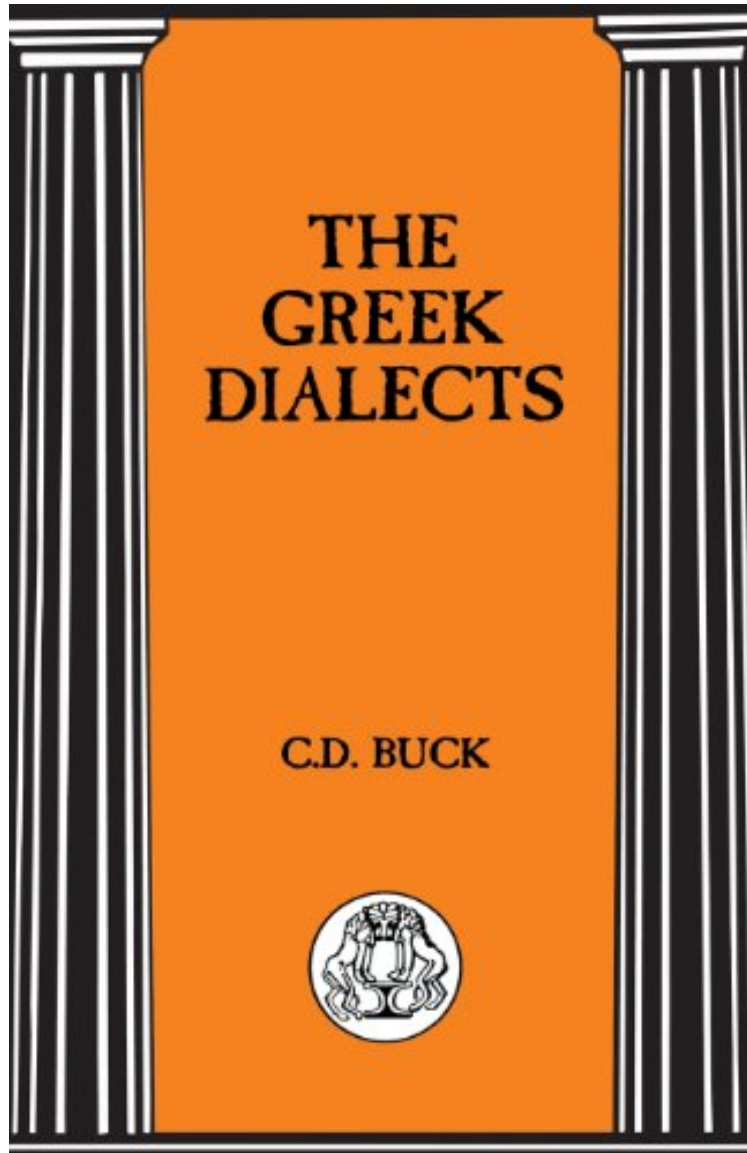


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The Greek Dialects (Bcp Advanced Language S)

Carl D. Buck

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Carl D. Buck : The Greek Dialects (Bcp Advanced Language S) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Greek Dialects (Bcp Advanced Language S):

58 of 58 people found the following review helpful. One of the Two Best English Books for Ancient Dialects By Cinna the Poet I originally titled this review "The Best Book for Ancient Dialects", but since writing my that another book has come out, which I just as warmly recommend. In fact, I recommend getting both and using them in conjunction. I'll tell you how below, but let me first describe Buck. This book, originally called Introduction to the Study of the

Greek Dialects, is a very good and relatively simple way to get into the subject. All the previous ones, if you could even find them, were large, complex, dated and almost always in German (or worse--Latin!). Buck (author also of the superb Dictionary of Selected Synonyms in the Principal Indo-European Languages) writes in a pleasant and approachable English all throughout. I bought mine some years ago and had to order it from .co.uk, but it's much easier to get hold of nowadays; there's the UCP copy and also the Bristol one. The price is quite reasonable for either one. There are two parts to it: "Grammar of the Dialects" (Phonology, Inflections, Word-Formation, Syntax, Summaries, and Survivals; 180pp) and "Selected Inscriptions" (by region, 120pp). There're also some appendices, including a nice little glossary. [By the way, for modern dialects--which are honestly more interesting--the standard and best introductory work is N.G. Kontosopoulos' (also spelled Kondosopoulos'), *Dialektoi kai Idiomata ths Neas Ellinikhs* (Dialects and Idioms of Modern Greek, 1981--ISBN 9603332577), though you may have to go to Athens to get it. Albert Thumb, who wrote the *Handbuch der griechischen Dialekte* (on ancient Greek) also wrote a *Handbuch der neugriechischen Volkssprache*, which is excellent (though NOT for beginning language-learners) and has been translated into English as *Handbook of the Modern Greek Language* (Library of Congress Catalogue Number 64-23434, ASIN B002N5YBZ0 or B0007DKLZE). After a Smyth-like description of grammar, there are a hundred pages of "folk" and "artistic" texts, with thirty pages in dialect (incl. Pontian, Magna Graecian, Cypriot, and even some Tsaconian) and a glossary.] At any rate, for the ancient stuff, I recommend getting Buck along with the new book by Stephen Colvin, *A Historical Greek Reader: Mycenaean to the Koine*. A bit more expensive, but well worth it if you can get it used. (For one thing, he uses laryngeals, which came about after Buck.) I had a class on ancient dialects at Ohio State; the class text was Colvin but most of us had both books in hand. Several students found Buck more approachable; others of us, including me, found Colvin so. You can read reviews on that book's page; in brief he starts with a lengthy and useful introduction/overview (71pp.), followed by 7pp. of Mycenaean and 110pp. of alphabetic inscriptions, by dialect-group and dialect. Then 81pp. of literary texts, by dialect. There's a general index, but no glossary, glosses running throughout. Because he includes the literary texts there are fewer inscriptions than in Buck, inscriptions being generally truer indicators of spoken dialect, despite frequent contamination from the koine. The reason I found him more approachable is that, besides the fact that his commentaries are rather fuller than Buck's, his book is more clearly organized by dialect, rather than Buck's general discussion of the phonology/grammar of all the dialects before going through them one by one. So, finally, what I recommend is going through Colvin and, after working through each dialect, turning to Buck for exposure to more of that dialect's inscriptions before going on to the next dialect in Colvin. You might also like to have Sihler's *New Comparative Grammar of Greek and Latin* at hand, which has replaced Buck's comparative grammar, (and, if you can afford it (which I can't), Beekes' *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, which should, I imagine, have superseded Frisk and Chantraine.) I hope this helps. Very best of luck!

24 of 24 people found the following review helpful. Useful though sadly predates understanding of Mycenaean and laryngeals

By Christopher Culver

Carl D. Buck's *THE GREEK DIALECTS: Grammar, Selected Inscriptions, Glossary* is the standard handbook for understanding the world outside of Attic and is an essential resource for the classicist or Indo-Europeanist. The grammar is divided into phonology, inflection, word-formation and syntax. In the phonology section, Buck simply lists each Proto-Greek phoneme and how it varies in each dialect. In the section on inflection, he sketches the ramifications of phonological differences in noun declension and verb conjugation. Ditto for the section on word formation. "Syntax" for Buck mainly means differences in the uses of the cases and verb moods. What is most helpful about the grammar is that he lists the peculiarities of each dialect. This enables Greek students trained in Attic to know what to expect before they approach a work in Ionic, such as Herodotus. The second part of that work, dealing with inscriptions, shows what evidence we have for each of the Greek dialects. The real drawback to Buck's work is its age. Last revised in 1955, it predates the understanding of Mycenaean data gained by the deciphering of Linear B, which somewhat importantly changes our view of the dialects. He also wrote before widespread acceptance of laryngeal theory, which complicates the issue of differing prothetic vowels. Nonetheless, in spite of its age, *THE GREEK DIALECTS* is a book worth making use of. Now, if only some modern scholar could make the necessary updates...

18 of 20 people found the following review helpful. OUT OF THE ATTIC

By DAVID BRYSON

In the greatest era of ancient Greek literature, the 5th century BC and prior, the Greek-speaking community was not large nor even particularly extensive. Greece itself is a smallish country, and even when we have added the Greek settlements in Asia Minor, Sicily, Cyprus and the nearer islands we have not exactly built up a vast population. Yet this one language in that period was spoken in something like 50 clearly distinct dialects. It was only after the Macedonian empire was established that Attic, the dialect of Athens, became dominant in popular speech as it had long been in literary idiom and Greek finally became almost as unified as Latin had been from the start and so remained through the long centuries of Rome's expansion and dominion. Buck's clear and methodical categorisation of the dialects came too early to benefit from the decipherment of the Linear B tablets. The discovery of a dialect so ancient naturally affects how we trace the lineage of the later dialects. However the impact of this discovery is not as drastic as we are sometimes led to think, and it has plenty of parallels in classical scholarship. Back in the 19th century Baehrens redrew the hierarchy of the MSS of Catullus. More recently Enoch Powell's *The Evolution of the Gospel* upset the adherents of the usual view of the sequence of their authorship, a view more dependent on divine revelation

than on scientific textual criticism, and the consequences of that are far more subversive of our culture than anything Linear B can do. How Buck groups and categorises the dialects will long continue to be subject to later analysis. What does not go away is his patient and methodical exposition of two things - in what ways they differ and what the linguistic processes are behind this differentiation. For the serious modern student of ancient Greek I should say that Buck needs to be introduced earlier into the process than was done in my time. So long as you stick with Attic, you can treat Greek as a matter of declensions and conjugations the way we do with Latin. The next step in my time was Homer, which seemed like a different language, and we were 'taught' a good number of things that were plain nonsense but nonsense the examiners had also been taught, and especially things we had to remember by rote with no idea of how they came to mean what we were told they meant. Zigzag back from there to Herodotus, whose Ionic dialect is actually the nearest to Attic, and the memory-strain was becoming excessive without a proper concept of how and why such-and-such a formation came to signify what it signified. Add in then the lyric poets and we were finding that exactly the same word might be a future indicative in Attic but an aorist subjunctive in the Aeolic dialects and there was a real need for a road-map, but nobody was providing that unless one picked Comparative Philology as a special subject. There is no real point in blundering through without a theoretical basis for it all, because that involves straining the memory and dulling the intellect. No doubt Buck has been superseded in all manner of ways, but if you are serious about getting to grips with the wonderful Greek language this book needs to be by your hand at quite an early stage. Any initial difficulty it may give you is repaid a thousandfold as you gain the unique thrill of confidence that comes from the understanding of ancient Greek.

Part of the Advanced Language Series, this is a revised edition of "The Greek Dialects" published by Chicago University Press in 1955. Its virtues were comparative clarity and conciseness on a subject too often treated, for example by contemporary work in German, with prolixity and obscurity. It became the standard scholarly introduction and reference work on questions of dialect; and though much valuable additional work has been done on the subject since its appearance, it largely retains its original virtues and still provides a valuable starting point of reference. The Advanced Language Series reissues important books on Greek and Latin Language (and associated areas) which have been unavailable for some time or have not previously appeared in readily affordable paperback format. They are intended for the reference shelves of all scholars and students of classical languages.