

known as Atticism, and the cultural context as the Second Sophistic. Nevertheless, at less exalted literary levels the koiné persisted as the general language of communication until the end of late antiquity.

¹ Browning (1969: 27–58), Palmer (1980: 174–98), Horrocks (1997: 32–70). ² A writer of c.425 BC: ps.-Xenophon, *Ath. Pol.* 2. 7–8.

Phonology

The selection of variants from Attic and Ionic:

1. In most lexical items, and in most authors, -σσ- is preferred to Att. -ττ- (§31.4).
2. Att. retention of [a:] after [e, i, r] is the norm (§30.3). This combined with the preceding led to the hybrid form (Doric- or Aeolic-looking) *πράσσω*.
3. -ρσ- is retained in most words (§31.5): but *θαρρῶ*.

§52. Greek Phonology in the Hellenistic Period

Since the orthography is frozen it is difficult to trace precisely the phonological changes that were undoubtedly taking place in the vernacular. We may speculate whether in the *recital* of formal literary texts an archaizing pronunciation was adopted. There are spelling errors in less formal documents (inscriptions and papyri) which give an indication of the phonology of the writer. The development is usually (but not always) in the direction of modern Greek: since the modern Greek language is a continuation of just one of the many varieties which constituted the vernacular koiné, it is to be expected that some regional features are not continued in any known variety of the modern language.

In general the phonetic and phonological developments of the Attic-based vernacular were as follows. It is commonly assumed that many of the vowel changes were under way in Attic by the early IV cent.¹

§53. Vowels

1. The pitch accent moves towards a stress accent, and distinctive vowel length is lost.
2. The front vowels *ī* [i:] and *ει* [e:] merge as [i], and are later (II cent. AD) joined by *η* [ɛ:].
3. *ου* [ɔ:] > [u].
4. The diphthongs [ai] > [ɛ], [oi] > [ü].
5. The second element of the diphthongs [au], [eu] becomes a fricative: [af], [ef].
6. The second element of the long diphthongs [a:i], [e:i], [o:i] disappears.

§54. Consonants

1. Voiced stops *β, δ, γ* become fricatives [v], [ð], [ɣ].
2. Aspirated stops *φ, θ, χ* become fricatives [f], [θ], [x].
3. The affricate/cluster *ζ* becomes a simple voiced fricative [z].
4. The aspirate disappears (psilosis): §23.10.
5. Final -*n* becomes weak or non-existent.

¹ Teodorsson (1974), Brixhe–Hodot (1993: 15 f.), Horrocks (1997: 102–7): against this Threatte (1980).

§55. Morphology/Syntax

Some characteristic features of Greek in the Hellenistic period:

1. Anomalous verbs such as *οἶδα* are regularized (3 plur. *οἶδασι*): cf. 21 10. The gradual elimination of athematic verbs continues; *εἰμί* (*sum*) is transferred to the middle: *εἶμαι* (past *ἤμην, ἦτο*).
2. The middle starts to fade as a separate category; so too the optative.
3. In the aor., thematic endings are replaced by athematic ones: *εἶπον* → *εἶπα*. The characteristic -*σα*- marker of the aor. spreads; in the 3 plur. a mixing of the competing forms -*ον* and -*σαν* produced -*οσαν*.
4. The -*σαν* ending of the 3 plur. spreads to the 3 plur. imper.: *ἔστωσαν*.
5. The distinction between aor. and perf. starts to break down.

6. Nouns with an awkward morphology are replaced: e.g. $\upsilon\varsigma$ ($\chi\omicron\iota\rho\omicron\varsigma$, and cf. 97 3), $\nu\alpha\upsilon\varsigma$ ($\pi\lambda\omicron\iota\omicron\nu$). In some cases an easier (dialect) form was selected: $\lambda\epsilon\acute{\omega}\varsigma \rightarrow \lambda\alpha\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$.

§56. Lexicon

The lexicon of Hellenistic Greek is in many ways the area in which the differences from classical Attic are most striking; however, none of the developments below is new to the koiné.

1. A large proportion of the words were originally at home in Ionic: there are a number of reasons for this. The literary koiné (e.g. of historiography) aligned itself with the tradition of scientific prose, where, as we have seen, Ionic was always extremely influential. Secondly, the importance of Ionians in the hellenization of Asia Minor explains why a large number of Ionicisms entered the common language on a spoken level.

2. Some literary prose authors (notably Polybios) use words which seem oddly poetic from an Attic perspective. No doubt this is partly due to the presence of dialect words (mostly Ionic) in the constitution of the koiné, words which were confined to poetry in Attic (but vernacular elsewhere). Another reason is the artificial nature of the literary koiné: writers drew on the lexical resources of the classical past, and this sometimes included the poets (especially epic).

3. The language is enriched by borrowings: particularly from Latin, but also from other languages in the case of regional standards (such as Egypt).

4. New forms were created by derivation:

- (a) Prepositional compounds in the case of verbs (often with multiple preverbs: e.g. $\pi\rho\omicron\sigma\sigma\alpha\pi\epsilon\lambda\omicron\gamma\acute{\iota}\zeta\omicron\nu\tau\omicron$ 65 22).
- (b) New verbs by means of derivational suffixes: e.g. $-\acute{\alpha}\zeta\omega$, $-\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega$, $-\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\omega$.
- (c) New substantives by means of derivational suffixes: e.g. fem. $-\iota\sigma\sigma\alpha$, abstracts in $-\mu\alpha$, $-\acute{\iota}\alpha$, and adjs. in $-\acute{\iota}\kappa\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$. Diminutive forms, which play a huge role in later Gk. morphology, start to appear in the written language in significant numbers.

5. Semantic shift

This is normal in all languages: thus, for example, $\phi\theta\acute{\alpha}\nu\omega$, 'I antici-

pate' \rightarrow 'I arrive', $\delta\acute{\omicron}\xi\alpha$, 'reputation' \rightarrow 'glory'. Religious sects are particularly prone to investing words with a specific new significance, and this is of course to be found in Septuagint and New Testament Greek.

§57. Post-Classical Literary Prose

The distinction between literary prose of the Hellenistic period and formal inscriptions (such as 65) is to a large extent artificial. The koiné takes many forms, and although the Atticizing movement of the I cent. AD is presented as a marked shift in attitude, there was always a continuum between 'low' koiné (the letters in 64) and the 'high' variety which closely emulated classical prose, and which required a high level of education. The move to Atticism could be compared to the return to classicizing Latin in medieval Europe after the reforms of Charlemagne.

1. The Septuagint

A translation of the Pentateuch (*torah*, or first five books of the Hebrew Bible) was made in Alexandria in the III cent. BC. Translation of the rest of the Hebrew Bible was probably complete by the end of the I cent. BC. To refer to the Septuagint (LXX) as though it constitutes a unitary work is misleading, since it is likely that there were competing translations of much of it. According to tradition (documented in the so-called *Letter of Aristeas*), Ptolemy II wrote to the high priest of Jerusalem requesting six elders from each of the twelve tribes to make a translation: he hosted them in Alexandria, where it took them seventy or seventy-two days (hence the name *Septuagint*).¹ In fact the translation was probably undertaken by and for the hellenized Jewish community of Alexandria for whom Hebrew and Aramaic were becoming inaccessible. For obvious religious reasons the Greek text remains close to the Hebrew original: the result is a rather peculiar form of the koiné which has been described as 'translation Greek'. This is an exaggeration if it implies that the morphology and syntax are artificially tied to the Hebrew.² It is real Greek of its period, serving a very specific purpose; it is, of course, a far cry stylistically from the Greek of Jewish writers like