

CHAPTER 1

Language in ancient Europe: an introduction

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The *Sanscrit* language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the *Greek*, more copious than the *Latin*, and more exquisitely refined than either, yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and in the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong, indeed, that no philologist could examine them all three, without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which, perhaps, no longer exists: there is a similar reason, though not quite so forcible, for supposing that both the *Gothik* and the *Celtick*, though blended with a very different idiom, had the same origin with the *Sanscrit*; and the old *Persian* might be added to the same family.

Asiatick Researches 1:442–443

In recent years, these words of an English jurist, Sir William Jones, have been frequently quoted (at times in truncated form) in works dealing with Indo-European linguistic origins. And appropriately so. They are words of historic proportion, spoken in Calcutta, 2 February 1786, at a meeting of the Asiatick Society, an organization that Jones had founded soon after his arrival in India in 1783 (on Jones, see, *inter alia*, Edgerton 1967). If Jones was not the first scholar to recognize the genetic relatedness of languages (see, *inter alia*, the discussion in Mallory 1989:9–11) and if history has treated Jones with greater kindness than other pioneers of comparative linguistic investigation, the foundational remarks were *his* that produced sufficient awareness, garnered sufficient attention – sustained or recollected – to mark an identifiable beginning of the study of comparative linguistics and the study of that great language family of which Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Gothic, Celtic, and Old Persian are members – and are but a few of its members.

All of the chapters that follow are devoted to languages belonging to the Indo-European language family – with one exception: Etruscan. This is not by editorial design, but by historical accident. Many of these are languages whose speakers clustered at points along the northern rim of the central Mediterranean basin. Over half are languages spoken wholly or partially within the space of the Italian Peninsula.

There were languages spoken in Europe prior to the expansion of the Indo-European peoples across the European continent – an event that unfolded over a period of millennia, likely having its inception in about the middle of the fifth millennium BC. For the most part, evidence of those “Old European” languages survives only as shadows cast across the grammars and lexica of the Indo-European languages: they were simply spoken too early in Europe’s history to have had the opportunity to achieve a written form that would survive in the historical record.

The earliest documented Indo-European languages of Europe were those that had the good fortune to be spoken in a time after the advent of writing systems suitable for their recording and in places in which those writing systems were created – or to which their

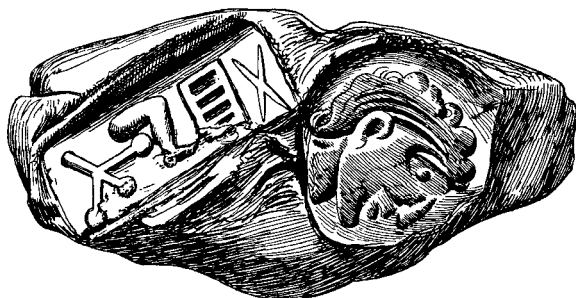


Figure 1.1 Cretan hieroglyphic inscription and portrait stamped on a sealing

use expanded – and to be written on materials that escaped decay within the natural environment in which they were produced and deposited. For most – though not all – of the Indo-European languages of Europe, a single writing system provided the key – directly or indirectly, immediately or through some evolutionary chain – to epigraphic survival. That writing system was not, however, the “Indo-Europeans’ gift to Europe.” It was, on the contrary, the adaptation by one particular Indo-European people of a pre-existing writing system of southwest Asia, whose roots can be traced now with some certainty to Egypt (see the Introduction to the companion volume entitled *The Ancient Languages of Syria-Palestine and Arabia*). That writing system was, of course, the Greek alphabet (see Ch. 2, §2).

And what of the residue – i.e. those languages of ancient Europe that have been preserved using something other than alphabetic writing? The Greeks – the very designers of the “alphabet” – had prior to the time of its creation, during the Mycenaean era, recorded their language on clay tablets using the *syllabic* script that Sir Arthur Evans, the distinguished British archeologist (1851–1941), dubbed *Linear B*; and among the Greeks of Cyprus, a related script – the *Cypriot syllabary* – remained in use long after the creation of the alphabet. Aside from these varieties of Greek, the languages of Europe that were written with a non-alphabetic script are at the present time poorly understood – if at all. The inverse corollary holds only in part, for some of the ancient languages of Europe, though indeed written in a script based upon the Greek alphabet – sometimes only slightly modified – remain undeciphered.

The Linear B syllabary of the Mycenaean Greeks was almost certainly based on the Cretan script that Evans called *Linear A* (see more on this below) – a still undeciphered writing system. In fact, three different undeciphered scripts have survived in the remains of the pre-Greek, Minoan civilization (as also named by Evans) of ancient Crete. The oldest of these is called *Cretan Hieroglyphic* or *Cretan Pictographic* (see Fig. 1.1) and its use is dated to the period 2000–1600 BC, seal stones providing the bulk of examples. The pictographic symbols making up the script probably have a syllabic value.

The second of the undeciphered Cretan scripts is known from only a single document, the *Phaistos Disk* (dated to about 1700 BC; see Fig. 1.2). The disk has been the object of repeated attempts at decipherment since its discovery in the early twentieth century. While success has often been claimed, none of the proposed decipherments carries conviction.

Linear A, the third of the Minoan scripts, is the best represented of the three. Dating from about the mid nineteenth to mid fifteenth centuries BC, Linear A documents partially overlap chronologically with those written in Cretan Hieroglyphic, though in terms of historical development, the former may trace its origins to the latter. Linear A, in turn,



Figure 1.2 The Phaistos Disk (side A)

appears to be the source of the Mycenaean Greek script, Linear B (see Ch. 3, §§1.1; 1.2; 2.1), though a simple direct linear descent is not probable. Of the three Minoan scripts, Linear A holds the greatest hope for decipherment. Recent work by Brown (1990) and Finkelberg (1990–1991) has taken up a notion proposed by Palmer in the middle of the twentieth century (e.g., Palmer 1968) which would identify the Linear A language as a member of the Anatolian subfamily of Indo-European. On the Cretan scripts see, *inter alia*, Chadwick 1990; Palaima 1988; Woodard 1997.

Mention should also be made of the undeciphered language called *Eteo-Cretan*. Much later than the three Bronze Age Minoan scripts, Eteo-Cretan is preserved in inscriptions written in the Greek alphabet. On Eteo-Cretan, see Duhoux 1982.

Prior to the emergence of Greek writing on Cyprus, attested by about the middle of the eleventh century BC (and the somewhat later appearance of Phoenician; see WAL Ch. 11, §1.2; Ch. 2, §2), the island was inhabited by a people, or by groups of people, who were recording their speech in the undeciphered set of scripts called *Cypro-Minoan* (see Table 1.1). As the name suggests, these Cypriot writing systems appear to have their origin in a writing system of Minoan Crete, Linear A being the likely candidate. *Archaic Cypro-Minoan* is the name given to the script found on only a single inscription, dated to about 1500 BC. This script has been analyzed as the likely ancestor of the more widely attested *Cypro-Minoan 1*, found in use between approximately the late sixteenth and twelfth centuries BC. A distinct script, *Cypro-Minoan 2*, has been found on thirteenth-century documents from the site of Enkomi. Yet a third, *Cypro-Minoan 3*, dating also to the thirteenth century BC, has turned up not on Cyprus but in the remains of the ancient Syrian city of Ugarit (see WAL Ch. 9, §1; on the Cypro-Minoan scripts, see especially E. Masson 1974, 1977; Palaima 1989). Cypro-Minoan remains undeciphered.

Table 1.1 A partial inventory of Cypro-Minoan characters					
Ɑ	Ɱ	Ɐ	Ɒ	ⱱ	Ⱳ
ⱳ	ⱴ	Ⱶ	ⱶ	ⱷ	ⱸ
ⱹ	ⱺ	ⱻ	ⱼ	ⱽ	
Ȿ	Ɀ	Ⳁ	ⳁ	Ⳃ	
ⳃ	Ⳅ	ⳅ	Ⳇ	ⳇ	
Ⳉ	ⳉ	Ⳋ	ⳋ	Ⳍ	
ⳍ	Ⳏ	ⳏ	Ⳑ	ⳑ	
Ⳓ	ⳓ	Ⳕ	ⳕ	Ⳗ	
ⳗ	Ⳙ	ⳙ	Ⳛ	ⳛ	

Cypro-Minoan 1 appears to have provided the graphic model for the Greek syllabary of Cyprus (see Ch. 3, §2.2). This Greek syllabic script was in turn not only used for writing Greek but also adopted for some other language of Cyprus, as yet undeciphered, dubbed *Eteo-Cypriot*. The Eteo-Cypriot inscriptions are commonly regarded as the documentary remains of an indigenous people of Cyprus who had withstood assimilation to the communities of Greek and Phoenician settlers. After Greek and Phoenician settlement of Cyprus, Eteo-Cypriots appear to have concentrated particularly in the area of Amathus (on the Eteo-Cypriot inscriptions, see O. Masson 1983:85–87).

From Portugal and Spain come ancient inscriptions recorded in those scripts called *Iberian*, broadly divided into two groups, Northeast and South Iberian. The latter group includes the variety of the script called *Turdetan*, after the ancient Turdetanians, of whom the Greek geographer Strabo wrote: “These are counted the wisest people among the Iberians; they write with an alphabet and possess prose works and poetry of ancient heritage, and laws composed in meter, six thousand years old, so they say” (*Geography* 3.1.6). One form of the Northeast Iberian writing system was adopted by speakers of Celtic for recording their own language (*Hispano-Celtic* or *Celtiberian*; see Ch. 8, especially §2.1), and these Celtic documents are interpretable (for the language, see Ch. 8, especially §§3.1; 3.4; 4.2.1.1; 4.3.6; 5.1). However, the Iberian scripts were used principally for a language or languages which are not understood, in spite of the fact that there also occur Iberian-language (*Old Hispanic*) inscriptions written with the Greek and Roman alphabets, and even bilingual texts. On the Iberian scripts and language(s) see, *inter alia*, Untermann 1975, 1980, 1990, 1997; Swiggers 1996; Diringer 1968:193–195.

While the South Picene language of eastern coastal Italy appears to be demonstrably Indo-European (belonging to the Sabellian branch of Italic; see Ch. 5), the genetic affiliation of its meagerly attested northern neighbor, North Picene, remains uncertain (though the two were formerly lumped together under the name *East Italic* or *Old Sabellian*). Though completely readable (being written in an Etruscan-based alphabet), North Picene remains largely impenetrable, in spite of the fact that a Latin – North Picene bilingual exists (a brief inscription, the identity of the non-Latin portion of which has been disputed). For an examination toward a tentative translation of the long North Picene inscription, the *Novilara Stele*, see Poultney 1979 (providing a summary of earlier attempts at interpretation).

The documentation of Insular Celtic – the Celtic languages of Ireland and Britain – (as opposed to Continental Celtic; see Ch. 8) which has survived from antiquity is very meager indeed, and is limited to Irish. The script used in recording this early Irish is the unusual alphabetic system called Ogham (see Table 1.2); most of its characters consist of slashing

Table 1.2 Irish Ogham (Craobh-Ruadh); font courtesy of Michael Everson					
Symbol	Transcription	Name	Symbol	Transcription	Name
┐	b	beithe	└	h	úath
┑	l	luis	┘	d	dair
┒	f	fern	┙	t	tinne
┓	s	sail	┚	c	coll
└┐	n	nin	┘┙	q	ceirt
┐┑	m	muin	┘┐	a	ailm
┑┒	g	gort	┐┙	o	onn
┒┓	ng	gétal	┙┐	u	úr
┓└	z	straif	┙┘	e	edad
└┑	r	ruis	┘┙	i	idad
┐┘	ea	ébad	┘┐	oi	ór
┑┙	ia	iphín	┐┙	ui	uilen
┓└┐	ae	emancholl			

lines, longer and shorter (notches being used at times for vowel characters), giving the impression that it was originally designed to be “written” by means of an ax or some similar sharp instrument, with wood serving as a medium. The Ogham inscriptions, which date as early as the fourth century AD (and perhaps as early as the second century), can be read (owing to our knowledge of later Irish) but consist largely of personal names and provide little data on which can be constructed a linguistic description of Ogham Irish. For such descriptions of Insular Celtic, the linguist must await the appearance of Old Irish and Old Welsh manuscripts in about the eighth century AD (and hence Ogham Irish is not treated in the present volume).

There is, however, a second ancient language of Britain which is written with a variety of Ogham, the language of *Pictish*. The Picts, who receive their name from Latin *Picti* “painted ones” (presumably referring to the practice of tattooing, though other etymologies have been proposed), inhabited portions of modern Scotland, along with the Scots, a Celtic people of Irish origin. A much broader, earlier distribution of the Picts has also been claimed. The Picts are known for their production of stone monuments on which are engraved intriguing images of animals and other designs, at times accompanied by Ogham inscriptions. The language of the Pictish Ogham inscriptions is not understood; it is not Celtic and probably not Indo-European. On the Pictish language, see Jackson 1980; for Ogham generally, see McMannus 1991.

In addition to the above enumerated poorly understood ancient languages of Europe (non-Greek Cretan and Cypriot languages, Iberian, North Picene, and Pictish), several other European languages are attested that are somewhat better known, though too meagerly so, it was judged, to be assigned individual chapters in this volume of grammatical descriptions. Brief discussion of these – many of which were spoken in or near Italy – now follows.

1. SICEL

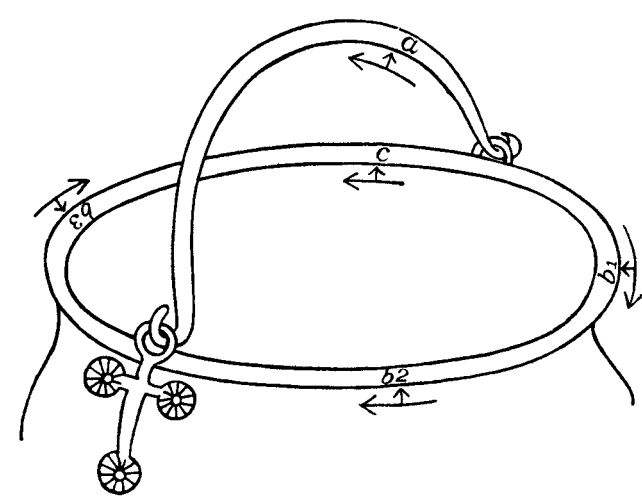
From Sicily come several inscriptions written in a language which appears to be Indo-European; a number of glosses are claimed as well (see Conway, Whatmough, and Johnson

1933 II:449–458; on Sicel generally, see Pulgram 1978:71–73 with references). The name assigned to the language, Sicel or Siculan, is that given by Greek colonists to the native peoples of Sicily whom they there encountered in the eighth century BC. Little is known about the ethnicity of these Siceli. The form *esti* occurs in Sicel, seemingly the archetypal Indo-European “(s)he is.” Interpretations of other inscriptional forms show considerable variation. Tradition held that the Siceli had migrated to Sicily from the Italian peninsula: thus, Varro (*On the Latin Language* 5.101) writes that they came from Rome; Diodorus Siculus (*Library of History* 5.6.3–4) records that the Siceli had come from Italy and settled in the region of Sicily formerly occupied by a people called the Sicani. On the basis of the available linguistic evidence, however, Sicel cannot be demonstrated to be a member of the Italic subfamily of Indo-European (see Ch. 4, §1).

On the inscriptional fragments from western Sicily identified as *Elymian*, see Cowgill and Mayrhofer 1986:58 with references.

2. RAETIC AND LEMNIAN

From the eastern Alps, homeland of the tribes called Raeti by the Romans, come a very few inscriptions in a language which has been claimed to bear certain Indo-European characteristics. For example, from an inscription carved on a bronze pot (the Caslir Situla; see Fig. 1.3) comes the Raetic form *-talina* which has been compared to Latin *tollo* “I raise”



a lavisešeli
b 1, 2 velxanu | lup·nu pitiave |
3 kusenkustrinaxe
c ϕelna vinutalina.

Figure 1.3 The Caslir Situla

(see Pulgram 1978:40 with additional references). However, similarities to Etruscan have also been identified and the two are perhaps to be placed in a single language family, along with a language attested on the island of Lemnos in the north of the Aegean Sea. Lemnian is known principally from a single inscribed stele bearing the engraved image of a warrior, dated to the sixth century BC. On these connections, see Chapter 7, §1.

Of the Raeti, the Roman historian Livy (*History* 5.33.11) writes, following upon his discussion of the Etruscans: “Undoubtedly the Alpine tribes also have the same origin, particularly the Raeti, who have been made wild by the very place where they live, preserving nothing of their ancient ways except their language – and not even it without corruptions.”

3. LIGURIAN

The Ligurians were an ancient people of northwestern Italy. Writing in the second century BC, the Greek historian Polybius (*Histories* 2.16.1–2) situates the Ligurians on the slopes of the Apennines, extending from the Alpine junction above Marseilles around to Pisa on the seaward slopes and to Arezzo on the inland side. Another Greek, Diodorus Siculus (*Library of History* 5.39.1–8), writes of the Ligurians eking out a life of hardship in their heavily forested, rock-strewn, snow-covered homeland and of the extraordinary stamina and strength which this lifestyle engendered in both men and women.

The Ligurian language appears to be attested in certain place names and glosses, some of which have been assigned Indo-European etymologies. For example, Pliny the Elder, a Roman author of the first century AD, in describing the grain called *secale* in Latin, noted that its Ligurian name (the name among the Taurini) is *asia* (*Natural History* 18.141). If the Ligurian form was once *sasia* (see Conway, Whatmough, and Johnson 1933 II:158), then, it has been proposed, the word may find relatives in Celtic – Welsh *haidd* and Breton *heiz* “barley.” The location of its speakers, abutting Celtic areas (and Strabo writes of Celtoligurians; *Geography* 4.6.3), might itself be taken to suggest an affiliation with the Indo-European family, but such a relationship cannot be confirmed by the available linguistic evidence.

4. ILLYRIAN

The historical peoples called Illyrian occupied a broad area of the northwest Balkans. Evidence for an Indo-European intrusion into the region can be identified by the late third millennium BC; an identifiable “Illyrian” culture appears only in the Iron Age (see, *inter alia*, Wilkes 1992:28–66). By the first century AD, the Greek geographer Strabo, in describing that part of Europe south of the Ister (the Danube), can identify as Illyrian those people inhabiting the region bounded on the east by the meandering Ister, on the west by the Adriatic Sea, and lying above ancient Epirus (*Geography* 7.5.1). For the Romans, the province of *Illyricum* denotes a rather larger administrative area. The term “Illyrian” can, however, be used by classical authors to designate a variety of peoples in and beyond the Balkans (see the discussion in Katičić 1976:156–163).

Within the northwestern Balkan region itself there was considerable cultural diversity, with not only the so-called Illyrian tribes being present, but Celts as well, by at least the third century BC. Strabo writes of the Iapodes dwelling near Mount Odra (close to the border of modern Slovenia and Croatia) whom he calls a mixed Celtic and Illyrian tribe (*Geography* 4.6.10) and who, he adds, use Celtic armor but are tattooed like the Illyrians and Thracians

(*Geography* 7.5.4; on the Thracians see below). In his account of the wars which various Illyrian tribes waged against one another and against the Romans, the Greek historian and Roman citizen, Appian of Alexandria, writing in the second century AD, preserves a tradition in which one hears echoes of such Balkan ethnic diversity. Appian (*Roman History* 10.2) records that the Illyrians received their name from Illyrius, a son of Polyphemus (the cyclops of Homer's *Odyssey*) and the nymph Galatea, and that Illyrius has two brothers, Celtus and Galas, namesakes of the Celts and the Galatae (the latter commonly being synonymous with "Celt" and perhaps used here to invoke descent from Galatea).

The Illyrian language presents an unusual case. While the Illyrians are a well-documented people of antiquity, not a single verifiable inscription has survived written in the Illyrian language (on two proposed Illyrian inscriptions, one demonstrably Byzantine Greek, see Katičić 1976:169–170). Even so, much linguistic attention (perhaps a disproportionately large amount) has been paid to the language of the Illyrians. Chiefly on the basis of Illyrian place and personal names, the language is commonly identified as Indo-European. To provide but two examples, the frequently attested name *Vescleves* has been etymologized as a reflex of Proto-Indo-European **wesu-klewes* ("good fame"), with Sanskrit *Vasuśravas* being drawn into the analysis; the place name *Birziminium*, interpreted as meaning "hillock," has been traced to the Proto-Indo-European root **b^herǵh-*, source of, *inter alia*, Germanic forms such as Old English *beorg* "hill" (see Katičić 1976:172–176 for discussion). This onomastic evidence is supplemented by the survival of just a very few glosses of Illyrian words; for example, the Illyrian word for "mist" is cited as *rhinos* (ῥινός) in one of the scholia on Homer; see Katičić 1976:170–171, who compares Albanian *re*, earlier *ren*, "cloud." Extensive study of Illyrian was undertaken by Hans Krahe in the middle decades of the twentieth century, who, along with other scholars, argued for a broad distribution of Illyrian peoples considerably beyond the Balkans (see, for example, Krahe 1940); though in his later work, Krahe curbed his view of the extent of Illyrian settlement (see, for example, Krahe 1955). Radoslav Katičić (1976:179–180) has argued, on the basis of a careful study of the onomastic evidence, that the core onomastic area of Illyrian proper is to be located in the southeast of that Balkan region traditionally associated with the Illyrians (centered in modern Albania).

The modern Albanian language, it has been conjectured, is descended directly from ancient Illyrian. Albanian is not attested until the fifteenth century AD and in its historical development has been influenced heavily by Latin, Greek, Turkish, and Slavic languages, so much so that it was quite late in being identified as an Indo-European language. Its possible affiliation with the scantily attested Illyrian, though not unreasonable on historical and linguistic grounds, can be considered little more than conjecture barring the discovery of additional Illyrian evidence.

5. THRACIAN

At the northern end of the Aegean Sea, stretching upward to the Danube, lived in antiquity people speaking the Indo-European language of Thracian. The ancestors of the Iron Age Thracians had probably arrived in the Balkans as a part of the movement which brought the forebears of the Illyrians. For the Greeks, Thrace was a place wild and uncultivated, home to both savage Ares and Dionysus, god of wine who inspired frenzy and brutality in his worshipers. Herodotus (*Histories* 5.3; 9.119) writes of the Thracian practices of human sacrifice and widow immolation, and of the enormous population of the Thracians (second only to the Indians) and their lack of political unity. Were they unified, surmises the historian, they would be the most powerful people on the face of the earth.

Though the Thracian language is not well preserved, its attestation, unlike that of Illyrian, is sufficient to place its membership in the Indo-European family practically beyond doubt. A few short Thracian inscriptions survive (see Brixhe and Panayotou 1994a:185–188), but more valuable are the numerous glosses (e.g., *bólinthos* “European bison,” cf. Old Norse *boli* “bull”; *brûtos* “beer,” cf. Old English *breowan* “to brew”) coupled with the evidence of place and personal names. For a summary of the evidence see Katičić 1976:138–142; Brixhe and Panayotou 1994a:188–189; see also Cowgill and Mayrhofer 1986:54–55, with references. Onomastic evidence may suggest the occurrence of a language boundary within the Thracian area, demarcated by Mount Haemus. South of this boundary the language evidenced has been distinguished as Thracian, while that to the north has been called Daco-Mysian.

According to Greek tradition, the Phrygians of Anatolia had migrated from the Balkans (see Herodotus, *Histories* 7.73, who writes that the Phrygians were formerly called the Briges and had been neighbors of the Macedonians; on the Macedonians see below), a view with which modern scholarship is generally in agreement. The Phrygian language does show certain similarities to Thracian, and some linguists have argued for linking the two in a single linguistic unit (Thraco-Phrygian). The appropriateness of the subgrouping is, however, uncertain; see WAL Chapter 31, §1.5.

6. MACEDONIAN

North of the Greeks, bracketed by Illyrians and Thracians, lived the Macedonians. Much uncertainty surrounds the linguistic status of the Macedonian peoples. Though, under the patronage of Macedonian kings, Philip the Second and his son Alexander the Great, Greek culture would be spread across the Mediterranean and Near Eastern world and the Greek language would become a lingua franca (the Attic-based Koine dialect; see Ch. 2, §1) spoken from Italy to India, it remains unclear if Greek was the native language of the Macedonians (see Brixhe and Panayotou 1994b:206–207 for a synopsis of ideas about the identity of Macedonian).

To be sure, the Greek orator Demosthenes, in the fourth century BC, can revile and lambaste Philip as one of the *barbaroi* (“barbarians,” those who do not speak Greek, i.e., those who *babble*; *Orations* 3.17) and rehearse how in the old days the Macedonian king had been rightly subject to the Greeks, as *barbaroi* should be (*Orations* 3.24). He can skewer Philip with the charge that, not only is he not a Greek and unrelated to the Greeks, he is not even a *barbaros* from some worthwhile place, but he is a plague out of Macedonia – a place from which you cannot even acquire a good slave (*Orations* 9.31). A century earlier, Herodotus had told the story of an ancestor of Philip, Alexander the First (a contemporary of Herodotus), who had been allowed to compete in games at Olympia – though *barbaroi* were excluded from the competition – because he was able to demonstrate satisfactorily that he himself was descended from a Greek banished from Argos (*Histories* 5.22; 8.137–139).

Explicit references to “Macedonian speech” exist. Plutarch, the Greek savant of the first and second centuries AD, when writing of Cleopatra (*Life of Antony* 27.3–4), the last of the Ptolemies (the Macedonian kings of Egypt), lauds her linguistic abilities, reporting that she could speak the languages of the Ethiopians, Troglodytes, Hebrews, Arabs, Syrians, Medes, and Parthians. In contrast, her male predecessors had not even learned Egyptian and some had even “ceased to speak Macedonian” (μακεδονίζειν ἐκλιπόντων). Presumably they had continued to speak Greek (i.e., had not taken a vow of silence). Athenaeus, a Greek writer of the later second century AD, in his account of a “Learned Banquet” (*Deipnosophistae*

3.121f–122a), places on the lips of one of the guests, the cynic Cynulcus, a Latin word *decocta* (a kind of drink made by boiling and then rapidly cooling a liquid); in turn, Athenaeus has another guest, Ulpian (an “Atticist,” promoting the use of untainted Attic Greek), rebuke Cynulcus for uttering a barbarism (!). Cynulcus fires back, retorting that even in the best old Greek one finds Persian loanwords and that he knows many Attic Greeks “using Macedonian speech” (μακεδονίζοντας; a participle from Plutarch’s verb). Elsewhere, Plutarch uses an adverb *makedonistí* (μακεδονιστί) having the same sense. For example, in his *Life of Alexander* (51.4), Plutarch recounts how the Macedonian conqueror, in a fit of rage, refusing to be quieted by his body guards, shouted out for the *hypaspistai* (Macedonian infantry troops, one contingent of the army of Alexander), “calling in Macedonian – and this was a sign of a great disturbance.” The precise sense of “speaking Macedonian” in these and other passages can be and has been debated; yet when these references to Macedonian speech are considered in their context, it is not difficult for one to conclude that what is being reported is the use of a distinct, non-Greek (“barbarian”) Macedonian language.

In contrast, however, other classical authors explicitly identify the Macedonians as a Greek people. Polybius, the Greek historian of the second century BC, for example, describes Macedonians and Greeks as being *homophylos* (ὁμόφυλος), “of the same race” or “akin” (*Histories* 9.37.7). For references to other, similar texts, see Katičić 1976:107–108.

An interesting case is provided by an instance in which Macedonians identify themselves as Greeks and speakers of Greek. The Roman historian Livy (first centuries BC and AD), writing of events in the war waged by Philip the Fifth of Macedon and his Arcarnanian Greek allies against Athens, with Rome as its own ally, records a meeting of the council of the Aetolian Confederacy, at which representatives from Philip, from Athens and from Rome address the council, each seeking Aetolian assistance in the war (200 BC). In his speech to the council, the Macedonian ambassador refers to the Romans as “a foreign people set apart more by *language* and customs and laws than by the space of sea and land” (31.29.12). In contrast, “Aetolians, Acarnanians and Macedonians [are] people of the *same language* . . . [and] with foreigners, with barbarians *all Greeks* are, and will be, at eternal war” (31.29.15). The dialect of the Aetolian Confederacy, a league of the Aetolians of northwest Greece, was the Northwest Greek Koine, a “common” dialect used throughout regions controlled by the Confederacy (see Ch. 3, §1.1.5). Is it this lingua franca to which Livy has his Macedonian diplomat self-servingly refer? One could well imagine that it would be the Macedonian’s *langue de choix* on such an occasion. The Acarnanians also inhabited northwest Greece, though Acarnanian inscriptions from this period are written in the Doric Koine, only slightly different from the Aetolian dialect.

Surviving Macedonian texts have not proved helpful in identifying the native language of the Macedonians. Most of the Macedonian inscriptions are written in Attic Greek, the dialect broadly disseminated by Philip and Alexander. A fourth-century BC inscription found recently in the remains of the great Macedonian city of Pella appears to be written in a variety of Northwest Greek and has led to conjectures that this may be the previously unattested Macedonian language (see the comments of Brixhe and Panayotou 1994b:209 along with the mention of other finds in n.19).

The evidence provided by Macedonian glosses is conveniently summarized by Katičić (1976:108–112), who analyzes these as belonging to three different classes. One class consists of words that are quite close to known Greek lexemes, some, though probably not all, of which appear likely to be loanwords directly from Greek: for example, *kommáraí*; compare Greek *kámmaroi* (κάμμοροι), a type of lobster (pl.). A second set is made up of Macedonian words which have no Greek counterparts, such as *aliē* “boar.” The third group is similar to the first to the extent that it consists of Macedonian words apparently having Greek counterparts;