the extreme compression of both thought and action, which often leads to highly complex structures that demand the most careful reading. This style is therefore in every marked contrast to the doctrines of Thrasymachus, who advocated logical refuting and clarity of expression as the primary virtues of a good rhetorical style.

In any probability, then, the reputation of Gorgias as the ‘founder father’ of Attic prose is exaggerated. It seems more likely that he developed and refined tendencies that were already in train, as seen perhaps in Thucydides’ speeches, and attempted to formulate the results as rules of composition. His excessive mannerism, however, though doubtless initially highly effective in what was still a very new domain, fell rapidly out of favour, and it is the work of Thrasymachus that had the more lasting influence. This shift can perhaps be traced in the work of the orator Antiphon (executed in 411 BC), whose early speeches are markedly archaical, with some use of choral equalization and associated phonetic contrivances, but who later adopted a more expansive sentence structure with fewer Ionic or ‘poetic’ characteristics (who often amount to the same thing, since much of what was current in early Ionic prose had come to be felt as poetic ‘because of the continued use of the same words and expressions in archaising poetry. It is in any case worth noting that there is a clear contrast between Antiphon’s rhetorical exercises and his genuine forensic oratory, which makes a much more straightforward appeal, as appropriate to its ‘real-world’ context. Lydias (born around the middle of the fifth century) also wrote speeches for the Athenian middle class, and again did so in a relatively ordinary Attic with few blatant rhetorical ‘tricks’; a ‘solloquial’ directness and simplicity of diction apparently gave a better impressiveness of honesty in a court of law.

Perhaps the most important figure in this field, however, is the rhetorical theoretician Isocrates (436–338 BC) who, though a pupil of Gorgias in his youth, owed a great deal more to Thrasymachus in his development of a technically refined
(though to some modern tastes rather bland) prose style, most particularly in his emphasis on precision of diction, the avoidance of 'poetic', i.e. often Ionic, expression, the paramount importance of transparency of sentence structure within the context of a complex 'periodic' style, and the need for a restrained approach to the rhetorical reinforcement of the message. The later influence of Iocricratic rhetoric on the great Roman statesman and man of letters Cicero, and through him on the subsequent evolution of prose writing in Europe, cannot be overestimated.

We should not, however, leave the subject of rhetoric without first observing that a broadly 'rhetorical' style comes to characterize other genres besides oratory. The case of Thucydides' history has already been mentioned, but no one can read a play of Euripides or Aristophanes without becoming aware of the impact of a rhetorical education on the construction of dramatic dialogue, particularly in set-piece confrontations. It is quite clear that early rhetoric had the most profound effect, not only in the context of the Athenian Assembly and the law courts but much more generally through the education system, on the vocabulary and thinking of the educated classes, and ultimately on the lexicon and stylistic conventions of literary and even official varieties of the Attic dialect.

Alongside the development of rhetoric we see in Athens in the late fifth century the growth of moral philosophy. This was directly associated with the general intellectual ferment of the period and particularly with the pressing need for a fundamental examination of basic ethical and political issues in the context of the freedoms and responsibilities afforded by democratic government. Some philosophers, among whom Socrates stands out as one who claimed to have nothing to teach but only questions to ask, favoured a dialectic method over exposition; and a new literary genre, the philosophical dialogue, eventually emerged, with Socrates' pupil Plato (427–348/7 BC) its greatest exponent.

Plato came from a highly cultured background and was steeped in the traditions of Greek poetry. Despite his general distaste of poetry (as perpetuating a distortion of reality), it is striking that when his subject matter becomes more abstract and his purpose more overtly didactic, as in the famous 'mythical' passages of the Republic, the style and vocabulary begin to exhibit marked similarities with those of Attic tragedy. In the more "natural" parts of his dialogues, however, we seem to be dealing, as in Aristophanes (always allowing for differences of genre and intent), with an urful approximation to the ordinary conversational style of the educated classes.

With the development of literature in a purely Athenian context during the late fifth and early fourth centuries BC we see the gradual emancipation of Attic prose from the direct influence of Ionic precedent, though it should be emphasized that certain lexical and grammatical features of Ionic prose had by then become permanent fixtures and a hallmark of the 'high' style. The influence and prestige of this variety were enormous, so that, by the time of Plato, Attic prose is the only prose literature of which we have any surviving record. This clearly demonstrates that Attic literature had by then come to dominate Greek culture, and that the Attic dialect, as the international language of intellectual endeavour (even, it should be noted, in the field of historiography, where Ionic had earlier reigned supreme),
already served as a model for the whole Greek-speaking world. In an earlier age Thucydides had felt obliged to "note down" his Attic; but now the fourth-century historian Thucydides, who came from the Ionian island of Chios, had little choice but to write in the established literary Attic of his period. The role of Classical Attic as the model for literary composition was assured, and its influence was to last for the next 2,000 years.
4.1 Introduction

During the latter half of the fourth century BC the kingdom of Macedonia became the controlling power in mainland Greece, and then, through the spectacular conquests of Alexander III ("the Great"), 356–323 BC, acquired control of the whole of the eastern Mediterranean, including Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt, and finally extended its rule throughout the former Persian empire to the borders of India. Great new cities were founded in the conquered territories, most notably Alexandria in Egypt, Pergamum in Asia Minor, and Antioch in Syria, and Greek culture and language were spread as far as the plains of the Punjab.

Curiously there was no consensus in antiquity as to whether the Macedonians were themselves of Greek origin or not, with Herodotus perhaps in favour of the proposition (L.I, VIII.43) and Thucydides against (IV.124–7). But as the growing power of Macedonia under Philip II began to threaten the autonomy of the Greek city states in the fourth century BC, the argument became intensely politicized, and those who advocated a strong military response to the growing threat, such as the Athenian orator Demosthenes, were in no doubt that they were "barbarians" (i.e. non-Greek speakers, cf. Olynthiacs III 24). There is in fact evidence to suggest that Macedonian was not readily understood by most Greeks (e.g. Plutarch, Alexander 51 4), and this fear alone would distinguish it from the Greek dialects that were discussed earlier, since we never hear otherwise of Greeks being unable to understand one another. We should not, however, discount the possibility that what is being described in such sources as "Macedonian" is in fact the language of Paeonians, Illyrians or Ilirian subjects of the Macedonian king.

For what it is worth, the few fragments we have of what is alleged to be the Macedonian language suggest that it was either a highly aberrant Greek dialect or an Indo-European dialect very closely related to Greek, perhaps representing the speech of a group who had become detached from the majority of the invaders who, further south, eventually became speakers of Greek during the first half of the second millennium BC (cf. Chapter 1). It had, for example, apparently failed to undergo certain otherwise 'common' Greek sound changes, such as the de-voicing of the voiced aspirated series of plosives standardly reconstructed for Indo-European, but so have de-aspirated them instead. We therefore find Macedonian names such as Беогал (Begovat) instead of Βεγαλ (Belegon), "Bringer-of-victory", were the first element derives from the Indo-European root *beleg-, "bear-carry". 32
For further discussion see Kallieris (1954/1976), Katičić (1976), Crossland (1982), and Sakkellariou (1983).

Whatever the truth of the matter, the Macedonian dialect/language clearly lacked the prestige necessary to serve as the linguistic and cultural counterpoint to Macedonian imperial ambition. But Attic, as the dialect of the culturally dominant city of classical Greece, already widely in use outside its region of origin as a literary and administrative language, obviously suited the purpose. It was therefore natural that the Macedonian kings, in search of a 'civilization' to underpin their growing power, should have established the study of Classical Greek literature, much of it in literary Attic, as a central pillar of their education system and adopted Great Attic as their own official language. Though this formally took place during the reign of Philip II (359/358-336 BC), the introduction of Greek civilization from the south had begun during the late fifth century BC, when the Athenian tragic poet Euripides, along with other famous artists of the period, had spent time at the court of king Aegisthus. This Anticization of the Macedonian aristocracy was to be the crucial factor in the future history of Greek, since, continued Athenian cultural prestige notwithstanding, the emergence of Great Attic as a true national language (the Koine) would surely have become long delayed, or even prevented altogether, without the substitution of the military and political power of Macedonia for the declining influence of Athens.

Alexander's conquest ushered in the Hellenistic age, which is conventionally dated from his death in 323 BC to the battle of Actium in 31 BC, in which the forces of Mark Antony and Cleopatra VII, the last Greco-Macedonian monarch of Egypt, were defeated by Octavian, soon to be the first acknowledged Roman emperor with the title Augustus. It should be noted, however, that Roman involvement in the Greek world had begun much earlier (see the introduction to Chapter 5), and that a clear dividing line between the later Hellenistic and Roman periods cannot be drawn.

In the early Hellenistic period the conquered territories were divided into a number of hereditary monarchies, though a few well-established kingdoms in Asia Minor managed to retain their autonomy, notably Bithynia and Pontus on the southern shores of the Black Sea, and Cappadocia in central Anatolia. The major dynasties included the Antigonids of Macedonia, the Ptolemies of Egypt and the Seleucids of Syria and Persia. Since the Macedonian aristocracy had long been Atticized, the study of classical literature remained central to the Hellenistic education system, and the Koine or 'common' written language of the Hellenistic world, employed from the outset as an official language by the new Macedonian rulers of the East, was simply the product of the natural evolution of Great Attic within its extended new environment.