A new history of the Greek language

G.C. HORROCKS
Greek: A History of the Language and its Speakers
(Longmans, London 1997)

ALAN H. SOMMERSTEIN

Thirty years ago, those of us who studied 'the history of the Greek language' at Cambridge (as Geoffrey Horrocks and I did, a few years apart), or elsewhere, worked mainly with Meillet's classic *Aperçu d'une histoire de la langue grecque*, first published as long ago as 1913 with a dedication to Michel Bréal (the father of semantics and incidentally of marathon races), last extensively revised in 1929, and rendered obsolete by the historic decipherment of 1952. The next generation had L.R. Palmer's slightly quirky volume in the Faber & Faber 'Great Languages' series, *The Greek Language* (1980). For both these scholars 'Greek' meant essentially ancient Greek. Of the 324 text pages of Meillet's sixth edition (the one in my possession), only eleven deal with developments later than the imperial period; Palmer compresses the entire history of 'post-classical' Greek, from the fourth century BC to the post-Colonels educational reforms, into one chapter of twenty-five pages. Horrocks' book represents a fundamental shift; indeed it can almost be said to go to the opposite extreme. Classical Greek and its antecedents are described in two introductory chapters (pp. 3-23), and the whole of the rest of the book deals with the continuous development whereby one of the dialects of ancient Greek (with some input from others) gave rise over two and a half millennia to the various forms of Greek that have been spoken and written in Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine and modern times. This is the first history of *Greek* (as distinct from ancient Greek) to have been written with the full benefit of the insights of late twentieth-century linguistics, and no one is better qualified than Horrocks, in both these fields, to have written it.

The book is an account of the *development* that turned classical Attic into

standard modern Greek; these two language states themselves are only, as it were, the book-ends. To some extent this is inevitable; as Horrocks says in his preface, one has to 'assume some . . . familiarity with Greek in order to say anything at all'; and he envisages a reader who has enough acquaintance with classical Greek grammar not to need to be told, for example, what is meant by the middle voice, or the structure of the aspectual system. But the *history* of the language down to the early classical period is treated essentially as a prologue to the book's main theme, and to an ancient Greek specialist who knows something of Horrocks' other work this is a considerable disappointment. Nothing at all is said of the position of Greek among Indo-European languages (which rated 70 pages in Meillet's book); only a summary account – though as far as it goes a thoroughly reliable one, with adequate signalling of diverse views – is given of Mycenaean Greek or of the distribution and relationships of the ancient dialects; and only the sketchiest information is provided about the phonological and grammatical differentiae of the various dialects and dialect groups. This is the more to be regretted because it is quite some time since there has been a synthetic treatment of the prehistory and protohistory of the language; a recent attempt (too recent, despite its nominal date, for Horrocks to have referred to) is Margalit Finkelberg's article 'The dialect continuum of ancient Greek' in *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 96 (1994) 1-36. It is, by the way, no longer the case that 'the first examples of the new alphabetic writing . . . come to light only from the second half of the eighth century BC onwards' (p. xix): the earliest known Greek alphabetic text is now a pottery inscription, not later than 770 BC, from a tomb at Osteria dell'Osa near the ancient Latin city of Gabii (see e.g. T.J. Cornell, *The Beginnings of Rome* [1995] 103).

After briefly considering the position of Attic in relation to Ionic, Horrocks turns to the phenomenon of the literary or genre dialect – a phenomenon that, as he goes on to show, has to varying degrees been characteristic of Greek throughout its history – and the early development of standard written forms of the language for public documents, transcending local dialectal boundaries, especially in Ionia. But the decisive event in the history of ancient Greek – one may almost say, in the history of Greek – was the creation of the Athenian empire, which only lasted three-quarters of a century but which resulted both in the import to Attica of the Ionic alphabet in which Greek has regularly been written ever since, and in the export throughout the Aegean, and later over

most of the Greek world, of a mildly Ionicized form of Attic ('Great Attic') which was to become the ancestor of the Koine and of modern Greek. Athenians in 424 BC laughed loudly at the 'prophecy' of a character in Aristophanes' *Knights* that they would sit as judges in remote, backward Arcadia: sixty years later two old soldiers, Xenophon of Athens and Aeneas of Arcadian Stymphalus (Aeneas Tacticus), were writing for publication in essentially the same form of modified Attic, and when about the same time almost all the states of old Greece (few of which had not, at some time during the previous century, been at war with Athens) formed a short-lived federal union, its official language was this same modified Attic.

Horrocks' detailed coverage begins with the Hellenistic period. From now on, each major variety of the language (whether definable by period, region, social milieu, or type of text) is illustrated by textual quotation, each text being printed, in effect, four times – in its original orthography, in a broad phonetic transcription, in an interlinear word-by-word English rendering, and in a readable translation; full particulars are given of key phonological, morphological and syntactic features characteristic of the variety; and linguistic developments are throughout presented against the background of social, political and religious developments contemporary with them. We follow the spread of the Koine and the gradual (but even today not quite total) disappearance of the old dialects; the varied forms of literary Greek in the Hellenistic age, from Menander to Polybius to the Septuagint, and the beginnings of a new dialect system across the vastly expanded Greek-speaking world; the impact of Roman power and of the Latin language (whose influence on the Greek of the eastern half of the empire Horrocks judges to have been largely superficial); the Atticist movement (whose influence on élite varieties of Greek, and on élitist thinking about the language, has been profound and, though much diminished, is not yet exhausted); and the reflexes of all this in the Greek of the increasing (and increasingly educated) part of the population that was adopting the Christian religion. The final chapter of Part I, somewhat misleadingly titled 'Spoken Koine in the Roman period', first charts the development of Greek phonology from classical Attic to the late Roman / early Byzantine period (non-specialists may here be surprised to learn how early a date now tends to be assigned to some major changes in the vowel system, or to the shift from pitch to stress accent), and then presents detailed linguistic analyses of a series of papyrus letters from the second to fourth centuries AD.

In the last letter of this series, in spite of all the writer's efforts to produce 'correct' Greek, it is clear that the spoken language had moved far towards its modern state (the dative case, especially, being all but defunct). That is how far Greek diglossia goes back – though as Horrocks repeatedly demonstrates, polyglossia would usually be a more accurate term; Byzantium only continued and deepened divisions that already existed in antiquity.

ELIZABETH JEFFREYS

Greek is the European language which has the longest history of continuous use, a language whose evolution can be traced from its first appearance in writing on tablets in Linear B to the written and spoken forms encountered not only in the Greece and Cyprus of today but also in the streets of Johannesburg, New York or Sydney (though Horrocks takes no account of the contemporary Greek diaspora). Most philologists and linguists concentrate on one phase only of this language. Horrocks, however, has boldly undertaken an examination of its entire sweep. He is to be congratulated for his bravery and his enterprise, for this obvious but daunting desideratum has not yet been supplied in English (or indeed any language). Robert Browning's *Medieval and Modern Greek*, its nearest analogue, made no attempt to cover the classical and earlier phases of the language.

My brief is to consider in particular those sections that deal with the Byzantine phases of Greek's linguistic history. The book's aim, to trace the evolution of the spoken as well as written Greek of the past, means, of course, that Horrocks is examining sounds through written records (though he seems almost apologetic for this: p. xvi). The greatest strength of the book is its interpretation of the evidence from different periods for the interplay between written and spoken forms, despite all the methodological problems involved. Up to the seventh century AD the non-literary papyri provide clear evidence of the conflict between a normative orthography and syntax and changing patterns of speech; to that point Gignac's studies have provided a detailed picture of developments. For some subsequent centuries, when few such informal documents survive, conclusions have to be made on the basis of the

formal products of writers who aim at a standard grammar; assessment of their deviations is often complicated by the intervention of several generations of transcribers, who are liable to correct variations and thus obscure the true nature of an author's language. This fact, together with the lack of a convincing historical framework, means that there are also few useful linguistic studies of Byzantine writers. Horrocks is judiciously aware of these problems. His divisions by type (high style: 'Byzantine belles lettres' [pp. 168-78]; middle style: chronicle, hagiography, paraenetic literature, etc. [pp. 179-204]) are not allowed to dominate: he makes his readers aware that all these categories are fluid. His selection of representative authors and choice of sample passages are obvious but sensible, and his linguistic comments are measured and well-based. Horrocks' summaries of the usages of, say, Malalas or Kekaumenos will be useful resources for classes in Byzantine Greek.

But this is not a particularly easy book to deal with. There are narrative sections on historical background which demand to be read through (pp. 129-45). Other sections will be used more for reference: for example, the valuable pages listing pronunciation changes and developments in Byzantine morphology and syntax (pp. 205-53), bare bones fleshed out by the sample passages. Users are likely to approach these in the manner of consultation, turning to the index to focus on a given issue. These pages, however, despite their array of detail, are likely to strike most readers who are not professional linguists as commentaries on developing paradigms which are not usually supplied. Horrocks has not eliminated the need to turn to historical grammars such as that of Jannaris – a centenarian though it be.

One of Horrocks' major concerns is with the development of the spoken language; hence the phonetic transcriptions attached to every sample passage (from earliest to most modern) which attempt to show the changing vowel and consonant values appropriate to the period and social class of the putative speaker. The results are most stimulating. But it would be even more splendid if the reader (again the non-professional) could be helped to vocalize the sounds: could the next edition include a CD?

My overall reaction, then, is very positive: this will be a useful book to put in the hands of those attempting to come to terms with the inconsistencies and complexities of Byzantine Greek, with its shifts in lexical register, morphology and an evolving syntax – whether the student's background is classical or Modern Greek. However, a good knowledge of Greek in some form is

necessary, and also a fair acquaintance with linguistic terminology. This is not a book for novices.

A strength of the book is its analysis of the difficulties that 'diglossia' has caused and the dispassionate demonstration of the routes which led to its development: there is no judgmental terminology over the division between 'learned' and 'vernacular', though one feels that there are some judgmental elements in the book's narrative form: the acceptance of monotonic *dimotiki* in 1982 is a kind of triumphant dénouement to the tale. Horrocks could, however, have made it plainer that the literary use of the vernacular was always a minor element in the Byzantine literary scene. Equally, if he wishes to suggest that much writing in the vernacular must have perished (p. 142), it should also be noted that much has yet to be acknowledged: the bulk of texts written in the vernacular in the late Byzantine period and the early *Tourkokratia* have religious or devotional subjects, have not entered the literary histories, and are barely listed anywhere.

However, the book is not even-handed in its treatment of the different phases of the history of Greek. Horrocks is a classicist, and he sometimes does not even try to remove his classicist's spectacles. This is apparent from the historical summaries: the history of the classical period is assumed to be common knowledge, and there are no summaries to correspond to those given for the Byzantine period, the *Tourkokratia* or the modern state. Proper names in the Byzantine section, though not in the classical, are given in transliteration even when there is a form widely accepted by English-speaking Byzantinistis (why Ioustinianós, Mikhaél, Ioánnes?). One feels that classicists are being reminded that times have changed.

There are other niggles. Psellos can use as high a style as Anna Comnena when he puts his mind to it (p. 160); the *de Caerimoniis* really is a rag-bag of documents and styles (p. 162); to talk of the hagiographic tradition as struggling for survival in an age of greater sophistication in the eleventh century and later (pp. 164-5) is to impose a post-Enlightenment mind-set; when discussing Theophanes' language it is as well to be clear that his text is a scissors-and-paste job, while I am far from certain that one can talk of 'traditional chronographic characteristics' (p. 185); ὅτι (p. 194) in Byzantine Greek regularly marks the beginning of an excerpted passage, as well as a ledger entry; Kekaumenos (p. 196) was probably not quite so artless as he would like his reader to think; it is a very fair conclusion that 'middle-register

writing in Byzantium 'reflected a continuously evolving tradition' (p. 204), but less useful to go on to charge educated Byzantines with not writing in the 'educated vernacular of their time' when such a goal was probably far from anyone's mind.

Most problematic is an underlying assumption that within the Byzantine empire a nation-state of Modern Greece was struggling to express itself and to be free (e.g. pp. 145, 150, 151, 290). This is to attribute an anachronistic and nineteenth-century mentality to the Byzantines of the twelfth to fifteenth centuries (see, e.g., A. Ditten, 'Βάρβαροι, Ἕλληνες und Ῥωμαῖοι bei den letzten byzantinischen Geshichtsschreiber', *Proceedings of the 12th International Byzantine Congress*, Belgrade, 1961, II, 274 ff., for a range of the terminological issues involved). The tendentious statements of Bryer (1981) and Beaton (1989, 1996) have lent a rather simplistic note to parts of Horrocks' survey. It is pushing matters, for example, to consider that Glykas' interest in proverbs is 'an expression of contemporary Greekness' (p. 266).

An offshoot of this assumption is the suggestion that the twelfth-century experiments in writing at a level that was clearly intended to represent the spoken language were the result of an urge for clear expression on the part of a developing middle class (p. 151). This is highly debatable. It needs to be emphasized that the number of works using this type of language was very small. Their writers were a closely knit group; their patrons were imperial or aristocratic. It is difficult to find evidence that these experiments were viewed as a 'potentially radical alternative to high Atticism'. I query whether these or the heightened interest in the literature of the ancient world at this time had anything to do with nationalistic sentiments associated with the area of the Balkan peninsula that is now Greece or indeed with any sort of 'contemporary "Greek" identity' (pp. 152, 169). The classical literary heritage was a source of nationalistic pride, certainly, but one that gloried in the strength of the Greek cultural tradition with barely an acknowledgment of any geographical connection with the administrative area called Hellas. The geographical focus of political pride for the Greek-speaking inhabitants of the East Roman Empire in the twelfth century was expressed in terms of the vigour of the New Rome (Constantinople) as opposed to the Old: it is this that is a constant theme in the public writing of the same group of court littérateurs who were experimenting with popular Greek.

In an ambitiously wide survey of this sort Horrocks is inevitably dependent

on the filter imposed by other scholars in the field. I could wish he had pushed his investigation of the secondary literature on Byzantium a little further: assimilation of Magdalino's work on the cultural environment of Manuel Komnenos would have made his comments on twelfth-century developments more nuanced. Equally, when dealing with the controversial issue of the nature of the style and language of the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century verse texts, in a language that approaches the vernacular, Horrocks has approached the matter through Beaton's summaries (p. 156), and shows little sign of having engaged with the problems himself – though it is good to see the chronicles of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries given due weight (p. 155).

Another point where Horrocks' approach to Byzantine texts is problematic is over an uneven application of caveats on possible distortions in copying. He recognizes in connection with high and middle style writers that there is a gap between the time of composition and the earliest manuscript in which a text may survive, and that this may open the way for linguistic interference from copyists. He is less willing to do so in the case of texts which appear to be closer to the spoken level of the language, though such texts in practice show more changes in copying than do their learned equivalents. Thus *Porphyris* ('which survives in a relatively late copy', p. 232) is cited as evidence for the possible tenth- or eleventh-century occurrence of futures formed with ϑὲ νά, which are not otherwise attested before the sixteenth century. Yet (p. 273) caution is advised over assessing the language of *Kallimachos* (with a probable late-thirteenth-century author) because the unique manuscript dates to around 1520. This sort of problem is at its most acute in connection with the Escorial version of the epic romance *Digenes Akrites*. Horrocks accepts the arguments of Stylianos Alexiou (followed by David Ricks) that E, although preserved in a manuscript from the last quarter of the fifteenth century, represents the original twelfth-century version of the poem and has undergone only minor deterioration in transmission. The issue is more complex than Alexiou allows: in fact the historically important text that he recommends has been painfully reconstructed, largely by his own efforts, from a manuscript with serious surface distortions. It is a pity then that the sample of *Digenes* E that Horrocks quotes is given without a textual apparatus for, of the 17 lines, 11 require textual notes (some major) and 9 do not form regular fifteen-syllable lines in the manuscript. Horrocks notes in connection with the *Ptochoprodromika* that 'the range of variant readings is considerable' (p. 266): *Digenes* E requires a similar warning comment.

Byzantine linguistic studies are, it is true, underdeveloped. This is apparent when looking for secondary material cited in Horrocks' survey of 'the 500-year "gap" between the latest colloquial text from antiquity and the earliest medieval vernacular literature': there is hardly any. Horrocks has done a very sound job with his survey: I hope this will stimulate others to provide studies of individual authors or linguistic phenomena to test or substantiate his statements.

In general I feel very impressed by the areas of the book in which I am not a specialist but have some problems over approaches to the material with which I am most familiar. I confess to some unease that I may not be alone in my reaction. Nonetheless, these reservations do not affect my view of the book as a whole. I have read it with immense interest and profit, and shall be recommending it for its information and analysis, as well as for its unique scope.

PETER MACKRIDGE

Horrocks' book is the first comprehensive account in English of the entire history of Greek. Thorough and clearly written, it covers a huge spectrum of diachronic and synchronic language use from the earliest written records to the present day. *Greek* is larger and more comprehensive than either Robert Browning's *Medieval and Modern Greek* (1st edn., London 1969; 2nd edn., Cambridge 1983) or Henri Tonnet's *Histoire du grec moderne* (Paris 1993). The whole text of Browning's ground-breaking book, which does not deal with ancient Greek, covers a mere 137 pages, while Horrocks devotes 235 pages to the period between the foundation of Constantinople and the present day. Tonnet devotes his 168 pages to what is essentially a well-trodden path through the history of Greek since the *koine*. By contrast, Horrocks' coverage is more ample: he devotes his longest section (260 pages to Browning's 35) to the Byzantine period, which is the least thoroughly researched of the three periods and the one for which the evidence is the most difficult to interpret. Horrocks devotes 72 pages to the modern period (to Browning's fifty) and it is characteristic that whereas Browning's book *ends* with a separate chapter on

the Modern Greek dialects, Horrocks *begins* his modern section with an account of the modern dialects, suggesting that dialects are not just what is left over after a study of the standard language, but that the history of spoken modern Greek can be nothing other than a history of its dialects.

The fact that Horrocks has more space than Browning at his disposal and divides his material into short sections allows him to present a more detailed and nuanced view and relieves him of the obligation to make sweeping generalizations about developments that took place in different ways in different times and places. The most striking differences, however, between Horrocks and Browning are that (*a*) Horrocks begins his medieval and modern sections with a historical survey of the Greek world during the relevant period, and that (*b*) he includes a number of illustrative passages at every stage of his book, which show the language in action rather than as a set of *disiecta membra*. Furthermore, whereas Browning and Tonnet are chiefly interested in the development of the spoken language, Horrocks takes the view that the history of written Greek is equally worthy of attention. In general, Horrocks' book is informed by recent developments in linguistics without losing the non-specialist reader in the obscurity of contemporary linguistic terms and symbols.

It is perhaps inevitable that a history of a language, when examining linguistic features belonging to an earlier stage, should be constantly looking forward to later developments. This somewhat teleological view, which implies that the earlier stage of the language is only there so that a later stage can develop out of it (a view that almost becomes explicit in Tonnet's title) is obvious right at the beginning of Horrocks' book when (on pp. 4-5), after quoting a seven-word Linear B document, he immediately lists the Modern Greek equivalents of six of the words as a startling illustration of the continuity of Greek. What he does not say is that only one of these words (ἄνθρωπος) has existed continuously in the spoken language ever since Mycenaean times, while the others have (at least until some time after 1821) been confined to the written language (and in some cases may not have had a continuous existence even there). Again, when Horrocks refers to 'phenomena of genuine significance for the history of the language', which lead to 'final [sic] outcomes known from modern Greek and its dialects [sic]', he distinguishes such phenomena from 'purely local phenomena' (p. 68). Certain developments, however, such as the articular 'temporal' or 'circumstantial'

infinitive, which is neither a feature of classical nor of Modern Greek, seem to have reached a dead end; yet such developments are surely not devoid of significance simply because they failed to be extended into our own time. Indeed (as in Chapter 10 with reference to the variety of styles and registers available to Byzantine writers), Horrocks shows quite clearly that there is no single line of development in the history of Greek. Our view of the development of Greek is conditioned by the fact that the common spoken language of Greece today is based largely on Peloponnesian dialects; but how would we view the history of Greek if, by some historical quirk, Trebizond had become the capital of a modern Greek state whose inhabitants spoke Pontic? (This is not so fantastic as it may sound, since Pontic has been used as a literary language in the theatre since the early years of this century, and was developed into a language of education and culture for the Pontians of the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s.)

The old bipartite division into ancient Greek and Modern Greek is apparent in Chapter 11 (on spoken Greek in the Byzantine Empire), which is marred by frequent chronological jumps between Byzantine and modern times and a reluctance to stick to the Byzantine evidence: the result is an insufficiently clear sense of what is characteristically *medieval* – as if medieval spoken Greek (unlike classical or modern spoken Greek) were not a synchronic system in itself but merely a mixture of ancient and modern features.

A certain lack of subtlety is to be expected in a survey of the history of Greek from Linear B to the present, particularly given that at certain times some forms (e.g. those of the imperfect passive) may have varied from village to village. Horrocks' survey often fails to do justice to the complexity of dialectal and Standard Modern Greek forms. To take one example, when talking about the northern dialects of medieval and modern Greek, he states that dialects characterized by the deletion of unstressed high vowels and the raising of unstressed mid vowels 'are still spoken [...] throughout the mainland north of Attica'. He fails to mention the so-called 'semi-northern' dialects spoken in north-east Epirus and the island of Skyros and formerly in Saranda Ekklisies in Eastern Thrace (this last dialect did not die a natural death, but faded out after its speakers were removed westwards into the Greek state in the exchange of populations of 1923), which display high-vowel loss but not mid-vowel raising (e.g. they have [áfse] for /áfise/ where purely northern dialects have [áfsi]).

We should always be wary of supposing that the choice between alternative morphological forms is a matter of whim. With reference to the alternative third-person plural active verb forms (*-un* and *-usi*, *-an* and *-asi*), Horrocks suggests that in medieval and early modern times 'even a single speaker might well have used them fairly indiscriminately' (p. 248). Yet evidence from modern Cypriot and Cretan suggests that the choice between these alternatives may be conditioned by syntactic environment. Thus in Cypriot, *-usin/-asin* are used at the end of a clause, but are avoided in favour of *-un/-an* before clitic pronoun objects, while, conversely, in West Cretan (especially in Sphakia) *-usi/-asi* are normal when the clitic follows, but *-une/-ane* in other environments. (Incidentally, Horrocks claims without justification on p. 309 that the *Erotokritos* doesn't normally use the *-usi* ending.) As in the case of certain other features (e.g. the rules regarding the pre- or post-verbal position of the clitic pronoun), it is worth investigating whether in this respect medieval Greek might be similar to one or more of the modern dialects.

I would like to make some observations about Horrocks' references to Pontic, not only because I have worked on this dialect myself (it is still spoken in Pontus, despite Horrocks' implication on p. 64), but because of its importance for the history of Greek. I shall confine my remarks to a single page of Horrocks' book (p. 264), in which he analyses a passage from the Escorial version of *Digenes Akrites*. I offer this as an extreme example of the lack of attention to dialectal detail throughout the medieval and modern sections. First of all, Horrocks follows Probonas in associating certain features of the language of the Escorial Digenes with modern Pontic, whereas in reality these features are not to be found in that dialect. Horrocks points to the absence of synizesis in διὰ in the passage he quotes, yet Pontic resists synizesis only when the /i/ is stressed, whereas /ia/ with unstressed /i/ has a quite different outcome: thus Pontic has [peδía] for standard [peδjá], but [δevéno] for standard [δjavéno]. Again, if we take τον in νὰ πάρουν τον γαμπρόν τους as an object pronoun rather than an article (which I doubt), the impression of Pontic word-order (since nowhere outside Pontus can *na*+verb be followed by an object pronoun) is undermined by the fact that in modern Pontic the third-person clitic pronoun has preserved the ancient initial [a], which is so powerful as to cause the elision of the preceding verb ending /o/ (*epératon* 'I take him'), whereas the pronoun in the quoted passage (as throughout the Escorial Digenes) has lost its initial /a/, even after a consonant;

besides, nowhere else in the same text is *na*+verb followed by an object pronoun. Next, Horrocks claims that modern παίρνω is derived from ancient ὑπαίρω. Yet if this is so, how does he account for modern Pontic epéro? Lastly, he explains the [u] in ἄγουρος ('lad'; incidentally used in some varieties of Pontic today to mean simply 'man') as being due to 'possible Asiatic vowel weakening', whereas this form (meaning 'unripe') is normal in Standard Modern Greek, which offers many other examples of the raising of unstressed /o/ to [u] (κώνωψ → κουνούπι, κομβίον → κουμπί and the first-person plural ending -ουμε).

My final criticism concerns not Horrocks' linguistic analyses but one of his historical surveys. At the beginning of Chapter 13, on the Greek language during the Ottoman period, Horrocks falls for the Greek nationalist myth (and others besides) when he writes: 'the [Ecumenical] Patriarchate's policies were instrumental in the preservation of a sense of Greek identity in an era when the chief preoccupation of the Greek population was the struggle for survival. As a result, most ordinary Greeks were able to keep their faith and their language, drawing inspiration from their traditions, while looking forward to their liberation by a foreign power, as foretold in popular legend and folk song' (pp. 293-4). The first part of this quotation conjures up the image, popularized by Gyzis' famous late-nineteenth-century painting which has been reproduced in countless Greek schoolbooks, postage stamps and telephone cards, of the Greek priest clandestinely initiating his pupils into the 'Greek idea' in the 'secret school' amid the dark night of servitude under the Turkish yoke. However, a very large number of Greek-speaking converts to Islam not only continued speaking Greek but passed their language down from generation to generation, with the result that we find Moslem Cretans and Pontians in Turkey today who still speak Greek as their mother tongue. Secondly, the preservation of a 'Greek identity' (which in any case was a very different matter before the Greek War of Independence from what it developed into under the influence of the official culture and education of the Greek state) was rather the by-product than the aim of the Patriarchate's policies, which were largely dictated by the Ottoman *millet* system. The Ottoman authorities never tried to force their subjects to abandon their native language. Moreover, it was precisely the Ottoman division of their non-Moslem subjects into *millet* that resulted in the formation of the *millet-i Rum*, or Orthodox Christian community, presided over by the Patriarch of Constantinople, which could

eventually be transformed into the 'Greek nation'. Finally, of the very few folk songs that explicitly refer to the future liberation of the Greeks from the Turks, there is perhaps no more than one that refers to their liberation by a foreign power.

Despite these quibbles, I would like to end my review, as Horrocks ends his book, on an up-beat note. His range is huge, his material aptly chosen and his analyses ample, clear and to the point. And – what is remarkable for a such a lengthy study of Greek in our day – the book is almost completely free from typographical errors. Horrocks' final sentence expresses a sentiment that we should all share: 'the only fully standardized languages are dead ones, and ... experimentation, diversity and change are a cause for celebration rather than concern.'