

There are no translations available.

Hellenistic Koine' or Common Greek

- After the conquests of Alexander the Great (roughly 336-323 BCE) the language underwent far-reaching changes.
- Greek became the standard language of commerce and government, existing alongside many local languages.
- Greek was adopted as a second language by the native people of Near East
- **Birth of the Hellenistic Koiné or common Greek** = development of the Attic-Ionic synthesis.
- The histories of **Polybius**, the discourses of **Epictetus**, and the **Christian New Testament** all date from this period and are good representatives of the Koine

Atticism and Purism

- During the **hellenistic period** some **purists** reacted strongly against the Koine.
- **Atticism** treated classical Attic as the only acceptable standard for prose writing
- **Atticism** continued to influence Greek writing well into the modern era.

Byzantine Period

Atticism dominated the production of literature for the entire Byzantine era from the establishment of Constantinople in 330 until 1453 when the city was defeated by the Turks.

The development of actual daily speech during this period is extraordinarily difficult to reconstruct since the vernacular speech was deemed unfit for literary production. As Greece entered a protracted period of bondage to the Turks lasting four hundred years, its literary production had been drastically reduced by the demands of Atticism.

Crete managed to resist Turkish control until 1669. The poetry produced there in the **local dialect**

near the end of this period would contribute significantly to the development of **modern demotic literature**

as would the

folk songs

produced on the mainland

Independence and Linguistic Issue

- **When Greece finally won its freedom in 1830** a new kingdom was formed with Athens and the Peloponnese at its core.
- The **dialects** spoken in these regions became the basis for the standard spoken language of today's Greek society.
- This standard was not formed directly from the folk songs and poetry of earlier peasant society, however. A purified, **katharevousa**, form of Greek was devised.
- Even today the language question still presents problems, yet the continuing growth of educational institutions as well as journalism and the broadcast media have begun to affect a solution. The distance between **demotic** and **katharevousa** is narrowing as a way of speech arises which combines aspects of both.

Modern Greek

- **Modern Greek has its origins in the Hellenistic Koine**

- While it is customary to divide Post-Classical and Post-Hellenistic Greek into the early Byzantine period (c. 300 AD to 1000 AD) and the later Byzantine/Medieval period (1000 to 1600), with the (truly) modern period starting after 1600, in fact **vernacular Greek of the 12th century** seems quite modern in many respects.

Katharevousa vs Dimotiki

- The important position that Classical Greece held culturally throughout the Mediterranean, the Balkans, parts of the Middle East, and even parts of Western and Central Europe, in the post-Classical period and on into the Middle Ages, meant that Greek speakers bore **a constant reminder of the language and linguistic "monuments" of their ancestors**.

- **Classical Greek thus formed the prescriptive norm** against which speakers of later stages of Greek generally measured themselves.

- The distinction between **Katharevousa** and **Dimotiki** became politicized
- **Katharevousa** ("Puristic", literally "(the) purifying (language)") = the high-style variety associated with official functions, i.e. those pertaining to government, education, religion, and such
- **Dimotiki** ("Demotic", literally "(the) popular (language)") as the language of the people in ordinary, day-to-day, mundane affairs.
- Currently, by various acts and actions of the government in 1976, **dimotiki is now the official language**, and the diglossic situation is resolved, at least officially.

[<The Greek Alphabet](#) [Loan Words>](#)