

**THE GODDESS AND THE HORSEMEN**  
**A discussion of the origins of the Greek Language**

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**1. THE ORIGINS OF THE GREEK LANGUAGE**

In Classical times, it was believed by many that the Hellenes had originated with Hellen. That meant that the Greeks had been around longer than anyone else, for Hellen was the firstborn son of Deucalion and Pyrrha, the parents of all mankind...to ancient scholars the story symbolized the larger truth that the Greeks had lived in Greece since earliest times (Drews, 1988: 3)

In the discussion to follow, two basic questions concerning the origins of the Greek language will be addressed: (1) who were the original speakers of the language which is now referred to as Greek, and (2) how did their language come to dominate and/or characterize a particular region and people. An examination of some of the issues surrounding the origins and movements of the (Proto) Indo-Europeans, emphasizing the coming of the Greeks to Greece - will address the first question. Other issues to be considered will include the re-evaluation of traditional theories which have envisioned the spread of the Indo-European (and Greek) languages as an essentially historically unprecedented "Volkswanderung", or mass migration - an idea which will be seen to rest on questionable scholarly presuppositions concerning the Aryan race (Drews, 1988, Eisler, 1987).

It will be argued that a more plausible explanation for the development of the Indo-European languages from a (hypothetical) proto-language (i.e. Proto-Indo-European, or PIE) may be derived from processes both attested to in records of the period, and having analogues throughout history. These processes will be seen to include small scale immigration and/or military takeovers. The linguistic and archaeological evidence presented will demonstrate that the coming of the Greeks to Greece may best be characterized in terms of military conquest (or "takeover" in the terms of Drews, 1988) by a relatively small number of warrior kings, who by virtue of their superiority in chariot warfare were able to impose their language and/or culture on the pre-Greek Minoan civilization.

The divergence of the Greek language from the proto-language (PIE) to become a language distinct from its "sister" languages (i.e. Sanskrit, Latin, etc.) will also be reconsidered in light of the often ignored linguistic evidence of a pre-Greek influence on Linear B and Mycenaean Greek [see Chadwick and Baumbach, 1963]. Finally, the implications of this neglect, which has persisted despite growing archaeological and linguistic evidence indicating the existence of an advanced civilization in Greece on the islands of Crete and Thera, whose decline appears to coincide with the coming of the Greeks to Greece, ca. 1600 B.C. (Drews, 1988; Eiser, 1987; Gimbutas, 1989), will be examined. The relevance of this discussion to the field of linguistics in general, and to historical linguistics in particular, lies in the challenge it presents to the implicit assumption of language

spread as something separate from the movement of its speakers. In addition, this paper will attempt to shed light on the frequently ethnocentric, racist and/or patriarchal Western foundations upon which much of contemporary historical linguistic theory appears to have been built.

## 2. The origins of the Indo-Europeans: Chariots & kings

It is interesting to note that whereas early Indo-Europeanists such as Franz Bopp (in 1833) tended to locate the Indo-European homeland in southern regions, such as Afganistan, based on analysis of shared IE words for certain flora and fauna (e.g. "bear" and "beech tree") native to that region of the temperate zone [see Drews, 1988: 4], the rise of European nationalism at the turn of the century brought with it a parallel shift in theories concerning the origins of the Proto-Indo-Europeans (PIEs). Perhaps to fill a personal desire for an auspicious ancestry [see Drews (1988) and Mallory (1989)], the predominately Northern European linguists began to propose a Northern European homeland for the "Aryan race". The questionable origins of such hypotheses can best be exemplified by the work of Poesche, who:

...convinced that the original Indo-Europeans were an exceptionally white race, surveyed the world to find a place where albinism, or depigmentation, is pronounced. The place he found was the Pripet Marshes, or the Rokitno swamp, between the Pripet, the Dnieper and the Beresina rivers [in eastern Poland and Western Russia] (Drews, 1988: 26).

The cumulative effect of such unchallenged racist assumptions led to conclusions such as "nothing Indo-European could have been indigenous to Asia Minor" being simply assumed by all scholars; and, arguably, to the Third Reich's ideology concerning a (Germanic) Aryan master-race (Drews, 1988). Other allegedly biologically-based theories linking linguistic and racial characteristics include observations concerning the "racial affinities" of the Hittites and the Indo-Europeans (e.g. prominent noses) leading to the conclusion that "if the Hittites were Indo-European, at some time and place, the Hittite nation must have invaded Asia Minor" (p. 53). Given their obvious shortcomings, if not complete fallacy, it is surprising that the influence of these beliefs can be seen to persist throughout the literature, most notably in the continued adherence to the theory of the movement of the Proto-Indo-Europeans in a "Volkswanderung":

Meyer, Beloch and Breasted imagined it as a massive movement of pastoralists, and in many quarters that's how it is imagined today: a large, disadvantaged (and probably dispossessed) nation on the move, coming from the pasture lands of the Eurasian steppe, descends into the Balkan peninsula and makes the place Greek (Drews, p. 6).

Breasted's description (cited in Drews, p. 46) of the break-up of the "great white race" also provides evidence of ethnocentrism. He states:

...divided into numerous tribes, they wandered at will, seeking pastures for their flocks...They were the most gifted and the most highly imaginative people of the ancient world.

That this wonderfully romantic image holds considerable emotional appeal to those who would be the linguistic descendants of such Northern European Aryans (i.e. the majority of Indo-Europeanists) presumably accounts for its persistent popularity.

Based on the assumption by early archaeologists that changes in the pottery style of a particular community could be taken as indication of cultural (and/or linguistic) change, archaeological research initially appeared to support the "Volkswanderung" hypothesis. However, as noted by Drews (1988) and others (i.e. Eisler, 1987; Gimbutas, 1989; Mallory, 1989), this type of extrapolation, based on essentially technical variations, is now considered by many to be an unstable foundation for meaningful reconstructions<sup>1</sup>. Thus, in the case of the Indo-Europeans, there is a much higher probability (if we consider the historical precedents to be elaborated below) invading barbarians would tend to have acquired such mundane necessities of life as pots from the locale through which they were travelling, rather than transporting large amounts of clay pottery with them across considerable distances [see Drews, 1988; Eisler, 1987]. When the inadequacies of the use of pottery for historic dating became apparent (with the advent of Carbon-14 dating), and a number of researchers redirected their focus to non-pottery archaeological evidence, they discovered an apparent relationship between the domestication of the horse, the development and perfection of the light horse chariot, and the spread of the (Proto) Indo-Europeans and the Indo-European languages (i.e. Drews, 1988; Gamkrelidze and Ivanov, 1990; Gimbutas, 1989; Mallory, 1989).

As will become apparent in the discussion to follow, the superiority of "Horse and Chariot"-oriented theories over the "Volkswanderung" (pastoral) theories can be seen in their ability to tie together both linguistic and archaeological research, in addition to proposing (with varying degrees of success) specific mechanisms for such language spread. For example, proponents of the former theory have been credited with bringing into doubt the "Northern homeland" hypotheses, as the result of a complete lack of evidence of horses (domesticated or otherwise) in Northern Europe until after the era in question [see Drews, 1988; Mallory, 1989]. One advocate of the "Horse and Chariot" theory, Drews (1988), completely discredits arguments concerning a Volkswanderung by arguing that such an influx is nowhere attested to in the records of regions where linguistic evidence of "Indo-Europeans" has been found (e.g. proper names, etc.). He notes that the scribes who apparently "overlooked" the arrival of masses of Indo-Europeans (i.e. evidence of a Volkswanderung) did mention the rare instances of "nations on the move", such as the Doric migrations in Greece. Drews also points out that what *is* frequently commented upon in the ancient texts, however, are the more mundane human dynamics of (1) immigration from less prosperous, or less civilized, areas to more urban areas, and/or (2) the chaos caused by upstart military leaders, whose resulting military games were played out on living chessboards (Drews, 1988; Eisler, 1987; Gimbutas, 1989). To back his claims, Drews cites Mesopotamian documents that record incidents of barbarian harassment, which the scribes characterize as "harassment by would-be Great Kings" (Drews, 1988).

An important distinction in the definition of processes of language spread is also made by Drews when he distinguishes "immigration" from "takeovers" and/or "pious atrocities". He defines "takeovers" as "coups d'état", in which a relatively small military group disposes of the incumbent ruler, and thereafter assumes for itself the position of governing body. "Takeovers" differ from "pious atrocities" of Great Kings insofar as the latter may result in the complete destruction of city states that do not acknowledge the Great King's overlordship (i.e. by plunder, pillage, burning, etc.). Thus, while "pious atrocities" might result in genocide, and hence "language death" (in its most literal sense), they would not be responsible for language change per se. The dynamics and linguistic repercussions of "takeovers", however, could be quite different. While a "takeover" might show comparatively minor impact on the native population (in terms of death and destruction), a stronger influence could very well be felt in terms of linguistic change. For example, the

language of the "conquerers" could become dominant at administrative levels - historical examples of which can be found in the status of Latin as the language of administration in the Roman Empire, the prestige of French as the language of the court after the Norman invasion of England, the spread of the "colonial languages", and (arguably) most recently, the status of English as the international language of business in the wake of American economic domination after World War II. Although the possible causes of such language status changes are numerous, it may be argued that simple expediency may often play an influential role: i.e. if the majority of the new "administrators" is not fluent in, or completely ignorant of, the language of the general populace, business would tend to be conducted in the language in which they were the most comfortable: "He who has the biggest sword (makes the) rules"! Furthermore, if the conquerers brought with them - and for reasons of interest or intimidation the "natives" adopted - new gods and/or technology, another mode of language transfer and/or mixing could occur with the adoption of lexicon, phraseology, and ideology from the incoming superstrate as a result of language being transferred/learned in the context of stories, beliefs, etc. In addition, while the native, or "substrate", language would tend to be more conservative with respect to syntactic and morphological features, phonological change would be expected as the result of the substrate (indigenous) speakers imposing their native phonological system on the new language.

The impact of the language contact would also be mediated by temporal considerations. For example, if the foreigners were in power for only a short period as a result of not being liked by, or not having assimilated to, the native population, presumably all that would remain to mark their presence would be mention in records and/or descendents bearing foreign proper names. Both the former and latter are attested to the ancient texts (Drews, 1988). The ancient texts cited by Drews (1988) also detail the sixteenth century B.C. conquests by "Hyksos" (Egyptian: lit. "foreign chiefs") and "Amorites" (Akkadian: amurru, lit. "westerners"). Such references may be offered as evidence of a sudden influx of foreign (i.e. Proto-Indo-European) military - especially since the Hyksos, who were responsible for the conquest of Egypt, appear to have been a *heterogeneous* group of Asiatics, whose superiority in chariot warfare won them, collectively, a considerable kingdom.

Chronologically, the linguistic evidence for "takeovers" (as opposed to a "Volkswanderung") can be summarized in the data cited below: (1) an absence of any records bearing Aryan names in 1800 B.C., (2) by 1500 B.C., Aryan kings are shown to be in control of a great number of city states, (3) by 1400 B.C. Aryan no longer appears to be a dominant language in many of the countries (Drews, 1988). Additional information concerning the rise of the Indo-Europeans based on military power (rather than the inundation by numbers) comes from texts citing Palestinian and Syrian cities controlled by men with Hurrian and Aryan names *in the palace and armies*; in contrast to a general population in which 90% of the names were Semitic. If had there in fact been "Volkswanderung", foreign or immigrant names would be expected to be represented cross-occupationally, and/or socio-economically. The frequent citing of the warrior class, the "maryannu" [plural in Skt: "marya" - young warrior; see also the Skt word for "stallion" - "açva, marya"] throughout the Indo-European invaded areas, has also been interpreted as indicative of the superiority of the barbarians (Indo-Europeans) in the art of warfare.

Drews comments (p.153):

All the Indo-European movements of the Bronze Age that we know about are takeovers, date no earlier than ca. 1600 BC, and are associated with chariot war-

fare...in short, mastery of chariot warfare explains sufficiently and cogently what the PIE speakers (and their charioteering neighbours) were able to do in the middle of the second millenium BC [i.e. conquer the known world], and why they did it.

The pervasiveness of the Indo-European horse terminology - in reference to the animal itself, as well as related motifs - can be seen throughout the Indo-European languages [from Buck, 1988: 164]:

	Horse	Stallion	Gelding	Mare	Colt/Foal
Grk:	ἵππος [ippos]	ἵππος οἰχειον [ippos, ocheion o (masc)]	ἵππος ἐκτεμνομενος [ippos ektemnomenos]	ἵππος [ippos, i (fem)]	πῶλος [polos]
NGrk:	ἀλογό [alogho]	βαρβάτο ἀλογό [varvato alogho, ati]	ἀλογό μουνουχισμενο [alogho mounouchi- smeno]	φοπάθα [fopatha]	πούλαρι [poulari]
Lat:	equus	(equus) admissārius	cantērius	equa	pullus
It:	cavallo	stallone	cavallo castrato	cavalla	puledro
Fr:	cheval	étalon	hongre	jument	poulain
Sp:	caballo	caballo padre	caballo castrado	yequa	potro
Rum:	cal	armăsar	jugan	iapă	mînz
Skt:	açva-, haya-	açva-, marya-	-----	açva-, vadaba-	kiçora-
OE:	hors, mearh	stēda	hengest	mere (myre)	fola, colt
ME:	hors	stalon	geldyng	mere	fole, colte
*IE:	*ekwo-				

Perhaps the most persuasive support for a Proto-Indo-European (or PIE) strength based on superiority in chariot warfare comes from the *Kikkuli*. This text records in intricate detail the horse training program as set down by the master horsetrainer, Kikkuli. Although the version

that survived the millennia is written in Hittite, its inclusion of Aryan glosses suggests the glossed terms to be "traditional and venerable terms" borrowed from the original source language (Drews, 1988: 140). The Hittite text presents an instruction in Hittite terms, and then for good measure adds the Aryan "technical term": "he (the trainer) lets them trot for half a danna and twenty iku (two and a half miles), and then gallops them for another twenty iku, which is the *aika vartanna* [lit. "one turn" in Aryan]" (p. 140).

In addition to the linguistic data cited above, the "vehicles" of language transfer (i.e. discourse/pragmatic considerations) should also be examined. It is apparent that the (Proto) Indo-Europeans would have brought with them not only a language - but also an ideology and theology based on their cultural relationship with horses [i.e. the patriarchial "Horse Cult" - see Drews, 1988; Eisler, 1987; D'Eaubonne, 1976; Gimbutas, 1989; Mallory, 1989; Martin, 1987; Nilsson, 1932]. The Aryan term "marya" cited above [lit. "charioteer", or "chariot fighter"], became the Egyptian and Akkadian "maryannu", or warrior class. The root, "marya-", was also maintained in Sanskrit to signify both "young man", and also "stallion" [a analogy persisting in Western culture]. In Greek, the derived term  $\mu\epsilon\rho\alpha\varsigma$  [meras] can denote either "girl" or "boy".

Drews (1988: 150) cites Aryan personal names and army positions to support the theory of the Horse Cult's military orientation, and superiority based on the horse, and the light horse chariot. In the records concerning the "greatest of Great kings of Mitanni" (predominately Amorites - ca. 2000-1700 B.C.), the following names are found:

Tushratta: [lit. "having the chariot of terror"] (also cited as sending greetings to his Pharaoh *and his horses*)  
 Bardashwa (from Nuzi): [lit. "possessing great horses"]  
 Biridashwa (prince of Yanuamma): [lit. "he who owns a grown horse"]  
 Zurata (prince of Accho): [lit. "one who owns a good chariot"]

In addition to the equestrian terminology mentioned previously, the earliest recorded "Greek" texts (e.g. Mycenaean Linear B accounting tablets ca. 1500-1250 B.C.; and the Homeric epics ca. 800 B.C.) include terms for the parts of the chariot derived from an "IE technical vocabulary" [see Buck, 1988; Drews, 1988]. These words include: the Greek words for wheel, yoke, axle, and those specific to a light, spoke-wheeled cart (i.e. one that a horse could pull): spoke, felloe, nave, cab, rail, and the parts and whole of the carriage and chariot itself (Drews, p. 170). Furthermore, the religious and/or ideological systems of the early Indo-European cultures show considerable consistency cross-culturally (and cross-linguistically) in the dominance of the Horse motif. For example, the Vedic ritual known as Ashvamedha [\*PIE: ash-wash = horse] parallels the early Roman ritual of the October horse, in which a chariot race (with two horses) was run, with the right-side horse of the winning team being sacrificed to the gods. In addition, the ancient Greek religion is rife with equestrian and warrior symbolism: e.g. the winged horse, Pegasus; the glorification of war [personified by the god, Zeus, who frequently assumes the *shape of a stallion* to visit earth, and whose domination is based on (meta)physical strength]; Zeus' daughter, Athena (whose pre-Greek origins will be discussed later), goddess of both wisdom and war; and, the two-horse chariot "twin" analogy [e.g. also seen in the Roman stories of Romulus and Remis (founders of Rome), the Biblical Cain and Abel, etc.] (Drews, 1988; Eisler, 1987; Grant, 1987; Mallory, 1989; Martin, 1987; Nilsson, 1932; Shipp, 1979).<sup>2</sup>

On the connection between the development of the light horse chariot and the "coming of the Greeks to Greece", it is generally agreed:

that the chariot, however used, was of central importance in Late Helladic Greece [ca. 1600 B.C.] is obvious. Less obvious is the link between the arrival of the chariot in Greece and the arrival of PIE. The language and the vehicle arrived together (Drews, 1988:24).

Archaeological support for the coming of the Greeks as a form of military "takeover" based on chariot warfare centers primarily on the "shaft graves" at Mycenae (in the Argolid). Excavations have found the earliest of these graves (ca. 1600 B.C.) to contain only the skeletons of very large men [i.e. foreigners: racially different from the indigenous population]. Later graves, dating from the mid-sixteenth century (ca. 1500 B.C.), were, by contrast, found to contain over four hundred gifts for the dead - including gifts of substances and/or designs not native to the Mycenaean region such as amber from the Baltic, and death masks and other religious artifacts most closely resembling those of the distant "Kurgan culture" of southern Russia (Drews, 1988; Gimbutas, 1989; Mallory, 1989; Van Royen and Isaac, 1979). These findings have also been interpreted as indicating strong ties between the rulers of such distant regions as the Steppes and Mesopotamia - as would be expected if the (Proto) Indo-European Hyksos, Amorites, and other "barbarian kings-by-takeovers" were, literally, related to each other.

Further support for the "takeover" hypothesis comes from the lack of evidence of any major power in the region of Mycenae prior to the sixteenth century ascendancy of the Myceneans (i.e. coinciding with the arrival of the Greeks), in contrast to the overwhelming evidence of a sophisticated, non-militant Minoan civilization which thrived in the islands from ca. 2500 B.C. (no signs of fortifications have yet been found on either Crete or Thera). Based on such evidence, the "coming of the Greeks to Greece" appears remarkably similar to the "takeovers", within a few generations of the perfection of the light chariot ca. mid 17th century B.C., of North West India by the Aryans, southern Mesopotamia by the Kassites, Egypt by the Hyksos, Mitanni by the Aryans, and the small Levantine states by Aryan and Hurrian maryannu. In other words:

If one dates the arrival of the Greeks in Greece to the beginning of the (fifteenth/sixteenth centuries) one tends to picture the first Greeks as warriors rather than herdsman. And instead of a massive Volkswanderung, what comes to mind is a conquest of the indigeneous population by a relatively small number of intruders (Drews, p. 24).

This version of the arrival of the Greeks also seems to best account for the total absence of Greek legends concerning the "coming of Greeks in Greece" - in direct contrast to the "arrival stories" seen in India, as well as other Indo-European regions [see Drews, 1988; Mallory, 1989]. As will be discussed below, the lack of an "arrival story" agrees with the archaeological evidence indicating that when the (Proto) Indo-Europeans descended on the Grecian peninsula ca. 1600 B.C., they found it to be already occupied.

### **3. The Pre-Greeks: the Minoan Civilization**

The existence of the "pre-Greeks", or the non-Indo-European Minoan civilization, long hinted in the myths and artifacts, yet long ignored by scholars, has been revealed primarily through the

excavations at Knossos (on the island of Crete), and at the site of Akrotiri (on the island of Thera, or Santorini). These excavations have left little doubt that the "Minoans" had not only a high level of technical expertise as evidenced by sophisticated multi-level architecture, paved roads, etc. - but also provided evidence of literacy in the form of the non-Indo-European Minoan Linear A script and the Phaistos disk [see Eisler, 1987]. Although beyond the scope of this paper - as little research appears to have been done in this area - a brief comment should be made concerning apparent similarities between Linear A script and the "language of the Goddess" illustrated and discussed by Marija Gimbutas. Gimbutas (1989), while exhaustively cataloguing what had previously been marginalized as "geometric designs" on artifacts dating from the Paleolithic era (ca. 6500 B.C.) onwards, became aware of a systematic and consistent use of specific patterns by followers of the Earth Goddess religion in Greece, as well as Her followers throughout the continent; although the Minoan civilization appears to have been one of the last surviving non-patriarchal societies. The author argues persuasively that the "geometric designs" represent an ideographic, or pictographic, script [in contrast to the Phoenician-type alphabet (which arrived in Greece at a considerably later date [for a study of the archaic scripts of Greece (ca. 800 B.C - 450 B.C) - see Jeffery, 1990]). These similarities between her "goddess language" and the ideographic script found on the Phaistos disk and in Minoan Linear A script are very intriguing, and beg further investigation [for additional discussion concerning evidence of wide-spread non-patriarchal civilizations pre-dating the PIE expansion, see D'Eaubonne, 1976; Eisler, 1987; Gimbutas, 1989; Walsh, 1981].

Literary and linguistic evidence of the cultural and ideological influence of the Minoans on the development of both the Greek language and Greek culture manifests itself on many different levels, some more subtle than others. For example, the need for the institution of a reversal of belief systems by the invaders resulted in historical (and other forms of) revisionism. Dating from coming of the Greeks, this can be found in the earliest reconstructed "history" of the "Heroic Ages". Based on recent research, it now appears that the "Heroic Ages" were, in actuality, a "dark age" lasting from approximately 1700 B.C. to 1400 B.C.; and, thus coinciding with the arrival of the PIEs and the decline/destruction of the Minoan civilization (Eisler, 1987).

One particularly transparent and symbolic myth (myths being a traditional conduit of oral history) recalls the slaying of the serpent Pyrhha, at Delphi, by Zeus, who thereupon became the most powerful of the gods of Olympus (Eisler, 1987; Nilsson, 1932). Given that the snake (serpent) was a symbol of good and wisdom in the Minoan (and other Earth Goddess) religions, it should not seem surprising that the (PIE) invaders' version of the conflict came to dominate. In fact, much of this symbolism (of the feminine associated symbols as evil) persists: e.g. in the Biblical story of Eve (and the serpent). The ancient Greek and contemporary symbols of the medical profession, however, hark back to the reverence of an earlier time. As the site of Delphi (famous from pre-Greek times for its *female*, prophetic oracles) was also sacred to the Minoans, it becomes apparent that the "killing of the snake" represents the overthrow of the Old Religion. Myths concerning the "Amazons" (warrior women) have also been interpreted as evidence of continued opposition to the "New Order" brought by the PIE Horse Cult. As can be attested to throughout history [see Eisler, 1987], overcoming opposition to a new rule is facilitated by the adaptation (or co-opting) of the symbolism of the opposing group [e.g. the pagan accoutrements of Christmas: the yule log, holly and ivy, etc.]. Manipulation of Goddess symbols by the newcomers (i.e. induced semantic shift) can also be seen in the reversal of the denotation of "black", from fertile (symbolizing the life-giving soil = good), and "white" (the color of (dead) bones = bad, evil), to the opposite meaning in Western culture (Eisler, 1987; Gimbutas, 1989). In fact, the so-called "Greek" Pantheon appears replete



with borrowed Minoan concepts and terminology, including the home of the Gods, Mt. Olympus, and arguably, Zeus himself. Commenting on the origins of the latter, Grant (1987) suggests that in the Minoan Pantheon, Zeus was probably only a minor weather deity in control of lightning and thunder, etc., whose home, not surprisingly, was found in a high place, such as a mountain (a Minoan "olympus"). The role of a god whose power was one of flash, noise, and destruction would understandably not have been as prominent in a religion focussed on the cycle of life and nurturing (i.e. the Goddess religion), as it would in a belief system glorifying the prowess of the warrior (i.e. the Horse Cult).

Other Minoan loan words include the following place names:

Mukēnai: "Mycenae" [Baldi, 1983: 67]  
Athēnai: "Athena" (i.e. Athens; and/or goddess, Athena) [ibid]  
Olympus: "mountain" [Nilsson, 1932: 236]  
Ida: "forest-clad mountain" [ibid]

In a paper entitled "Homeric *ανθος*" [anthos], in Chadwick and Baumbach's discussion of Mycenaean Greek and Linear B (1963: 271-278), J. M. Aitchison provides - albeit unintentionally - additional evidence of the influence of Minoan on the development of the Greek language. In Aitchison's questioning of the traditional interpretation of *ανθος* [anthos] as "flower", we note the similarities between *ανθος* and the above cited Minoan word "Athēnai", the name of the goddess after whom the city of Athens was named, and who has been identified as the pre-Indo-European Earth/fertility Goddess (see Eisler, 1987). The proposed relationship between *ανθος* and Minoan "Athēnai" is based on Aitchison's disagreement with the traditional definition of the "word (and its derivatives)...(having)..to be regarded as metaphorical in at least six of the contexts in which it occurs" (p. 271). He proposes that a more "natural meaning" for *ανθος* based on analysis of the contexts in which it is found, is "upward, visible growth" (p. 272). This interpretation agrees with other "earth/fertility goddess" connotations to be found in adjectives derived from *ανθος* which the author cites to support the meaning "growth". Aitchison offers the following examples (p. 273):

*ενανθης* [enanthis]: "well-growing"  
*βαθια* [bathia]: "thickly growing"  
*ανινοθε* [aninothe]: "spring forth, rise upwards"

This term also appears as a medical term, *αντι προσοπυ* [anthi prosopou]: "breaking out, rash, eruption".

Aitchison also comments on an apparent connection between *ανθος* and the Greek Pantheon. He states (p. 275):

Underlying the twelve Olympians was the primitive (sic) worship of the fertility of Nature: this mysterious productive power is ascribed generally to Demeter or Gē, but also to others. Several gods were worshipped under cult names derived from *ανθος*; these cults seem to have been connected with vegetation in general, rather than with flowers alone.

It is therefore curious that despite the additional evidence the author himself presents, he seems unable to acknowledge the obvious relationship between the origins of the term *ανθος* and the fertility cults. While noting (p. 276) the use of *ανθεια* [anthea] in reference to the goddesses (rather than gods) Hera (*Ανθεια ι Ηρα* [anthea i Hera]), and Aphrodite (*ανθεια Αφροδιτη* [anthea Aphrodite]) - and even going so far as to cite Welcker's theory that Hera was "originally an earth goddess" and that "she was...undoubtedly connected with growth and fertility... (since)...ears of corn were called *ανθεια Ηερης*, [anthea Heris], Aitchison balks - stating that such theories have "met with strong opposition" (p. 276). It is thus ironic that Aitchison, having reviewed the etymological theories on the origins of *ανθος*., yet unable to accept a Minoan contribution to Greek, bemoans the "absence of convincing cognates in other IE languages" (p. 277)!

#### 4. A brief sketch of the development of the Ancient Greek dialects

On the development of the Greek language, it has been commented:

the evidence of the Greek dialects and their distribution points to a rather late date, say around 1400, for the introduction of Greek speech to the Peloponese....Greeks were in Thessaly before they appeared in the Peloponese, but...we have no linguistic evidence for Greek speech in any part of Greece prior to 1600 B.C. (Drews, 1988: 38).

A number of theories have been forwarded concerning the development of the Greek language from Proto-Indo-European - a summary of which may be found in the Appendix. One of the earliest theories, based on the "Volkswanderung" hypothesis of the movement of the PIEs, was the "wave theory" proposed by Caskey [1952 - cited in Drews, 1988] to account for the Ancient Greek dialects. According to Caskey, each dialect represents the arrival of a new wave of (PIE) immigrants. This theory was mainly disproved by Porzig [1954 - cited in Drews, 1988] when he showed that Caskey's "first wave dialect", Ionic, was not the most ancient Greek dialect, and that Ionic and Arcado-Cypriote were both descended from a common "East Greek" (Drews, p. 38).

Risch [1955 - cited in Drews, p. 39], elaborating on Porzig's ideas, proposed the existence in the Late Helladic period (ca. 1400 B.C.) of two dialects: one in the Mycenaean South (i.e. central Greece, the Peloponese, and Crete - roughly equivalent to Porzig's "East Greek"), and the other in the North (i.e. North Greek in Boeotia). Of particular interest to the reader, however, should be the mechanisms Risch suggests to account for the creation of dialectal differences. First, he suggests a divergence of dialects from a common Proto-Greek that evolved in Greece, rather than Porzig's waves of (non-native) immigrants. In addition, the sociolinguistic processes the author invokes to explain these variations are thought-provoking. He suggests that the Ionic dialect emerged when the socio-economic climate was such that the speakers of South Greek came under influence (or dominance) of North Greek speakers, resulting in a status shift lending prestige to the latter dialect; and therefore encouraging South Greek speakers to adopt characteristics of

North Greek into their speech, presumably to facilitate social advancement. His finding that the South Greek Arcado-Cypriote dialects were more conservative may also be accounted for by Risch's theory for the following reasons. Since the Cypriots lived at a considerable distance from the North Greek strongholds, they would have been under less direct control (and/or influence) of the North Greeks.

Risch proposes a similar explanation for the Aeolic dialects, which date to ca. 1200 B.C., and are believed to represent the last of the Mycenaean Greek languages [encoded in Linear B script - see Chadwick and Baumbach, 1963], with one variation. In the case of Aeolic, he suggests a North substrate was overlaid by a South Greek superstrate when the South became dominant, with North-West Greek and Doric preserving more North Greek characteristics. Risch thus hypothesizes that both dialects had arisen from Proto-Greek, in Greece, and as a result of a "language spread over a geographical area too large and politically divided to be linguistically unified" (Drews, p. 39). The contribution of such an analysis of the development of the Greek dialects to historical linguistics is that it begins to capture, or attempt to account for, the complexity of the human processes involved in language change - as does the more recent "takeover" hypothesis (e.g. Drews, 1989). All of which appears to support the benefit of interdisciplinary approaches (in this case, linguistic and archaeological) to comprehensive language reconstructions.

Drews (p. 40) identifies the crux of the problem in the following quotation:

Today many linguists are quite aware that linguistic change has not always proceeded at a glacial pace. In preliterate societies, language may change rather rapidly: literature has a conservative influence upon both vocabulary and grammar, and a people without literature might be relatively uninhibited in its linguistic innovation. Arabic, for example, has changed less in thirteen hundred years than some nonliterary languages have changed in the last two centuries. It is quite certain that the rate of linguistic change for Greek was far more rapid before Homer's time than after. The same may have been true for Sanskrit before and after the Vedas were composed.

In societies in chaos, as appears to have been the case in "Greece" upon the arrival of the "Greeks", the loss of literacy and the conflict of ideologies (among others) may easily have resulted in such rapid change as suggested in the quotation above.

##### **5. Conclusions: The Goddess and the Horsemen**

In this paper, two basic questions concerning the origins of the Greek language were considered: (1) who were the original speakers of the language which is now referred to as Greek, and (2) how did their language come to dominate and/or characterize a particular region and people. The result of the examination of some of the issues surrounding the origins and movements of the (Proto) Indo-Europeans and the coming of the Greeks to Greece appears to be supportive of the "Horse and Chariot" theories of language spread, and a rejection of the "Volkswanderung" as insufficient to account for the linguistic and archaeological research findings. In addition, the proposed "Volkswanderung", or mass migration, was seen to rest on questionable scholarly presuppositions concerning the Aryan race (Drews, 1988, Eisler, 1987). It has thus been concluded that the search for an explanation for the development of the Indo-European languages from Proto-Indo-European should focus on processes both attested to in records of the period, and having analogues

throughout history (i.e. small scale immigration and/or military takeovers). In conclusion, the linguistic and archaeological evidence appears to strongly suggest that the "coming of the Greeks to Greece" may best be characterized as a military conquest (or "takeover" in the terms of Drews, 1988) by a relatively small number of warrior kings, who by virtue of their superiority in chariot warfare were able to impose much of their language and/or culture on the non-Greek Minoan civilization, although vestiges of the latter remain.

## NOTES

- 1 For comparison, consider attempting to pair the technical changes of the last decade (computer chips, etc.) with the migration/movement of a particular group of people.
- 2 Although a discussion of the ego- and/or ethnocentrism implicit in the denigration of ancient religions to the status of "cults" and/or "mythology" (i.e. fairy tales) is beyond the scope of this paper, these problems may be recognized as deriving from the same form of theoretical (and/or ideological) bias that led to the "Northern homeland" hypotheses examined earlier.

## APPENDIX

Some of the linguistic differences between the East (or Risch's South) and West (Risch's North) dialects are summarized below (from Baldi, 1983: 68-70) [for further discussion of the Ancient Greek dialects, see Bubenik, 1983; Grant, 1987; Nagy, 1970; Williams, 1983]:

### [A] **Ancient Greek dialects**

#### East/South Greek Dialects

1. Attic-Ionic: "ē" vs West/North "ā" < \*ā, cf. mētēr, Doric mātēr - "mother"
2. Attic dialect: or "koinē"- became dominant (as a result of ascendancy of Athens)
3. Ionic
4. Aeolic: Lesbos, Thessaly, Boetia
5. Arcado-Cyprian: "in" for Attic-Ionic "en"

#### West/North Greek

Characterized by:

- "ē" not "ē" (as above)
- retention of intervocalic t (not s, cf. Cretan portí, protí)
- articles toí, taí not hoi, hai

Dialects:

1. Northwest Greek: Delphian, Locrian, Elean
2. Doric: Laconian, Heracleian, Megarian Corinthian, Argolic, Rhodian, Coan, Theran, Cyrenaean, Cretan, Sicilian Doric

[B] **Classical Greek**

Consonants:        p        t        k  
                      b        d        b  
                      ph      th      kh  
                      m        n  
                                      s  
                                      l  
                                      r

Vowels:            i                    u  
                      e                    o  
                                      a

Ablaut: qualitative

e.g. pémai "fly": pot-é "flight": e-pt-ómen "flew"  
      dérk-o-mai "see": dé-dork-a "saw": édrak-on "saw"

quantitative

e.g. patēr "father" (nom. sg.): patéres (nom. pl.): patrós (gen.sg.)  
      kúōn "dog" (nom. sg.): kunós (gen. sg.)

Breathings: smooth (´)

rough (˘) <IE \*s: Lat. sex. Gk. héks "six"

Morphology: Cases: nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, vocative

Genders: masculine, feminine, neuter

Numbers: singular, plural, dual

Noun declensions: ā-declension [oikí-ā "house"]

                                      o-declension [lóg-os "word"]

                                      consonantal declension [phúlak-s "watchman"]

Verb: voices (active, passive, middle)

      moods (indicative, subjunctive, optative, imperative)

      tense (present, imperfect, future, aorist, perfect,

          pluperfect, future perfect)

Basic Word Order: SVO

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