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**Geography, History and Dialect: the case of Oropos**

1. For all multilingual or polylectal societies some questions must be asked at an early stage: are the speakers aware of the existence of linguistic varieties? How do they distinguish them? How do they use them? How wide is their active or passive knowledge? How do they rate the linguistic variety which they mainly use? And what about the varieties which they do not use, those which belong to different communities? However, to move the attention from the language to the speaker means also to think in terms of the historical events in which the speaker is involved. In its turn this leads us to consider the link between dialect and history and dialect and culture.

I have discussed elsewhere some of the more general problems<sup>1</sup>; here I intend to concentrate on a subset of questions. I shall conclude with an analysis of the evidence offered by the inscriptions of Oropos, but I must first illustrate through other evidence the specific set of problems with which I am concerned. What were the role and status of dialect (one's own and that of others) in the texture of normal Greek life? Note that I do not ask what is the role of language in Greek society. The latter question would lead us to discuss the art of persuasion, the way in which the eloquent man is or is not valued by his peers, the contrast between λόγος and ἔργον, the various types of speech acts, etc. By contrast my question is geared at a view of Greece as a multilingual or polylectal society. We may reformulate the problem and ask at the beginning at least what difference it made to speak one or the other dialect, to be a speaker of Attic rather than of Boeotian. How were the various dialects rated, how were their differences exploited?

2. Before we plunge into our evidence (or lack of it) we ought to ask what sort of data we need; a look at some evidence from other periods and other cultures (not too exotic) may give us a hint of what we would like to find.

Consider for instance some lines from an obscure poem about silk worms and their cultivation written in 1779 by an equally obscure author, Antonio Purqueddu, both in dialect (Sardinian) and in the literary language (Italian); the text is taken from

<sup>1</sup> A. Morpurgo Davies, «The Greek Notion of Dialect», *Actes Pont-à-Mousson* 7-27.

the beginning of the 'canto primo', which follows an introductory defence of the author's decision to write in both Sardinian and Italian<sup>2</sup>.

Sardinian	Italian
Ne s'offendant'is damas, e segnoras,	Nè s'offendan le dame, e le signore,
Poch'in linguaggiu patriu imoi cumpongu,	Perch'in patrio linguaggio or io compongo
Chi serbi po isplacairi a is serbidoras	Che serve per spiegare al servidore
Is utilis prezettus, chi propongu	Quegli utili precetti, che propongo

*Let not dames and ladies be offended! because I now compose in local language! which is useful to explain to the servants! the useful precepts that I propose.*

Here an erudite data collector deliberately exhibits a mixture of defiance and (mock) humility. It is odd to write in the local dialect but things are made better by adding a translation into the better known Italian language. The dialect will at least be useful for the servants. It is difficult to know how much of this is written tongue in cheek but consider how clear it is that the author sees Sardinian as a language of lower diffusion and less status than Italian: he is already suffering of the inferiority complex of the dialect speaker confronted with a standard language. Classical Greece did not have a standard language but did the speakers think in terms of superior and inferior dialects?

Another example. In 1519 when Charles of Habsburg, the future Charles V, then King of Spain, approached the German electors hoping to be chosen for the German kingship he wrote from Spain in German, though he had been brought up in Belgium speaking French. In his letter to Frederick of Saxony he stated «das wir ain Teutscher von gebluet und gemuet, von gepurt und zungen sein». Later on in the declaration issued after his election he committed himself (3 July 1519) «in schriften und handlungen des reichs kain ander zunge oder sprach gebrauchen lassen, wann die Teutsch oder Lateinisch zung»<sup>3</sup>.

Clearly the decision to put on a «German speaker» appearance and the commitment to German (in preference to French) was part of a general *captatio benevolentiae*. German speech stood for German devotion; the declaration that German and Latin were the two acceptable languages was a declaration of patriotism.

We know that for Herodotus (viii 144) the Greek language was part of the definition of being Greek but were the dialects similarly considered? Was the Boeotian dialect, for instance, treated as a) part of the essential characteristics of a Boeotian, b) something which the Boeotian treasured and was proud of?

For my final example I return to Italy and to the small pamphlet *de vulgari eloquentia* written by Dante in Latin probably in the first years of the fourteenth century

<sup>2</sup> Purqueddu, *Il tesoro della Sardegna ne' bachi e gelsi. Poema sardo e italiano (De su tesoru de sa Sardigna)*, Cagliari 1779, 28.

<sup>3</sup> R.E. Keller, *The German Language*, London 1978, 348.

(1302-4?) and posthumously published. At some stage in his attempt to define what language poets should use Dante goes through an analysis of the contemporary linguistic varieties in Italy looking among the 'quam multibus varietatibus' of the vulgar language for the most dignified one ('decentiorem loquelam'). He starts with the Romans (I xi 2):

Dicimus igitur Romanorum - non vulgare, sed potius trisiloquium - ytalorum vulgarium omnium esse turpissimum: nec mirum, cum etiam morum habitumque deformitate pro cunctis videantur fetere. Dicunt enim: «Messere, quinto dici».

*I say then that that of the Romans - not vulgar speech but blether - is the ugliest of all Italic vulgar languages; no wonder since they seem to stink more than anyone else for the turpitude of their customs and habits. For they say: 'Sir, what do you say?'*

Later on, discussing the more acceptable varieties, Dante turns to the Apulians:

Apuli quoque vel a sui acerbitate vel finitimorum suorum contiguitate, qui Romani et Marchiani sunt, turpiter barbarizant; dicunt enim: «Volzera che chiangiasse lo quatraro» (I xii 7)

*The Apulians too horribly barbarize either for their own roughness or for the contact with their neighbours who are Roman and Marchians; they say: 'I would like the boy to weep'.*

We have here a very impressionistic account of the various dialects with, in all instances, a severe aesthetic judgement of a purely subjective nature. Linguistically this is a very shoddy discussion; ethnolinguistically it is interesting not least because of the classification of dialects that it provides. Do we have something similar for Greek?

3. The reply is simple but dismal. None of these pieces of evidence can be easily matched in Greek. Whatever we say about the problems that I mentioned must be the result of a patient - and speculative - work of reconstruction. Where do we begin?

Attica as usual provides most data. Consider Solon's trimeters reported by Aristotle because they mention the cancellation of debts and the slaves freed by his  $\sigma\epsilon\iota\sigma\acute{\alpha}\chi\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha$ . Solon (36, 11 West) regrets the plight of those Athenians who through misery are obliged to be sold abroad and no longer use the Attic language because they have wandered too extensively. Here the regret for the forgetfulness of one's own language makes sense only if this is associated with loss of personal identity and, to use an anachronism, loss of national identity. Almost two centuries later we find the Old Oligarch (Ps.Xen., *Ath. Pol.*, ii 7) deploring the changes undergone by Attic through mixture with other dialects and with foreign languages; this linguistic 'contamination'

is obviously felt to endanger the integrity of the country<sup>4</sup>. Also at the end of the fifth century Thucydides writes some significant words in the speech with which Nicias addresses the troops before the last disastrous battle of the Sicilian expedition. The sailors are told (vii 63) not to forget how important it had been for them to be taken for Athenians even when they were not and to be the wonder of the whole Greece for their knowledge of the (Attic) language and their imitation of Attic manners. Conceivably Nicias may be talking to foreign mercenaries and may be seen as extolling 'Greek' over the barbaric languages but it is also possible, and indeed more likely, that he is extolling the virtues of Attic to the speakers of other dialects.

In Attica then the dialect was an object of pride. There and elsewhere it was also used—as one might have expected—to identify the geographical origin of individuals (much as local accents are nowadays). In the *Choephoroe* (563-4) Orestes mentions that he will approach the Mycenae palace which was his by right of birth speaking Phocian in order not to be recognized. In the fourth century Demosthenes (xvi 2) attacks his contenders in one of the political speeches saying that, were it not for the fact that he knew them personally and that they were speaking in Attic (καὶ τὸ τῆ φωνῆ Ἰατρικιστί), the content of their speech would have convinced him that they were Arcadians and Laconians respectively. A similar point arises in another Demosthenes speech (lvii 18) where Euxitheos's father is accused of being foreigner because he ἐξέμιζεν, i.e. spoke in the wrong accent or did not speak in Attic<sup>5</sup>.

But should we think that the dialect was also a factor in ethnic identification? Was it something which individual states would have wanted e.g. to export through some form of cultural imperialism? Or at least something which needed to be retained as a necessary counterpart of local autonomy? And, most important, how far can we generalize from one region to the other, from one dialect to the other?

In other words should we assume that for its speakers or writers a dialect, any dialect, could be as important in providing a focus for «national» identity as German was at the beginning of the nineteenth century? This was the time when in his *Reden an die deutschen Nation* (1808) Fichte explained ([vii 460] 407-9) that the first original and truly natural boundaries of the states are their inner, spiritual boundaries and that whoever speaks the same language is naturally linked together by a number of invisible ties.

Also should we imagine that any of the Greek city-states would have been interested at any stage in deliberately favouring the diffusion of its dialect in the same way in which Britain in the mid-1830's, on Macaulay's advice, decided to withdraw all financial support from the teaching of Indian languages which it had previously encouraged and turn it into support for the teaching of English to the Indians?<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the discussion by A. Cassio, «Attico 'volgare' e Ioni in Atene alla fine del 5. secolo a.C.», *AION Sez. Ling.* 3, 1981, 79 ff.

<sup>5</sup> The verb ἐμίζεν probably implies contact with other Greek dialects rather than with foreign ('barbaric') languages.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. P. Moon, *The British Conquest and Dominion of India*, London 1989, 465 f.

The evidence I have just quoted for Attic is ambiguous when we try to distinguish between dialect/language as a cultural focus and dialect/language as simple marker of provenance, though it may favour the first interpretation. We have a clearer text with Thucydides's account of the catalogue of the allies in the Sicilian expedition (vii 57, 2). The Athenians, we are told, *qua* Ionians were ready to attack Doric Syracuse and came of their own volition; together with them came the Lemnians and the Imbrians, the Aeginites and the Histiaeans of Euboea all of whom still shared the same language and customs (τῆ αὐτῆ φωνῆ καὶ νομίμοις ἔτι χρώμενοι). The reference here is to Athens' colonies and the implication is that to share the same language and customs meant fundamentally to share the same motives and aims. It is difficult to deny that here, as in the Herodotus passage (viii 144) about τὸ Ἑλληνικόν, which is identified by shared language and customs, language is seen in a higher light as a unifying element. But how widespread was this concept?

4. I doubt that we can reach a clear-cut solution but it is worthwhile to turn away from Athens and the literary sources and look at the actual evidence we have for the use of, and attitudes to, dialect in various localities. Here the main evidence that we can use is provided by the inscriptions; hence what we are likely to find concerns the written rather than the spoken language—with the additional difficulty that the question of literacy raises its head.

I start with a short and perhaps trivial account of the linguistic situations of two regions, Laconia and Boeotia, which have been discussed and indeed contrasted before—though perhaps not in this manner. I shall then turn directly to Oropos.

4.1. Any discussion of Sparta must be brief—through empathy and through lack of evidence. The official reputation was, needless to say, one of laconism and illiteracy. Ion of Chios (fr 107 v. Blumenthal) said that «the battlements of Sparta are not words»; Plato (*Leg.* 610 E) reported that Sparta was βραχύλογος as contrasted with Athens φιλόλογος and πολύλογος. Much later Plutarch gave an example of what λακωνίζειν meant (*de garr.* 513 A): if someone were to come and ask: 'Is Socrates in' the polite reply would be 'He is not in but he is at the bank' (οὐκ ἔνδον, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τᾶς τραπέζης); a grudging reply would be 'Not in' (οὐκ ἔνδον), but if one wanted to λακωνίζειν he could even drop 'in' and use the simple negative (οὐ). No doubt Xenophon's report of the letter written by the Spartan general Hippocrates to Sparta in 411 (*Hell.* i 1, 23) reflects the same habits: Ἐρρει τὰ κᾶλα, Μινδαρος ἀπεσσεύα. Πεινῶντι τῶνδρες. Ἀπορίομεν τί χρῆ δρᾶν. «Ships are lost. Mindaros died. The men are hungry. Do not know what to do». The author of the *Dissoi Logoi* reports (2, 10) that for the Laconians it was a good thing that the children did not learn μωσικά καὶ γράμματα while for the Ionians it was a bad thing. In a fit of rhetoric Isocrates in the *Panathenaion* (209) argued that the Laconians did not even know their letters. In other words the official picture starting with the fifth century is that of a country not interested in eloquence or in learning, the exact opposite of Ionia and Athens. The dialect itself is taken to be the least musical of them all (Paus. 3, 15, 2: ἥκιστα παρεχο-

μένη τὸ εὐφώνιον)<sup>7</sup>. This is 'outside' information; can we say anything at all about the Laconians' attitude to their own dialect?

First we must dismiss the charge of total illiteracy; recent studies of the question<sup>8</sup> lead to the conclusion that literacy did exist in Sparta (we would not otherwise have the documents we have) but in the classical period was definitely restricted. The paucity of the actual inscriptions is remarkable. Hansen's edition of Greek verse inscriptions<sup>9</sup> includes for the period before the fourth century 12 Laconian texts vs. 272 Attic ones; for the fourth century 4 Laconian and 198 Attic texts. Before the third century there are only two state documents from Sparta both of the fifth or fourth century: a broken list of war contributions<sup>10</sup> and the fifth or fourth century treaty of alliance with the Erxadieis (?) published by Peek.<sup>11</sup> Private documents were obviously more numerous (dedications, manumissions etc., list of names) but still very few in comparison with any other region. For the period from the seventh century to the end of the fifth century Boring (op. cit.) lists some 180 items but most of them consist of a single name or a single letter. Bourguet<sup>12</sup>, in a book which Meillet thought was the only discussion of Greek dialects which presented the facts in their historical reality, highlighted two features of Laconian documentation: first, a notable lack of interest in the regularization of the spelling both in general terms and for specific words; secondly, a lack of interest in the dialect itself.

We may now look at some of the evidence which illustrates both phenomena. Consider for instance three of the best attested phonological changes:

a) in Laconian at some stage intervocalic [s] of secondary origin was replaced by [h] and then lost: hence forms like νικάῃας and νικάας which replace νικάσας;

b) the aspirated dental, normally written <θ> in Greek, comes to be written <σ> probably to indicate the change from an aspirate to a fricative ('Ἀσάναια, ἀνέσηκε);

c) initial [w], originally written with a <F>, probably becomes a labial or labiodental fricative and is written <β> (Βοινέας).

It is striking that in our texts there is no clear chronological layering for the various spellings but these seem to coexist for a long period. The standard example is that of the name of Artemis Ortheia who had a remarkable sanctuary near Sparta. Woodward<sup>13</sup> collected and dated the forms of the name written on texts (mostly on minor votive objects) which he thought belonged to the sixth century and earlier. The rel-

<sup>7</sup> I owe this reference to Albio Cassio who discusses it elsewhere in this volume.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. P. A. Cartledge, «Literacy in the Spartan Oligarchy», *JHS* 98, 1978, 25-37; T. A. Boring, *Literacy in Ancient Sparta* (*Mnemosyne Suppl.* 54), Leiden 1979.

<sup>9</sup> Hansen *CEG*. The second volume dedicated to the fourth century inscriptions includes an additional list of earlier texts.

<sup>10</sup> *IG V* 1:1; Jeffery, *LSAG* 201 nos 55, 56; Meiggs-Lewis 67; new fragment to be published by A. P. Matthaiou.

<sup>11</sup> *SEG* 26: 461, 28: 408, 32: 398, 35: 326; scholars cannot agree on the dating and this oscillates from 470 to 430, to 400, to 390.

<sup>12</sup> B. Bourguet, *Le dialecte laconien*, Paris 1927.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. J. E. Hondius and A. M. Woodward, «Laconia: I. Inscriptions», *ABSA* 24, 1919-20 and 1920-21, 88-143, especially 116-7.

ative dating is likely to be correct even if the *terminus ante quem* for the stratigraphy must be lowered<sup>14</sup>. We find the name written *Φορθα*[λα, *Φορθασία*, *Φροθασία*, *Φροθαία*, *Φο(ρ)θελαι*<sup>15</sup>. Given the variety of spellings we may well hesitate to take these texts as contemporary but a worse problem arises. Linguistically there can be no doubt that the correct development is *Φορθασία/Φροθασία* > *Φορθαία/Φροθαία* > *Φορθελαι*<sup>16</sup>. Yet one of the earliest texts or even the earliest, an ivory carving, is dated by L. H. Jeffery (*LSAG* 198, no.1) to the late seventh century and carries the name *Φορθαία*<sup>17</sup>. In other words, secondary intervocalic [s] had already been lost by the seventh century, though much later we find forms with <σ> written. Moreover in the same context but later we find names like *Φριθσα* (Jeffery *LSAG* 198, no.2a) or *Χισμίδας* (ibid., no 6) which also keep an intervocalic [s]. Still later we have contemporaneously *Φορθελαι* and *Φορθαία* and we also find forms of the linguistically earlier *Φορθαία* attested later than *Φορθελαι*.

If we ignored this name, we might think that intervocalic [s] began to be replaced by <h> in the late fifth century<sup>18</sup>: *νικάῃας* (*IG V* 1: 213), *Ποηοιδᾶ*[νι] (ibid., 1228), etc.<sup>19</sup>. On the other hand some sherds from the sanctuary of Athena Khalkioikos, which according to Boring are dated to ca. 500 and presumably belong to the same dedicator, have alternative forms such as *Βασιλίδας* and *Β]αηιλ[ιδας*<sup>20</sup>. Here too inconsistency reigns.

Exactly the same sort of spelling inconsistency prevents us from establishing when the exact onset and spread of the other two changes occurred. The first Laconian evidence for a <β> spelling of words for which we would have expected <F> apparently belongs to the fifth century<sup>21</sup> but <F> remains in use in the successive centuries. Similarly, <σ> appears for <θ> starting from the fourth century at least (*IG V* 1: 255, 1317; *ABSA* 26, 1923-5, 233 no.25 [ἀνέσηκε]) but does not supersede the current use of <θ>.

Here too the name of Artemis Ortheia provides, as Bourguet knew, the best evidence for the *modus scribendi* which we have outlined. From the fourth century onwards we begin to find other ways of spelling it in addition to those already listed: *Φωρθελαι* after the adoption of the Ionic alphabet (*IG V* 1: 255, iv c.), *βωρθελαι* with β

<sup>14</sup> Cf. A. W. Johnston in Jeffery *LSAG* 447 f. with the reference to J. Boardman, *ABSA* 58, 1963, 1-7.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. also R. Arena, *Note Linguistiche. A proposito delle tavole di Eraclea*, Roma 1971, 66 f.

<sup>16</sup> H. Jucker and E. Risch, «Orthia oder Ortheia? - Zum Namen der Göttin 'Orthia'», *Hefte des Archäologischen Seminars der Universität Bern* 5 (1979), 27 (= *SEG* 30: 411).

<sup>17</sup> Arena, *op. cit.*, 67 doubts that Jeffery was right in reading θ for the letter which looks like φ on the actual text, but no one disputes that here too we are dealing with the same name.

<sup>18</sup> However cf. *νικάῃαντα* in *SEG* 26: 464, if correctly read and restored.

<sup>19</sup> The date of the Damonon inscription (*IG V* 1: 213) is disputed; cf. L. H. Jeffery, *ABSA* 83, 1988, 879-89, who suggests lowering it to the fourth century.

<sup>20</sup> Hondius and Woodward, *op. cit.* in note 13, 121 ff., nos. 81-4, 99.

<sup>21</sup> *IG V* 1: 1229 *Βοινέ*[ας]; cf. O. Masson, «Remarques sur la transcription du w par bêta et gamma», in H. Eichner, H. Rix eds., *Sprachwissenschaft und Philologie. Jacob Wackernagel und die Indogermanistik heute*, Koll. d. Idg. Gesellschaft 1988, Wiesbaden 1990, 202-212 at p. 204.

for *F*, βωρσέα with σ for θ; *F*ορθλα with ι for ετ etc. In general, spelling alternations seem to be present in all documents at a much higher degree than in other regions.

What we know then is that the Laconians wrote very little, wrote very briefly (if at all) and do not seem to have taken the trouble to introduce a standardized spelling; if they did so this may have been limited to a certain type of documents but did not influence e.g. private inscriptions. The Laconians also do not seem to have shown the slightest interest in the diffusion of their dialect abroad and the slightest pride in it. Bourguet (*op.cit.*) pointed out some of the relevant facts. The serpent-column put up at Delphi in 479/8 to celebrate the victories in the Persian war (Meiggs-Lewis 27, Schwyzer *DGE* 11) is written in Phocian letters and in a non-Laconian form of dialect though the Laconians may well have been responsible for the offering and their name appears first in the list before that of the Athenians. More surprisingly the stele which at Delos records the protection offered by the Spartans to the island (*IG V 1: 1564*), datable between the fifth and fourth century, is written for the first part in Spartan letters and dialect and for the second in Ionic letters and dialect. The second part includes the names of Sparta's ephoroi and of the kings, i.e. the most quintessentially Spartan part. We shall probably never know what prompted this odd linguistic and epigraphic split, but the extraordinary thing is that it was tolerated. In a sense it precludes the very early reception of koine influences in Laconian. In the third century the documents that we have preserve very little of the real dialect.

Bourguet did not find it difficult to show that this nonchalante attitude of the Spartans to their dialect changes after 146 B.C.; the newly formed confederation of Eleutherolaconians, with its purely nominal independence from the Romans, aims at remembering and restoring the old glory. Hence also a revival of the written dialect which is unique to this extent in Greece. The old traditions are consolidated and the victories in the boys games are celebrated in the most abstruse dialect, based partly on what was actually being said (rhotacism is a new phenomenon), partly perhaps on some erudite work of reconstruction of the past. Even the digamma, which previously did not appear frequently in the inscriptions, is resurrected for the purpose. There is little doubt that this new and complicated old-style reveals a pride in the language which is new to Sparta; at the same time some of the old habits are kept and there is a total reluctance to standardize the spelling. Between the second century B.C. and the end of the second century A.D. the same name is written in the dative Ὀρθείαι, Ὀρθεία, Ὀρθείη, Ὀρθία, Ὀρθέα, Φωρθέα, Βωρθέα, Βιωρθήα, Βωρσέα, Βορθα[α]; from the Flavian era it serves as an epitheton of Artemis whose name appears indifferently in the form Ἀρτέμιτι or Ἀρτέμιδι.<sup>22</sup> Bourguet highlighted this extraordinary revival but did not sufficiently emphasize how limited in scope or subject matter it was. We have nothing in dialect beyond the inscriptions about the boys games. Every other type of document—and at this stage there is a very large number of offi-

<sup>22</sup> The inscriptions are collected by A. M. Woodward in R. M. Dawkins ed., *The Sanctuary of Artemis Orthia at Sparta* [AO], London 1929, 285-377; the index (p. 417) gives a list of the various forms and new texts have not changed the picture substantially.

cial documents—is written in koine or in koine mixed with a very few doricisms. In a text such as *ABSA* 26, 1923-25, 206 no. 3 written on the base of a statue of Augustan times the only Doric feature is the presence of α where Attic would have η:

Ἄ πόλις  
Λεύκιον Καίσαρα  
Σε(β)αστοῦ υἱόν  
ἀρετᾶς ἔνεκεν  
καὶ εὐνοίας ἄς  
ἔχων διατετέ-  
λεκεν εἰς αὐτάν.

Even the boys agon is not immune from the koine; occasionally some of the texts seem to provide us with a sort of word by word translation of the dialect inscriptions into the koine. It is enough to compare *IG V 1: 292* (AO 50) and *IG V 1: 293* (AO 51) written in the same year (round 150 AD) to see how easily the Laconians switched from one to the other form; interestingly enough the dialect text is written in much more cursive and untidy letters while the koine text has a much more formal appearance. On the other hand the dialect text has the name Ἀρτέμιδι in the koine form, while the koine text has the word μῶαν in the dialect form<sup>23</sup>.

On the basis of the evidence available we must conclude that before the second century B.C. the Laconians, together with an absence of concern for linguistic facts, showed few or no signs of pride in their dialect and no signs of linguistic imperialism. Their political power did not go together with an increased diffusion of their language or, apparently, a desire for it. Paradoxically it is conceivable that this absence of interest in language and in extended literacy may be responsible for the survival of some features of Laconian even in modern times. In a period in which the diglossia of local language (dialect) and koine was only potential, an absence of concern for language may have led to a form of linguistic behaviour determined by the principle of least effort, i.e. to a preservation of those linguistic forms which were most familiar and required no intellectual effort. In a situation of minimal literacy and little schooling the influence of the written language was not likely to lead to the adoption of a new language. The early appearance of texts written in koine does not contradict this view; it is a limited subset of the population that is responsible for those texts. But is the extraordinary absence of standardization which characterizes Laconian spelling another manifestation of the Laconian indifference to language? This is indeed likely, but we ought to be less sanguine than Bourguet in our interpretation of the data, not least because now we have—and Bourguet did not—the new fifth or fourth cen-

<sup>23</sup> These observations are independent of those by V. Bubeník, *Hellenistic and Roman Greece as a Sociolinguistic Area*, Amsterdam 1989, 73-76, to whom we can refer, however, for a statistical analysis of the introduction of the koine in the public and private documents of Laconia.

tury decree published by Peek (*SEG* 26: 461 etc.); it contains things which we do not understand but the spelling is internally coherent. It may well be—but only more evidence will tell—that the Laconians made a much greater distinction than other regions between formal and informal writing and it is also possible that the few people responsible for formal writing were those who did adopt the written koine at an early stage.

4.2. We now move on to a very different region. If the Laconians were laconic and cared not for words, the Boeotians were pigs. That was well-known from the time of Pindar (*Ol.* vi 89 f.) and obviously much earlier<sup>24</sup>. Plutarch (*de esu carniū* 995 E) reported many centuries later that the Athenians called the Boeotians dense and stupid and witless (παχέεις καὶ ἀναισθήτους καὶ ἡλίθους), mainly because of their immense appetite; indeed jokes about the Boeotians and food are frequent. We have for them dialect imitations in Aristophanes and a fragment by Euboulos (12 Hunter, Ath. 10, 417) again insists on the insatiable desire for food and drink which characterized the Boeotians and contrasts it with the excessive talking and small appetite of the Athenians. A fragment by Strattis (*PCG* 49) reported by Athenaeus (14, 621 F) makes fun of the impossible vocabulary that the dialect used. We are also informed that the voice (or dialect?) of women was pleasant while that of men was the opposite (... καὶ ἡ φωνὴ δ' αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἐπίχαρις· τῶν δ' ἀνθρώπων ἀτερπὴς ἡδὲ βαρεῖα)<sup>25</sup>.

This is the official image but no Greek dialectologist can help being attracted by Boeotian. We have evidence for the dialect in a much larger number of inscriptions than for Laconia; they go from the early seventh century to the end of the first century B.C. though the dialect is abandoned in official documents after 171. Before that the dialect is used at all stages for formal and informal documents; there are differences between the various cities but they are not very substantial in spite of the frequent attrition and the numerous rifts between them. The most remarkable feature, however, of the Boeotian texts is the constant attention given by the writers to the need to modernize the orthography and to keep in tune with the changes in pronunciation. No other region shows similar attention to its way of writing or is equally ready to alter its spelling in a coherent manner or is equally capable of imposing a certain standard over a relatively wide area. The result is that the reader is left with the impression of an immensely intricate system of vocalic changes, while the truth is that in Boeotian and Boeotian only we have documentation of the changes which, at different times,

<sup>24</sup> Some of the evidence for the image of the Boeotians among the other Greeks is collected in an old monograph still useful as a collection of data: W. Rhys Roberts, *The Ancient Boeotians: their character and culture and their reputation*, Cambridge 1895.

<sup>25</sup> The statement appears in an ethnological description which used to be attributed to Dicaearchus (*GGM* I 97 ff.; *FHG* II 254 ff.) and is now attributed to Herakleides Creticus (or Kritikos); cf. F. Pfister, «Die Reisebilder des Heracleides», *SB Wien, Ak. Wiss., Phil.-Hist. Kl.*, 227, 2 (1951), who argues (44 f.) that the text was written between 275 and 200 B.C.

also happened in most forms of Greek. The best way to illustrate this is to look, however briefly, at a number of texts in a rough chronological sequence<sup>26</sup>.

The earliest inscriptions such as a) and b) show features common to a number of archaic Greek texts. The only 'novelty' (in b) is δδ which no doubt renders the correct pronunciation of the sound corresponding to Attic ζ.

a) Theban rim of a lebes, 700-676 B.C. (*IG* I<sup>2</sup>: 402, Schwyzer *DGE* 440, *LSAG* 94 no. 2)

καρὸν τὸ Πυθῖο Φισφόδικος ἀνέθεκε

b) Base for Delphic dedication 475-50 B.C. (Schwyzer *DGE* 443, *LSAG* 95 no. 17, Marcadé I 8)

Ἐπίδδαλος τόπό[λλον] Βουδτιος ἐχς Ἐρχ[ομένω]

[ἡ]υπατόδορος Ἄρισσ[ογείτων] ἐποῦσάτων Θεβαῖο

In the fifth century (and even earlier) innovations begin to appear. We first find a new letter and some new spellings. Where previously the Boeotians would have written ε or ει for a short (or long?) [e] before another vowel or for an [ei] diphthong they now occasionally use (at Thespiai at least) Ϝ, i.e. a letter which is half way between E and I, and is normally taken to indicate iconically [ɛ:] or [ɛ], i.e. a sound which is half way between [e] and [i]<sup>27</sup>. In addition the spelling of αι and οι changes to indicate a more open pronunciation of the second element of the diphthong. Hence αε, οε in d).

c) Rim of a bronze hydria, 475-50 B.C. (*SEG* 30: 541 = *BCH* 99, 1975, 749-54)

ἡερακλῖος ἐς Θεσπίας,

d) Selection of names from the Stele for the Tanagraeans fallen in battle, 424 B.C.? (*IG* VII: 585, Schwyzer *DGE* 451, Venencie, *BCH* 84, 1960, 611 ff.)

Μοέριχος Ἄριστόθενος Ἄβαεόδορος Αισχίνιας Φεργαένετος Ἄμυνοκλέες

The adoption of the Ionic alphabet in ca. 395 B.C. leads the Boeotians to a serious work of reanalysis (again no other region does the same). We can follow the oscillations but the first problem is that Attic-Ionic <υ> corresponded to [y] and [y:] while the Boeotians had only [u] and [u:]. The final decision was to write <ου> for the Boeotian vowel but for a while υ, ο, were also tried out as in e). On the other hand since in

<sup>26</sup> What follows makes no attempt to originality. The history of Boeotian vocalism has been repeatedly studied even in recent times, starting with a masterly article by M. S. Ruipérez (*Word* 12, 1956, 67-81) reprinted in *Opuscula Selecta*, Innsbruck 1989, 67-81; cf. also A. Bartoněk, *Development of the long-vowel system in Ancient Greek dialects*, Praha 1966 and more recently W. Blümel, *Die aiolischen Dialekte*, Göttingen 1982 with earlier bibliography. However, this type of work mainly aims at establishing a pattern and chronology of development. By contrast in this context the discussion is not linguistic but ethnolinguistic.

<sup>27</sup> In this volume J. Méndez Dosuna argues convincingly that in Boeotian and elsewhere [eV] clusters (where V = [a(:), o(:)]) underwent synizesis ([eo] > [ɛo]) followed by raising ([ɛo] > [jo]). However, where our sign is used for the continuation of an interconsonantal [ei] diphthong presumably this referred to [ɛ:] or the like.

the Ionic alphabet <αυ>, <ευ> etc. indicated [au], [eu] etc. this spelling was retained for the Boeotian diphthongs.

e) Inventory of sacred objects: Thespiiai, ca. 390 (Platon & Feyel *BCH* 62, 1938, 149-66; Taillardat & Roesch, *RPh* 40, 1966, 70-87)

σκόφοι δωδέκα: ὑδραίων-	<ο>, <υ> for [u]
δεκα: στάνιμοι χάλκιω τ-	<ω> as a mistake for <ο> [o]
ρῖς .....	
... φαγάνω δύο: πούραυμα*	<υ> for [u], <ου> for [u:], <αυ> for [au]
φρυνοποπέιον .....	<υ> for [u:]

By the middle of the fourth century things begin to settle and the Boeotians change their spelling because of the monophthongization of two of their diphthongs, [ei] and [ai]. The original [ei] first monophthongized into [e:] and then merged with [i:]. Hence the new spelling with <i> as in γένη for earlier γένει. As a result the digraph <ει> becomes available to express the Boeotian long closed [e:]. At the same time the change of [ai] to [e:] allows the Ionic letter <η> to be used for the new low e-sound. Hence σωτήρ (Attic σωτήρ) but κή (Attic καί). Hesitations of course still exist as in f).

f) Decree of the Theban league, ca. 365 (P. Roesch, *REG* 97, 1984, 45-60)

... καὶ εἴμεν αὐτοῖ γᾶς	EIMEN for earlier EMEN [e:]
καὶ Φουκίας ἔππασιν κή	KAI,KH [ε:] for earlier KAI [ai]
ἐνώναν ...	
... κή αὐτοῖ κ[ῆ] γέ-	ΓENI [ɪ] for earlier ΓENEI [ei]
νι .....	
Ἴσχυάω, Παντακλειος,	H for earlier AI, EI for earlier E [e:]

At the end of the third century the Boeotian spelling seems to have reached a more stable form but its disappearance is near. Military catalogues like the two from Hyettos in g) written at distance of some forty years from each other and manumission decrees like that in h) reveal the impetus of the development; Βοιωτοῖς in the first catalogue but Βοιωτῦς in the second after the <υ> letter was redeployed to indicate the treatment of the original [oi] diphthong in preconsonantal position. In h) the typical Boeotian change of [u] after dental to [ju] is dutifully indicated (τιούχαν etc.).

g) Military catalogues from Hyettos, ca. 250-45 and ca. 210-200 (R. Étienne, D. Knoepfler, *Hyettos de Béotie*, 1976, 72 and 77)

Καλλιστράτω ἄρχον-	Νικασαρέτω ἄρχον-
τος Βοιωτοῖς ...	τος Βοιωτῦς ...

h) Chaeronea Manumission, first quarter second century (?) (P. Roesch, J. M. Fossey, *ZPE* 29, 1978, 126 no. 4)

Θιός. Τιούχαν ἀγαθάν. Μνασιγέ-  
νιος ἄρχοντος, μείνδς Ἐρμαίω ...

What do we learn from this brief survey? At least three points emerge:

i) Through a period of at least three or four centuries we find Boeotians with a fine phonetic sense who for some reason were interested in rendering their pronunciation in writing and in putting on record the changes which were taking place in their language. Why this is so and how can this habit or this ability be transmitted from generation to generation remains obscure but that the interest existed at all is significant.

ii) There was a deliberate attempt (otherwise the facts would be unexplainable) to standardize the spelling throughout the whole region. Where this did start from, Thebes or any other town, quite simply we do not know. Boeotia did not have political unity all through this period (it is sufficient to remember the different behaviour of the pro-Persian Thespieae and the pro-Athenian Plataea during the Persian wars), yet apparently linguistic and spelling developments seem to follow similar paths in the various towns.

iii) There was a political decision that in most circumstances all the acts of the Boeotian koinon had to be written in the local dialect. This is striking because from the third century onwards we find documents of less importance in the koine or in some form of Attic. There are also a few exceptions to the general rule and we ought to be able to explain them—but we are not. The dialect disappears from official/political documents with the end of Boeotian independence in 171<sup>28</sup>. In other words the Boeotians were very different from the Spartans. They kept the written version of the local language for official purposes as long as they had independence and then they gave it up. In private inscriptions a form of dialect much mixed with the koine is still found as late as the first century but is the exception rather than the rule. Learning and erudition are not missing from late Boeotia (it is enough to think of Plutarch) but they do not lead to a restoration of the written dialect.

That the Boeotians (or a subset of them) were interested in their dialect is clear from the superhuman efforts at phonological analysis which they made and which put them miles ahead of every other Greek writing community. That the political leaders saw the language as linked to political autonomy is clear from their linguistic history. We have no definite evidence for linguistic pride, but some form of pride there must have been. Yet pride does not necessarily lead to linguistic imperialism or, as one may say with a less loaded term, to linguistic diffusionism; as we shall see, it can be proved that this was a sin of which the Boeotians were not guilty.

4.3. We now turn to the most difficult case of them all, the linguistic history of Oropos. Oropos is a small coastal district situated between Boeotia and Attica exactly opposite Eretria; its importance was mainly strategic and commercial; traffic between Attica and East Boeotia had to pass through it and its two harbours were used for the transport of corn and other food stuff between Euboea and Attica. It made money

<sup>28</sup> For some statistics about the use of koine or dialect in public and private documents from Boeotia cf. Bubeník, *op. cit.*, 139-142.



through taxes and customs. An ancient limerick emphasized the point with a malicious pun on the word τέλος:

πάντες τελώναι, πάντες εἰσὶν ἄρπαγες·  
κακὸν τέλος γένοιτο τοῖς Ὀρωπίοις.  
they are all tax-collectors, they are all robbers;  
let the Oropians have a bad end/tax <sup>29</sup>

Oropos was probably a colony of Eretria<sup>30</sup>, but the early history is obscure. We know that the Athenians took power over it some time in the early fifth century (ca. 470 rather than ca. 490 according to Knoepfler). There is no evidence for an earlier Boeotian conquest. Probably at the end of the fifth century (ca. 430-410) Oropos established an important sanctuary, the Amphiaraiion, which became a centre of pilgrimage thanks to its oracular properties. Afterwards Oropos' history is infinitely complicated; the city oscillates between periods of independence or semi-independence, periods of subjection to Athens and periods of subjection to Boeotia. Eretrian intervention is very frequent and the links with Eretria persist, to the point that if Knoepfler is right, Eretria found it impossible to be at peace with Athens when she dominated Oropos. How desirable Oropos' conquest was is shown by Demosthenes' statement in 353/2 (Dem. xvi 18). In very rough terms it looks as if in the first part of the fifth century Oropos was loosely annexed to Attica, in 411 Eretria got hold of it with the help of the Boeotians but it preserved some independence until in 402 the Thebans intervened into internal struggles and kept Oropos under their power (having moved the population away from the sea); in ca. 395 Oropos was annexed to the Boeotian confederation but after Antalkidas's peace in 387/6 when the confederation was dissolved it reobtained its independence. A few years later it put itself under the protection of Athens<sup>31</sup>, just in time to be the object of a coup by the tyrants of Eretria (in 366) who then ended having to ask for the help of the Thebans and giving Oropos to them, while waiting for a settlement. In 338 Thebes lost Oropos again but it is disputed whether it was then given to Athens by Philip or was restored to complete autonomy<sup>32</sup>. By 335 the city had certainly been handed over to Athens but in 322 it re-acquired its independence. Once again this did not last; in 312 Oropos first fell under

<sup>29</sup> The two lines (Müller *GGM* I 101) come from the geographical text by Heraclides Creticus (or Kritikos) quoted above.

<sup>30</sup> For Oropos as a colony of Eretria see the fragment by Nicocrates in *FGH* 376, fr.1. In general our account of the political history of Oropos follows closely V. Petrakos, 'Ο Ὀρωπὸς καὶ τὸ ἱερόν τοῦ Ἀμφιαράου, Athens 1968 and above all D. Knoepfler, «Oropos, colonie d'Érétrie», *Dossiers/Histoire et archéologie*, 94, 1985, 50-55. Cf. also D. Knoepfler, *Chiron* 16, 1986, 71-98. A number (or even most) of the dates mentioned are disputed but the general picture is likely to be correct; for our purposes it seemed useless to enter into some of the historical controversies, since, whatever view one adopts, it is not likely to change the general conclusions about the use of the dialect.

<sup>31</sup> Knoepfler, *Chiron* 16, 1986, 93 makes a case for ca. 374 as the date at which this happened.

<sup>32</sup> The first view is the standard one: cf. e.g. L. Robert, *Hellenica* 11-12, 1960, 195; Petrakos, *op. cit.*, 26; M.K. Langdon, *Hesperia* 56, 1987, 47-58; Knoepfler, on the other hand, argues for a first period of autonomy, but does not spell out his reasons: cf. *Chiron* 16, 1986, 74 note 8.

Cassander but shortly afterwards a general of Antigonos reconquered it and obliged it to join the Boeotian koinon. In 304/3 Demetrius gave Oropos back to Athens under which it remained until after the beginning of the new century (ca. 295) when it entered again a brief period of independence. In ca. 285 Oropos returned to the Boeotian koinon in which it remained with a fair degree of autonomy until 171 when the koinon was dissolved. It is possible that after a period of independence the city rejoined the koinon when this was reformed but eventually in Augustus' times it ended again under the power of Athens. Louis Robert (loc. cit.) points out, tongue in cheek, that in the twelfth century AD Oropos was still disputed between the bishoprics of Thebes and Athens. No wonder then that modern authors do not find it easy to establish the exact allegiance of this contended city; in 1911 when he ought to have known better W.S. Ferguson stated in his book on *Hellenistic Athens* (pp. 324-5) that «Oropus ... belonged to Attica through geographical location as decisively as it was Boeotian by language and history». Viceversa might have been more correct, as we shall see, though still not exact.

What do we know about the dialect in this confused situation? We have relevant epigraphical data only from a late period<sup>33</sup>, i.e. at the earliest from the fifth century but the first substantial inscription probably dates from the first part of the fourth century after the foundation of the sanctuary. If we simply flip through all the texts (which is not easy because there is no up-to-date corpus)<sup>34</sup> we find in turn inscriptions written in a form of Ionic which closely resembles that of Eretria, inscriptions written in Boeotian and inscriptions written in what is normally called koine, though I cannot find any difference from standard Attic. If we try to link the various linguistic forms with the historical position of Oropos at the time in which they were inscribed we do of course end in a vicious circle; all too often scholars have tended to argue that the dialect was determined by the political situation and consequently have imposed a date on the texts on the basis of the dialect in which they were written, while then dating the main periods of conquest on the basis of these texts. This is obviously unsatisfactory—should we confess defeat? We need not be unduly pessimistic; there are some points of reference and we ought to start with them. Possibly the earliest local text (on letter forms) really belongs to the fifth century but ἠόρος ἠοδδ (*SEG* 31: 492), though not meaningless, is not very significant for the determination of the dialect. Then we have a small fragment of a *lex sacra* which, according to Petropoulou, the most recent editor, must be dated at the very end of the fifth century or the very

<sup>33</sup> I am grateful to D. M. Lewis who has drawn my attention to a broken dedication found at Skaia Oropou and datable perhaps to ca. 550 (V. Petrakos, Πρακτικά τοῦ Η' διεθνoῦς συνεδρίου Ἑλληνικῆς καὶ Λατινικῆς Ἐπιγραφικῆς 1982, Athens 1984, I 312 f.). However, the dedication is in Attic letters and may well have been put up by an Athenian; even if it were not, the text (... Ἀλεξομενός μ' ἀνέθεκεν) could hardly be used as evidence for the local dialect.

<sup>34</sup> The original edition of the Oropos inscriptions in *IG* VII is completely out of date since it does not even include the successive publications of texts by V. Leonardos in *AE* (cf. *SEG* 1: 100). Petrakos, *op. cit.* (in note 24), offers a more recent list. I have not been able to see V. Petrakos, Ἐπιγραφικά τοῦ Ὀρωποῦ, Athens 1980, but the texts are reproduced in *SEG* 31: 417-492.

beginning of the fourth<sup>35</sup>. It is written in quasi-stoichedon in Ionic letters and seems to be in Ionic though the evidence is very limited. Boeotian is excluded, though one word (ἐλεξε) must be due to Boeotian influence and though the sanctuary must have been under Boeotian dominance as shown by the fact that contributions are defined in terms of Boeotian coinage. A more substantial *lex sacra* which gives rules for the management of the sanctuary is written stoichedon in the Ionic alphabet and is normally dated between 388 and 377 during the brief period of independence of Oropos<sup>36</sup>. It shares most of the specific features of the dialect of Eretria: datives in -ει (for -ηι), infinitives like ἐξεῖν (for -ειναι), τιθεῖν, forms like δημορίων with rhotacism. Other features have occasionally been called Boeotian (e.g. by Petrakos, *op. cit.*: ἐν τοῖ ἱεροῖ, ἐντῶθα, ἐλάττων, ἀφικνεμένων) but, with the exception of ἀφικνεμένων, which may well be a mistake (we would expect η or ει instead of the first ε), they are all Euboean<sup>37</sup>.

Round the middle of the century (ca. 350) we find two proxenies for Amyntas son of Perdikkas, the Macedonian king, and for one of his friends (*IG VII*: 4251, 4250). Here the dialect is West Ionic (οἰκίης) with some of the peculiarities of Eretria (εῖν for εῖναι, τύχει) but not all: there is no rhotacism, the verb used is the Boeotian ἐλεξε, and we have ἀτέλειαν and ἀσυλλαν though in Eretria we would expect ἀτελέην and ἀσυλήην (cf. Schwyzer *DGE* 804)<sup>38</sup>.

After this period we start finding in Oropos decrees which are Attic from all points of view, in both dialect and formulation. They belong to the period of Attic domination (? 338-322) and include both building inscriptions (*IG VII*: 4255, Petrakos, no. 40) and honorary decrees (*IG VII*: 3499 = Petrakos, no. 41; 4253 etc.). With freedom from Athens there comes a new formulation e.g. of proxeny decrees but these are nevertheless in Attic (cf. *IG VII*: 4256, 4257; *SEG* 15: 264 in honour of Philip Macedonian) though the ἐλεξεν which we met in the 350's reappears in place of Attic (and Eretrian) εἶπε. After Antigonos' general obliged Oropos to join the Boeotian koinon in 312 the city dedicated, again in Attic, a statue to Pisis, a Thespian who had favoured this move<sup>39</sup>. From now on the inscriptions of Oropos are in Attic including the text *SEG* 16: 295 to be dated either after 322 or after the end of the relatively brief period of Attic power started in ? 303/2. This makes financial arrangements for the rebuilding of the walls which probably had been destroyed by the Athenians<sup>40</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> For the text see Leonardos, *AE* 1925/6, 43 no. 155; A. Petropoulou, *GRBS* 22, 1981, 39-63 at p. 40.

<sup>36</sup> See for the text *IG VII*: 235, Petrakos, *op. cit.* (1968), 176, no. 39 and above all Petropoulou, *op. cit.*, 51.

<sup>37</sup> This was demonstrated as early as 1886 by Wilamowitz in a brilliant article (*Hermes* 21, 1886, 91-115) that is still fundamental for the study of the dialect of Oropos.

<sup>38</sup> Schwyzer *DGE* 812a (Leonardos, *AE* 1917, 236 ff.), an Oropos proxeny for a Carian, apparently has ἀσυλλήην together with ἀτέλειαν, the hybrid ἐλεξεν and the Attic εἶναι.

<sup>39</sup> See *IG VII*: 427; cf. P. Roesch, *Études béotiennes*, Paris 1982, 433, note 85.

<sup>40</sup> L. Robert, *Hellenica* 11-12, 1960, 202.

During most of the third century and the first part of the second century Oropos was annexed to the Boeotian koinon which was at that stage a far more liberal and democratic institution than in the previous period. At this point the first impression is that documentation increases considerably and oscillates between Boeotian and Attic/koino, but it is not normally stated that the line of demarcation is absolutely clear. Every inscription found at Oropos and originating from the city is in Attic (no traces of Euboean); the Boeotian inscriptions all emanate from the Boeotian koinon, i.e. they are official decrees of the koinon, set up in stone in the Amphiaraiion. The typical example is provided by the proxeny decrees. The formulae used at any given time are practically identical; the date is established both in the 'Boeotian' decrees and in the 'Attic' decrees through reference to the Boeotian archon, the verb used for the proposer of a motion is in both cases ἐλεξεν, that for the president of the assembly is ἐπεψάφιδδε in the Boeotian texts, ἐπεψήφισε in the Attic ones. In no case an Oropos decree is compiled in Boeotian; in one case and one case only a decree of the Boeotian koinon is compiled in Attic (*SEG* 15: 282: between 263 and 255). To what we owe this one exception to the rules of the confederacy is not clear but it may be partly due to the fact that the proposer was from Oropos.

How firm Oropos was in its decision not to use Boeotian emerges from a piece of clever reconstruction produced by Michel Feyel<sup>41</sup>. Between 228 and 226 (probably) Oropos received an invitation from Boeotian Akraiphia to take part in one of the traditional Boeotian festivals, that of the Ptoion. It replied passing a decree (*IG VII*: 351, Petrakos, no. 43) which accepted the invitation and established what should be done. The decree needless to say is in Attic (to the point of using εἶπεν instead of the ἐλεξεν of the earlier proxeny decrees). Feyel spotted a version of this decree in a small fragment found at the Ptoion (*IG VII*: 4143) which clearly represents a cumulative summary of all the replies received by Akraiphia to the many invitations issued. The first part of the fragment in Attic summarizes Oropos' decree; this is followed by a part in Boeotian which contains the reply of the Haliartoi. In other words Akraiphia had received a reply in Boeotian from the other members of the koinon but a reply in Attic from Oropos; dutifully it reproduced this dialect distinction in its own official document<sup>42</sup>.

At this stage we may summarize Oropos' linguistic development. Presumably the original dialect of the city was Eretrian and this was still used in writing in the first part of the fourth century even though the city had experienced Attic dominance. Further periods of Attic power seem to have changed the situation. Under Attic power in ? 338-322 only Attic was used and afterwards Attic remained as the official (written) language with Eretrian being forgotten (whether it survived, as is likely to have done,

<sup>41</sup> *Contributions à l'épigraphie béotienne*, Paris 1942, 134-39.

<sup>42</sup> For the whole set of events and the newly discovered full decree of Haliartos see Roesch, *Études béotiennes*, 203 ff.

as spoken language, we cannot know)<sup>43</sup>. By contrast Boeotian power had no deep influence on the (written) language of Oropos, though borrowings did occur. The koinon, whose documents were in Boeotian, did not prevent Oropos from writing in Attic and a city like Akraiphia did not object to receiving official documents from Oropos written in that dialect. In one instance Attic or koine were also used, exceptionally, for a decree of the koinon set up in the Amphiaraiion.

5. Let us now return to some of our starting points. Was the dialect something which could be exported through cultural diffusionism? Was it something which could be associated with a state's or city's autonomy, a symbol of independence? Oropos did not stick to its own dialect when confronted with what looks like Attic linguistic imperialism; in Nicias' terms it realized how privileged the position was of those who had mastered Attic and abandoned its own written dialect in favour of a written version of Attic. Two facts may be relevant: first Attic and Eretrian are structurally very close; secondly the change happened in the late fourth century and not earlier, though Oropos had 'enjoyed' subjection to Attica at an earlier period. It would be possible to say that as many other cities Oropos abandoned its own dialect only in favour of the koine. However we want to put it, the fact remains that in the late fourth century when Oropos was restored to independence after a period of Attic power, it naturally changed some of the formulations of its official decrees, but still did not return to the old linguistic forms. On the other hand even when it was a full member of the Boeotian koinon, it kept its linguistic independence nor was this attitude rejected by the Boeotians. By contrast the Boeotian decision to set up in the Ptoion a summary of an Oropos decree in the original linguistic forms, which were in such blatant contrast with the official Boeotian used by other cities, reveals that there was in Boeotia a form of linguistic liberalism which probably was not matched in Attica.

It is a moot question whether we can generalize from a limited set of examples or whether in this field any generalization is possible. Yet in positive terms we can now state that in some Greek regions, at one time or the other, dialect and 'national pride', dialect and autonomy came to be linked and that this happened even when the dialect, as in the case of late third century Oropos, was not the epichoric one. In negative terms we have found little evidence, outside Attica, for any form of linguistic diffusionism. The main lesson is one of diversity. As Ann Jeffery put it (with the help of Saki)<sup>44</sup>, the record of Archaic Greece is basically a set of separate parts, even if these could most easily fuse at times when a city produced more history than could be consumed locally. When political independence was lost, Boeotia gave up the written dialect as a lost cause, Laconia to a certain extent resurrected it; Oropos first

<sup>43</sup> A word of caution is necessary: the evidence we have been using (the only one available) is mostly composed of public documents. We cannot exclude, therefore, that in private scribbles (as much as in speech) the Eretrian-type dialect was preserved for a longer period than indicated above.

<sup>44</sup> L. H. Jeffery, *Archaic Greece. The City-States c.700-500 B.C.*, London 1976, 23.

abandoned its linguistic autonomy and then preserved the newly acquired dialect of its old masters even under a new regime. The three regions reacted differently but in all of them at some point the use of the dialect (or, more exactly, that of the written dialect) answered needs which were not merely those of communication<sup>45</sup>.

INTERVENCIONES: Cl. Brixhe, A. C. Cassio, J. L. García Ramón, A. López Eire, G. Vottéro .

<sup>45</sup> Even so it is necessary to stress the tentative nature of any conclusion we can reach. This is all the more essential because of the indiscriminate use of dialect made—or not made—by historians and others in the discussions about ethnicity, a term which I have deliberately avoided. Thus E. Wills (*Doriens et Ioniens*, Paris 1956), while denying that the distinction between Dorians and Ionians was accompanied by strong ethnic feeling, did not hesitate to define it in linguistic terms (e.g. p. 58 note 3, p. 101 etc.). By contrast, J. B. Hainsworth (*TPhS* 1967, 62-76 at p. 66) from a linguistic point of view asserts (with a good chance of being right) that «the linguistic usage of Doric ... from an early period exactly parallels the ethnic usage, and derives from it». It is certainly true, as Hainsworth maintains (p. 64), that «what was audible was Boeotian, Corinthian, Argolic, etc.» and that the immediately identifiable dialects were those of the various cities or regions. However at some stage terms like Doric and Ionic acquired some form of linguistic content, so much so that it is disappointing to find a complete absence of references to dialect in the discussion of Dorians and Ionians by J. H. M. Alty (*JHS* 102, 1982, 1-14), who reaches conclusions diametrically opposite to those of Will. Alty (p. 2 note 11) speaks of Doric and Ionic as adjectives which, when not used of ἔθνη, referred to music, architecture and dress but does not even mention the use of e.g. Δωρὶς γλώσσα in Thuc. iii 112 and vi 5. In my view there are two different questions which ought to be tackled in the correct order. First, the question I asked earlier: do we know whether in some instances at least the dialect (any dialect) contributed to the definition of the various ethnic units in Greece? In view of some of the evidence provided earlier I would answer positively—at least for the period from the fifth century onwards. Secondly, do we know whether from this point of view Doric, Ionic etc. ever counted as dialects?