

“Sie sprechen wie ein Buch”: G. N. Hatzidakis (1848-1941) and the defence of Greek diglossia*

Peter Mackridge
St Cross College, Oxford

The story of the Greek language controversy – like the history of the Greek language itself – has usually been told in a somewhat teleological fashion, tracing the course that it followed until it reached the present situation. When Greek diglossia was officially abolished in 1976, it was (in theory, at least) the demotic rather than the *katharevousa* version of Modern Greek that became the official language of the Greek state. For this reason, those who study the Greek language question tend to concentrate on the arguments of the demoticists, since these arguments have a double advantage: they seem eminently reasonable, and they seem to have won the day. What I aim to do in this article is to look back at the arguments of the principal proponent of the written language, commonly known as *katharevousa*, namely Georgios Hatzidakis (1848-1941). I aim to avoid a teleological approach and instead to place myself in Hatzidakis’s position, in an attempt to understand what it felt like at the time to be defending the diglossic status quo against the powerful attacks of those who promoted the exclusive use of demotic for all spoken and written purposes.

Before I go any further, I would like to clear up a potential confusion about the identity of demotic by quoting a recent

* An earlier, shorter, version of this article was given as a paper at the 140th anniversary conference of the Department of General Linguistics, St Petersburg State University, 19 March 2003.

statement by Anna Frangoudaki which in my view accurately presents the situation:

Although a large segment of the literature on the Greek sociolinguistic situation maintains the contrary, *Demotiki* [sic] is not a vernacular, or a dialect, or a variety. It is in fact a standard. It is the product of a process of codification and normalization of the spoken language, out of the varieties used by the educated in the urban centers. This process occurred approximately between the 1880s and 1930s.¹

I would add that when we say demotic is a standard, we imply that it is primarily a *written* language.

Katharevousa attempted, in its orthography, morphology and vocabulary, to resemble Ancient Greek as closely as possible, although in syntax it deviated significantly from the Classical language, while in semantics, style and turns of phrase it relied heavily on French and German models.² *Katharevousa* therefore ignored the phonological changes that had occurred in spoken Greek since antiquity, as well as most of the morphological developments and many of the lexical substitutions that had taken place during the same period.³

¹ Anna Frangoudaki, "Comment. Greek societal bilingualism of more than a century", *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 157 (2002) 102. This special issue, edited by Joshua A. Fishman, is entitled *Focus on Diglossia*; Frangoudaki's article is a comment on an article by Alan Hudson, "Outline of a theory of diglossia", published in the same issue.

² Hatzidakis quotes the German linguist Karl Foy as stating quite correctly that "η καθαρεύουσα αρχαίζει μεν ως προς τους τύπους, νεωτερίζει δε ως προς την έκφρασιν" (quoted in "Περί του γλωσσικού ζητήματος εν Ελλάδι", Part 1, reprinted in G. N. Hatzidakis, *Γλωσσολογικά μελέται* (Athens 1901), Vol. 1, p. 279). The four parts of Hatzidakis's article were originally published in the journal *Αθηνά*: 2 (1890) 169-235; 5 (1893) 1-65; 7 (1895) 145-282; 8 (1896) 147-75.

³ Whereas in reality the fundamental differences between *katharevousa* and the modern Greek dialects are phonological and morphological, Hatzidakis often confined his discussion to vocabulary: e.g. *La Question de la langue écrite néo-grecque* (Athens 1907), p. 119 (this work was originally published in German (*Die Sprachfrage in Griechenland*,

I don't think *katharevousa* could have survived as long as it did (i.e. until 1976) if it hadn't had such an eminent proponent as Hatzidakis. As the first – and in his time the only – Professor of Linguistics at Greece's sole institution of higher education, the University of Athens, Hatzidakis held a unique position of authority in linguistic matters.⁴ Then, as now, teaching appointments at the university were made directly by the Ministry of Education. For this reason, the pronouncements of university professors could be interpreted, and even intended,⁵ as representing the official views of the Greek state. But Hatzidakis didn't simply hold a powerful and prestigious office; he was also a first-rate linguist who was able to impose his views on the basis of a profound study of the medieval and modern phases of the Greek language.

Hatzidakis was one of the three great Greek scholars of the second half of the nineteenth century onwards who laid the foundations on which the modern Greek national identity has been constructed. First Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos, influenced by Vico and by various currents in German thought (which included Hamann and Herder), wrote the *History of the Greek Nation*, about which I shall say more later. Then Hatzidakis and his contemporary Nikolaos G. Politis (1852-1921) seemingly went on to share the task of transferring the ideas and method pioneered by Jacob Grimm to the Greek context, Hatzidakis following the scientific study of the historical development of language inaugurated by Grimm in his *Deutsche Grammatik* (1819-37), and Politis following Grimm's *Deutsche Mythologie* (1835) in studying what he claimed to be the survivals of ancient Greek mythology in modern Greek

Athens 1905) as another riposte to Karl Krumbacher: see notes 12 and 30 below).

⁴ The University of Athens was often known at the time as "the national university".

⁵ "Περί του γλωσσικού ζητήματος εν Ελλάδι", Part 3 (1895) = *Γλωσσολ. μελέται* 1, p. 503.

folklore.⁶ Hatzidakis placed the study of the historical development of Medieval and Modern Greek on a scientific basis; yet when it came to his polemical writings on the language question, which are the subject of this article, he often abandoned scientific method under the influence of ideological prejudice.

Hatzidakis was born in 1848 into a poor family in the tiny village of Myrthios near the south coast of western Crete, while the island was still part of the Ottoman Empire.⁷ Between them, his father and grandfather had fought in four rebellions by the Christian population of the island against the Ottoman administration. Georgios Hatzidakis came late and, it seems, by accident, to learning. He attended primary school in Crete, where he also assisted his father, who was a miller, by transporting grain up to the mill, on donkeys and mules, from caiques moored in Plakias harbour; he also acted as *καλονόρχης* to his father, who was *ψάλτης* in the village church, and in this capacity the boy came into close contact with ecclesiastical Greek.⁸ Hatzidakis's early life has many similarities with that of his contemporary Joseph Wright (1855-1930), the second holder of the Chair of Comparative Philology at Oxford (1901-1924). Wright too came from a very poor family; he worked as a "donkey-boy" at the age of six, became a "doffer" at a Yorkshire textile mill at the age of seven (changing bobbins on the spinning frame), never had any schooling, and

⁶ It is no coincidence that N. G. Politis's first book was entitled *Νεοελληνική μυθολογία* (Athens 1871).

⁷ Biographical details from Dikaios V. Vagiakakos, *Γεώργιος Ν. Χατζιδάκις (1848-1941). Βίος και έργον* (Athens: Academy of Athens 1977); and from R. M. Dawkins, "Myrthios to Sphakia" (unpublished travelogue), in f.Arch.Z.Dawk. 12 (12) in the Taylor Institution Library, Slavonic and Greek Section, University of Oxford.

⁸ R. M. Dawkins, who paid two visits on Hatzidakis's 100-year-old father Nikolaos in Myrthios in 1916 and 1917, describes the *καλονόρχης* as "the boy who chants as a sort of prompter about half a phrase ahead of the singer, to the great confusion of the listeners".

taught himself to read and write at the age of 15.⁹ Just as Wright produced the monumental *English dialect dictionary* (6 volumes, 1896-1905), so in 1908 Hatzidakis initiated the *Historical dictionary of the Modern Greek language* (compiled under the aegis of the Academy of Athens from 1927 onwards), which turned out to be predominantly a dialect dictionary too.¹⁰

Georgios Hatzidakis took part, alongside his father, in the long but ultimately unsuccessful Cretan revolt of 1866-8. It was towards the end of that revolt that he found himself by accident on board a ship bound for the Kingdom of Greece, where, aged 20, he enrolled in high school in Athens. He graduated from high school at the age of 24 in 1873 and took his first degree at the University of Athens. He then received a Greek state scholarship to study linguistics for four years in Germany, where he successively attended the universities of Leipzig, Jena and Berlin. In 1885 he was appointed to a position in Linguistics and Indian [i.e. Indo-European] Philology at the University of Athens, and in 1890 became "regular professor" in the same subjects. But even after this, during the last of the Cretan revolts in 1897, he returned to Crete as a revolutionary leader. He was totally committed to the cause of Greek nationalism, and his active participation in liberation struggles made it natural that, like his equally pugnacious and implacable opponent Yannis Psycharis, Hatzidakis should have wanted "glory and fisticuffs" (δόξα και γροθιές) in the scholarly arena as well as on the field of battle.¹¹

⁹ For this and other information about Wright I am indebted to Professor Anna Morpurgo Davies.

¹⁰ The first volume was published in 1933; the most recent volume (Vol. 5), reaching the word *δαχτυλωτός*, appeared in 1989.

¹¹ "Ἀνδρειωθείς εἰς ηρωϊκὸν περιβάλλον, μαχητὴς διὰ τὴν ελευθερίαν κατὰ τὴν νεότητά του ὡς ἐπιστήμων, κατορθώνων νὰ ἐπιβάλληται ἐναντὶ πεισμώνων καὶ πολλὰκις φανατικῶν ἀντιπάλων του, Ἑλλήνων καὶ ξένων, δι' ἀκαταμαχῆτων ὀπλῶν" (Vagiakakos, *op. cit.*, p. 106). The phrase "θέλω δόξα και γροθιές" is quoted from Psycharis, *Το ταξίδι μου* (Athens: Ermis 1971), p. 42 [1st ed. 1888].

Hatzidakis's arguments in favour of preserving the written language commonly known as *katharevousa* were firmly based on nationalist ideology. In brief, his chief arguments were (a) that the Greek written language in use in his time was the natural development of the written language used by the Greeks since Alexandrian times, and (b) that the written language was the only factor that united the Greeks in all the regions that they inhabited, both in the Kingdom of Greece and in the Ottoman Empire.¹² Basically, then, he implied that the most important link between individuals of the same nation is their sense of belonging to a common linguistic tradition, and he claimed that the written Greek language was a unifying force in both diachronic and synchronic terms.¹³ Any attempt to impose a spoken version of Greek as the written language would, in his view, have two catastrophic effects for the Greek nation: it would cut the modern Greeks off diachronically from their past, and it would split the Greek nation synchronically into regional groups characterized by distinct spoken dialects. Cutting the modern Greeks off linguistically from their past would sever their connections not only with Classical antiquity, but with the Holy Scriptures that underpinned the Greek Orthodox Church, and it was precisely the Church that, in his view, had earlier united the Greek people during the long centuries of foreign occupation.¹⁴ Nevertheless, whereas almost

¹² See, e.g., “Περὶ τοῦ γλωσσικοῦ ζητήματος ἐν Ἑλλάδι”, in: *Τὸ πρόβλημα τῆς νεωτέρας γραφομένης ἐλληνικῆς* ὑπὸ Κ. Κρὺμβacher καὶ Ἀπάντησις εἰς αὐτὸν ὑπὸ Γεωργίου Ν. Χατζιδάκι (Athens 1905), p. 819. This article, which was published as an appendix to Hatzidakis's response to Krumbacher (pp. 774-843: see note 30 below), was written for the *Revue des études grecques* in early 1902 in the wake of the Gospel Riots in Athens 1901 (before Krumbacher gave his lecture), but proved too long to be published in full in that journal.

¹³ “Περὶ τοῦ γλωσσικοῦ ζητήματος ἐν Ἑλλάδι”, Part 3 (1895) = *Γλωσσολ. μελέται* 1, p. 466.

¹⁴ In the Ottoman Empire the Patriarch of Constantinople was the religious leader of the *Millet-i Rum* (Orthodox Christian community). This has led Greek nationalist historians to claim that the Orthodox

all Greek Orthodox Christians during the Ottoman period were united in a single flock under the Patriarch of Constantinople, since the foundation of the Church of Greece in 1833 the Greek Orthodox Christians were divided into two separate flocks: the inhabitants of the Greek state were subject to the Church of Greece, while those of the Ottoman Empire (including, until 1913, Hatzidakis's native Crete) remained subject to the Patriarchate. This was why Hatzidakis saw the Greek language as the only factor uniting the Greeks of his time.

Before the mid-nineteenth century, Greek nationalists saw the middle ages as a dark period of their history. The rhetoric of the intellectual and political leaders of the Greek independence movement in 1821 implied that, at some unspecified time in the distant past, Greek culture had gone into hibernation, from which it was now reawakening. In the 1850s, however, partly perhaps under the influence of a growing rapprochement with Orthodox Russia and a disaffection with Protestant Britain and Catholic France, certain Greek intellectuals came to rehabilitate Byzantium and to see it as the missing link between ancient and modern Greece. In the monumental *History of the Greek Nation* by Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos (1860-74), which Paschalis Kitromilides has characterized as "the most important intellectual achievement of nineteenth-century Greece",¹⁵ Greek history and culture came to be presented as unitary and uninterrupted "from Agamemnon to George I", as Hatzidakis aptly expressed it.¹⁶ Paparrigopoulos argued that there had never been a break in historical and cultural continuity among the Greeks as there had been in the West, where the fall of Rome had made it necessary

Church kept alive the sense of Greek nationhood during the Ottoman period.

¹⁵ Paschalis M. Kitromilides, "On the intellectual content of Greek nationalism: Paparrigopoulos, Byzantium and the Great Idea", in David Ricks and Paul Magdalino (eds.), *Byzantium and the Modern Greek Identity* (Aldershot: Ashgate 1998), p. 28.

¹⁶ *Το πρόβλημα*, p. 699.

to create a Renaissance. The ideology of the continuity of Hellenic culture was especially desirable at a time when the geographical boundaries of the Greek state were so narrow that they excluded more than half of those people who could be classified as being ethnically and culturally Greek. Thus the idea of a diachronic unity both compensated for the lack of a synchronic unity and encouraged the desire and hope for the geographical unification of all the lands inhabited by Greeks, a unification analogous to those that were taking place at that time in Germany and Italy.¹⁷

¹⁷ Hatzidakis appeared to contradict himself when he claimed that during the period of Frankish rule “we forgot we were Greeks”, and that the oblivion of national unity and Orthodox Christianity went hand-in-hand with the use of local dialects in literature (*Το πρόβλημα*, p. 820); nevertheless, he may have believed that the Ottoman conquest of Greek lands from the Franks restored the authority and unity of the Orthodox Church, a view recently put forward by Molly Greene, *A shared world. Christians and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2000). Hatzidakis claimed in 1890 that the literary works of the Frankokratia were incomprehensible to the rest of the Greeks because they were written in their local dialect (“Περί του γλωσσικού ζητήματος εν Ελλάδι”, Part 1 = *Γλωσσολ. μελέται* 1, pp. 250-1) – a view refuted by, among others, George Seferis, who wrote about his childhood memories of hearing the 17th-century Cretan verse romance *Erotokritos* being sung by fishermen near Smyrna. Hatzidakis presented contradictory attitudes to the Renaissance literature of his native Crete; earlier in his career, at least, he wrote that he would have been happy if the language of Cretan Renaissance literature had prevailed as the national literary language: G. N. Hatzidakis, *Γλωσσικών αποπημάτων αναίρεσις* (Athens 1886), p. 78 (this volume consists of a collection of articles that Hatzidakis wrote as part of his long-running battle against Dimitrios Vernardakis, who was soon to be succeeded by Psycharis as Hatzidakis’s *bête noire*). See also *Μελέτη επί της νέας ελληνικής ή Βάσανος του ελέγχου του Ψευδαττικισμού* (Athens 1884), p. 82, where he states that the fall of Crete to the Turks was a tragedy for the Greek language, since the Cretans were developing a demotic suitable for their contemporary cultural needs: “Τω 1453 επεσφραγίσθη η πολιτική, τω δε 1669 η γλωσσική ως ειπείν δουλεία του έθνους.”

Hatzidakis's view of the Greek language could be seen as the linguistic counterpart of Paparrigopoulos's historical view.¹⁸ Whereas earlier scholars, such as Korais, had simply compared Modern with Ancient Greek, Hatzidakis studied Medieval Greek as the missing link between the two. Concentrating on the history of Greek language and culture since Classical antiquity, Hatzidakis argued that there had never been a Dark Age in Greek medieval history, since the Greeks had never ceased to look to the ancient Greek language as the model and benchmark for their own written expression. The West abandoned Latin after the Dark Ages, when each nation was emerging from a period of barbarism and ignorance during which, on the level of oral expression, Latin had split into the various distinct Romance languages; each nation then set about cultivating, enriching and standardizing its own spoken language in order to produce a variety suitable for written purposes. Hatzidakis argued that Greek had never split into distinct spoken languages in this way, that Ancient Greek, as I said, always continued to be the ultimate model for writing, and that, through their constant exposure to the language of the church, even uneducated people could understand the written language without difficulty.¹⁹ (Here we recall Hatzidakis's childhood experiences as assistant cantor in his village church.)

Hatzidakis's fondness for making comparisons between the Greek situation and that of western nations sometimes led him to make contradictory statements. He wrote that, when he was a student in Germany, people used to tell him: "Sie sprechen wie ein Buch".²⁰ He saw this as an indication that in every civilized nation one variety of the language is used by the

¹⁸ Simos Menardos said as much at the event held at the Academy of Athens in 1929 to mark Hatzidakis's 80th birthday: "Ο Γεώργιος Χατζιδάκις είναι κάτι περισσότερο ή Κωνσταντίνος Παπαρρηγόπουλος της γλώσσης" (quoted by Vagiakakos, *op. cit.*, p. 128).

¹⁹ "Περί του γλωσσικού ζητήματος εν Ελλάδι", Part 1 (1890) = *Γλωσσολ. μελέται* 1, p. 249.

²⁰ "Περί του γλωσσικού ζητήματος εν Ελλάδι", Part 3 (1895) = *Γλωσσολ. μελέται* 1, p. 489.

uneducated in their speech, and another is used for writing (according to this view, educated speech consists of a mixture of features from both varieties). Indeed, Hatzidakis argued that the possession of a *single* language variety (what he called “το μονόγλωσσον”) was the “unenviable privilege” of barbarian peoples or newly emerging nations.²¹ (By a single language variety he meant spoken language only²² – what might be called monoglossia as opposed to diglossia.) On the other hand, he sometimes claimed that the linguistic situation in Greece was unique, indeed, that the modern Greeks were superior to the French, the English and the Germans precisely because they possessed two different forms of their language.²³

While Hatzidakis contributed more than any other linguist to the study of the historical development of spoken Greek in medieval and modern times, he was equally contradictory when it came to his approach to the question whether or not there was a common spoken language in his day. He often argued that there was no common spoken Greek,²⁴ and that the spoken language was split into dialects. Furthermore, he argued that in cultures and periods where a common spoken language has appeared, it evolved not by amalgamating the common features of two or more dialects, but as a result of the dominance of a single dialect which, through its cultivation in classic works of literature, eventually supplanted the other dialects.²⁵ If a body of great literature had been produced after the ancient period in any Greek dialect and had imposed itself on the whole nation, then that dialect might have become the national written language, and the Greeks might have achieved what he once called “the desired linguistic unity” (a contradiction with his

²¹ *Το πρόβλημα*, p. 809.

²² “Περί του σκοπού και της μεθόδου της περι την Μέσην και Νέαν Ελληνικήν ερεύνης”, *Μεσαιωνικά και Νέα Ελληνικά*, Vol. 1 (Athens 1905), p. 362 (article first published 1892).

²³ *Το πρόβλημα*, p. 829.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 792.

²⁵ “Περί του γλωσσικού ζητήματος εν Ελλάδι”, Part 3 (1895) = *Γλωσσολ. μελέται* 1, p. 501.

denigration of “το μονόγλωσσον”).²⁶ But, Hatzidakis argued, this had not happened. Up to his time, the single body of literature that had imposed itself on the whole of the Greek nation was the literature of antiquity.²⁷

In the very early years of his career, Hatzidakis was a linguistic conservative; at that stage, he needed to do no more than encourage the preservation of the diglossic status quo. From the late 1880s, however, he became a linguistic reactionary, for it was then that concerted efforts began to be made to oust *katharevousa* and replace it in written use by a version of the spoken language (commonly known as demotic).²⁸ There were three chief periods during which Hatzidakis devoted himself to attempting to demolish the arguments of the so-called demoticists. The first of these, which lasted from 1887 to 1896, centred around the extreme demoticist theory and practice of the Paris-based linguist Yannis Psycharis. The second came in 1902-1908, in the wake of the political crises brought on by riots in the streets of Athens, which were provoked by the publication of a trans-

²⁶ “Περὶ του γλωσσικού ζητήματος εν Ελλάδι”, Part 2 (1893) = *Γλωσσολ. μελέται* 1, pp. 358-9; cf. “Περὶ του γλωσσικού ζητήματος εν Ελλάδι”, Part 3 (1895) = *Γλωσσολ. μελέται* 1, pp. 453-4. Contrary to Hatzidakis, Achillefs Tzartanos maintained that “η κοινή ομιλουμένη νέα Ελληνική, η γλώσσα των Αθηνών” derives partly from “μία ανάμειξι των ιδιωμάτων των διαφόρων Ελλήνων”, but chiefly from “τη λόγια παράδοσι, ήτοι απ’ τη γλώσσα των σχολείων εν γένει, απ’ τη γλώσσα της εκκλησίας, του τύπου, της διοικήσεως κλπ.” (A. Tzartanos, *Το γλωσσικό μας πρόβλημα. Πώς εμφανίζεται τώρα και ποια είναι η ορθή λύσις του* (Athens: Kollaros 1934), pp. 22-3). Anna Frangoudaki (*Η γλώσσα και το έθνος 1880-1980. Εκατό χρόνια αγώνες για την αυθεντική ελληνική γλώσσα* (Athens: Alexandraia 2002), p. 70), quoting selectively from the same pages, omits Tzartanos’s reference to “the learned tradition”.

²⁷ In fact, Hatzidakis displayed very little interest in literature – a poor qualification for a linguist, in my view!

²⁸ Manolis Triantafyllidis wrote of Hatzidakis that “η θέση του πάντα ρυθμίζονταν από τον αντίπαλο”: see M. Triantafyllidis, *Από τη γλωσσική μας ιστορία. Βερναρδάκης – Κόντος – Χατζιδάκης* (Athens: Sergiadis 1935), p. 29; article reprinted from *Τα Νέα Γράμματα* 1 (1935).

lation of the Gospels into demotic and the performance of ancient Greek tragedies in a mixture of *katharevousa* and demotic.²⁹ These events had brought Greece and the Greek language controversy to the attention of the world media. Hatzidakis's major intervention this time was sparked off by a lecture in which Karl Krumbacher, Professor of Byzantine Literature at the University of Munich, ridiculed the Greeks for their use of *katharevousa* and encouraged the use of demotic for written purposes.³⁰ The third phase was Hatzidakis's reaction to the Liberal government's educational reforms of 1917, which introduced demotic as the sole language of textbooks and instruction in the first four grades of primary school. In what follows, I will concentrate on the first of these three phases, then add a few observations on the last phase.

Hatzidakis consistently argued that spoken Modern Greek could not be used for written purposes until it had been adequately studied, and that *katharevousa* could not be abandoned unless and until a rival variety of written Greek had imposed itself by means of a respected body of literary texts. Psycharis broke out of the vicious circle implied in Hatzidakis's views by presenting his argument for demotic in the form of a large-scale literary work written in the version of the language that he was promoting. It was easy to find arguments against the language of Psycharis's demoticist manifesto *To ταξίδι μου* (1888). It is clear that Psycharis, who had never lived in

²⁹ For details of the Gospel Riots see Philip Carabott, "Politics, Orthodoxy and the Language Question in Greece: the Gospel Riots of November 1901", *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 3.1 (1993) 117-38. The actual linguistic form taken by Georgios Sotiriadis's translation of the *Oresteia* is uncertain. No modern scholar appears to have seen the text, which has never been published. If the text still exists in manuscript form, it should definitely be reassessed.

³⁰ Krumbacher delivered his lecture on 15 November 1902 and published it as *Das Problem der neugriechischen Schriftsprache* (Munich 1903). The volume that Hatzidakis published in response (see note 12 above) consists of miscellaneous material, including his Greek translation of Krumbacher's book (pp. 2-182) and his own riposte (pp. 301-773).

Greece, had distilled his version of “pure” demotic in a linguistic laboratory, and the German-orientated Hatzidakis was able to argue that Psycharis’s language was just another Paris fashion.³¹ There is no doubt that it was an artificial language, based as it was on Psycharis’s scholarly study of the development of Greek phonology and morphology in medieval and modern times. Psycharis, who had studied under French linguists such as Michel Bréal, Arsène Darmesteter, Louis Havet and Gaston Paris,³² detected systematic trends in the historical development of the Greek spoken language, and he realized correctly that underlying the superficially divergent modern Greek dialects there was a uniform phonological system.³³ The language in which he wrote his book was based on the common phonological and morphological features of the modern dialects and was purged as far as possible of all ancient features that

³¹ *La Question*, p. 92. As is to be expected from the fact that Hatzidakis was spurred into action by the writings of a foreign scholar, namely Krumbacher, the arguments he put forward during his second period were often aimed at an international audience.

³² Irene Philippaki-Warburton, “Ο Ψυχάρης ως γλωσσολόγος”, *Μαντατοφόρος* 28 (December 1988) 34-9. It is not without political significance that Psycharis was orientated towards France (and that the demoticists tended later to align themselves with Venizelos), while Hatzidakis was orientated towards Germany. In 1914, Hatzidakis became one of the founders of the Ελληνογερμανικός Σύνδεσμος (Vagiakakos, op. cit., pp. 11, 14), a fact that places him firmly in the pro-Constantine camp. His connections with the Greek royal family date back to at least 1901, when he dedicated one of his books to Prince George, then governor of Crete. Nevertheless, it was during Venizelos’s premiership in 1914 that a Royal Decree set up the *Historical dictionary* as a “public service”, and, at least after 1922, Hatzidakis was on good terms with his fellow-Cretan Venizelos, as is shown by their amicable correspondence (see Vagiakakos, op. cit., 94-8) and by the fact that Venizelos himself addressed the special meeting of the Academy of Athens convened in 1929 to honour Hatzidakis on his 80th birthday (cf. note 18 above).

³³ The first systematic study that made clear the phonological rules underlying the Modern Greek dialects was Brian Newton’s *The generative interpretation of dialect. A study of Modern Greek phonology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1972). This “Newtonian” study remains the greatest contribution to the understanding of the Modern Greek dialects ever published.

were not to be found in the dialects. Ironically, however, while those commentators who are sympathetic to demotic have traditionally branded Hatzidakis and his allies as “purists”, Psycharis, with his aversion to linguistic compromise, was actually more of a purist than Hatzidakis.

Hatzidakis characteristically accused Psycharis not only of denying his fatherland,³⁴ but of spreading heresy,³⁵ the implication being that *katharevousa* was the linguistic orthodoxy. Hatzidakis’s chief arguments against Psycharis’s version of demotic, apart from the charge that it had never been spoken in any Greek *demos*, was that the language question was not primarily a linguistic matter but a cultural and historical one. Hatzidakis argued that Psycharis’s linguistic views were based on the erroneous belief that language is a natural phenomenon and that therefore its study is a natural science.³⁶ Psycharis seemed to believe that phonetic laws, like the laws of physics, do not admit exceptions. Against this, Hatzidakis (quoting authorities such as William Dwight Whitney, Hermann Paul, Berthold Delbrück, Karl Brugmann³⁷ and others) argued that a nation’s language is formed by that nation’s historical experiences, and that therefore the study of language is a historical and social science. In this respect Hatzidakis’s views accord with modern linguistics; paradoxically for a linguistic conservative or reactionary, his ideas on language were in this sense more modern than those of Psycharis.

According to Hatzidakis, the Greek written language had developed over the millennia and was inherited by the modern

³⁴ “Αρνησίπατρις”: *Το πρόβλημα*, p. 822.

³⁵ *La Question*, pp. 46-7.

³⁶ E.g. “Περί του γλωσσικού ζητήματος εν Ελλάδι”, Part 1 (1890) = *Γλωσσολ. μελέται* 1, pp. 236-7. Another factor that caused Hatzidakis to argue that linguistics was a human rather than a natural science was the presence of the “ψυχικόν στοιχείον” and “ψυχικός παράγον” (“Περί του γλωσσικού ζητήματος εν Ελλάδι”, Part 3 (1895) = *Γλωσσολ. μελέται* 1, pp. 388, 415).

³⁷ Joseph Wright also worked with Brugmann in Leipzig from 1885 to 1887.

Greeks when they set up their independent nation state in the 1820s. The mixture of ancient and modern features that came to be known as *katharevousa* was a “historical necessity”, since the fathers of the independent Greek state could not do otherwise than adopt the already available written language that had been handed down to them over the generations and adapt it to suit the requirements of modern civilization; Hatzidakis argued that one cannot go against “the commands of history”,³⁸ and admitted that one had to live with the situation one had inherited: “We are all slaves to habit!”³⁹ (this could be called the “argument from inertia”). Furthermore, he wrote, the Greeks had awoken from the torpor of servitude by fixing their gaze on their glorious ancient past, which enabled them to orientate themselves as if it were the pole star.⁴⁰ Ancient Greek language and literature, he argued, had been and continued to be the later Greeks’ sole source of enlightenment. He claimed that modern written Greek had the additional advantage that it was comprehensible to those non-Greeks who had learned the basics of the ancient language, and he once wrote the following:

We have easily developed a language that is widely known and useful for culture, [whereas] the Academicians of St Petersburg published the great Indian [i.e. Sanskrit] lexicon in German and compose most of their work in German or French or Latin, because if they were published in Russian, very few people would read them and Russian scholarship would make an insignificant contribution to culture.⁴¹

³⁸ “Περὶ τοῦ γλωσσικοῦ ζητήματος ἐν Ἑλλάδι”, Part 1 (1890) = *Γλωσσολ. μελέται* 1, p. 293; cf. *ibid.* pp. 455, 470. Krumbacher, *To πρόβλημα*, pp. 96-8, accused Hatzidakis of presenting his explanation of Greek diglossia as a justification for it.

³⁹ “Περὶ τοῦ γλωσσικοῦ ζητήματος ἐν Ἑλλάδι”, Part 1 (1890) = *Γλωσσολ. μελέται* 1, pp. 301-3.

⁴⁰ *To πρόβλημα*, p. 819; also “Περὶ τοῦ γλωσσικοῦ ζητήματος ἐν Ἑλλάδι”, Part 1 (1890) = *Γλωσσολ. μελέται* 1, p. 260.

⁴¹ “Περὶ τοῦ γλωσσικοῦ ζητήματος ἐν Ἑλλάδι”, Part 1 (1890) = *Γλωσσολ. μελέται* 1, p. 283. In this quotation he is referring to O. Böhtlingk and R. Roth, *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch*. Hrsg. von der Kaiser-

As far as vocabulary was concerned, Hatzidakis argued that if one used Ancient Greek words, the reader could ascertain their meanings by looking them up in a dictionary, whereas spoken words were semantically fluid.⁴² For him, the form and meaning of a word were defined and dictated not as a result of negotiation among speakers within the contemporary community, but by its etymology and its semantic history, that is, by the external authority of textual tradition. As for the foreign words used in spoken Greek, Hatzidakis argued that they are “like wedges driven into the body of the language, and they remind us [the Greeks] of the miserable days of our homeland”.⁴³

In 1917 Venizelos’s Liberal government introduced educational reforms that included the imposition of demotic as the sole language of instruction and study in the first four grades of primary school. Hatzidakis, who by this time was nearing the age of seventy, failed to notice the considerable differences between the “demotic” of the 1917 reformists and that of Psycharis, including their significant concessions to *katharevousa* and the greatly reduced distance between their language and ordinary Athenian speech.

In his attacks on these reforms, Hatzidakis contradicted what he had written elsewhere by acknowledging that there was indeed a “common spoken language” and that this was close to the written language.⁴⁴ He alleged, with some reason, that this “common spoken language” was different from the so-called

lichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 7 vols., St Petersburg 1852-1875. (I am grateful to Professor Yuri Kleiner for this reference.) Hatzidakis’s point is rather weakened by the fact the authors of the Sanskrit dictionary were obviously both of German origin.

⁴² *Μελέτη*, p. 87. I am grateful to Dr Io Manolessou for having traced this reference, which I had mislaid.

⁴³ *Το πρόβλημα*, p. 778; see also “Περὶ τοῦ γλωσσικοῦ ζητήματος ἐν Ἑλλάδι”, Part 2 (1893) = *Γλωσσολ. μελέται* 1, p. 359.

⁴⁴ E.g. “Περὶ τοῦ γλωσσικοῦ ζητήματος ἐν Ἑλλάδι”, Part 2 (1893) = *Γλωσσολ. μελέται* 1, p. 346 (contrast with Germany, where there is no common spoken language); “Περὶ τοῦ γλωσσικοῦ ζητήματος ἐν Ἑλλάδι”, Part 3 (1895) = *Γλωσσολ. μελέται* 1, p. 508n.

“demotic” of the new schoolbooks, which was based on the rural language of the Greek folksongs,⁴⁵ a language that was more or less unaffected by the learned written tradition but had little relevance to modern culture. He argued that there was no unified demotic language,⁴⁶ no “homogeneous popular spoken language”.⁴⁷ On the contrary, he favoured the urban language spoken in polite society – what he called “the language of the salons”⁴⁸ (it is interesting that this erstwhile villager had become the spokesman of an urban elite); this “langue des salons” was not the continuation of the popular “μητρο-δίδακτος παράδοσις” (“mother-taught tradition”) but rather a mixture of this tradition with the learned tradition of the Church, the school, the press, the administration and books; he characterized this learned written tradition as “πατροπαράδοτος” (“handed down by the father”).⁴⁹ Here we observe a

⁴⁵ *Γεννηθήτω φως. Ο μαλλιαρισμός εις τα δημοτικά σχολεία* (Athens 1920), p. 4; cf. “Περί του γλωσσικού ζητήματος εν Ελλάδι”, Part 2 (1893) = *Γλωσσολ. μελέται* 1, pp. 347-8, where he claims that the urban spoken language is not the language of the folk songs but a mixture of *katharevousa* and demotic features.

⁴⁶ *Γεννηθήτω φως*, p. 32.

⁴⁷ *Γλωσσολογικάί έρευναι*, Vol. 2 (Athens 1977), p. 363. This particular article first appeared as a slim volume entitled *Διατί είμαι μεν δημοτικιστής αλλά δεν γράφω την δημοτικήν* (Thessaloniki 1926). This interesting late contribution by Hatzidakis to the language controversy was written immediately after the inauguration of the University of Thessaloniki, where he was elected as the first Rector and Professor of Linguistics, but where some of his fellow-academics used and promoted the demotic in their teaching and writing; these included Manolis Triantafyllidis, also appointed as a professor of Linguistics, who had been one of the superintendents of primary education in the Ministry of Education who had planned and implemented the education reforms of 1917.

⁴⁸ “Η γλώσσα των αιθουσών” (“Περί του γλωσσικού ζητήματος εν Ελλάδι”, Part 2 (1893) = *Γλωσσολ. μελέται* 1, p. 346), “η γλώσσα των συναναστροφών” (e.g. “Περί του γλωσσικού ζητήματος εν Ελλάδι”, Part 4 (1896) = *Γλωσσολ. μελέται* 1, pp. 510-11; *Το πρόβλημα*, p. 808).

⁴⁹ *Γεννηθήτω φως*, pp. 4, 10; for mixture see also “Περί του γλωσσικού ζητήματος εν Ελλάδι”, Part 1 (1890) = *Γλωσσολ. μελέται* 1, pp. 282-3, 285, 290, 293.

very telling, though perhaps not altogether conscious, distinction between the “maternal” popular language and the “paternal” learned one, with each individual Greek learning his/her language from both sides. We can infer from this distinction that in Hatzidakis’s patriarchal and essentialist view the “maternal” language is appropriate for expressing emotions and simple everyday concepts, while the “paternal” language is suitable for the expression of sophisticated abstract concepts. Hatzidakis denounced so-called educational demoticism as what we today would call social engineering. His arguments were given greater weight by the fact that the Venizelos government that introduced the 1917 reforms was of doubtful constitutional legality, and Hatzidakis alleged that the superintendents of primary education had imposed their reforms by “autocratic” and “terrorist” means.⁵⁰ Furthermore, the outbreak of the Bolshevik revolution in the year that the Greek linguistic reforms were introduced enabled him to allege that the community formed by the fictional schoolchildren of the novel *Τα ψηλά βουνά* by Zacharias Papantoniou, which constituted one of the school readers, was a “soviet”.⁵¹ It is not surprising that the linguistic reforms in education were overturned when the Liberal Party lost the 1920 general elections.

Greek is an important case for sociolinguistics, because those of us who are more than forty years old have been able to observe, in our own lifetime, the change from a diglossic to a monoglossic situation. Despite the fact that with hindsight Hatzidakis appears now to have been fighting a losing battle, in three important respects his views have been borne out. In so far as there has been a victory of demotic, this has come about

⁵⁰ By using the term *τρομοκρατία* (“terrorism”: *Γεννηθήτω φως*, p. 56), Hatzidakis was perhaps intending his readers to think not only of the Bolsheviks but of the Bulgarian *komitadjis* who, during the Macedonian Struggle of 1904-8, had “terrorized” the Orthodox Christian population of Ottoman Macedonia in an attempt to force them into declaring themselves Bulgarians, with the intended result that this territory would eventually be annexed by Bulgaria rather than Greece.

⁵¹ *Γεννηθήτω φως*, p. 51.

chiefly through the combined effort of four groups of people: literary writers, grammarians, educational demoticists (who included child psychologists) and politicians. Greeks have become accustomed to written demotic (a) through literature, especially since the 1880s; (b) through the use of demotic as the object of language study and the medium of instruction in the first grades of primary school since 1917; and (c) through the grammar of Triandafyllidis (1941). Subsequently, the over-use (and indeed misuse) of *katharevousa* by the Colonels' dictatorship of 1967-74 led to a popular revulsion against it, and when the Colonels fell the Greek nation almost unanimously rejected it. But much of the credit for the abolition of *katharevousa* is due to literary writers, particularly those of the so-called Generation of 1930 such as the Nobel-prize-winning poets Seferis and Elytis, who indeed produced a respected body of literature in demotic that has "imposed itself on the whole nation". Secondly, Hatzidakis promoted the gradual progress of the spoken language towards the written, and indeed the actual language written and spoken by educated Greeks today is not the pure version promoted by the demoticists, but consists of a mixture of popular and learned lexical and grammatical features. Lastly, Hatzidakis's belief that Ancient and Modern Greek are essentially the same language – and that to view Ancient and Modern Greek as two distinct languages is tantamount to claiming that the ancient and modern Greeks are distinct peoples – is still passionately held by many Greeks today.