Chapter 3
Dialect, identity, and the invention of Athenian exceptionalism

1 Language and identity

This section's title pairs two words that will be familiar to almost everyone. Indeed, one might concede that language is a key element in individual, group, political, and national (or ethnic) identities. This simple statement – in fact, possibly a universal truth – however contains two concepts that have no univocal definition. What is language? What is identity? Let us begin with the first question. Linguists have assigned to language various definitions that may place greater emphasis on the structural, social, semiotic, or even symbolic functions of it (on the latter, see below).[1] As a completely abstract concept, language may be defined as a (human) faculty. Again abstractly, language may be considered a system of formal structures made up of rules that define the grammar of an individual language. Of course, even this structuralist view of language – championed by giants of theoretical linguists such as Ferdinand de Saussure and Noam Chomsky, among others – recognises that language has a social aspect. Thus, in Saussure's thought, the abstract system (*langage*) that makes up a language (*langue*) takes concrete shape in the individual utterances of individual speakers on individual occasions (*parole*, approximately 'language use'). Since the middle of the 20th century, sociolinguistics (the branch of linguistics that studies the relationship between language and society) has advocated for a definition of language that emphasises its communicative (semiotic) function. Language is thus seen as a system of utterances that facilitates communication between members of a given community. Sociolinguistics is particularly interested in the variation experienced by each language (*langue*), an entity that is constituted by many geographical, social, and individual varieties ('dialects', 'sociolects', and 'idiolects' respectively), which may also vary depending on the communicative situations ('registers'). There is also, of course, a temporal dimension to language, which leads linguistics (and sociolinguistics within it) to distinguish between 'synchronic' and 'diachronic' approaches.

Either a synchronic or a diachronic viewpoint may be adopted in the study of Ancient Greek (an extinct historical stage of the Greek language). The synchronic approach will define 'Ancient Greek' as a set of grammatical rules that were in use at certain social and/or geographical levels in a certain historical period (e.g. the

1 The bibliography is immense. For an orientation, see Lyons (1981, 1–11); Trask (2007, 129–31).

Open Access. © 2024 the author(s), published by De Gruyter. [CC BY] This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.
https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111382890-003

5th century BCE). The diachronic approach, meanwhile, will explore the ways in which Greek changed over time (e.g. in its transition from the 2nd to the 1st millennium or in the evolution from Classical Attic to the koine). When we apply the question 'What is language?' to Ancient Greek, we immediately encounter difficulties that are specific to this language. The first difficulty concerns the patchy knowledge that we have of individual utterances, since this knowledge is based exclusively on *written* texts that cover the Greek diachronic development only imperfectly. Ancient Greek is a *corpus language*: a variety that no longer has native speakers but for which a large number of written records survives.[2] The second problem that we encounter will be repeatedly highlighted and discussed in this chapter. Even after accepting that by 'Ancient Greek' we in fact mean only a specific variety of Greek as evidenced in the written sources at a certain chronological period and thus an abstraction, we are left with the problem that neither this nor any other variety can be reasonably defined as 'standard Ancient Greek' in the same way in which we speak of standard French, English, Italian, or Modern Greek. Ancient Greek culture had no prescriptive grammar that defined the standard language to be spoken by all and accepted as such. The Classical period is particularly thorny in that until the end of the 4th century BCE, Greek was not even endowed with a supraregional variety common to vast strata of the Greek population: the Greeks spoke regional dialects ('a ground of closely related norms': Haugen 1966b, 923). Nonetheless, this situation produced a well-known paradox: the Greeks were aware that they all spoke one language. Being speakers of the same language (ὁμόγλωσσοι) is among the criteria on which Herodotus (8.144.2) founds what is perhaps the first approximation of a cultural notion of Greek identity in ancient sources (see Sections 1.1 and 2).

Faced with the Greek paradox, the linguist might perhaps say that Herodotus' view is in contradiction with the reality of Greek dialectal fragmentation. The cultural historian, instead, will treat Herodotus' notion of language as a *symbol*, a brick in the construction of an ideology of identity. But what is identity? It is when we come to the second word of our title that things become both stickier and more slippery. Identity has today become so much the buzzword in most human science fields that a well-meaning colleague once offered the sensible (albeit defeatist) suggestion that in our investigation of Greek linguistic purism, we might best dispense with the word altogether to avoid running into theoretical quicksand and offending disciplinary sensitivities and dogmas. Identity, in other

2 Corpus languages are thus different from *languages of fragmentary attestation* ('*Trümmersprachen*'), for which even written evidence is scarce: an example of an ancient fragmentary language is Phrygian. For the distinction, see the classic Untermann (1989).

words, is encrusted with multiple layers of meaning (hence the stickiness) and resists univocal definitions (enter the slipperiness). However, complete avoidance of this contentious and contested word will not do. In studies of linguistic ideologies (and purism, including Atticism, belongs to this category) the stigmatised word – 'identity' – resounds at every turn of phrase, and the avoided concept that it denotes looms over many an explanation.

In this volume, we have thus chosen to begin with a very broad definition of identity as

> the confluence of the person's self-chosen or ascribed commitments, personal characteristics, and beliefs about herself; roles and positions in relation to significant others; and her membership in social groups and categories (including both her status within the group and the group's status within the larger context); as well as her identification with treasured material possessions and her sense of where she belongs in geographical space. (Vignoles, Schwartz, Luyckx 2011, 4).

This non-committal definition is adequate for our investigation of language ideologies in the ancient world, given that we do not aim to problematise the concept of identity nor to contribute critically to this field of study. When paired, 'language' and 'identity' ignite a semiotic explosion, as more prosaically testified by the more than 3,000 hits that their association produces in Brill's Linguistic Bibliography.[3] In what follows, we shall not so much look at individual identities but will instead focus on the multifaceted character of group identity at both the individual (i.e. how a person identifies with a group) and group (i.e. how that group construes its own identity) levels. Naturally, our attention will focus particularly on the role that language plays in these constructions, which we shall explore at key moments in Greek history: namely, the emergence of a reflection on Greek ethnic identity in archaic literature (see especially Sections 1.1 and 2.4), and the rise of Athenian exceptionalism in the 5th century BCE (Sections 2.5–6). In what follows, we shall consider how language relates to ethnic and social group identity, leaving aside other associations investigated in the literature (gender, religion, nation, etc.).

Shared ancestry is the first criterion of ethnic identity. In the next section (1.1) and again in Section 2.4, we shall investigate how Greek ethnicity (the representation of all the Greeks as one nation) was founded on a web of genetic affiliations that linked the individual Greek tribes, which, in turn, represented smaller-scale ethnic identities (the Dorians, the Ionians, etc.). However, ancestry is not the sole characteristic of ethnicity. Other, less straightforward criteria contribute to

---

3 https://bibliographies.brill.com/LBO (accessed 25/05/2023). For the development of studies on language and identity, see the overview in Edwards (2009, 15–9).

shaping it, thus making it 'more plastic than solid' (Edwards 2009, 151). Some of these other criteria are objective: shared religion, language, and laws are common examples (and it is not by chance that they also feature in Herodotus' definition of τὸ Ἑλληνικόν: see Section 1.1). By contrast, other criteria of ethnicity, are amply subjective. However, their subjectivity is the very reason that ethnic identities persist across generations despite rapid social change, when tangible links with previous generations no longer persist and ethnic identity evolves into a *belief* of shared ancestry.[4] We shall return to this concept below, as it proves useful for understanding evolution of Hellenicity across time and its later identification with a set of shared cultural values (including language) in the definition of which Athens played a key role.

Language itself may be layered with subjective beliefs. The definitions reviewed at the beginning of this section treat language as a tool of human communication. However, language also has a symbolic function that is activated precisely when it is used to mark identity: it becomes 'an emblem of groupness' that provides 'a powerful underpinning of shared connotations'.[5] Such symbolism commonly develops into a fully-fledged linguistic ideology, whereby the linguistic variety of an ethnic or social group is believed to be better, more correct, or more logical than all others. In Greek culture, ideology of this nature emerges most powerfully in the perception that Greek – a pillar of Hellenicity – is superior to other languages. However, this linguistic ideology also affected the perception of the Greek dialectal varieties: this is because at some point, Attic became a symbol that could eventually be promoted to the rank of prestigious variety (see Section 3.4). One variety's construction of a status over others on the same dialectal continuum is usually linked to the power of a dominant social and political group that wishes to impose its own language and transform it into a standard.[6] In Greek history, this is only partially the case. Athens exported Attic beyond Attica as an administrative language (*Großattisch*: see Chapter 4, Section 4), and this eventually triggered the formation of the koine and its use as a supraregional variety. However, the koine was not strictly – or at least not always – a prestige language, because it was also the language of the masses and included many subvarieties. Moreover, the later symbolic construction of Attic as the best language *par excellence* was conceived precisely as a reaction to the koine and by groups that were not politically dominant. As we shall argue in this chapter, the seeds of the linguistic ideology espoused by Atticism

4 Edwards (2009, 158).
5 Edwards (2009, 55), from which the distinction between structural and symbolic language is taken.
6 The ideological nature of this construction is well-captured by Uriel Weinreich's famous dictum, 'a language is a dialect that has an army and a navy': cf. Edwards (2009, 5; 64).

are in fact already discernible in the more broadly cultural ideology of 5th-century Athens that – although not focused exclusively on language – fabricated the idea of Attic uniqueness that Atticism later amplified.

In exploring how Attic became a symbol of Greek identity despite having initially been the language of a single regionally defined subgroup, it is useful to move from the level of ethnic identity to that of group identity. Greek culture expressed a plethora of smaller-scale group identities: for example, the social class of the καλοὶ κἀγαθοί, athletic or artistic guilds, religious confraternities bounded by the worship of some god or local hero, age groups such as the ἔφηβοι, etc. Some of these groups managed to acquire a special status that was contrasted with that of other social groups: in other words, they acquired markedness.[7] One such example is that of the πεπαιδευμένοι, those who attained higher education and thereby gained social recognition.[8] The Atticist linguistic archaism of the πεπαιδευμένοι, in turn, is an instance of 'marked language'.[9] The particular group identity that Atticism created is accompanied by four processes that Mary Bucholtz and Kira Hall (2004, 377) call 'semiotic processes of identification' and that are recurrent in the shaping of identities through language.[10] The first of these processes is practice – that is, the sedimentation of a habitus: in our case, the repeated use of Attic as a symbolic practice. The second is performance – a marked speech event at which identity is expressed through language: Atticism has a highly performative aspect, where language and pronunciation are continuously displayed, scrutinised, and assessed.[11] The third process is indexicality, through which the use of a linguistic feature becomes an *index* of something else: in the Atticist ideology, using correct Attic is an index of high social status and 'good' ethics (see Chapter 2, Section 3.3). The fourth process is ideology, which entails distorted beliefs – in our case, that Attic is an intrinsically better form of language.[12] Interestingly, cultural ideology often diverges from actual practice (which is complex and strategic).[13] Thus, a strict Atticist such as Phrynichus may prescribe the use of certain features based on his group's cultural ideology but may then disattend these prescriptions in his own prose.

In our initial exploration of the relationship between language and identity in Greek society, we have hitherto focused on a snapshot of two broad historical and cultural periods. First, we have considered Greek ethnic identity and how the

7 See Bucholtz, Hall (2004, 372).
8 See Schmitz (1997) and Chapter 1, Section 3.3.
9 Bucholtz, Hall (2004, 372).
10 See further Bucholtz, Hall (2004, 377–81).
11 See Schmitz (1997); Vessella (2018); Chapter 2, Section 3.3.
12 On the Atticist purist ideology, see Chapter 2, Section 3.1.
13 See Bucholtz, Hall (2004, 381–2).

notion of a (regardless of how historically abstract) shared language was part of its construction in the late archaic age. Next, we have considered how Attic purism became the cornerstone of Greek linguistic ideology in the post-Classical age. This transition includes a prominent logical gap: why would Attic, a local dialect, become the symbol of Greekness? The process, of course, is different from that by which varieties such the dialects of Florence or Sweden became the languages of new nations: Greece had no political central power that endorsed Attic. The answer lies exactly in the notion highlighted above: ethnic identity is based not only on objective criteria but also on subjective beliefs that allow this identity to survive through time. Classical Athens and her culture play a paramount role in this process, as this chapter argues.

During the archaic period, there developed a notion of Greek ethnicity based on shared ancestry where differences – including dialectal differences – were reconciled through the construction of a common lineage (Section 2.4). From the late 5th century BCE, the importance of common ancestry (συγγένεια) begins to recede, perhaps as the result of two initially different but ultimately cooperating factors. The first, chronologically, is the Athenians' wish to sever their ties with the other Greek tribes and claim uniqueness, which led the Athenians to devise a special narrative around their own origins, based on the myth of autochthony (Sections 2.5–6). The second factor is the new political horizon that the Greek world enjoyed after Alexander the Great. During the Hellenistic period, one's claim to Greek ethnicity could no longer be based on the claim to *real* Greek ancestry. Thus, from the late 4th century BCE onwards, Greek identity notably becomes a *presumed* identity.[14] The belief that the Greeks share a common Greek lineage may survive as an abstract – but formerly objective – notion because the defining characteristics of identity now encompass new, subjective factors. The most enduring of these new factors is culture, a shared set of educational values that find their concrete embodiment in Classical literature.

Atticism is among the clearest examples of the ways in which this new cultural notion of identity functioned, allowing ethnicity to retreat into the shadows and thus reassuring newcomers and outsiders.[15] However, it was 5th-century BCE Athens that established the belief that cultural Greekness could be acquired by anyone and that the best school at which to learn it could only be Athens herself. Athenian propaganda invented a novel way of thinking about identity, elevating Attic to the language of the culture that all wishing to belong must possess. This ideological construction appealed to Roman society and at the same time enabled

14 Cf. Edwards (2009, 159), who borrows the expression 'presumed identity' from Max Weber.
15 Cf. Edwards (2009, 161), quoting Joshua Fishman.

the Greeks to continue in their proud reiteration of ethnic superiority. At the end of this long historical journey, Aelius Aristides gives full emphasis to this concept in his *Panathenaic Oration*:

> Aristid. 1.326–7 Lenz–Behr: οἳ τὰς μὲν πατρίους φωνὰς ἐκλελοίπασι καὶ καταισχυνθεῖεν ἂν καὶ ἐν σφίσιν αὐτοῖς διαλεχθῆναι τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρόντων μαρτύρων· πάντες δὲ ἐπὶ τήνδε ἐληλύθασιν ὥσπερ ὅρον τινὰ παιδείας νομίζοντες. ταύτην ἐγὼ τὴν μεγάλην ἀρχὴν καλῶ τὴν Ἀθηναίων [. . .]. μόνη δὲ ἥδε πάσαις μὲν πανηγύρεσι, πᾶσι δὲ συλλόγοις καὶ βουλευτηρίοις σύμμετρος, ἔτι δὲ ἅπασι καὶ καιροῖς καὶ τόποις ἀρκεῖ καὶ δι' ἴσου πρέπει· δύο γὰρ τὰ πρῶτα σχεδὸν ὡς εἰπεῖν κέκτηται μόνη, σεμνότητα λέγω καὶ χάριν.
>
> They (i.e. the other Greeks) abandoned the dialects of the homeland tradition and would be ashamed to speak among themselves the languages of the past in the presence of witnesses. They all came to this language (i.e. Attic), regarding it as a marking boundary of civilisation. This I call the great victory of the Athenians. [. . .] Only this dialect (i.e. Attic) is suitable to every festivity, every meeting and assembly, and again it is sufficient and adequate to every occasion and place. For it alone possesses those two things that might be said to be the most important – namely, decorum and grace.

After all, Attic was an ancient dialect, a member of the Ionian group: when needed, albeit in the shadows, genetic ties could still be perceived, and the new version of Hellenicity could appear to be happily in continuity with more archaic notions of Hellenic ethnicity. The sections that follow unravel this fascinating story up to the threshold of the Hellenistic age.

1.1 Defining Greek identity: Ethnicity, language, and culture

The birth of Greek identity as a notion and its evolution in the archaic and Classical periods, have been investigated since the 19th century. These topics received new impulse in a series of influential studies published from the late 1990s onwards, to which this section is indebted.[16] Politically, ancient Greece was not a single society but a constellation of city-states, regional communities, and transregional groups.[17] Each of these political entities was the expression of an ἔθνος, which may be translated as 'population group' but also 'inhabitants of a certain land or πόλις'. Early Greek notions of identity were essentially *ethnic* (i.e. expressions of a given ἔθνος) and based on *genealogical* criteria: 'the ethnic group is dis-

16 J. M. Hall (1997); Fowler (1998); Malkin (2001); J. M. Hall (2002); Gruen (2013). Vlassopoulos (2015, 1–2) summarises the history of the field, showing how it has been shaped by the historical and political events of the 19th and 20th centuries.
17 See Vlassopoulos (2015), who discusses how each fits within the ethnicity paradigm.

tinguished from other social and associative groups by virtue of association with a specific territory and a shared myth of descent'.[18] In many ancient sources, the notion of ἔθνος overlaps with that of γένος ('kinship'), which denotes any group related by birth: a family but also a population group.[19] As Jonathan Hall remarks, 'the Hellenes can be described as both an *ethnos* and a *genos*, since one of the defining criteria of Greekness, along with language, customs and cult, was – for Herodotos at any rate – shared blood'.[20] Kostas Vlassopoulos, however, correctly warns that shared blood or common descent 'is neither exclusive to ethnic groups, nor is it sufficient by itself to constitute an ethnic group'.[21] Other factors – which may be objective or subjective: see Section 1 – also come into play.

The archaic age is largely an age of 'intrahellenic identities', dominated by four γένη: the Achaeans, the Aeolians, the Dorians, and the Ionians. Tellingly, apart from the Achaeans, the names of these ethnic groups coincide with those of dialectal groups. The connection between γένος and dialect is not usually explicit in earlier sources but is highlighted already in Heraclides Criticus (3rd century BCE, fr. 3), who first defines the Greeks as those who speak Greek (ἑλληνίζειν) and then proceeds to list the individual dialects that each γένος speaks.[22]

The earliest Greek sources reveal that some of these ethnic identities were already acquired notions (the Ionians are mentioned in *Il.* 13.685 and the Dorians in *Od.* 19.177) but that their characters and mutual relationships were constantly refined throughout the archaic and early Classical periods. Whenever the various subgroups faced issues of cultural interaction with other subgroups or peoples, the need to differentiate and self-identify emerged.[23] With the passage of time, these subgroups became building blocks in the construction of an overarching Hellenic identity. A unified idea of the Greeks as a single ἔθνος – that which J. M. Hall calls 'the becoming of the Greeks' – was probably shaped in the late archaic period under the impulse of panhellenic sanctuaries and festivals.[24] Opposing affiliations (e.g. Ionic vs Doric) may at times be contrasted for political reasons but ultimately contributed to a significant shift in the rhetorical construction of identity from race to culture, which is a 5th-century BCE acquisition.[25]

---

18 On group boundaries as essential to ethnic identity, see Edwards (2009, 157).

19 J. M. Hall (1997, 34–6); Gruen (2013, 1).

20 J. M. Hall (1997, 35). On the many meanings of γένος and its overlap with ἔθνος, see Loraux (1996, 35–42).

21 Vlassopoulos (2015, 6).

22 See Hainsworth (1967, 65); Consani (1991, 17–23); Finkelberg (2005, 161–76); and further Section 2.4 and Chapter 4, Section 4.3.

23 J. M. Hall (2002, 6).

24 J. M. Hall (2002, 154–68); Finkelberg (2005, 37–8); Vlassopoulos (2013, 38–41).

25 J. M. Hall (2002, 226–8).

This view of the evolution of Greek identity is echoed in linguistic bibliography. In discussing how in the early Classical period the idea of Ἑλλάς came to inglobate that of linguistic unity, Anna Morpurgo Davies (1987) identifies the ideological contrast between the notion of 'Greek' and that of 'barbarian' as a turning point.[26] The role that Athenian political propaganda played in this conceptual evolution in the wake of the Persian Wars has rightly been emphasised.[27] Kostas Vlassopoulos has also warned against constructing the relationship between Greeks and barbarians (and hence our perceptions of Greek identity) according to a rigid chronological division, since this relationship varied not only across time but especially across different Greek communities.[28] However, the topic of this volume – and, in general, of any investigation of Atticism – necessarily demands a focus on the ways in which ethnic and linguistic identities were shaped in Classical Attic sources in particular. Considered from this perspective, it is undoubtedly the case that the rhetoric of a cultural Hellenicity opposed to non-Hellenicity – a rhetoric that intensified in Athenian discourse after the Persian Wars, as Vlassopoulos also admits – became the prevailing paradigm from the 5th century BCE onwards, markedly increasing in the 4th-century construction of panhellenism.[29] The new model posited culture (παιδεία) as the cornerstone of Hellenicity (see Section 2.6). While still defined in mostly Athenocentric terms, this culture was nonetheless also accessible to those non-Greeks who constituted much of the leading elite of the Hellenistic (and later Roman) world. The later classicising attitude of Graeco-Roman intellectuals, who championed the mastering of high-register (Atticising) Greek as a token of belonging, is a direct consequence of the centuries-long redefinition of the relationship between identity and language that was initiated in late Classical Athens.

In sketching the evolution of Greek identity and its appropriation of linguistic characters, we face several challenges. One is the difficulty in aligning ancient literary sources with material evidence: an example is the heated debate surrounding the origins of the Dorians (see Section 2.4, n. 90). Another challenge emerges in the fact that historical and mythographic accounts are typically much later than the archaic period when Greek ethnic identity was first defined and are seldom coherent with one another: this is because 'genealogies in oral cultures are *fluid*' (Fowler 1998, 3). A single author may sometimes merge and adapt independent mythographic and genealogical cycles and may not be entirely familiar with certain aspects of these traditions. A prominent example of this challenge is the Pseudo-Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*, on which we will focus in Section 2.4. How-

26 Morpurgo Davies (1987, 15–7); E. Hall (1989); J. M. Hall (1997, 44–7); J. M. Hall (2002, 175–89).
27 J. M. Hall (2002, 186–9); Malkin (2001, 7).
28 Vlassopoulos (2013, 36).
29 J. M. Hall (2002, 8; 221).

ever, divergences also affect the accounts of Hellenic genealogy offered by Apollodorus (1.7.1–3) and Strabo (8.7.1), while further relevant differences concern details of Heracles' lineage (which is central to Doric identity) in Diodorus Siculus (4.57–8), and the description of Ion's parentage (which is relevant for Ionic genealogy and Athens' place within it) in the versions narrated in Hecataeus and Euripides' *Ion* respectively.[30]

For historians of language, an additional challenge emerges in the question of how so diversified a literary tradition may be used to obtain contextual information on linguistic history and its ancient perception. It is unclear whether language (i.e. dialect) played a role in the early construction of Greek 'regional' identities since here too all relevant sources are later. The first definition of Hellenicity based on linguistic criteria (although not on these alone) occurs in the already evoked passage of Herodotus' Book 8:

> Hdt. 8.144.2: πολλά τε γὰρ καὶ μεγάλα ἐστὶ τὰ διακωλύοντα ταῦτα μὴ ποιέειν μηδ' ἢν ἐθέλωμεν, πρῶτα μὲν καὶ μέγιστα τῶν θεῶν τὰ ἀγάλματα καὶ τὰ οἰκήματα ἐμπεπρησμένα τε καὶ συγκεχωσμένα, τοῖσι ἡμέας ἀναγκαίως ἔχει τιμωρέειν ἐς τὰ μέγιστα μᾶλλον ἤπερ ὁμολογέειν τῷ ταῦτα ἐργασαμένῳ, αὖθις δὲ τὸ Ἑλληνικόν, ἐὸν ὅμαιμόν τε καὶ ὁμόγλωσσον, καὶ θεῶν ἱδρύματά τε κοινὰ καὶ θυσίαι ἤθεά τε ὁμότροπα, τῶν προδότας γενέσθαι Ἀθηναίους οὐκ ἂν εὖ ἔχοι
>
> For there are many and great reasons why we (i.e. the Athenians) should not do this (i.e. make an agreement with the Persians), even if we so desired; first and foremost, the burning and destruction of the statues and temples of our gods, whom we are constrained to avenge to the utmost rather than make pacts with the perpetrator of these things, and next the kinship of all Greeks in blood and speech, and the shrines of gods and the sacrifices that we have in common, and the likeness of our way of life, which it would not befit the Athenians to betray. (Translation by Godley 1920, adapted).

In Herodotus, as already noted, 'language' represents an immaterial notion, an aggregative entity constructed on the knowledge that Greek was fragmented into local dialects, 'an abstract reification that assumes the prior existence of an 'imagined community' defined according to other criteria'.[31] These other – arguably objective – criteria are religion (θεῶν ἱδρύματά τε κοινὰ καὶ θυσίαι), culture (composed of common ἤθεα 'attitudes; temper'), and common blood (ὅμαιμον) – that is, kinship.[32] Herodotus, therefore, sits on the cusp of the transition from a purely ethnic identity to a

30 Hecat. *FGrHist* 1 F 16; Eur. *Ion* (57–75; 1589–94); cf. J. M. Hall (2002, 27).
31 J. M. Hall (2002, 192).
32 Analyses of this famous passage and of what it tells us about identity are many: see especially R. Thomas (2001); J. M. Hall (2002, 189–94). Saïd (2001) explores its influence in later discussions of Hellenicity.

broader cultural understanding of the concept, which will later develop into the ideal of Hellenicity also embraced by Atticism.[33] To understand this transition, it is necessary to examine the mythographic sources in which the first views of Greek ethnicity emerge. These sources mention linguistic matters only rarely, but much of the historical and geographical information they convey was used by ancient and modern linguists alike to derive conclusions on Greek linguistic history. Therefore, in the two sections that follow, we shall first address Greece's linguistic (i.e. dialectal) landscape from approximately the 2nd millennium to the middle of the 5th century BCE, highlighting the methodological and interpretative issues that this situation entails for linguists. This specialist background – potted though it may be in a volume of this kind – supports a more in-depth engagement with the ancient mythographic accounts and a fuller appreciation of the broader *cultural* implications of these traditions and their later re-use. This particularly concerns Athens' acquisition of a privileged status in Greek linguistic and cultural history, an evolution that is foregrounded in the exacerbation of the cultural opposition between the Ionians and the Dorians and the renegotiation of relationships within the Ionic ethnic group (see Section 2.5).

2 Greek: Language and dialect

The linguistic landscape of archaic and Classical Greece is notoriously fragmented and far from unified. Each region – indeed, each city – spoke a distinctive dialect, varieties that modern dialectology subsumes under six dialectal groups: Arcado-Cypriot, Attic-Ionic, Aeolic, Doric (encompassing the Northwest group), and Pamphylian (scantily attested around modern Antalya in Turkey, and difficult to classify).[34] Each of these dialects embodied a norm in its own right, and Attic was not endowed with a special prestige that marked it as superior to the other dialects – a norm – nor was there a recognised standard language (*Dachsprache* 'umbrella language'). A standard variety emerged only in the Hellenistic age with the koine, itself having evolved from the convergence of two closely related subvarieties of the same group: Attic and Ionic. Other areas of the Greek world also developed similar standard varieties based on the Classical dialects. The best documented example is the Doric 'koina' that was used in hundreds of Hellenistic inscriptions from Delphi as well as from Rhodes; in Sicily, a similar regional standard was

33 Konstan (2001, 32–5) and R. Thomas (2001, 215) discuss how Herodotus is here resounding the Athenian new ethnic discourse.

34 On Pamphylian, see the classic study by Brixhe (1976), and the overview in Filos (2013b). On Northwest Greek as a subvariety of Doric, see Section 2.2.

formed starting from the Doric dialect of Syracuse (Mimbrera 2012). The West Greek dialects also provided the basis for official documents issued by the Aetolian League (Bubeník 2018). The differences between the koine and these local koinai, which were mostly written standards, are addressed by Striano (2018).

A fundamental difference between the ancient Greek situation and that of many modern languages is that in ancient Greece, 'dialect' (διάλεκτος) carried no sociolinguistic connotations and was not subordinated to language (γλῶσσα).[35] As Herodotus' *Histories* 8.144.2 shows, Greeks in the Classical period recognised the existence of a unitarian γλῶσσα while aware that they, in fact, spoke different varieties (διάλεκτοι), none of which was a standard for the other Greeks.[36] The perception of a Greek language constituted by dialects that are not subordinated to a standard language also appears to have persisted into the Hellenistic age, given that the ancient grammarians treat the koine as neither an umbrella language nor the sum of all the dialects (see Sections 2–3). For them, the koine was simply another idiom, common to all Greeks because it was not geographically determined (significantly, κοινή is originally an attribute of διάλεκτος).[37] It is only in Late Antiquity (notably in the scholia to Dionysius Thrax's *Grammar*: Consani 1991, 43–53), and more consistently in the Byzantine period, that διάλεκτος assumes the modern meaning of regional and/or individual variety, subordinated to standard language.[38] A curious fact, highlighted by Morpurgo Davies (1987, 9), is that in both the Byzantine and the earlier Hellenistic-Roman periods, dialects such as those described in Gregory of Corinth's Byzantine treatise Περὶ διαλέκτων had ceased to exist, having been supplanted by the koine. However, it was in its non-Classical sense of 'regional variety' that 'dialect' would be adopted by Renaissance linguistics, largely determining the way in which the linguistic notion of dialect is treated in modern dialectology[39] and how the term 'dialect' is employed in modern languages.[40]

35 This initial, non-specialised meaning of διάλεκτος as 'language, linguistic variety' is consistent with its derivation from διαλέγομαι 'to converse, to speak'. The fullest account of the use of διάλεκτος in Greek sources is van Rooy (2016).

36 Versteegh (1986, 431); Morpurgo Davies (1987); Consani (1998, 95–6).

37 Morpurgo Davies (1987, 18); Consani (1991, 29–32); van Rooy (2020, 13–4); van Rooy (2021a).

38 Morpurgo Davies (1987; 8); Consani (1991, 16; 67–8); a slightly different view in van Rooy (2016, 259–67) and van Rooy (2021b), criticised in Consani (2021).

39 Van Rooy (2019).

40 Haugen (1966b, 923); Consani (1991, 75–94); van Rooy (2021b). The specialisation of the notion of dialect as a local variety (sociolinguistically) subordinated to a standard language is already pervasive in 19th-century linguistics. However, in some early 19th-century works 'dialect' may also be used to refer to daughter languages in relation to a mother language: see for example the title of an influential volume by Antoine Meillet, *Les dialectes indo-européens* (1922). A similar

2.1 The origins of Greek: Methodological premises

In this section, we shall briefly consider several theoretical issues concerning historical linguists' approaches to the origins of Greek. Not only will the adoption of this perspective be propaedeutic to our future analysis of Attic and its linguistic traits in comparison with other Greek dialects but it also allows us to consider in a different light the phenomena that accompany the emergence of Attic as a prestige variety (Section 2.6), its internal variation (addressed in Chapter 4), and the ancient speakers' perception of this development (Section 3). Although sociolinguistics is, of course, the central discipline to which we must turn in studying these phenomena, historical linguistics and dialectology provide additional tools with which to address issues of genetic relationships between dialects (particularly Attic and Ionic) and the mechanisms of change across them, showing that convergence (for instance between Ionic and Attic in their path to the koine) and borrowing (for instance, when Classical Attic imports prestigious lexemes from Ionic) are not only phenomena of a socio-cultural nature but enjoy full citizenship within a theory of historical linguistics.[41]

According to the current consensus, Greek (sometimes referred to as 'Proto-Greek', though this is a tricky term) – one of the earliest-attested Indo-European languages – was brought to Greece no earlier than 2000 BCE (and more probably around 1700, although estimates vary) by Indo-European peoples.[42] They overlapped with speakers of non-Indo-European languages living in the Greek mainland and islands and eventually imposed their language (with a shift of the pre-existing populations).[43] The precise dynamics of the coming of the Greeks is a

approach dominated the beginnings of Romance linguistics whose founder, Friedrich Diez, treated the Romance languages (i.e. the literary varieties of six Romance languages) as dialects, 'Mundarten' of Latin (Diez 1836, 4). In both Meillet's and Diez' case, 'dialect' is essentially a synonym of 'daughter language'. In Romance linguistics, the shift in the perception of dialects as geographically defined varieties on a par with languages took place with the generation following Diez, starting with Wilhelm Meyer-Lübke's *Grammatik der romanischen Sprachen* (1890–1902). This seminal work considers the whole dialectal variation of Romance and treats the dialects as points in a dialectal continuum rather than as inferior varieties subordinated to a more prestigious language.

41 Some of these aspects are discussed in Chapter 4.

42 The first documents in the Anatolian language family date back to 1700 (Hittite) and 1500 BCE (Luwian). The oldest Mycenaean tablets are dated to ca. 1450 BCE. The oldest hymns of the Rig Veda were transmitted orally until ca. 1000 BCE but date back to at least 1500 BCE.

43 We have no historical name for these pre-Hellenic peoples, whom ancient sources call by various names (Pelasgians, Dryopes, Leleges, Kaukones – they also mention historical peoples such as the Phrygians and the Phoenicians). For a recent appraisal, see Finkelberg (2005, 42–64).

thorny and heatedly debated question, which has exerted an impact on the study of the Greek dialects. The main question here is how Greek became differentiated into several local dialects, the answer to which has occupied a central position in Greek dialectology as a reflex of wider debates in Indo-European linguistics.[44] Following the tenets of the comparative method, the traditional model presupposes a linear evolution from Indo-European, through 'Proto-Greek', to the dialects by way of increasing splits in the branches of a linguistic family tree (*Stammbaum*).[45] Critics of this model claim that it is not adequate to explain evolution across dialect continua, where varieties of the same language are mutually intelligible, as is the case with Greek.[46] These scholars have therefore preferred the alternative 'wave theory' (*Wellentheorie*) model, which posits that languages (and dialects) do not differentiate through a series of vertical and regular mutations but through innovations that spread concentrically like waves in a pond, overlapping with other waves.[47] In this model, dialects are marked by imaginary lines ('isoglosses'), which mix in a complex interlacement of linguistic traits.[48] The wave model explains language change through phenomena such as contact, language-internal diffusion, and mutual accommodation: an effect of social factors.

The alternations of these two models are evident in how Greek dialectology has approached the question of the dialectal differentiation of Greek. Anna Morpurgo Davies (1992) offered an appraisal of the problems involved in this methodological issue in an article of unsurpassed finesse and clarity.[49] The distribution of the different dialects on Greek soil has traditionally been explained through the hypothesis that Greek came into Greece from the Balkan peninsula in three

44 For an introduction to the debate in Indo-European and historical linguistics, see Gąsiorowski (1999, 41); Clackson (2022, 26–9); on its impact on Greek linguistics, see Méndez Dosuna (1985, 261–306). See also Morpurgo Davies (1992, 417–20); J. M. Hall (1997, 162–70); Finkelberg (2005, 111–4); Hajnal (2007).

45 The model was originally developed by August Schleicher (1853; 1863, 14–6): cf. Morpurgo Davies (1996, 237–46; 270–6). For a discussion of its methodological premises, see Gąsiorowski (1999, 41); François (2015, 163–6); Weiss (2015); Consani (1991, 175–9) discusses its application in 19th-century Greek dialectology.

46 Garrett (2006, 139). Cf. François (2015, 167); Colvin (2020, 71).

47 The model was developed by the Indo-Europeanist Johannes Schmidt (1872), inspired by Hugo Schuchardt's earlier intuitions on proto-Romance (Schuchardt 1866–1868; Schuchardt 1900: the latter in fact a lecture delivered in 1870 and taken into account by Schmidt).

48 An isogloss is a linguistic trait shared by two or more varieties, which is such as to enable their distinction from other varieties. In linguistic maps, an isogloss corresponds to the line separating two areas where the given linguistic trait has distinct values. For a discussion, see Chambers, Trudgill (2004, 89–103).

49 See also García Ramón (2010); Scarborough (2023, 18–30).

migration waves (Kretschmer 1909).[50] In this model, which is indebted to ancient mythography, the dialects are considered to be branches of a family tree that share the same ancestor, 'Proto-Greek'.[51] Linguistic history and relationships between the dialects are thus described by applying the comparative method. Later studies, following the decipherment of Linear B,[52] have instead shown that already towards the end of the 2nd millennium Greek was dialectically differentiated and that Mycenaean is the ancestor of only some Greek dialectal groups (Attic-Ionic and Arcado-Cypriot).[53] These studies, inspired by the diffusionist wave theory, attribute the dialectal differentiation of Greek between the 1st and 2nd millennia to contact and accommodation.

The two models may be fruitfully reconciled for the purposes of our introduction to Greek dialectal history. The genetic model is useful for reconstructing unattested phases of the language and presenting a taxonomic description of the Greek dialects (see Section 2.2),[54] enabling us to explain language change in chronological terms. Meanwhile, the wave theory diffusionist model is useful in matters of detail, highlighting the fact that mutation can also occur through mechanisms other than simple linear filiation.[55] In our case, this approach is necessary for appreciating the internal variation of Attic. The ancients themselves demonstrated some awareness of this, and modern scholarship has devoted much attention to the social and chronological variants of this dialect.[56] The diffusionist model, which accounts for change in terms of both *time* and *space*, highlights the evident truth that 'no dialect is monogenic' (García Ramón 2018, 34). For our purposes, this serves as a sobering counterbalance to the ancient (particularly Atticist) purist pretence that Attic could really remain untouched by contact. The attention to lexical diffusion and borrowing from neighbouring varieties also brings to the fore sociolinguistic factors such as social strata and contexts of usage. In this chapter and the next, we shall make frequent mention of Ionic influence on Attic, an influence that was more pervasive

50 This supposes an Ionic migration in the Peloponnese, Crete, and Central Greece ca. 2000 BCE; an 'Achaean' migration in most of the same areas, pushing the Ionians further south, ca. 1700 BCE; and the final Doric migration ca. 1200 BCE.

51 For an accessible introduction to the issue of Proto-Greek, see Filos (2013a), with a rich bibliography. The Indo-European dimension of the question is discussed in Clackson (2007, 14–5), based on Garrett (2006).

52 See Porzig (1954); Risch (1955). This theory is not universally accepted: a convenient overview of the different theories on the position of Mycenaean accessible to non-specialists is provided by Milani (2013).

53 Méndez Dosuna (1985, 292–3); Hajnal (2007, 133–9); Horrocks (2010, 15–9).

54 Morpurgo Davies (1992, 429).

55 Cf. Haugen (1966b, 925–6).

56 See Chapter 4.

in certain social strata (among the elite and the intellectuals) and contexts of usage (literary language, private inscriptions). This happened because Ionic was endowed with *prestige*, a sociolinguistic factor that affects the ways in which dialects influence one another. We shall see in the second part of this chapter that Attic itself gradually acquired a cultural prestige that later motivated, first, its evolution into the koine (no longer a local dialect, but a supraregional variety spoken by all Greeks) and, subsequently, its promotion to the idealised linguistic standard of Atticist purism.

2.2 The diachronic and the synchronic dimensions

The previous section argued that it is beneficial to think of early Greek linguistic history in terms of a dialect continuum where demarcations and boundaries may have been much less rigid than our genetic reconstruction allows. In the period between the end of the written record in Linear B (beginning of the 12th century BCE) and the first sustained use of alphabetic writing in the late 9th–early 8th century BCE,[57] many innovations occurred across the already partly differentiated dialectal continuum, leading to the situation evidenced in the archaic epigraphic record. Thus, the Greek language as we know it is largely a creation of the period that followed the collapse of Mycenaean civilisation.[58] Scholars have linked this rapid evolution to extra-linguistic factors, such as economic crisis and mass population movements, the latter mirrored in the ancient historical accounts of early Greek migration and colonisation (on which see Section 2.4).[59] At the same time, the development of new forms of economic and socio-political links between different regions of the Greek world led to the emergence of a communal Greek ethnic identity, which is reflected in the archaic mythographic accounts that seek to find a common ancestor for all the Greek γένη.[60]

It is necessary to address the outline of these linguistic and social changes to appreciate how the relationship between Attic and other dialects was portrayed in ancient sources and why many of them insist on the notions of movement and migration, against which Athenian thought later held the notion of Attic autochthony. The decipherment of Mycenaean has shown that in the 2nd millennium, the Peloponnese was occupied by people who spoke a dialect (or perhaps multiple

57 Only one document earlier than the 9th century BCE is known: the personal name *o-pe-le-ta-u* in Cypriot syllabic writing (perhaps mid-10th century BCE).
58 Morpurgo Davies (1988, 76).
59 Garrett (2006, 142).
60 See Consani (1991, 17–23); Morgan (2001); Finkelberg (2005, 161–76); and further Section 2.4.

dialects) that was the ancestor of Attic-Ionic and Arcado-Cypriot. The latter may have already been differentiated into a separate linguistic group by the end of the Mycenaean era.[61] This linguistic uniformity was disrupted by speakers of West Greek (Doric): probably not a real 'invasion' (see Section 2.4 for the ancient roots of this theory) but a gradual movement of these peoples towards the east and the south.[62] The linguistic ancestor of Attic then moved into Attica: it is noteworthy that Classical accounts of Attic origins obscure the historical reality of this migration to fabricate the idea that Athens is an exception (see Section 2.4). Proto-Aeolic began to develop in Thessaly around, or shortly after, the Mycenaean collapse. Boeotian formed from Proto-Aeolic through contact with West Greek; until ca. 1200 BCE, Boeotia, a Mycenaean land, spoke a dialect of the southeast group.[63] Around 1100 BCE, Aeolic speakers migrated to Asia Minor, where the distinctive East Aeolic variety developed.[64] For some time, speakers of West Greek must have cohabited with speakers of Proto-Ionic in the Peloponnese, as indicated by the fact that Ionic and West Greek share several isoglosses that may be explained as contact phenomena. The ancients seem to have been aware of this when they speak of an Ionic presence in the Peloponnese (cf. Strabo 8.1.2). Ionic then developed independently after migration to Asia Minor around 1000 BCE, the last large migration to have taken place: later Athenian sources cite this fact to posit that Ionia is a colony of the Athenians. This outline reveals that no Greek land was wholly immune to emigration and immigration at the turn of the 1st millennium BCE.

All these movements are largely responsible for those shared innovations and contact phenomena that make Greek dialectal geography so varied and complex. This 'animated' historical tableau thus complements the picture painted by dialectology, which captures the dialects as though in a 'synchronic still life'. The complete lack of linguistic data and the unreliability of later ancient historical sources poses a serious difficulty for the reconstruction of Greek linguistic history between ca. 1200 and 800 BCE.[65] Thus, the 1st-millennium map of the Greek dialects, divided into six distinct – though related – varieties, is drawn on the basis of several diagnostic phenomena: shared innovations as a first criterion, and

61 Consani (2006, 29–32); García Ramón (2010, 229).
62 See Musti (1985); Consani (2006, 32).
63 García Ramón (2018, 94; 96).
64 For a defence of the historicity of the Aeolic migration, pointing to the existence of Proto-Aeolic as a unitary group, see García Ramón (2010, 230–5), who argues against H. N. Parker (2008). The archaeological evidence for this migration is debated: see Rose (2008). The same applies to the idea of an Ionic migration: Mac Sweeney (2017).
65 García Ramón (2018, 98–9) provides an excellent description of this problem.

common conservative traits as an additional criterion.[66] Shared innovations are more informative than shared archaisms.[67] The more common a given linguistic change (e.g. devoicing of obstruents in Indo-European languages) is, the more likely it is to have been introduced independently and thus not diagnostic for subgrouping.[68] The rarer or more 'aberrant' a shared development is, the more probable the relationship between the languages that possess it.[69] The single most important innovation in early Greek dialectal history, linking Mycenaean with Arcado-Cypriot and Attic-Ionic, is the change of inherited /t(h)i/ (θι, τι) into /si/ (σι) (as, e.g., in φησί/φᾱσί 's/he says' vs φᾱτί; cf. Mycenaean *pa-si*). Such changes are not commonplace in Greek linguistic history and constitute a truly evolutionary step within the Greek dialectal continuum. Similarly, the evolution of inherited /a:/ (ᾱ) into /ɛ:/ (η) (through /æ:/) is the exclusive isogloss linking Attic and Ionic and setting them apart from the other dialects (although in Attic /a:/ is maintained before /e/, /i/, /r/: '*alpha purum*'). The ancients also recognised this as a diagnostic separative element (see Section 3.1).

A second type of innovation is also known: those that may have happened in different groups independently or may have spread through time and space by contact, during the first centuries of the 1st millennium (consider the case of the East Aeolic infinitive ending -μεναι, which probably results from contact between inherited -μεν with Ionic -ναι).[70] Some of these changes and shifts caused significant divergences in the dialect continuum, since displacement and geographical distance meant that the occurrence of a certain innovation happening in a certain subvariety would not be reflected in the group's other subvarieties (for instance, in Arcadian and Cypriot, which, though genetically related, developed into two markedly different entities).[71] Nevertheless, none of these splits was so significant as to hinder intelligibility: Greek literary sources make it manifest that dialects were mutually intelligible, although the perception of dialectal differences sometimes led to negative comments or accusations of 'extraneity' (ξενία). Section 3.4 considers how these perceptions contributed to the progressive polarisation of

66 For a similar synchronic grouping of dialectal varieties, see Colvin (2007); Horrocks (2010, 16). A good introduction to Greek linguistic changes (both Proto-Greek and post-Mycenaean) is provided in van Beek (2022).

67 See Brugmann (1884) and the discussion Méndez Dosuna (1985, 264–78); Clackson (2022, 20–6); García Ramón (2018, 82–5). Cf. also García Ramón (2010, 221).

68 Gąsiorowski (1999, 54).

69 On the notion of 'common aberrancy', see Hock (1991, 563).

70 For a different view, see García Ramón (2010, 234); Scarborough (2023, 237).

71 Risch (1949) dated these changes to between 800 and 600 BCE; cf. Hajnal (2007, 136–7).

the Greek dialectal situation, with Attic assuming a prestigious role and eventually supplanting most other dialects.

We have seen how Greek dialectology reconstructs six dialectal subgroups: in reality, however, at least thirty local varieties were in existence, sometimes down to the very vernacular of each city. This is particularly true for Doric, the most locally differentiated group. Any descriptive list of each group and its subvarieties must select features according to which the differences between the dialects may become apparent. At the same time, even the most detailed description of a Greek dialect remains merely a synchronic abstraction, portraying the dialects as though they existed on the same chronological level and as though no innovations occurred over time and space. For our purposes, two elements are worthy of attention. The first is relative geographical isolation of Attic, which ancient sources link to the myth of Athenian autochthony (see Section 2.5). The second is the fact that we know the dialects of Attica and Ionia quite well thanks to an unmatched written record. Conversely, our knowledge of other groups, their subvarieties, and mutual differences is much more limited. Also, and perhaps more importantly, when we delineate the ideas that the Greeks had on the dialects in the Classical age we almost exclusively rely on Attic sources. Attic comedy, historiography, and oratory abound in sociolinguistic reflection (see Chapter 4, devoted to this) and often treat language in the light of socio-historical factors (see, in particular, Sections 2.5–6 on the purity motif). We do not have anything comparable for Ionic and almost nothing at all for Aeolic and Doric. Thus, when addressing the later perceptions of the Classical dialects in Greek erudition (see Section 3; cf. Chapters 6 and 7), we must remain aware that a distortive effect is probably at play, an effect that we are unable to fully correct owing to the lack of appropriate information from other traditions coeval to Attic literature.

2.3 Sources: Local dialects and literary languages

The extent of Classical literary sources, the state of epigraphic corpora, and the use that later generations made of them profoundly shape our discipline. The picture of the Greek linguistic landscape that can be drawn based on epigraphic and literary sources often differs, and the two views must necessarily be complemented with one another. Epigraphy allows us to neatly distinguish between all the dialects, some of which we know sufficiently well while our knowledge of

others remains deficient.[72] The situation described by the epigraphic record is one of fragmentation and harmony at the same time. Regional diversity was high, but this produced no conflict between regions and *poleis*: there was no attempt to superimpose one dialectal variety onto the others, nor was there a need to diminish the local dialect in a bid to foster intraregional communication or a sense of linguistic unity.[73] In the case of Attic, which will be the focus of the next two chapters, its considerably vaster inscriptional record allows us to detect two specific tendencies. First, it is easier to identify traits that belong to substandard Attic, which also enables us to describe the dialect in its diastratic variation (see Chapter 4, Section 2.1).[74] Second, Attic was clearly permeable to influence from other dialects, with Ionic particularly conspicuous among them.[75] From the 6th century BCE onwards, Athens welcomed Ionian artists and thinkers, some of whom wrote literature in Ionic despite their residency in Athens: two prominent examples are Herodotus and Anaxagoras (the latter's works had wide circulation in Athens: see Pl. *Ap*. 26d–e, *Phd*. 97c). Ionic certainly influenced Attic intellectual discourse: Attic comedy's frequent attacks against Ionians (see Sections 2.6 and 3.1) express the popular perception of this pervasive influence, which is discussed in Chapter 4, Section 2.1 in greater detail.[76] The Attic inscriptional record confirms that from the end of the 6th century BCE onwards, Ionic features – both linguistic and epigraphic, especially as concerns the adoption of the Ionic alphabet – were considered to be prestigious.[77] To sum up: until the 5th century BCE, the Attic written record shows a relative permeability to external influence rather than a strong linguistic insularity.

The linguistic information that literary sources provide conveys a picture that differs from that of epigraphy, with its neat division into local varieties. As is well known, only a small number of dialects contribute meaningfully to the develop-

72 See the overview in García Ramón (2018, 31–3); cf. Colvin (2020, 70) for the consequences it has on a sociolinguistic investigation of Greek.

73 For a preliminary study of these tendencies, see Morpurgo Davies (1999). The situation is different in the case of metrical inscriptions where the local dialect must interact with the rules of poetic tradition. Mickey (1981) is a classic study of this interaction. See also Morpurgo Davies (1987); Passa (2016b).

74 On sub-standard or 'vulgar' Attic, see Cassio (1981, 81–7); Colvin (1999, 281–7); Colvin (2020, 74–84). Schulze's (1896, 698–700) considerations on features of Attic vase inscriptions that intimate koine developments remain valid.

75 See Rosenkranz (1930); Willi (2002b, 121–4); Willi (2010a, 107–14).

76 Cassio (1981, 91–2).

77 On the Ionic alphabet in Attic inscriptions, see Threatte (1996, 26–49). The dedication of Iphidike (*CEG* 198, end of the 6th century BCE) is a perfect example of the mingling of graphic, monumental, and linguistic Ionicisms that lend prestige to the dedication: see Kaczko (2016a, 100–10).

ment of Greek literary languages.[78] In the absence of any univocal correspondence between one dialect and a literary variety, it is best to describe this relationship beginning with the literary genre. Epic is composed in Ionic with a prominent contribution from both continental and East Aeolic (sporadic Attic elements are late and do not necessarily become part of the fixed code of epic Greek).[79] Choral lyric employs a mixture of Doric (with features of various kinds, but with a prevalence of 'mild' Doric), Ionic, and Aeolic (both epic and non-epic).[80] Later on, Doric will also provide the basis for literary prose as well: a prominent example are the Pseudo-Pythagorean writings (Thesleff 1965). The presence of non-epic Aeolic elements in the language of choral lyric is best explained as an influence from a prestigious tradition that must predate the flourishing of Alcaeus and Sappho. The two poets from Lesbos are the best example of the adaptation of an epichoric dialect (East Aeolic) to the needs of high-level poetry: although distinctly Aeolic, their diction is not devoid of carefully selected epic elements.[81] Elegy and iambus are markedly Ionic, with a different degree of adherence to the epic code and the epichoric dialect: prestigious non-Ionic features are carefully interspersed here as well. The use of a single dialect, with no mixing, first emerges in prose – but early Ionic prose is largely indebted to epic Ionic (this may also be the case with Herodotus' language), and thus its language too is a literary artefact.[82]

Even a bird's eye view of archaic Greek literary language reveals that dialectal mixture and a degree of artificiality are the norm in Greek poetic language: no genre or individual composition is devoid of interaction with other linguistic traditions. At a first glance, such dialectal diversity may seem to mark a stark difference with later phases of Greek literary language, when the Atticising style was ubiquitous. However, this is only partly true: poetic language remained dialectically composite throughout the ages. The real difference between the archaic age – when the Greek literary languages were shaped – and subsequent periods rather lies in the degree of *openness* of the linguistic canon. Provided that post-Classical poetry used the various dialectal mixtures codified in the archaic period, prose production had to come to terms with Atticism: even when the Atticising

78 General overviews in Colvin (2007); Tribulato (2010a); see also the relevant chapters in Cassio (2016).
79 Passa (2016a).
80 Tribulato (2016b).
81 See Tribulato (2021d) apropos of Sappho.
82 On the language of early Ionic prose and its relationship with epic, see Dover (1997, 84–95); Vessella (2016a, 356–61); Vatri (2019) focuses on rhythmic elements. On Homeric elements in Herodotus and the difficult question of their origin, see Tribulato (2022d).

norm was refused, the reasons for the refusal still attest to the overpowering presence of Atticist prescriptivism.[83]

If the Greeks of the archaic age were to assess the situation of literary language in the Imperial period, they would surely have found it paradoxical. Attic remained a marginal variety in the Greek literary scene throughout the archaic period. When it joined the group of literary languages, it was obliged to negotiate its presence in poetry by paying homage to the previous poetic traditions: there is much (epic) Ionic and (lyric) Doric in tragedy.[84] Comedy, like oratory and historiography, employs a less adulterated form of the dialect, but in these genres, too, Attic is adapted to resonate with the literary tradition (as in comedy) or to avoid parochialism (e.g. in Thucydides).[85] The Attic gradual acquisition of prestige is the outcome of Athens' carefully engineered imperialistic and cultural policy, which dispersed Attic culture and language beyond Attica while simultaneously becoming more exclusive in her separation from common Greek ancestry (see Sections 2.5–6).

2.4 The ancient accounts: Monogenetic origin and multilinear descent

Greek ancestry relies on the notion that the four Greek γένη descend from the same ancestor, the eponymous Hellen. The reality of political fragmentation in archaic Greece has shaped the narrations of Greek beginnings, resulting in their curious mixture of monogenetic vertical descent and multilinear horizontal development. This structure of Greek ancestral accounts is best represented by the genealogies of the Pseudo-Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*, a mythographic 'reference work' (Fowler 1998, 2). The *Catalogue* assembled and rewrote earlier local genealogies into a 'retrojective revision' (Fowler 2013, 125). Its final version, which probably dates to the early 6th century BCE, contains the most ancient Hellenic (in the sense of 'Panhellenic') genealogical tradition that has survived (frr. 9 + 10a Merkelbach–West):[86]

---

83 Galen is a perfect example: see Manetti (2009) and cf. Chapter 6, Section 3.1.
84 Attic as a 'Classical' language: Willi (2010a); tragic polymorphism: Willi (2019); cf. Chapter 1, Section 4.3.
85 Language(s) of comedy: Willi (2002a); Willi (2002b); Willi (2003a); Chapters 4 and 5; historiography and oratory: Dover (1997, 83–4); Willi (2010a, 103–4).
86 For the text of these fragments, see West (1985, 57–60). An overview of the different views on authorship and dating of this Pseudo-Hesiodic work is in Cingano (2009, 116–8). Detailed discussions of this genealogy are Fowler (1998); J. M. Hall (2002, 25–9); Fowler (2013, 122–30).

Ἕλληνος δ' ἐγένοντο φιλοπτολέμου βασιλῆος
Δῶρός τε Ξοῦθός τε καὶ Αἴολος ἱππιοχάρμης.

And from Hellen, the war-loving king, were born
Dorus and Xuthus, and Aeolus who delighted in the battle-chariot.
(Translation by Most 2018, 49)

Ξοῦθος δὲ Κ[ρείουσαν ἐπή]ρατον εἶδος ἔ̣χ̣[ουσαν
κούρην καλλ[ιπάρηον Ἐρε]χθῆο̣ς θείοιο̣
ἀθανά]των ἰ[ότητι φίλην ποι]ήσατ' ἄκ̣[οι]τ̣ι̣ν̣,
ἥ οἱ Ἀ]χα̣ιὸν ἐγ[είνατ' Ἰάονά τε κλυ]τ̣ό̣π̣ω̣λ[ο]ν [. . .].

And [Xuthus made Creusa,] who had a lovely form,
the beautiful-cheeked daughter] of godly Erechtheus,
by the will of the immortals his dear] wife,
and she bore him] Achaeus [and Ion] of the famous horses [. . .].
(Translation by Most 2018, 53)

According to Pseudo-Hesiod's Hellenic genealogy, the same ancestor (Hellen, son of Deucalion, son of Prometheus) fathers Dorus, Aeolus, and Xuthus (who is the father of Ion and Achaeus). These are the eponymous founders of the ethnic groups into which the Greeks divided themselves: the Dorians, the Aeolians, the Ionians, and the Achaeans.[87] As J. M. Hall (2002, 26–7) remarked, what makes the Pseudo-Hesiodic genealogy an 'ethnic genealogy' is its recourse to 'faceless' mythological characters to express the relationship between these groups as one of filiation from a common father.[88] The paradoxical aspect of this narrative, which describes the beginnings of the heroic age, is the explanation of a historical fact – the political and regional fragmentation of Greece and its people – through a myth that fabricates an idea of primaeval unity through the symbolic figure of a common ancestor (Hellen) that never existed.[89] The invention of Hellen projects the anxieties surrounding the Greeks' internal unity as an ἔθνος back to an earlier age. The more fine-grained details of this 'tendentious' mythical account (Fowler 2013, 123) reflect actual historical events and political aims that contributed to shaping the genealogies – and, often, also to significantly reshaping existing ones.

These short fragments alone provide important information on these myths' relevance for Greek political and linguistic history (we leave aside the questions of the relationship between the Achaeans and the Dorians, and of the latter's migration – referred to through the myth of the return of the Heraclidae – which inter-

87 That these γένη also coincide with the main dialectal groups as recognised by the Greeks themselves does not entail that they are merely linguistic in character: see J. M. Hall (1997, 153).
88 Cf. Hainsworth (1967, 64).
89 Finkelberg (2005, 30–1).

sects the linguistic problem of the arrival of Doric in the 2nd-millennium Mycenaean Peloponnese).[90] We may begin with the fact that the level of detail reserved for the Aeolic lineage in the *Catalogue* suggests that the composer(s) of this part of the poem were keenly interested in making the Aeolians prominent, perhaps because they were Aeolians themselves.[91] However, it is evident that this original nucleus underwent much grafting from parallel or later traditions. We see this clearly in the portrayal of Attic genealogy. The *Catalogue* includes no dedicated space for the inhabitants of Attica (Ἀττικοί): rather, they are subsumed under the Ionians. However, according to the *Catalogue*, Xuthus begets Ion through his marriage to Creusa, daughter of Erechtheus/Erichthonius, the mythical ancestor of the Athenians.[92] The *Catalogue*, therefore, partly portrays the Ionians as descendants of the Athenians' progenitor. This is one example of 'grafting' in the *Catalogue*'s structure: a (probably) originally independent Athenian lineage was included in the panhellenic myth of Hellen and his sons. Martin West (1985, 169–71) saw a 'particularly prominent' element of Athenian propaganda in the *Catalogue*, which, together with other compositional and linguistic features, made him inclined to conclude that the poet who assembled this work from earlier genealogical material was an Athenian. Indeed, West (1985, 57) remarked that 'Xouthos marriage to Kreousa [. . .] serves to establish Athens' claim to seniority over the Ionians', a political operation the first traces of which surface in Solon (fr. 4a West: see Section 2.6).

Leaving aside the question of the *Catalogue*'s authorship, if an Athenian propagandist operation lies behind the story of Xuthus' marriage to Creusa, this propaganda does not yet rest on Erechtheus' principal attribute, which was soon to acquire paramount significance in later Athenian retellings of the Athenians' origins. This attribute is that Erechtheus is γηγενής 'born from the earth'. The characterisation already appears in the second book of the *Iliad*, though in the suspicious lines 547–8, part of the Athenian section of the *Catalogue of Ships* (546–56) which is most probably a late archaic Athenian addition itself.[93] The lack of this motif and

90 The fullest versions of the return of the Heraclidae may be found in Diod. 4.57–8 and Apoll. *Bibl.* 2.167–76. This myth appears to have been distinct from the historical traditions concerning the Doric migration, although they often become confused. For a summary, see Fowler (2013, 334–42). J. M. Hall (2002, 73–82) discusses ancient sources and their modern interpretations. For the archaeologists' view on the 'Doric migration', see Morris (2000, 198–201); Deger-Jalkotzy (2008, 389–92). For the idea that the Dorians were already living in the Peloponnese during the 2nd millennium, see Chadwick (1976). For the debate in Greek dialectology, see Méndez Dosuna (1985, 299–306).

91 Fowler (1998); Fowler (2013, 128–9).

92 These originally distinct personages soon came to be assimilated: see Loraux (1981a, 45–65); Rosivach (1987, 294–97); Loraux (1996, 51–3).

93 See West (2001, 179–81).

the grafting of Athenian lore onto the Ionian lineage demonstrate that when the poem was assembled in its present form, Attic and Ionic identities were still shifting and their lineages were not unitarian: ancient sources have the Ionians variously originating in places as diverse as Messenia, Phocis, Achaia, among others,[94] suggesting a relatively late definition of Ionic identity within the framework of Greek genealogical systematisation.[95] Athens was soon to react to this indefiniteness of the Ionic γένος and claim a unique role for herself. While the *Catalogue* enacts a complex narrative in which movement, grafting, segmentation, interconnections, and exogamy are the norm, the Classical construction of Athenian identity proposed an alternative paradigm based on autochthony and purity.

2.5 The Athenian revolution of identity

The 5th century BCE ushered in a change that would become of paramount importance for the history of Greek identity.[96] Leveraging Erechtheus' status as 'born from the earth', the Athenians recast their genealogy to portray themselves as an autochthonous γένος that had inhabited Attica since time immemorial.[97] Although other Greek πόλεις also claimed to be autochthonous, the resonance that Attic literature gives to this motif succeeded in entrenching it as a unique Athenian characteristic.[98] Athens thereby severed her ties with the other Greek γένη, opposing her narration of autochthony to the 'alterité fondatrice' (Loraux 1996, 29) of other Greek cities, whose founders originated externally.[99] The strength and pervasiveness of this piece of Athenian propaganda exerted a revolutionary impact on the definition of Greek identity as a whole, as the focus gradually shifted from genealogical relations to cultural criteria, thus preparing the ground

94 J. M. Hall (2002, 68–9).

95 Connor (1993, 196).

96 Fowler (2013, 572).

97 On Athenian autochthony, see Loraux (1981a, 35–73); E. Montanari (1981); Rosivach (1987); Connor (1993, 204–6); Loraux (1996, 27–48); E. E. Cohen (2000, 79–103). Shapiro (2005) explores iconographic evidence that may demonstrate that the autochthony motif was not entirely a product of the 5th century BCE. Hornblower (1991–2008 vol. 1, 13), dealing with Thucydides' version of Athenian autochthony, defends the historical plausibility behind the myth.

98 D.S. 1.9.3 notes that the claim to autochthony was shared by 'all Greeks' as well as barbarians. Bearzot (2007a, 13–9) summarises this motif's presence in other local traditions; see also Gruen (2013, 3–4).

99 See Gotteland (2001); J. M. Hall (2002, 203).

for a view of Hellenicity reflected in culture that afforded Athens a special status.[100]

On the mythographic level, the best known representation of this fundamental shift is found in Euripides' *Ion*, which 'amends' the Hellenic genealogy by changing Ion's parentage.[101] Given that Euripides has Apollo as Ion's real father, the Athenians can now profess to have no connection with the rest of the Hellenic ancestry.[102] If it had previously been essential to Athenian identity to place Athens firmly within the first generations of Hellenic lineage (see the *Catalogue of Women*), by the late 5th century BCE, the claim to exceptionalism had intensified in importance. The revolution of earlier heritage finds in Euripides' *Ion* a sounding board, particularly in the subversion of the relationship with Ionia: Ion is no longer an Ionian but an Athenian who becomes the eponymous ancestor of the Ionians.[103] This masterly logical trick preserves Athens' strong ties with Ionia but reverses power relations: the Ionians are now subordinated to their motherland Athens.[104] This becomes the ideological justification of Athens' rule over her Ionic allies through the Delian League and the not-insignificant revenue that she elicited from allies and for public gatherings such as the Panathenaea.[105]

Euripides' *Ion* is thus a demonstrative example of those changes in Athenian society and politics that underpin a significant shift in identity and culture: late 5th- and 4th-century BCE Attic sources also demonstrate awareness of how the rapid evolution of Athenian society may be reflected in language (see Chapter 4, especially Section 3). As Fowler (1998, 9) further notes, Euripides takes a more audacious step in making Dorus Ion's son, with a revolutionary subordination of the Dorians to the Ionians. These shifts reflect contemporary political concerns. The Athenians lay the foundations of their exceptionalism and hegemonic ambitions in the notion that they are a purer γένος than any other. This point is made, among others, by Herodotus (7.161.3), who says that the Athenians are the *oldest*

100 In this section, the terms 'revolution' and 'revolutionary' are consciously used, following Ober (1996, 4), to refer to the socio-political changes and the ideology which sustained them, which affected Athens from approximately Cleisthenes' reforms (508/7 BCE) to the beginning of Macedonian rule (322 BCE). On autochthony and intellectual superiority as central holdings in Athenian civic ideology, see Ober (1996, 148–9).

101 On Ion's myth and its political implications, see Loraux (1981a, 197–253); Zacharias (2003, 44–102); Meinel (2015, 212–4); Martin (2018, 13–23); Gibert (2019, 4–8; 40–6).

102 Fowler (1998, 9).

103 See e.g. Gibert (2019, 44–6). Cassio (1985a, 115–8) deals with the 'colonisation propaganda' in Attic 5th-century BCE literature.

104 On this reversal, see Connor (1993).

105 See J. M. Hall (1997, 55); cf. Osborne (2010, 250): 'Athens began to demand that allies perform rôles normally expected of Athenian citizens, but without citizen privileges'.

people of Greece, since they are the only ones among the Greeks who did not migrate from elsewhere (ἀρχαιότατον μὲν ἔθνος παρεχόμενοι, μοῦνοι δὲ ἐόντες οὐ μετανάσται Ἑλλήνων), a point repeated in Thucydides (1.2.5; 2.36.1; see further Section 2.6).[106] The context of Herodotus' passage is that of an Athenian embassy to the Syracusan tyrant Gelon, which frames autochthony as a qualifying criterion for Athenian hegemony against all other Greeks and particularly – one infers from the context – the Spartans.[107] However, it would be erroneous to see this remoulding of Athens' genealogy as a mere effect of the conflict with Sparta.[108] That it started much earlier is attested by Solon's well-known assertion that Attica was the most ancient land of Ionia (πρεσβυτάτην [. . .] γαῖαν Ἰαονίης, fr. 4a West). The tradition of the Athenian settlement in Ionia became so ubiquitous in 5th-century BCE sources that Herodotus (from Halicarnassus, where Ionic was spoken in the 5th century BCE) remarks that the Asiatic Ionians certainly had no claim to purity since they were a mixed population originating in many Greek lands, even though – as he sarcastically adds – some entertained a vision of themselves as pure Ionians (οἱ καθαρῶς γεγονότες Ἴωνες, Hdt. 1.147.2).[109]

The political use of Athenian autochthony has impactful consequences that go beyond Athens' relations with Ionia and her interests in the Peloponnesian War. The fabric of Greek identity itself emerges as radically changed, which is why this junction of the political and cultural history of Athens is of particular interest to our investigation of the roots of Atticism. Let us focus on two broad aspects. The first aspect concerns an apparently minor point of legal interest – namely, the redefinition of Athenian citizenship in Pericles' law of 451/0 BCE, whereby 'only those born from two citizen parents would be Athenian citizens' (Blok 2009, 141).[110] The motivations of this law are debated (including regulation of citizen numbers, demotion of mixed marriages, ethnic exclusivity, and landownership). They may, in fact, respond to a variety of factors, including the wish to boost the Athenians' self-awareness and morale following a prolonged period of unsuccessful warfare.[111] Be that as it may, the law presents itself as a means of extending equal rights to all citizens regardless of their social standing: Athens' carefully constructed demo-

106 Loraux (1996, 29).

107 Loraux (1996, 30); Vannicelli (2017, 499–500).

108 Fowler (2013, 574).

109 Hdt. 1.146.1–2 with commentary in J. M. Hall (1997, 52); Fowler (2013, 573). Cf. Hdt. 1.146.2, 1.147.2; Pherec. *FGrHist* 3 F 155.

110 Cf. Arist. *Ath.* 26.4; Plu. *Per.* 37.3. For earlier definitions of Athenian citizenship, see Frost (1994).

111 This is the thesis of Blok (2009), which should be consulted for an overview of previous interpretations. See also Patterson (2005); J. M. Hall (2002, 204 and n. 151).

cratic ideology mediates between the ideal of political equality and the reality of social inequality.[112] Its emphasis on the Athenians' common origin (ἰσογονία) overshadows political equality (ἰσονομία).[113] In truth, seen from the perspective of those who cannot claim autochthony, the law reveals an exclusive mentality. The 'corporate' social set-up of the Athenian citizen body ensures the functioning of Athenian direct democracy, and the exclusion of various categories (slaves, women, metics, etc.) from citizenship is part of its institutional success.[114] The reality of exclusivity is covered in Pericles' idea (Thuc. 2.37.1) that 'merit was the prerequisite of power and influence' (Osborne 2010, 251). Thus, although the citizenship law ensured that foreigners and allies were *de facto* excluded from influence, Athenian rhetoric propagated the belief that merit and shared values could afford anybody a different kind of belonging.

The second aspect of interest to us ensues from this and concerns the way in which Athens, while closing the ranks of her own identity, succeeded in the revolutionary trick of promoting a more open notion of *Greek* (as distinct from Athenian) identity. Through the myth of autochthony and non-mixedness, Attic culture and language – which, as noted in Section 2.3, had been relatively marginal in the Greek cultural arena throughout the archaic age – acquired originality and unicity.[115] This shift is particularly evident in Athens' relationship with Ionic and Near Eastern cultures. Until the Persian Wars, the Athenian elite had actively promoted the imitation and adaptation of Ionic and Near Eastern practices in art, writing, and dialect: 'exotica' were markers of elite status.[116] As the 5th century BCE progressed, anti-Ionic and anti-barbarian attitudes surfaced, going hand in hand with the propagandist narrative that the Athenians had defeated the Persians single-handedly and with a broader nostalgic promotion of 'old Athenian' values and virtues.[117] Scholarship is now generally unanimous that this cultural change – the so-called 'invention of the barbarian' – had political roots and was consciously initiated by the Athenian δῆμος to foster political hegemony through cultural suprem-

---

112 Ober (1996, 149). As B. Cohen (2001, 88) incisively puts it, 'this accommodation of such apparently irreconcilable elements was facilitated at Athens by the cultural phenomenon that "truth", for the Greeks, was multifaceted: *mythos* (myth) and *logos* (reason) might be antithetical, but they were also complementary'. Meinel (2015, 236–7) detects a similar tension in the twisting ways in which otherness and purity are represented in Euripides' *Ion*.

113 See Pl. *Mx*. 239a; Rosivach (1987, 303–4); Loraux (1996, 41).

114 Ober (1989; 5–6); Bearzot (2007a, 9; 12); Osborne (2010, 30); Lape (2010, 24–5).

115 Bearzot (2007a, 11).

116 See Connor (1993, 198–201); B. Cohen (2001); and J. M. Hall (2002, 200).

117 See e.g. Carey (2013), who explores this issue in relation to comedy's use of Marathon as a symbol.

acy (but see the caveats voiced in Section 1.1).[118] One might ask whether this change in the conception of Hellenic identity can really have resulted from the Persian Wars and Athens' growing leadership in them.[119] That this question can be answered positively – at least, as far as Athens' role in the construction of Greek identity is concerned – is demonstrated by an earlier source, Hdt. 8.144.2. In Section 1.1, we saw how this is the earliest text in which cultural criteria flank – and perhaps override – common blood in the definition of Greek identity. Tellingly, however, this change takes place in a speech *attributed to the Athenians*. In a different section of the *Histories* (1.56.2–57.3), Herodotus further relates that the two most ancient Greek stocks are the Ionians and the Dorians. The former, originally Pelasgians, had never left their home, while the Hellenes as a whole had wandered wide and far. The Athenians thus once spoke Pelasgian, but later became Hellenes by acquiring the Greek language:

> Hdt. 1.57.3: εἰ τοίνυν ἦν καὶ πᾶν τοιοῦτο τὸ Πελασγικόν, τὸ Ἀττικὸν ἔθνος ἐὸν Πελασγικὸν ἅμα τῇ μεταβολῇ τῇ ἐς Ἕλληνας καὶ τὴν γλῶσσαν μετέμαθε.
>
> If, then, the Pelasgians were all like this (i.e. they spoke the same language), then the Attic people, being Pelasgian, also changed their language at the same time as they changed to being Greeks.

This short sentence contains a series of concepts that lead the reader to recognise Athens' shadow in Herodotus' conception of a culture-based identity in *Histories* 8.144.2. First, unlike the other Greeks who have moved a lot, the Athenians are ancient and autochthonous – in this case through their Pelasgian ancestry.[120] Second, their Hellenicity is based on *language*, not blood. Third, it follows that language, like culture, can be acquired, borrowed, and bestowed on others.[121] This 'Athenian imprint' is the same as that which, *mutatis mutandis*, later leads Attic authors to claim that Athenian culture can be exported everywhere and learned

118 See E. Hall (1989); J. M. Hall (2002, 175–89).

119 See J. M. Hall (2002, 189).

120 It is a matter of interpretation whether this Herodotean passage should be read as an implication that Herodotus is here representing 'the Athenians as autochthonous but of non-Greek origin and the Spartans and the other Dorians as Greek but immigrants, thus taking the political clichés about the past endorsed by each city to their extreme (and hardly glorious) logical conclusions' (Dewald, Vignolo Munson 2022, 257).

121 See the analyses in J. M. Hall (2002, 194) and Lape (2010, 153), although the latter sees this as Herodotus' attempt 'to demolish [. . .] Athenian racial pretensions'. In considering whether modern scholarship may not be over-playing Athenian responsibility in the Greek 'invention of the barbarian', Hall concludes – based on historical, epigraphic, and archaeological sources – that the burden carried by the whole citizen body in the Persian wars made Athens more exposed to the surfacing of a barbarian stereotype than other Greek cities (J. M. Hall 2002, 182–6).

by all. The sounding pieces of this propaganda motif – for example, Thucydides' account of Pericles' funeral oration (Thuc. 2.35–46), Isocrates' *Panegyric* (4.46–50), and Plato's critical *Menexenus* (238a–239a) – are so famous and ubiquitous in the literature on Classical Athens that it is not necessary to dwell on them at length here.[122] These texts construct Athenian exceptionalism based on shared motifs such as autochthony, military and moral value, ability to reason and to speak, and education.[123] As Loraux (1981b, 333) says, 'les Athéniens ont inventé Athènes'.

In Isocrates, however, the focus gradually shifts from Athens herself to what she has done and can do for the other Greeks: the definitive defeat in the Peloponnesian War looms behind Athens' wish to reclaim hegemony among the Greeks.[124] At 4.46, Isocrates begins by saying that the prizes bestowed by the Athenians (the context is that of an agonistic metaphor) have attained such regard that they are sought after by all other Greeks. This is an allusion to the fact that Athenian culture now carries an explicit prestige in the eyes of non-Athenians. Isocrates then touches upon the importance of philosophy (4.47) and public speaking (λόγοι, λέγειν), which is a far better gauge of superiority and freedom than wealth (4.49). The next chapter contains the famous redefinition of Greekness. No longer based on γένος but on mental disposition (διάνοια), it unites the Greeks under the banner of Athenian culture (παίδευσις, already evoked by Pericles in Thuc. 2.41):

> Isoc. 4.50: τοσοῦτον δ' ἀπολέλοιπεν ἡ πόλις ἡμῶν περὶ τὸ φρονεῖν καὶ λέγειν τοὺς ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους, ὥσθ' οἱ ταύτης μαθηταὶ τῶν ἄλλων διδάσκαλοι γεγόνασιν, καὶ τὸ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ὄνομα πεποίηκεν μηκέτι τοῦ γένους, ἀλλὰ τῆς διανοίας δοκεῖν εἶναι, καὶ μᾶλλον Ἕλληνας καλεῖσθαι τοὺς τῆς παιδεύσεως τῆς ἡμετέρας ἢ τοὺς τῆς κοινῆς φύσεως μετέχοντας.
>
> So far has our city left other men behind with regard to wisdom and expression that its students have become the teachers of others. The result is that the name of the Hellenes no longer seems to indicate an ethnic affiliation but a mental disposition. Indeed, those who are called 'Hellenes' are those who share our culture rather than a common biological inheritance. (Translation by J. M. Hall 2002, 209, slightly modified)

A logical gap is evident in the transition from the praise of the art of speaking to the notion that Athenian culture brings together those who possess it. The missing link is the idea that those who have acquired Athenian culture have *learned* it

122 See the foundational study of Loraux (1981b).
123 Ober (1989) reconstructs the symbols that underpin Athenian ideology, 'the discourse of Athenian democracy' (Ober 1989, 35). He also analyses Pericles' role in the prominence given to rhetoric and education in the construction of the new Athenian elite (which was no 'ruling elite'): see Ober (1989, 86–93).
124 For a commentary on these central chapters of the *Panegyric*, see Buchner (1958, 53–65).

somewhere and not merely observed it in a passive way. It is in this implicit junction, we contend, that the foundations are laid for the future elite educational system, committed to the perpetuation of Attic culture. The idealisation of 'Atticness' is Athens' legacy to later ages of Greek cultural history.

2.6 Drawing the threads: Athens and the invention of purity

In this section, we synthesise the threads that have been woven into the fabric of the linguistic and socio-historical sketch of the previous sections to discuss their significance for the later cultural trends that eventually resulted in the rise of Atticism. We have seen how the negative perception of barbarians and the promotion of Athenian exclusivity developed out of Athenian ideology after the Persian Wars because of Athens' greater involvement in them, and essentially for political reasons. The purity motif, which also surfaces elsewhere in Greek thought and was later to become central to the linguistic ideology of Atticism, was substantially amplified and moulded by Athenian political and cultural reflection between the 5th and 4th centuries BCE.[125] In this section, we shall press this further to argue that Athens was responsible for transforming purity into a cultural value to be actively pursued.

Some have claimed that Pericles' citizenship law, with its convergence of ethnic and civic elements, spurred reflection on purity in non-ritual terms.[126] Angelos Chaniotis (2012) has further suggested that a new concept of 'purity of the mind', connecting (bodily) purity with morality, developed towards the end of the archaic age, surfacing initially in Attic 5th-century BCE sources.[127] Taking her cue from Chaniotis, Saskia Peels-Matthey (2018) has explored the occurrence of metaphors for such 'moralisation of purity' in Attic tragedy and comedy. These two studies appear to support the hypothesis that Athenian culture contributed to a significant shift in the Greek conceptualisation of purity.

Narrowing the focus, we may consider how Attic literature employs the motif of autochthony to construct a metaphorical rhetoric opposing the semantic domains of purity/impurity and mixedness/unmixedness, which are also recurrent motifs in the purist paradigm (see Chapter 2, Section 2.1). Clear statements concerning the role of purity in Athenian civic identity all belong to the 4th century

125 On purity and pollution as central beliefs in Greek religion, see the classic R. Parker (1983) and the more recent Petrovic, Petrovic (2016).
126 Meinel (2015, 185 n. 55).
127 See, especially, Chaniotis (2012, 133). The idea is reiterated in Chaniotis (2018).

BCE.[128] However, the discourse on autochthony and ethnic origin is an evident intimation that the purist mentality was already fully in place in the late 5th century BCE. According to our reading, these texts cast movement and migration as negative attributes of non-Athenians: see, for example, Hdt. 1.56.2 (the Doric ἔθνος is characterised as πολυπλάνητον κάρτα 'that has wandered much' – on the context of this passage, see above n. 120), Hdt. 7.161.3 (the Athenians are the only Greeks who have not changed their place of habitation: μοῦνοι δὲ ἐόντες οὐ μετανάσται Ἑλλήνων), and Eur. *Ion* 590 (the Athenians are not an ἐπείσακτον γένος, a race brought from outside, echoed in Eur. fr. 360.7: λεὼς οὐκ ἐπακτὸς ἄλλοθεν). This motif is then amplified in 4th-century BCE sources: for example, Lys. 2.17 (the Athenians are unlike most other Greeks, who have gathered from all over: οἱ πολλοί, πανταχόθεν συνειλεγμένοι), Isoc. 4.24 (the Athenians are not migrants who have been collected from many other ἔθνη), Isoc. 12.124 (the Athenians are neither migrants nor invaders but the only autochthonous Greeks ὄντας δὲ μήτε μιγάδας μήτ' ἐπήλυδας, ἀλλὰ μόνους αὐτόχθονας τῶν Ἑλλήνων), and others.

To be sure, in Greek literature at large the refusal of ethnic mixedness and the claim to purity are not only associated with the Athenians.[129] However, Attic sources express an aversion to foreigners to an extent that seems unparalleled elsewhere and that may reflect popular attitudes.[130] Thus, in his assessment of Athenian autochthony, W. R. Connor overtly speaks of

> a prejudice against migrants – a prejudice that cut both against the Dorians as late-comers in Greece and against Ionians as emigrants. It could also cut against the metics, the resident foreigners in Attica who were so important to the city's economy, but never accorded full citizen rights. (Connor 1993, 205).

It is important to recognise that Athenian autochthony was not only played against the other Greeks but also served to distinguish 'real' Athenians from those who had arrived in the city later. This motif is present in Ar. *V.* 1076, in which the old jurors who fought in the Persian Wars consider themselves to be the only Athenians who can claim to be natives (Ἀττικοὶ μόνοι δικαίως ἐγγενεῖς αὐτόχθονοι).[131] This line reveals how the vocabulary of exclusion (μόνοι) and enti-

128 See Meinel (2015, 184–5).

129 See Sordi (2000) for an overview, and a discussion of, the role of the συγγένεια motif in 5th-century BCE new retellings of older genealogies.

130 See Cassio (1981, 87). Commenting on the opinions of the chorus in Euripides' *Ion*, Meinel (2015, 218) suggests that they express the xenophobic point of view of the lower classes.

131 In these lines from *Wasps,* the Marathon motif (see Carey 2013) is paired with that of ethnic purity.

tlement (δικαίως) is profoundly paired with that of unmixedness (ἐγγενεῖς αὐτόχθονοι here serving as an antonym of μιγάδες). The step from unmixedness to purity, of course, is small. One of the Classical Attic texts in which this further step is explicitly taken is Plato's *Menexenus*, a work that plays with the traditional Attic genre of the funerary oration and its *topoi*:[132]

> Pl. *Mx.* 245c–d: οὕτω δή τοι τό γε τῆς πόλεως γενναῖον καὶ ἐλεύθερον βέβαιόν τε καὶ ὑγιές ἐστιν καὶ φύσει μισοβάρβαρον, διὰ τὸ εἰλικρινῶς εἶναι Ἕλληνας καὶ ἀμιγεῖς βαρβάρων. οὐ γὰρ Πέλοπες οὐδὲ Κάδμοι οὐδὲ Αἴγυπτοί τε καὶ Δαναοὶ οὐδὲ ἄλλοι πολλοὶ φύσει μὲν βάρβαροι ὄντες, νόμῳ δὲ Ἕλληνες, συνοικοῦσιν ἡμῖν, ἀλλ' αὐτοὶ Ἕλληνες, οὐ μειξοβάρβαροι οἰκοῦμεν, ὅθεν καθαρὸν τὸ μῖσος ἐντέτηκε τῇ πόλει τῆς ἀλλοτρίας φύσεως.
>
> So firmly-rooted and so sound is the noble and liberal character of our city and endowed also with such a hatred of the barbarian, because we are pure-blooded Greeks, unadulterated by barbarian stock. For there cohabit with us none of the type of Pelops, or Cadmus, or Aegyptus or Danaus, and numerous others of the kind, who are naturally barbarians though nominally Greeks; but our people are pure Greeks and not a barbarian blend; whence it comes that our city is imbued with a whole-hearted hatred of alien races. Nonetheless, we were isolated once again because of our refusal to perform the dishonorable and unholy act of surrendering Greeks to barbarians. (Translation by Bury 1929, 369)

The vocabulary of purity is particularly prominent in Euripides' *Ion*, the mouthpiece of Athenian autochthony.[133] Even when only the passages that contain the adjective καθαρός are considered, a clear association between purity and citizenship emerges. At ll. 469–71, the chorus beseech the *virgin* goddesses Athena and Artemis to bestow 'the *ancient* race of Erechtheus (τὸ παλαιὸν Ἐρεχθέως γένος) *pure* oracles of childbirth (καθαροῖς μαντεύμασι)'. The evoked oracles are those that should announce an offspring to the childless Xuthus and Creusa but will eventually reveal that Ion is Creusa's son, whom Xuthus will adopt. At l. 673, Athens is portrayed as a 'pure city' (καθαρὰν [. . .] πόλιν) which the stranger Ion – although a citizen (ἀστός) by name – will enter in silence, like a slave rather than as someone who can enjoy the civic privilege of παρρησία. Later (l. 1333), the priestess allows Ion to go to Athens as a ritually pure man (καθαρός), a qualification, however, that probably partakes of the semantic over-layering of καθαρότης in the play, also alluding to Ion's newly acquired Athenian status.[134] Ritual and

132 For the different interpretations of this elusive Platonic work, see Sansone (2020); for its criticism of Periclean rhetoric, see E. E. Cohen (2000, 100–2).
133 See Meinel's (2015, 212–43) analysis.
134 See Meinel (2015, 237–8) for a different interpretation.

ethnic purity thus continuously intertwine and overlap in the play since they share the same vocabulary.[135]

Moving forward to the age of Atticism, it is telling that in the *Panathenaic Oration*, Aelius Aristides (1.14) explicitly uses the adjective καθαρός to refer to Attica. Her geographical position – surrounded by all the Greek peoples – causes her to stand out in her exclusivity: 'for this reason, she alone wears the ornament of Greece in its pure form and is as much of another kind as is possible to be from the barbarians' (διὸ δὴ καὶ μόνη τὸ τῶν Ἑλλήνων πρόσχημα καθαρῶς ἀνῄρηται καὶ τοῖς βαρβάροις ἐστὶν ἐπὶ πλεῖστον ἀλλόφυλος). The discourse of Attic purity, which 5th-century BCE literature soft-pedalled in the background, can now reach the full expression of exceptionalism because Aelius Aristides lives in an age in which cultural purity is constantly on display as a status symbol.

How does one acquire such distinctiveness in a world that is full of races and tribes? The solution, again, was already in sight in late 5th-century BCE Athens. Although the Athenians did not enforce an overt policy of ethnic discrimination, they precluded the extension of citizenship to foreigners.[136] Athenian propaganda solves the paradox of her acceptance of foreigners alongside exclusive citizenship with an authentic stroke of genius ('une opération de langage très réussie': Loraux 1996, 41): the invention of an imagined citizenship, a symbolic Athenian identity based on education and shared values, which is already in place in Pericles' funeral oration.[137] By acquiring these badges of belonging, anybody can wash away the 'original stain' of mixedness (i.e. ethnic impurity).[138] Old aristocratic εὐγένεια ('birth privilege') is recast as a quality attainable by the masses in a kind of 'communal aristocracy of merit' that is celebrated by Attic orators.[139] Ethnic purity is no longer the focus of Greek perceptions of identity, for the ideal is now the attainment of a pure form of *cultural* identity, in which autochthony can – and will – be gradually replaced by moral nobility: a kind of εὐγένεια whereby

135 Meinel (2015, 228).

136 See Loraux (1996, 38) on this important difference.

137 The promotion of Athens as 'the centre of the entire civilized world' is also hidden 'behind the clouds of condescending laughter' against non-Greeks according to Willi (2002b, 149). On the different assessments of comedy's attitudes towards non-Attic dialects and non-Greek languages, see Colvin (1999, 302–6), who argues for a realist, non-negative portrayal of the dialects; Willi (2002b, 125–49), who argues for the role of dialect as a linguistic strategy to integrate non-Athenians into Athenian discourse; and Willi (2003a, 222–5), on foreign talk as an expression of Greek ethnocentricity. Lape (2010, 64–71) instead focuses on Old Comedy's portrayals of rivals and bad politicians as foreigners or speakers of bad Greek as evidence of an implicit 'racist' attitude. On this topos, see further Section 3.4 and Chapter 4, Section 3.3.

138 The expression 'original stain' is borrowed from Bearzot (2007a, 10).

139 Ober (1989, 259–61). Cf. Lape (2010, 181).

γένος has considerably looser boundaries and may encompass all who belong to an imagined community of Athenians.[140]

Purity, we contend, is the essential characteristic of a notion of cultural identity founded on exclusion that replaces the earlier view of ethnic identity based on opposition and divergence (of lineage). Exclusivity highlights the elitist streak in the Athenian view of Hellenic identity. Parallel to the rhetoric behind the Athenian citizenship law, which sanctions inequality under the pretence of equality, Athens creates an inclusive notion of *Hellenic* identity while simultaneously closing the ranks of *Athenian* citizenship.[141] But how inclusive is this new cultural identity? What does the acquisition of the 'right' παιδεία entail? Already in Isocrates, we see that Hellenicity is in fact restricted to those who have the social rank or economic means required to attain a truly Athenian education.[142] While the ideal is cosmopolitan, the concrete effect is, in fact, elitist.[143]

This narrative includes another development that is both logical and ideological. The notion of autochthony embodies the Athenian ideal of always remaining the same despite the passage of time.[144] In Thucydides, this ideal is present both in the initial chapter, in which Athens' unicity is opposed to the continuous migrations (μεταναστάσεις) and emigrations (μετοικήσεις) of the other Greek cities (Thuc. 1.2.5), and then in Pericles' funeral oration, in which the sentence τὴν γὰρ χώραν οἱ αὐτοὶ αἰεὶ οἰκοῦντες διαδοχῇ τῶν ἐπιγιγνομένων μέχρι τοῦδε ἐλευθέραν δι' ἀρετὴν παρέδοσαν ('for by always inhabiting this land in the succession of generations, [our ancestors] have delivered it free [to us] until today', Thuc. 2.36.1) includes a telling short-circuit between the past tense παρέδοσαν used to refer to the ancestors who have inhabited the same land and the adverb αἰεί (occurring also at 1.2.5), which projects that action into both the present and the future. The eternal character of the Attic delineation of autochthony is not contradictory – it feeds, rather, Athens' primacy over the centuries:

> le gain essentiel du développement sur l'autochtonie est la possibilité d'exalter sereinement la pérennité d'Athènes et sa vitalité toujours renouvelée au fil de la chaîne des générations. (Loraux 1996, 33).

140 On the pre-eminence of εὐγένεια from Aristotle onwards, see Gotteland (2001).

141 J. M. Hall (2002, 204).

142 See Raaflaub (1983, 529–31) on the Classical foundations of ἐλευθέριος παιδεία.

143 See J. M. Hall (2002, 209). On the elitist character of παιδεία, see Schmitz (1997) and Chapter 1, Section 3.3.

144 This is a topical feature in all Athenian funeral orations: see Loraux (1981b, 150–1); Loraux (1996, 32) and some of the texts discussed here below.

This character lends itself to being exported beyond the geographical and historical boundaries of Classical Athens, in 'une incessante recréation de l'origine' (Loraux 1996, 33). Atticism, with its claim to use a dialect that has never changed, will later represent the linguistic counterpart of this eternal recreation.

The new construction of Hellenic identity is thus an expression of Athenian chauvinism.[145] Its cultural and linguistic seeds are already sprouting in Classical Attic literature, in which a notion of a prestige Attic variety is already in place.[146] Comedy mocks foreigners for their imperfect control of language and non-Athenians or citizens of lower standing for their way of speaking.[147] This may well be a universal feature of humour (but see further Section 3.4).[148] However, it is possible that this tendency in Old Comedy to mark up dialectal and linguistic variation was later interpreted as a defining feature of Athenian culture, something to be taken seriously and imitated. This is just one of the many examples of the paradigmatic role of Attic comedy (especially Old Comedy) in the later idealisation of supposedly 'authentic' Attic characters (see further Chapter 4, Sections 3.1, 3.3, and 4.3; and cf. Chapter 5, Section 1). The notion of exclusivity interwoven in Attic sources resurfaces in Atticist theories of linguistic correctness, which often do not rely simply on the mere opposition good/bad but also play on geographical notions of exclusivity: dialects other than Attic are excluded, as are words associated with non-Hellenic regions of the world (see Chapter 2, Section 3.3). This attitude responds, on the linguistic level, to the Athenocentric view that has replaced the earlier aggregative idea of Greek identity. In the Atticist ideology, realities beyond the perimeter of Attica no longer qualify as alternative centres of cultural prestige. The Hellenistic new cities – irrespective of their wealth and importance – are peripheries compared to Athens.

The exception, of course, is Rome.[149] Rome escapes this fate thanks to her acquisition of Greek culture and her recasting as the new Athens on the part of those Greeks who had a personal interest in legitimising this culture's value in the Roman world (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Pausanias, and Aelius Aristides

145 The term 'chauvinism' is used by J. M. Hall (2002, 202).

146 Colvin (1999, 282; 292).

147 On these comic sources and their different modern interpretations, see Colvin (1999, 119–281; 287–95); Colvin (2000); Willi (2003a, 198–225); Bettarini (2015, 19–20). On mockery of non-standard language and accents as a means of social and ethnic discrimination in modern societies, see e.g. Lippi-Green (2012), who focuses on the US.

148 See Evans Davies (2014), although cf. the caveats in Colvin (2000, 285–6), who concludes that 'dialect alone was not used to attack' (Colvin 2000, 296), and further Bettarini (2015); Colvin (2020, 73).

149 Saïd (2001, 293–5).

being three prominent examples).[150] In *Roman Antiquities* 1.89–90, Dionysius of Halicarnassus famously overturns the accusation of barbarity levelled against Rome to claim that the Romans, in fact, descend from the Greeks, that their language is partly a Greek dialect (Aeolic), and that they have preserved this Greek character far more than other Greeks who, living among barbarians, have become utterly barbaric.[151] In a similarly notorious chapter of his *On Ancient Orators*, Dionysius credits Rome (not Greece!) with saving Greek oratory ('the Attic Muse') from the decay that it had experienced in the Hellenistic age and restoring it to its former glory (D.H. *Orat.Vett.* 1–3). The Roman rulers – like the Macedonian kings before them – can escape the stain of barbarity because they master Greek (i.e. essentially Athenian) παιδεία unlike the ever-changing 'truly barbaric' populations (the Thracians, the Celts, the Germans, etc.).[152]

Attic linguistic purity forms the core of Athenian παιδεία. The next chapter discusses the Attic literary texts that allow us to suppose that 'proto-purist' attitudes – or, at any rate, a marked linguistic chauvinism – are already well established in 5th-century BCE sources. They mark a pivotal point in the Old Oligarch's nostalgic view of a bygone past ([X.] *Ath.* 2.7–8). In the Old Oligarch's view, late 5th-century democratic Athens, with her influx of people, goods, and languages, has irremediably lost her linguistic exclusivity and now employs a 'mixed language, which comes from [those of] all the Greeks and the non-Greeks (κεκραμένῃ ἐξ ἁπάντων τῶν Ἑλλήνων καὶ βαρβάρων; see Chapter 4, Section 3.2). Adulterated language goes hand in hand with corrupted ethics and a diluted identity (represented by δίαιτα 'way of living' and σχῆμα 'way of dressing': on these criteria, see already Hdt. 8.144, discussed in Section 1.1).[153]

The ideal of linguistic purity is essential for the elitist version of Hellenic identity embraced by the cultured classes from the Hellenistic age onwards. The return to an archaic form of language is part of their ideology of exclusion. It responds to the transformation of Attic into the koine, the language of the masses. Elite culture rejects the koine and its universality by fictitiously recreating a form of continuity between high-register post-Classical language and literary Attic. Between the Old Oligarch's begrudging remarks and the blossoming of Atticism in the 1st–2nd centuries CE, two broad phenomena take place in Greek culture. The first is the formation of the koine (see Chapter 4, Section 4). The second is the almost contemporary birth of a 'professional' reflection on the Classical dialects and their role in Greek learning (see Chapters 6 and 7). The roots of this reflection are steeped in the 4th

150 See e.g. Konstan (2001, 36–43) on Pausanias.

151 On the theory of the Greekness of Latin, see Ascheri (2011), with previous bibliography.

152 Saïd (2001, 290).

153 Cassio (1981, 80–1).

century BCE, and its fruits in Hellenistic scholarship are the *sine qua non* of later grammatical erudition, Atticism included. Chapters 6 and 7 will consider at length the role that these Hellenistic predecessors played in the formation of Atticist linguistic theories. To appreciate the standing that Attic attained in the context of the other dialects and literary varieties, the present chapter will now cast a final glance over the ways in which ancient erudition constructed the relationship – the power relationship, one might be tempted to say – between the Classical dialectal groups. The study of the ancient *perception* of the dialects – as opposed to their mere linguistic *description* – adds a valuable new dimension to the slow yet unstoppable acquisition of prestige on the part of Attic.

3 The Classical dialects: Ancient perceptions of linguistic diversity

Unlike modern dialectology, ancient Greek scholarship mostly deals with the Greek dialects in their literary dimension and much more rarely as geographically defined varieties.[154] Reflections on the dialectal form of literary language are scattered throughout Greek erudition of every epoch, although no ancient treatise has survived that addresses the issue organically.[155] We may take the stylistic theorisation of Dionysius of Halicarnassus as an informative example. In Chapter 5 of his rhetorical work *On Thucydides*, Dionysius makes a detour to explore the origins of the historiographical genre. The first historiographical works, he claims, were characterised by the same simple style, which privileged the use of the local dialect. In its evolution, however, historiography became more universal and elaborate, and this also brought about a change in style. Thus, Herodotus and Thucydides innovated not only in their conception of the subject matter (D.H. *Thuc*. 5–6, p. 330–3 Usener–Radermacher) but also in their choices of words and figures of speech (D.H. *Thuc*. 23–4, p. 359–64 Usener–Radermacher). Dionysius elsewhere identifies the two historians as the purest models of Ionic and Attic, respectively (D.H. *Pomp*. 3.16, p. 239.5–8). From a modern perspective, one might say that their merit was to have elevated the imperfect use of local dialects to the level of canonical literary languages. However, it is noteworthy that in *On Thucydides*, dialect is only mentioned insofar as it concerns Herodotus: in relation to Thucydides himself, Attic as such is not even discussed. This is a good example of how Greek stylistic theorisation never addresses (literary) dialects in a precise

154 This and the following subsections are based on Tribulato (2019b).

155 Tryphon wrote a treatise on the (literary) dialects: see Cassio (1993, 78–9).

manner and refrains from providing the kind of phono-morphological information typical of modern linguistic enquiries.[156]

The theoretical framework that accommodates the ancient treatment of dialects has several peculiar characteristics that must be addressed to understand some of the statements that ancient grammarians made. The Alexandrian scholars had already developed a peculiar theoretical approach to the dialects, which classified their main features as variations (πάθη) from an analogical prototype: this is sometimes called συνήθεια ('common language'), while at other times it is overtly identified with the koine or with an abstract 'agreement between the dialects'.[157] Besides the theory of πάθη, the other cornerstone of ancient linguistic methodology is the identification of certain authors as representative models of each dialect. Consequently, that which remains of ancient dialectology is mostly a *theory of literary dialects*, that is, the linguistic forms handed down in Greek literary texts.[158] This is not to say that there was no interest in local dialects; Hellenistic scholarship often produced collections of regional notable terms (ἐθνικαὶ γλῶσσαι, λέξεις, and ὀνομασίαι: see Chapter 6, Section 4).[159] Traces of this local glossography may be detected in later sources, but for the most part, this production was wholly obliterated by the later focus on literary dialects.

Another discernible tendency that was briefly mentioned in the first part of this chapter is that dialect is seen as an expression of the character of its γένος. The most illuminating source in this respect is a (certainly late) scholium to Dionysius Thrax's *Grammar* (schol. D.T. (Vat.) *GG* 1,3.117.18–27), in which four Greek γένη (Dorians, Aeolians, Ionians, and the Ἀττικοί/Athenians) are summarily differentiated based on key identifying characteristics:[160] the Dorians are more virile and their language is grandiose; the Ionians, by contrast, are completely relaxed and frivolous (χαῦνοι); the Athenians excel for their lifestyle and elaborate language, while the Aolians are renowned for their austerity and old-fashioned dialect.[161] In connection to this, ancient sources ascribe an ethical and psychological function to the literary use of certain dialects. This function is described through the emotions that the language of certain literary pieces excites

156 See e.g. Tribulato (2022d, 242–8) re. the assessment of Herodotus' dialect in ancient scholarship.

157 The classic study is Wackernagel (1876). See also Siebenborn (1976, 150); Consani (1991, 26–7); Cassio (1993, 85–6); van Rooy (2016, 253).

158 Cassio (1984, 118); Cassio (1993, 79–81).

159 Latte (1925, 157–75); Cassio (1993, 81–6); S. Valente (2014).

160 There is no certainty that the scholium goes back to Choeroboscus (8th–9th century CE): see Cassio (1984, 126 n. 48).

161 An illuminating commentary on this scholium is found in Cassio (1984, 125–8); see also Section 3.3 below.

in their readers or listeners. The emotions are specifically linked to linguistic forms and not to the contents of the pieces, confirming that the ancients entertained a psychagogic view of literary dialects.

Another typical characteristic of ancient dialectology is its widespread neglect of a diachronic perspective. With few exceptions, mostly referable to Attic, ancient grammarians do not distinguish between different chronological stages of language.[162] The most striking consequences of this unhistorical attitude are the already-mentioned facts: first, that ancient grammarians appear to ignore the fact that the koine is a later form of Greek derived from Attic and, second, that they treat it as simply another διάλεκτος without any recognition of its genetic relationship to older dialects.[163] The earliest traces of this theory may be found in Tryphon (second half of the 1st century BCE).[164] Byzantine exegesis inherits and perpetuates this division of Greek into five varieties, including the koine. In his Περὶ διαλέκτων (1.12 Schäfer), Gregory of Corinth defines the koine as 'the variety that we all use' (διάλεκτος ᾗ πάντες χρώμεθα). This allows him to argue, on linguistic grounds, for an uninterrupted continuity between Ancient and Byzantine Greek.

A further noteworthy aspect is the way in which ancient dialectology perceives the relationship between Attic and Ionic. In parallel with the progressive emancipation of the Athenians from the Ionians, which leads to the recasting of the Ionians as ἄποικοι of the Athenians (see Section 2.6), the linguistic συγγένεια of these two varieties also evolves into the notion that Ionian is a form of παλαιὰ Ἀτθίς ('ancient Attic'), a theory whose most influential proponents include Aristarchus (see Chapter 7, Section 3.2).[165] The two sides of this relationship – the political and the linguistic – are clearly merged in Strabo (8.1.2).[166] The Athenians' precedence over the Ionians becomes standard in later sources, down to Byzantine exegesis.[167]

---

162 For the periodisation of Attic, see Probert (2004) who focuses on Apollonius Dyscolus and Herodian. On the ancients' lack of historical-linguistic awareness, see Lallot (2011); for exceptions to this general trend, see Nünlist (2012a) and Schironi (2018, 599–601), both on Aristarchus (see also Chapter 7, Section 3.2).

163 On the koine as a 'fifth διάλεκτος', see Consani (1991, 27–53); van Rooy (2016, 253–4). For ancient sources, see, among others, Clem.Al. *Strom.* 1.21.142.4; schol. (Marc.) D.T. *GG* 1,3.309.23–36; Greg.Cor. Περὶ διαλέκτων 1.12–4 Schäfer; and the anonymous Byzantine commentary on Dionysius Thrax's *Grammar* in *GG* 1,3.567.2–3.

164 See Morpurgo Davies (1987, 14); Cassio (1993, 78–9).

165 Aristarchus and Old Attic: Schironi (2018, 620–2).

166 See Hainsworth (1967, 67–8).

167 See e.g. Eust. *in Il.* 1.14.9–11; Eust. *Comm. in Dion. Perieg.* 423.42–4.

Unlike Atticism, however, ancient dialectology never theorises the pre-eminence of Attic over other varieties (see Chapters 6 and 7 for a more detailed discussion) nor the idea that the dialects are subsumed under a standard language (which is a development of Byzantine grammar: see Section 2). Nonetheless, it would appear that for comparative purposes, Attic is often implicitly treated as a sort of linguistic benchmark against which features peculiar to the other dialects may be described. The subsections that follow, dealing with Ionic, Doric, and Aeolic, respectively, make the case for such a reading of ancient dialectological and grammatical sources. We shall see how the peculiarities of these three dialects are often contrasted with Attic and how the latter does not receive the same amount of attention in terms of ethical and psychological considerations. Thus, we shall argue, the sources themselves appear to suggest that Attic occupied a special place within ancient dialectology and that this peculiarity found distinctive reception and new resonance in Atticist theorisation.

3.1 The ancient perception of Ionic

Ancient grammatical sources devote ample space to Ionic phono-morphological characteristics. A common feature is the comparison between Ionic and Attic. Perhaps in keeping with the notion that Ionic is a form of Old Attic, typical Ionic traits are often perceived as changes from a previous (Attic) form. Two representative – albeit opposing – phenomena associated with this methodological approach are the transition of /aː/ (ᾱ) to /ɛː/ (η), and contractions. In the first instance, grammarians correctly describe the shift of /aː/ to /ɛː/ as a τροπή ('change'). However, their interest usually lies in the Ionic η's difference from Attic (and koine) *alpha purum*: there is no recognition that, in fact, the preservation of /aː/ is shared by all other Greek dialects, nor that /aː/ > /ɛː/ also occurs in Attic.[168] The adoption of the same perspective in the treatment of contractions produces an incongruous explanation. The preservation of vocalic hiatus is seen as an essentially Ionic phenomenon (although it was widespread in many archaic Greek varieties), in opposition to Attic practice. Attic contractions are presented as the starting point from which Ionic diverges by way of 'resolution' of the contraction. For example, in a comment on the adverb ἀψευδέως 'truly' attributed to Philoxenus by the scholia to the *Odyssey*, the uncontracted adverbs ἀμεπέως and

168 Cf. e.g. Hdn. *GG* 3,1.340.9–10: τὰ εἰς ρη ἰωνικώτερα κατὰ τροπὴν τοῦ α εἰς η βαρύνεται, κόρη, Ἄσκρη πόλις Βοιωτίας, κτλ. ('Ionic nouns in -ρη, in which α mutates into η, retract the accent: (e.g.) κόρη, Ἄσκρη – a city of Boeotia –, etc.').

ἀψευδέως are explained as forms 'in Ionic resolution' (ἐν Ἰωνικῇ διαλύσει) deriving from ἀμεπῶς and ἀψευδῶς.[169]

The observation of this general trend of assessing Ionic based on Attic should not, however, lead to the conclusion that Ionic was perceived as less prestigious. On the contrary, thanks to its authoritative model authors, Ionic enjoys a status that even permeates Atticist lexicography, which notes Ionic peculiarities but rarely censures them.[170] The main reason for this respectful treatment of Ionic certainly is its connection with Homer, the poet *par excellence*. The perception of Homer as an Ionic authority, however, is not monolithic: already, Aristarchus thought that he was an Athenian who wrote in an ancient form of Attic, a theory that also surfaces in some of Herodian's fragments.[171] Several entries in the Atticist lexica seem to subscribe to the same view.[172] The circulation of alternative explanations for Homer's language does not alter this picture. Some ancient scholars, somewhat anticipating the modern theory of the 'Aeolic phase', thought that Homeric language mostly employed Aeolic.[173] Others still (e.g. Dio Chrysostom, the Pseudo-Plutarchean *Vita Homeri*, Philodemus, etc.) regarded Homeric language almost as a *summa* of all Greek dialects, a theory that also finds a place in Herodian.[174] The fact that this champion of normative grammar frequently uses Homer to exemplify linguistic norms constitutes a perfect demonstration of how foundational the Homeric text was in Greek culture and thus also in language.[175]

After Homer, the model authors of Ionic are Herodotus and Hippocrates. The latter's usage of Ionic is a marker of the medical genre but is also a problem for the intellectuals of the Atticist period, who must reconcile Atticist precepts with the medical tradition in Ionic. Galen discusses this problem in various places, but a hint of this linguistic controversy may also be found in the second prefatory letter of Pollux's *Onomasticon*.[176] Regarding Herodotus, Ionic is often regarded as

169 Philox. fr. 2 (= schol. BHQ Vind. 133 *ad Od.* 14.485 Dindorf).

170 See the examples in Tribulato (2019b, 365–6), where Byzantine sources and their probable Hellenistic antecedents are also addressed.

171 See Chapter 7, Section 3.2. For the presence of this theory in Herodian see Probert (2004). For Herodian's approach to dialects in Homeric language, Stephan (1889, 24–36) is still useful.

172 See e.g. the entries from Moeris' lexicon analysed in Pellettieri (2023b); Pellettieri (2023c); Pellettieri (2023d) and Pellettieri (2023e) with further references.

173 Schironi (2018, 612–5).

174 On the origin of this theory and its use in rhetorical-grammatical sources, see Blank (1988, 141–2); Janko (2000, 377 n. 4).

175 See Pontani (2012).

176 Cf. e.g. Gal. *De differentia pulsuum libri iv* 8.635.3–5 Kühn: καὶ ἡμετέρας δὲ δύο πραγματείας ὁ βουλόμενος ἔχει, τήν τε περὶ Ἀττικῶν ὀνομάτων καὶ τὴν περὶ τῶν ἰατρικῶν ('Those who want [to delve into terminological matters] also have my two treatises at their disposal, one on Attic

characteristic of his distinctive pleasantness (ἡδονή), grace (χάρις), and sweetness (γλυκύτης). Herodotus' style has Dionysius of Halicarnassus as its first important supporter. In the *Letter to Pompey Geminus*, Dionysius praises the historian for the pleasantness of his narration, achieved both through a correct arrangement of the subject matter and through the style, characterised by a pure Ionian dialect, of which he is the greatest model (τῆς Ἰάδος ἄριστος κανών, D.H. *Pomp.* 3.16, p. 239.8–9 Usener–Radermacher). Language and narrative skills afford Herodotus the frequent assimilation to Homer, which is expressed in the famous definition of Herodotus as ὁμηρικώτατος ('most Homeric') of *On the Sublime* (13.3), and more fully in Hermogenes (*Id.* 336).[177] Through rhetorical theorisation, the notion that Ionic is sweet, pleasant, and almost ontologically poetic enjoys a wide dissemination that survives into the Byzantine age.[178]

Several sources describe the effect that Ionic χάρις elicits in the audience, and these include Atticising authors. For instance, in describing the abilities of Scopelianus of Clazomenae (an Ionic city), Philostratus (*VS* 1.519) states that 'the ability to speak wittily is natural among the Ionians' (πρὸς φύσεως μὲν γὰρ τοῖς Ἰωνικοῖς τὸ ἀστείζεσθαι). Philostratus emphasises the pleasantness of Scopelianus' speech in a polemic with those who considered him a pompous representative of Asianism. He attributes to these detractors the criticism that Scopelianus was ἀκόλαστος 'unbridled' (Philostr. *VS* 1.514). This is a telling judgement that reveals to us the other side of the coin in Ionic characterisation. Alongside their positive qualities, the Ionians were also credited with defects such as lack of restraint, lasciviousness, moral corruption, sexual depravity, and obscenity. Characterisations of this nature already abound in Attic comedy and will be addressed in Chapter 4, for they are part of the Attic self-definition and claim to superiority. However, these judgments also surface in serious theorisations, such as those concerning music and language.[179] The softness of Ionic musical modes, a denotation that is replete with negative undertones, is topical in Greek literature at least since Pl. *R.* 3.398e.[180] A fragment of Heraclides Ponticus (163 Wehrli = 114 Schütrumpf) quoted in Ath. 14.624c–626a argues that the Ionic musical mode evolved from an initial austere character to effeminacy (τὰ τῶν νῦν Ἰώνων ἤθη τρυφερώτερα, cf. Ath. 14.625d).[181] This derogatory topos

terms and the other on medical ones'); cf. also Chapter 1, Section 4.3; Chapter 6, Section 3.1. On the second letter of the *Onomasticon*, see Tribulato (2018, 255–8).

177 On this passage and its context, see Priestley (2014, 199–205). The role of Ionic language in the ancient comparison between Homer and Herodotus is addressed in Tribulato (2022d).

178 Cf. e.g. Phot. *Bibl.* cod. 72.45a.

179 See Cassio (1984, 119–20). Abert (1899) is still useful for his collection of key passages.

180 See Tribulato (2019b, 375).

181 On this fragment in general, see Hagel (2009, 431–4); Prauscello (2012, 68–70).

must, however, have originated as an initial appreciation of the elegance of Ionic deportment and costumes in Attic culture, which later developed into a source of ridicule in 5th-century comedy as part of the evolution of Athenian attitudes towards Ionia (see Section 2.6).[182]

The transition from the ethical sphere to the theory of sounds and language is noteworthy. Thus, Aristides Quintilianus (2.13) states distinguishes 'masculine sounding' vowels (among them α) and 'feminine sounding' vowels (among them η) and asserts that the prevalence of one of these two types of vowels determines a dialect's virile or effeminate character. Regarding Ionic, the femininity of its sounds is sometimes regarded as conducive to its pleasantness, but at other times, it assumes a negative connotation. Philostratus himself, who praises the Ionic character of Scopelianus of Clazomenae, also reports (*VS* 1.513) that Isaeus of Assyria (an orator once given to slackness and pleasures) reproached his disciple Dionysius of Miletus for the excessive *singing* of his Ionian diction (μειράκιον, ἔφη, Ἰωνικόν, ἐγὼ δέ σε ᾄδειν οὐκ ἐπαίδευσα). These sources enable us to grasp the considerable complexity of the image that Ionic evokes in ancient commentators. A dialect related to Attic, the model language of epic, lyric, medicine, and philosophy and the best dialect in terms of elegance, sweetness, pleasantness, and poeticism, Ionic may, however, also bear negative connotations when elegance yields to affectation, sweetness to effeminacy, and pleasantness to lasciviousness. Precisely in this latter, negative sense, Ionic characteristics may thus be contrasted with those typical of Doric in a scale of values that often sees the latter emerge victorious as an alternative to Attic in the competition with Ionic.

3.2 The ancient perception of Doric

Doric occupies a special place within ancient dialectology, which recognises its peculiar subdivision into local subvarieties.[183] Although most of these varieties are described through literary sources (Alcman for Laconian, Epicharmus, Sophron, and Theocritus for Syracusan, etc.), evidence suggests that ancient scholars were also interested in local varieties, such as Cretan.[184] Ancient dialectology adheres to the ethical and cultural polarity of Dorians and Ionians. Thus, while

---

182 See Cassio (1985a, 105–18); Connor (1993, 199). Because of this comic representation, 'Ionic' is glossed as a synonym for 'effeminate' in ancient Greek scholarship: see e.g. Hsch. ι 1200; *Su.* ι 495.
183 Hainsworth (1967, 70–1); Cassio (1993, 75).
184 A collection of Cretan glosses is attributed to Hermonax, who lived before the 1st century CE: see Pagani (2005a). For Hellenistic glossographic collections focused on spoken dialects, see Chapter 6, Section 4.

Ionic traits are contrasted with the reference model of Attic (see Section 3.1), Doric is contrasted with the unity of both Attic and Ionic, an entity that ancient scholars implicitly reconstruct even if they lack the theoretical concept of our Attic-Ionic group. A diagnostic example is, again, how ancient grammarians address the inherited /a:/ (ᾱ) in Doric. This phoneme is contrasted with the Ionic (and koine) /ɛ:/ (η), without any awareness of the fact that the latter is a mutation of the former and not vice versa.[185] Connected to this, considerable attention is paid to the inflection of 1st-declension masculine nouns in -ᾱς, particularly with regard to their genitive singular in -ᾱ (outcome of -ᾱο). The grammarians are interested in the fact that the declension of these nouns in Doric betrays some similarities with the Attic contracted declension of personal names such as Μηνᾶς, Μηνᾶ, an inflectional type preserved in the koine. Thus, it is not uncommon to find discussions of the correct definition of these inflectional patterns: Choeroboscus, for example, quoting Theodosius, notes that they are always differentiated by the accent and that it is incorrect to call 'Doric' the type with perispomenon accentuation.[186]

The characteristic most frequently associated with the Dorians and their dialect is ἀνδρειότης 'virility', an integral element of the myth of Doric military superiority (cf. Thuc. 6.80).[187] Such virile character is also detected in Doric musical harmony. Plato (*La.* 188c–d) prefers the Doric musical mode to the Ionic, Phrygian, and Lydian modes as the only one suited to the true man. Plato's judgement is widely echoed in later works and also contributes to the idea of the moral superiority of Dorian-speaking authors.[188] As we have seen, Aristides Quintilianus also casts the opposition between the Ionians and Dorians in a phonetic light.[189] Although Aristides initially classifies /a/ (α) among the 'intermediate' sounds, he then says that /a/ is contrasted with /ɛ:/ (η) and is masculine by nature. Aristides cites the opposition between Doric and Ionic as proof, and the two dialects are said to correspond to the 'contrary character of their ἔθνη' (δηλοῦσι δὲ τοῦτο καὶ αἱ τῶν διαλέκτων ἀλλήλαις ἀντιπεπονθυῖαι τῇ τῶν ἐθνῶν ἀναλόγως ἐναντιοτροπίᾳ, ἡ Δωρίς τε καὶ Ἰάς).

As Albio Cassio has argued, much appreciation of the 'Doric α' is likely to depend on the prestige of choral poetry.[190] However, not all authors composing in

---

185 See e.g. St.Byz. 9.43.4–6 (= Hdn. *GG* 3,2.357.6–7): Ἰθωμήτης διὰ τοῦ η καὶ Δωρικῇ τροπῇ Ἰθωμάτας ('Ἰθωμήτης ['of Itome'] with η, and with Doric [vowel] mutation Ἰθωμάτας').

186 Choerob. *GG* 4,1.142.29–37. For other Doric peculiarities, see Tribulato (2019b, 369).

187 Cassio (1984, 118–9).

188 See e.g. Iambl. *VP* 241–2 on the superiority of Doric.

189 Cassio (1984, 124–5); Tartaglini (2003, 339–40); Ucciardello (2005, 42–3).

190 Cassio (1984, 122–4).

Doric are regarded equally as models of the dialect. The Greek dialectological tradition appears to have regarded more highly those authors who were Dorian in origin, such as Alcman, Epicharmus, and Sophron (but sometimes also Pindar). The dialect of those who were not born in Doric cities – such as Ibycus, Simonides, and Bacchylides – is, according to the definition given in Byzantine dialectological treatises, 'completely slackened' (παντελῶς ἀνεῖται).[191]

3.3 The ancient perception of Aeolic

For the ancient grammarians, Aeolic essentially corresponded to East Aeolic and its literary representation in Sappho, Alcaeus, and epic poetry. Although ancient scholarship recognises the Aeolic character of Thessalian and Boeotian, it is not interested in contrasting the different outcomes in these varieties of the Aeolic group. The rare comments on Boeotian that we find in ancient grammar reflect the fact that this dialect was used in the poetic fragments of Corinna: Boeotian in itself is of no interest, nor is Thessalian, as a dialect that is devoid of literary pedigree.[192]

Ancient grammar and dialectology credit 'Aeolic' with many traits that modern linguistics considers to be distinctive of East Aeolic: barytonesis; psilosis; diphthongisation; the athematic conjugation of *verba vocalia*; thematic infinitives in -ην, such as λέγην 'to say' (where /ɛː/ results from contraction); apocopated forms like κάτ for κατά; forms like βρόδον (< ῥόδον 'rose'), etc. Once again, the usual implicit benchmark for identifying these traits as typical of Aeolic is Attic (sometimes the koine), with respect to which all may be described as πάθη ('mutations'). However, some Aeolic peculiarities cannot be easily explained as linear mutations from Attic. For these, the ancient grammarians resort to other dialects as the original starting point of the mutation.

Consider, for instance, the ancient treatment of the complex phonetic phenomenon of diphthongisation, which in East Aeolic corresponds to the so-called '2nd compensatory lengthening' of other dialects. In /Vns/ sequences, the /n/ is lost in most Greek varieties; in many dialects, the vowel is lengthened to compensate for the loss of /n/ (see the feminine aorist participle λύσανσα > λύσᾱσα; or the 3rd-person plural indicative φέρονσι 'they bring' > φέρουσι), but in East Aeolic, the sequence instead yields /Vis/ (λύσαισα; φέροισι). The phonetic and morphological

191 See Consani (1991, 116); Ucciardello (2005, 52–3).

192 For rare exceptions, see the passages mentioned in Tribulato (2019b, 370 n. 29). On ancient linguistic exegesis on Corinna, see Vessella (2012), with previous bibliography.

mechanisms at work in East Aeolic diphthongisation are not understood by ancient grammarians, who prefer to devise a mechanical analogical rule by which any Aeolic αι corresponds to Doric ᾱ. Although this equation works for forms such as Doric λύσᾱσα : Aeolic λύσαισα, both of which derive from λύσανσα, it appears to have been artificially extended to credit Aeolic with forms in -αι- corresponding to Doric ᾱ. This, of course, is erroneous: not all Aeolic αι are diphthongised forms resulting from compensatory lengthening and, conversely, Aeolic has many instances of ᾱ that go back to inherited /a:/, just like Doric.

An illustration of this analogical reasoning deriving from a mechanical application of the πάθη theory is preserved in the famous 2nd-century CE P.Bour. 8, probably a copy of a treatise περὶ Αἰολίδος.[193] The papyrus clearly aims to describe the East Aeolic variety used by Sappho and Alcaeus, who are the sources of all the quotations preserved in the text. The surviving portion of the papyrus begins with a discussion of some diphthongised forms (ll. 1–24) that, among correct East Aeolic forms, such as the masculine aorist participles λέξαις, γράψαις, and ποήσαις (for λέξᾱς, γράψᾱς, and ποήσᾱς) or the feminine accusative plural νύμφαις (for νύμφᾱς), include hypercorrect 1st-declension masculine nominatives in -αις for -ᾱς (e.g. Πέρσαις 'Persian' for Πέρσᾱς). There is no compensatory lengthening in Πέρσᾱς, since the /a:/ of the suffix is inherited. However, the papyrus devises the rule by which 'any form which in Doric ends in ᾱς is pronounced with an ι by the Aeolians, both in nouns and in participles' (πάσης [. . . . .] εἰς τὸ ας τεταμένον ληγούσης παρὰ Δωριεῦσι μετὰ τοῦ ι ἐκφερομένης παρ' Αἰολεῦσι κἀπὶ μετοχῶν καὶ ὀνομάτων). Of course, the same derivational rule (which the papyrus probably described as an instance of πλεονασμός 'pleonasm') could not be devised by taking Attic as a starting point since in Attic (as well as in Ionic and the koine), 1st-declension -ᾱς changes to -ης, and hence the neat analogical theory of pleonastic iota will not work. Doric is therefore needed to make this πάθος easy to understand.[194]

The ancient perception of Aeolic exhibits several differences compared to that of Ionic and Doric. First, as we have already seen, the literary canon of reference is far narrower and coincides with Sappho and Alcaeus. This limitation also appears to have influenced the description of the 'character' of the Aeolic dialect, harmony, and γένος. The fragment of Heraclides Ponticus (163 Wehrli = 114 Schütrumpf) already considered above (Section 3.1), states with regard to the Aeolic musical mode that

---

193 Edited in Wouters (1979, 274–97). The traditional attribution to Tryphon is uncertain: see Wouters (1979, 294–5).

194 Wouters (1979, 288) instead proposes that Doric is brought into the picture because 'the ancient grammarians always stressed the special resemblance of Aeolic and Doric'. On πλεονασμός in this papyrus, see Wouters (1979, 290).

> the Aeolic character is haughty and turgid, and even a little vain (τὸ δὲ τῶν Αἰολέων ἦθος ἔχει τὸ γαῦρον καὶ ὀγκῶδες, ἔτι δὲ ὑπόχαυνον), and this befits their (i.e. the Aeolians) love of horse-breeding and hospitality (ὁμολογεῖ δὲ ταῦτα ταῖς ἱπποτροφίαις αὐτῶν καὶ ξενοδοχίαις): it is not an evil character, but is full of dignity and courage (οὐ πανοῦργον δέ, ἀλλὰ ἐξηρμένον καὶ τεθαρρηκός). Therefore, a love of drinking, sex, and any relaxation in lifestyle are typical of them (διὸ καὶ οἰκεῖόν ἐστ' αὐτοῖς ἡ φιλοποσία καὶ τὰ ἐρωτικὰ καὶ πᾶσα ἡ περὶ τὴν δίαιταν ἄνεσις). This is why the Aeolians have the typical character of Hypodorian harmony (διόπερ ἔχουσι τὸ τῆς Ὑποδωρίου καλουμένης ἁρμονίας ἦθος).

This statement is a perfect illustration of the way in which ancient thought combined the perceived defining characters of an ἔθνος with the effect produced in the audience by the musical mode associated with it. Heraclides delineates the Aeolic ethos using a plurality of information. The contents of Lesbian lyric, and particularly of Alcaeus' sympotic poetry, may underpin the mention of the Aeolians' passion for drinking, sex, and a relaxed lifestyle. Their love of horses, on the other hand, presupposes a broader ethnic vision, which includes the Thessalians, well-known horsemen and breeders. The attribution of haughtiness, turgidity, and vanity, however, reflects rhetorical and linguistic theories and is therefore of interest to us.

The first characteristic that Heraclides recognises in Aeolic harmony is that of being ὀγκώδης 'turgid'. In its rhetorical meaning, the adjective is ambiguous: it can identify an over-elaborate style, whose excesses lapse into vulgarity (see e.g. D.H. *Lys*. 3, p. 12.2 Usener–Radermacher), but it can also identify the *gravitas* that was recognised as a positive element in the theories of the Greek μουσικοί and μετρικοί, a quality to be sought through specific choices of phonemes and syllabic composition.[195] Thus, in a passage from *Po*. 1.181.12–4 Janko, Philodemus uses precisely ὀγκώδης to report on a theory advanced by Andromenides concerning the value of syllables and the sounds contained in them: the 'heavy' syllables uttered by poets are associated with the 'brightest' sounds (ὀγκώδεις συλλαβὰς τῶν λαμπροτάτων φθόγγων). This passage does not discuss Aeolic but allows us to focus on another aspect of the connection between harmonic theory, phonology, and the description of a dialect's character. Aeolic harmony was recognised as having gravity, and this is paralleled in the grammatical sources' emphasis on the Aeolic phenomenon of barytonesis. In the scholium to Dionysius Thrax mentioned above (schol. D.T. (Vat.) *GG* 1,3.117.18–27, cf. Section 3), barytonesis becomes, along with psilosis, the hallmark of Aeolian archaism and antiquity: τὸ δὲ Αἰολικὸν [i.e. ἦθος] τῷ τ' αὐστηρῷ τῆς διαίτης καὶ τῷ τῆς φωνῆς ἀρχαιοτρόπῳ· διὰ τοῦτο καὶ

195 On the complex theory hinted at in this passage, which may go back to Dionysius of Halicarnassus' *On Composition*, see Stanford (1967, 33–4); J. I. Porter (2010, 236–9); cf. Tribulato (2019b, 381 n. 54).

τὴν βαρύτητα τῶν τόνων καὶ τὴν ψιλότητα τοῦ πνεύματος ἐζηλώκασιν ('the Aeolic character [is distinguished] by the austerity of the lifestyle and the antiquity of the language: for this reason, they favour the gravity of accents and the absence of aspiration'). As Cassio (1984, 127) shows, this strange statement (which the scholiast vehemently criticises: τοῦτο δὲ οὐκ ἔστι πιθανόν· τί γὰρ ἡ βαρεῖα τάσις καὶ τὸ ψιλὸν πνεῦμα πρὸς τὸ τῶν τρόπων αὐτῶν; 'This is not credible: what do grave accents and smooth breathings have to do with the austerity of their way of being?') must depend on the polysemy of βαρύς and τόνος, which from the perspective of grammatical thought percolate through musical theory (where they indicate low and pleasant sounds and scales), and further the ethical level (where they indicate *gravitas* and dignity).[196] In essence, the Aeolic character, harmony, and dialect were perceived as a middle ground between the Dorians' severity and virility and the Ionians' looseness and effeminacy. Aeolic possesses both strength and gravity – characters that connect it to Doric – but also a tendency towards elevation and a style that is not excessively severe, together with an ethos inclined towards life's pleasures – characters that bring it closer to Ionic (drunkenness and slackness characterise the συμποτικαί melodies connected to Ionic harmony and condemned in Pl. *R.* 3.398e).[197]

The ancient theories on the character of the non-Attic dialects have long-lasting effects that are still perceptible in Byzantine scholarship. Immediately after expressing the theory that the Ionians are ἄποικοι of the Athenians (cf. Section 3), Eustathius also states that 'something identical is said about the Aeolic and Doric dialects, since they also have some similarity' (ὅμοιον δέ τι καὶ περὶ τῆς Αἰολίδος καὶ Δωρίδος διαλέκτου λέγεται, ὡς καὶ αὐτῶν ὁμοιότητά τινα ἐχουσῶν, Eust. *in Il.* 1.14.11–2). The context illuminates the reasons for this apparently incongruous statement. The passage discusses the first word of the *Iliad,* μῆνιν, attributed to 'Attic and Ionic', and its possible variants, including μᾶνιν – the Doric and Aeolic form, attested in Pindar and Alcaeus. Like Attic and Ionic, Doric and Aeolic 'have something in common': although Eustathius does not make this explicit, we infer from the passage that this similarity is based on the common retention of /a:/. We have here, then, a specifically linguistic reflection on the kinship between the Doric and Aeolic γένη, which was principally claimed on

196 Cassio (1984, 125–8). In Aristides Quintilianus (see above) βαρύτης is instead associated with Doric: cf. Tartaglini (2003, 340).

197 The harmonic and musical implications of the middle character of the Aeolic mode are discussed by Prauscello (2012, 74). On Greek harmonic theory and its connections with linguistics, the theory of ethos, and psychology, see the classic studies by Abert (1899) and W. D. Anderson (1966); Barker (1989) deals with the texts and Barker (2007) with the theoretical elaboration; Rossi (2000) provides an overview of the psychagogic effects of music.

mythographic and historical grounds (see Section 2.4). The further development is the comparison between the ethical attitudes – the characters – of the two γένη, both of which are endowed with strength and gravity: two qualities that, as we have seen, were linked precisely to the characteristic sound of *alpha*.

3.4 Conclusion: Inventing Attic

From the fragments of grammarians and other products of ancient scholarship, a clear view emerges of the ways in which dialects (i.e. linguistic forms) were described and placed on an evaluative grid by ancient scholars. Linguistic phenomena were selected and commented upon not on the basis of a criterion of correctness (or of preference for one variety over the other) but on the basis of the functions that they fulfilled in literary genres, essentially those of archaic and Classical poetry. From the comments on dialects that we find in many authors – in fact, from Plato to Eustathius, in a remarkable continuity of thought – emerges an equally clear idea of the function that this linguistic diversity fulfilled in the common perception of Greek poets and writers. Thus, Ionic is more poetic and pleasant because it is associated with the foundational genre of epos; Doric is more austere and virile because it is associated with choral lyric, etc.

The wreckage of much ancient linguistic and grammatical scholarship makes it impossible to understand to what extent its various products differed from one another, but some final thoughts on this topic are necessary before we proceed to assess the role of Attic in Classical literature and Greek linguistic thought. Despite the Attic prominence in both literary theory and grammar, ancient dialectological sources are remarkably silent on the 'character' of this dialect and its speakers (of course, Atticism – with its purist inclination – is a separate case). Many of the sources dealing with the 'characters' of the dialects resonate with the traditional polarity that contrasted the Dorians and the Ionians.[198] The Athenians, however, had invested considerable effort in delineating themselves from the Ionians in this and other respects.[199] The scholium to Dionysius Thrax (schol. D.T. (Vat.) *GG* 1,3.117.18–27), which consigns a stereotypical but vivid definition of the γένη and their dialects, is frustratingly vague as far as the Athenians are concerned: they always (strive to) excel (or distinguish themselves: ἀεὶ διαφέρειν) in their lifestyle (εἰς δίαιταν) and inventiveness of speaking (φωνῆς ἐπιτέχνησιν, where ἐπιτέχνησις seems

198 Connor (1993, 201).

199 See Connor (1993, 203). Cassio (1984, 116) opportunely recalls Herodotus' statement (1.143.3) that the Athenians spurned the name [of the Ionians] and did not want to be called such' (οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι ἔφυγον τὸ οὔνομα, οὐ βουλόμενοι Ἴωνες κεκλῆσθαι).

to carry a further overtone of excessive artificiality).[200] The point of view expressed in this scholium appears to inherit the long-standing tradition of Athenian self-separation and distinction that began in the 5th century BCE (see Sections 2.5–6) and was certainly enhanced by the Hellenistic reception of Attic literature. The apparent silence of dialectological sources strongly suggests the following interpretative hypothesis. With the construction of their particularity, the Athenians would appear to have succeeded in making it irrelevant to define their own character on comparative grounds: Attic is simply Attic, and enumeration of its distinctive characteristics is futile, since Attic identity per se is unique.[201]

Considered in this interpretative light, some of the well-known aspects of Athenian cultural history that we addressed in this chapter acquire new significance. Beginning with the most recent, it may be claimed that when Atticism eventually emerged, it filled a natural gap in Greek linguistic thought by unapologetically elevating Attic to the role of the best linguistic variety. However, Atticism was prepared by that which we have called the 5th-century BCE Athenian 'invention of purity'. The claim that we made in Section 2.6 can now be further refined in light of these last sections' excursus into the ancient perceptions of the other dialects. Our first metalinguistic sources for Attic come from Attic literature itself (see Willi 2002b; Chapter 4). It is as though the Athenians, after 'inventing Athens' (in Nicole Loraux's words), had also 'invented' their own language – that is, the way in which its image was projected to the outer world. Moreover, since this metalinguistic reflection on Attic was born in Athens, its viewpoint is *internal*: it is not Attic that is contrasted with other varieties (like, for instance, Doric is contrasted with Ionic) but rather the other varieties that are assessed on Attic terms. Thus, the Attic comic poets can take turns in ridiculing Ionic effeminate pronunciation (see Ar. *Pax* 929–34) and intellectual language (Ar. *Pax* 45–8), Spartan directness (e.g. Ar. *Lys*. 81–4), Boeotian rustic wealth (Ar. *Ach*. 860–954), and Megarian destitution (Ar. *Ach*. 729–835). Although many of these literary sources are comic in character and thus stereotypical, we argue that they also express a superior outlook with respect to the other varieties, which are perceived as more provincial.[202] Within a matter of decades, Strattis, a poet chronologically close to Middle

200 This perception might perhaps correspond to the situation, described by Edwards (2009, 68), of 'extremely high-status varieties' that appear 'affected and generally over the top'.

201 As Hainsworth (1967, 67) remarks, 'the status of Attic does not represent even an ethnically biased linguistic argument: it is a tribute to the predominance of Attic in literature and commerce and to the national arrogance of its people'.

202 Bettarini (2015, 20). Colvin (1999, 282; 292) and Colvin (2009, 39–40) instead find evidence for this superior outlook only in relation to internal varieties of Attic. See further Willi (2002b) on dialects being integral to Aristophanes' panhellenic vision.

Comedy, can fully play on this when he mocks Thebans for their funny, incorrect, and outdated linguistic usages (fr. 49).[203] The Athenocentric view that they project becomes the *internalised* vantage point from which later sources (both literary and scholarly) perceive Attic, having learnt from Attic literature a way to judge its dialect as unique.

By contextualising the evolution of Attic in relation to early Greek linguistic history and assessing the complex intertwining of dialectological details, mythographic accounts, and identity-building processes, we may conclude that the Athenians were particularly precocious in their elaboration of a purely Athenian linguistic evaluative system. Owing to the way in which Greek culture evolved in the subsequent period, with the emergence of a standard language based on Attic, Alexandrian scholarship actively contributed to elevating Attic to a privileged rank and to making it an implicit benchmark against which all other dialects should be assessed. The next – more radical and militant – step would be taken by Atticism, which further elevated the already-established advantage of Attic to the status of the preferred variety: a linguistic norm. The seeds of this Attic linguistic exclusiveness are wholly Classical, as the next two chapters will demonstrate.

203 See Bettarini (2015).