This series introduces English-speaking students to central themes in the history of the ancient world and to the range of scholarly approaches to those themes, within and across disciplines. Each volume, edited and introduced by a leading specialist, contains a selection of the most important work, including a significant proportion of translated material. The editor also provides a guide to the history of modern scholarship on the subject. Passages in ancient languages are translated; technical terms, ancient and modern, are explained.

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We frequently speak of Greek dialects but hardly ever try to explain what is the meaning of ‘dialect’ in this phrase. If we did, we would be reminded that dialects should not be discussed without making reference to their ethnolinguistic background. In general it seems impossible to call a dialect a dialect (rather than a language) and to study its development without considering the speakers of that dialect and the way in which they understood their linguistic situation or reacted to it. In the specific case of Greek the concept of dialect is so nebulous that a study of the ethnolinguistic data is especially relevant. What follows offers a few considerations which bear on the problem.†

2. We start with one of the best known passages of the late Byzantine grammarian, Gregory of Corinth, who lived in the twelfth century A.D. and wrote a manual Περὶ διαλέκτων [On Dialects] marked by little originality and much repetition. It contains a definition of dialect which sounds singularly modern in its formulation: Διάλεκτός ἐστιν ἰδίωμα γλώσσης, ἢ διάλεκτός ἐστι λέξις ἰδιον χαρακτήρ τόπου ἐμφαίνουσα “a dialect is a special form of a language or a dialect is a form of speech which indicates the special character of a place”. It is noticeable that nineteenth or twentieth century dictionaries echo the sentiment and sometimes even the wording. It is also remarkable that the same dictionaries tend to use as exemplification of the use of the word ‘dialect’ (an obvious

1 Some of the points made here were first mentioned in the Semple Lectures on “Greek Attitudes to Language” which I delivered in 1983 at the invitation of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati. I greatly profited from the comments made then and from the discussion which followed the presentation of this paper at the Pont-a-Mousson Rencontre. For clarification, new ideas and new information I am especially indebted to Professors Albin Cassio of Naples and Jean Lallot of Paris.
Greek borrowing) phrases or sentences which refer to ancient Greek dialects.1

1 It is a singularly instructive to read through some of the definitions; I quote a few at random. *Oxford English Dictionary* s.v. 'dialect': "One of the subordinate forms or varieties of a language arising from local peculiarities of vocabulary, pronunciation and idiom. (In relation to modern language, usually spec. a variety of speech differing from the standard or literary language; a provincial method of speech, as in 'speakers of dialect')." One of the examples quoted (ibid.) is "1644 Raleigh Hist. World ii. 406 The like changes are very liberal in the Aeolic Dialect." Deutsche Wörterbuch von Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm, Bd. 6 (1884), col. 2684 s.v. 'Mundart': "die wissenschaftliche bedeutung, die auf die in den einzelnen Länderschaften geltenden unterscheidungen der lebendigen volksprache gegenüber einer allgemeinen, haupt-scher schriftsprache zielt, ist schon bei Schottel vorhanden, ist vielleicht die älteste des deutschen Sprachlebens der Grabeerthuthe of the Grimm Dictionary, Bd. 6 (1885) col. 872, s.v. 'Dialekt' has "Landschaftlich begrenzte Teilsprache, überwiegend mündlich. 1748 bey den Griechen schrieb ... jedes volk seinen dialet wie es ihm zusprechen pflegt GOTTSCHEID Sprachkunst 58. Dictionnaire de l’Académie française, vol. I (1952), p. 394 s.v. 'dialecte' gives a brief definition: "Variété régionale d’une langue" and exemplifies "La langue grecque ancienne à différents dialectes, le dialecte attique, le dialecte dorique...". Tresor de la langue française. Dictionnaire de la langue du XVe et du XVe siècle, vol. 7 (1979), p. 150 s.v. 'dialecte, A. linguistique': 1. Forme particulière d’une langue, intermédiaire entre cette langue et le patois, parlée et écrite dans une région d’étendue variable et parfois instable ou continue, sans le statut culturel ou le plus souvent social de cette langue. 2. Forme régionale parlée et surtout écrite d’une langue ancienne. Comme ça n’est égal, que certaines des idées de l’écriture soient en dialecte ionien (RENARD, Journal, 1895, p. 290). N. Tommasino e B. Bellini, *Nuovo Dizionario della lingua italiana*, vol. 2 (1885), p. 133 s.v. 'dialetto': "Particolare linguaggio parlato da uomini d’un o più province, che per la differenza d’alci vocaboli o modi o costumi o desinenze o pronunci, si scosta dall’uso delle altre province che parlano la lingua stessa. Nel greco distinguonsi i dialetti Attico, Dorico, Jonico, Eolico, Lucano e Etrusco. 154, S. Barbaglia, *Grande Dizionario della lingua italiana*, vol. 4 (1906), p. 521 s.v. 'dialetto' ‘Parlata propria di un ambiente geografico o culturale diverso...’ contrapposta a un sistema linguistico affine per origine e sviluppo, ma che, per diverse ragioni, è stato imposto come lingua letteraria e ufficiale. 154, Varchi V-II.17 (il greco), oltre la lingua comune, quattro dialetti, cioè quattro idiomi...". As a native speaker of Italian I can read Spanish, which I have never studied, but I cannot read Sicilian or Milanese, two Italian dialects, without the help of a translation.2 Hans Wolff, "Intelligibility and Inter-Ethnic Attitudes" in D. Hymes ed., *Language in Culture and Society*, New York 1964, 440–441. This is the current view: what exactly happened in spoken language and how far some of the earlier distinctions survived beyond the Hellenistic period is, needless to say, difficult to establish.

In current speech a dialect is now seen as a form of language which can be given a specific geographic or social definition. By contrast a language is seen as standardized and spoken over a wider area or by a larger group of people. In our modern literate world languages are likely to be both spoken and written, while dialects may simply exist in spoken form; we speak of dead languages, meaning presumably languages which are known only in written form, hardly ever of dead dialects. Until the recent wave of 'ethnicity' a language tended to have higher status than a dialect: the Sardinians were proud to speak a Romance language, not an Italian dialect.

The distinction between language and dialect which is so clear to the layman is less so to the linguist. We are now aware, as perhaps our nineteenth century predecessors were not, that it cannot be made in purely linguistic terms. It is simply not true, for instance, that the structural distinctions between two so-called dialects of a language are always smaller than those between two so-called languages. The criterion of mutual intelligibility which is often invoked in this context cannot be used as a magic dividing line; first, it is part of our normal experience that we sometimes understand other so-called languages even without specific training in them while we may fail to understand the so-called dialects of our own language.4 Secondly, there are instances where some form of intelligibility exists but is not mutual because social factors intervene. In an old article Hans Wolff5 described the situation in the Eastern Niger Delta, where two structurally very close languages, Nembe and Kalabari, are spoken in adjacent areas. The Nembe claim that they understand Kalabari without difficulties. The Kalabari claim that to them Nembe is completely obscure except for a few words. It is noticeable that the Kalabari are a prosperous group while the Nembe have neither political nor economic power. In other words the labels 'language' and 'dialect' are applied on the strength of factors that need not be exclusively or even primarily linguistic.

We may now return to the similarities between the current lay understanding of a dialect and Gregory's definition. These are neither due to chance nor are they prompted by identical reactions to similar sets of observable facts. Though the current views fit admirably with the linguistic situation of the modern European nations (or of most of them) they have not been reached independently; they are clearly derived from the Greek views. It is the latter which call for an explanation rather than the former. How did Gregory or his predecessors reach their definition? Was this meant to reflect the linguistic situation of the ancient Greek world? If we answer in the affirmative, as is only natural, we encounter a curious paradox. Gregory and his predecessors are not interested in the theory of dialectology or linguistics, they are interested in describing Greek. But if so, and if Gregory thought that a dialect was a dialect of a language, as is implied by his statement, what was the language he had in mind? In Gregory's period, and indeed in the period of the earlier scholars from whom he may have borrowed his data and his thoughts, there was indeed a Greek language, the product of the Hellenistic koine [common Greek language], but in those periods it is also true that the koine had replaced the very dialects (Ionic, Attic, Doric and Aeolic) which Gregory lists and discusses.6 On the other
hand in the earlier period, when the dialects in question still flourished, there does not seem to have been a standard language of which those dialects could be dialects. Attic, Boeotian, etc. had equal status; there may have been a certain amount of dialect switching for the purpose of communication but there was no switching from the dialect to a standard common language simply because such a standard common language did not exist. If so, how did the grammarians reach their definition in the absence of suitable linguistic conditions to which to anchor it?

3. The paradox could be solved in a number of ways. It could be argued, for instance, that our interpretation of the data is wrong. There may have been, even before the creation of the koine, some form of standard language which could be called Greek and which could have counted as the language of which the dialects were dialects. An alternative possibility is that, even if such a standard language did not exist before the koine, the grammarians reached their concept of dialect after the creation of the koine; the fact that they then applied it to the earlier period and spoke as if Attic, Ionic, etc. were simply dialects of Greek (i.e., on this interpretation, of the koine) would simply be due to the normal absence of feeling for historical development which characterized most of Greek grammatical work. This second hypothesis is not intrinsically contradictory; it is indeed plausible but, as I hope to show, is unnecessary. On the other hand the first hypothesis conflicts with all the data we have, as a brief review will show. In what follows I propose to argue that, even though there was no standard language in Greece before the koine, an abstract notion of Greek as a common language which subsumed the dialects was present among Greek speakers at a relatively early stage, i.e. from the fifth century B.C. onwards; it is this notion which the grammarians inherited and developed in the direction which opened the way to Gregory's definition of dialect, and, in the last resort, to the concept of dialect currently used by the European layman.

4. The case first depends on the demonstration that before the development of the koine, i.e. before the Hellenistic period, there was no standard language in Greece – this calls for a linguistic inquiry. Secondly, we shall have to move from linguistic to 'metalinguistic' data and try to find out how the ancient Greeks at various periods of their history understood their linguistic situation. Here rather than with linguistic phenomena we shall be dealing with ethnolinguistic or folk-linguistic data.

4.1. What do we know about the linguistic position of Greece in the prehellenistic period? We may rehearse here some well known facts about the written language (for which we have various types of data) and about the spoken language (about which we can only extrapolate from the written data).

The contemporary data we have for prehellenistic Greece show in the case of inscriptions a great deal of linguistic variety. Texts from different regions are written in different linguistic forms and the odds are that the writing conceals a greater amount of differentiation in the spoken language. It is sufficient to remember Herodotus' reference (I.142) to four different varieties of speech in Ionia which is not supported by epigraphical or literary data. It also seems likely that in progress of time both Boeotia and Thessalia adopted a standard-ized regional spelling which ignored the phonological differences which must have existed in the various areas of the these two regions.

The literary evidence is less reliable because of the uncertainties about the manuscript tradition but can still lead us to some broad conclusions. The texts are written in a number of different linguistic forms; there is no standard literary language. There is on the other hand an interesting pattern of dialect or language switching tied to the view that some linguistic forms are more suitable than others for certain linguistic genres. Epic verse is written in some form of Ionic. Attic tragedy is written in Attic except for the choruses which are in a modified form of Doric. Lyric poetry can be in Aeolic; literary prose cannot. In a number of instances the choice of dialect is independent of the origin of the author; Pindar was from Thbes but did not write in Boeotian. Hesiod was also from Boeotia but composed in epic language, i.e. in a composite form of Ionic. We have Ionic prose, Doric prose and Attic prose, but, for instance, the Hippocratic corpus is written in Ionic, though Hippocrates himself was from Cos, a Doric place. The literary dialects are no perfect match for the epigraphical dialects: the Doric of Attic choruses is far less Doric than that of, e.g., the Peloponnesian inscriptions. These facts are far from new but a further point needs stressing. The dialect switching practised by poets and writers must have contributed to the contemp-
porary feeling that the various Greek dialects were joined by a special relationship which separated them from other non-Greek speech varieties. A different form of dialect switching also occurred in comedy for comic purposes but we may have to discuss that later in connection with spoken language.

Finally we must turn to epigraphical verse. The language of Greek verse inscriptions has been studied by K. Mickey in an Oxford dissertation and in a 1981 article, her conclusion is that before ca. 400 these relatively humble verses were neither in the local dialect nor in any other dialect. The authors, in her view, aimed at a purified forms of the local dialect from which the most specifically local forms were excluded. That this is so is perhaps most clearly shown by Thessalian; the local genitives in -ωτο or patronymic adjectives in -ωτι are omnipresent in all prose inscriptions but are obstinately absent from verse inscriptions, though they could have been supported by the epic model. If this avoidance of local forms is not due to chance, one may well wonder what is the language that the local poets were really aiming at. Could they think of it as a form of Greek which was not too Thessalian, not too Boeotian etc.? Do the verse inscriptions, in other words, confirm the impression we received from the literary dialects that the writers or speakers recognize a special link between the various ‘Greek’ dialects?

4.2. Any information about spoken language must be extrapolated from written texts. Parodies of various forms of speech in comedy confirm what we guess from the inscriptions, viz. that different regions used different linguistic forms. What our written evidence irritatingly does not reveal is how much dialect switching existed for the purposes of spoken communication. Did the sophists for instance always speak in Attic when in Athens? Did Socrates’ interlocutors always switch to Attic in the course of their discussions (as Plato would have us believe) even if they were, for instance, Boeotian? We do not know how to interpret the odd examples of dialect exclamations in the context of normal Attic speech which we find e.g. in Plato or Xenophon. They may be there as reminders of the nationality of the speaker and of the way in which he in fact spoke. Yet it is also possible, at least in the case of the Plato example, that they are there for emphasis; the speaker had switched to Attic but to express strong emotion reverted to his own dialect. In general we cannot assume that speech reported in Attic or Ionic was in fact pronounced in Attic or Ionic; literary conventions do not normally allow reported speech in a different dialect from that of the main text (the same principle also applies to the speech of foreigners). On the other hand it is again Plato from whom we gain the impression that speech in one’s own dialect was respectable even in Athens: at the beginning of the Apology (17d) Socrates pleads ignorance of the correct expressions to be used in a tribunal, explains it with his inexperience and concludes ὡτε τὸν ἑνῶς ὡς ἔχει τῆς ἐνυθάδε λέξεως ‘I am therefore, like a foreigner, without skill in this form of speech’. He then argues that if he had really been a ἕνος [foreigner] he would have certainly been forgiven if he had spoken in the accent and manner in which he had been brought up (Ὡστέρ οὖν ἄν, ἐὰν τό ὄντο ἕνως ἐτύγχανον ὄν, συνειγνώσκετε δήπο τό ὄντοι, ἐὰν ἐν ἑκείνι τῷ φωνῇ τε καὶ τῷ τρόπῳ ἔλεγον ἐν οἴστερ ἐπεθράμμυν τείλ). Terminology (the use of ἕνως) and context guarantee that here the reference is to a Greek dialect and not to a foreign language; we can infer that it was feasible to speak in an Athenian tribunal in one’s own dialect.

That dialect switching was possible for specific purposes is, however, known. We may remember Orestes stating in the Choephoroe (563-4) that he will address the porter of his palace in Phocian in order not to be recognized; that he then proceeds to speak in beautiful Attic trimeters does not alter the import of the statement. 12


Morris Davies, Glotta 46 (1968), 96 with note 2; Mickey, TPS 1981, 50 ff.

CF. e.g. Plato Phaedo 62a, where Cebes, a Boeotian, starts his (Attic) talk with a dialect expression: Ἰτέων ζῆσι, ἐπί, τι ἀφ' ὄντος φωνῆς ἐπίνοικα. ‘["Indeed, by Zeus", he said, speaking in his own dialect]’ [see also the same exclamation attributed to the Thebans in the Seventh Episode, 144a5]. In Xen. Analects VI.6.34 the Laconian Cleandrus replies to Xenophon in Attic but starts with a Laconian exclamation: Ἀλλὰ τοῖς σάις, ἕοι, ταύτα τῷ τινί ἀποκρινόμενοι κτλ. [Well, to the two gods, I will answer you quickly ...]. We have no reason to think that a Spartan would have switched to Attic for the sake of Xenophon and in this instance it seems likely that he spoke in Laconian all through. In the Hellenica (IV.18.50) Pasimachus begins with the same exclamation a sentence which is wholly in Laconian.

12 Obviously we remain in doubt about the exact reference of φωνῇ and τρόπῳ in this context; Maurice Croiset (Plato, Oeuvres completes vol. 1 Paris 1953, p. 141) translates with ‘accent’ and ‘dialectically’ respectively.

For the purposes of this paper it is of course irrelevant whether on the stage Orestes spoke or did not speak with a Phocian accent; a minority of commentators has argued for the first hypothesis (cf. e.g. T.G. Tucker, The Choephoroe of Aeschylus, Cambridge 1901, p. 131 ff. on Chor. 561) but this seems to stretch credibility. The scholia [ancient commentaries] to Eur. Phoen. 301 (ed. Schwartz p. 287) state that in the passage of the Phoenissae under discussion the chorus of Phocian women spoke in Phocian but with an accent which revealed foreign origin; as a parallel they quote a fragment of the Sophoclean ἔντονος ἔκπληκτος [The Demand for Helen’s Return] (fr. 178 Nauck, 176 Pearson) which is taken to presuppose the use of a similar dramatic device to indicate Laconian origin (the text is not beyond suspicion: καὶ γὰρ χαράκταρι αὐτῶν ἐν γλώσσῃ τε μὲν καὶ παραφωνοῖ Ἀκανθών ὑπεσθεῖσθαι λέγουσαν ‘Yes, the accent is
Finally we ought to consider the extent of exposure to dialect forms other than their natives ones undergone by the various speakers. We must assume that in normal intercourse between people of different regions only a minimum of dialect switching occurred. So much at least seems to be implied by comedy; it should follow that some or most of the dialects were mutually intelligible. We also know — again from comedy — that Doric doctors were more popular than others. Various passages imply that doctors spoke Doric and were understood. A last point is that long periods spent in cities other than one’s own must have had linguistic consequences. One of the speeches in the Demosthenic corpus (57: mid fourth century) concerns the citizen status of an Athenian whose father was accused of being a non-Athenian because he used to ξενιζέω, i.e. to speak with a strange accent. This is explained by the defendant as due to the fact that his father had spent a long time away from Athens as a war prisoner and consequently had acquired that accent.14 We have here some evidence for dialect mixture to use together with the evidence offered for instance by the disgruntled complaints of the Old Oligarch (Ath. Pol. 2.77) about the adulterated dialect spoken by the Athenians as a result of the outside influences to which they were exposed because of their commercial activities.15

 Literary dialects in their recited and their written form offered a different type of exposure. All through Greece Homeric poetry was known and appreciated, the Spartan soldiers listened to Tyrtaeus’ poems in the epic language, in Athens no one objected to the mild Doric of tragedy choruses; the language of Greek verse inscriptions also shows that at a local level dialect forms other than one’s own were appreciated. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it has not been realized how crucial from a linguistic point of view were the decisions taken by the various oracles about the language they used in their responses. Delphi’s choice of the epic language in preference to the local dialect was meant to guarantee to the oracle panhellenic importance.16 Yet it also guaranteed panhellenic diffusion to the language chosen; it led to memorization and close scrutiny of the message — almost a linguistic explication de textes — by a vast number of people to whom the responses mattered: a misunderstanding could have been fatal.

5. What do we learn from this quick survey? There is no evidence before the Hellenistic period for a standard language used in Greece for either the purposes of literature or those of communication. There is on the other hand some evidence for a complicated pattern of dialect switching (if nothing else for literary purposes) and for an extensive passive knowledge of different dialects. The linguistic forms used differ extensively from region to region but the patterns of use and understanding create links between the different dialects and contribute to mark them off as a unit which can be contrasted with non-Greek languages.

I turn now to the second question: what do we know about the Greek attitudes to dialect or language?

We start from scholarship and technical terminology. Dialects in the early period are referred to with the generic terms γλώσσα/γλώσσα [glóttalglossa] and φωνή [phōnē] which can also be used for foreign languages; after Aristotle we have the impression that διάλεκτος ’speech, conversation, language’ etc. begins to have its later specialized use but we remain in doubt about the exact date. There is no evidence that the Περί διάλεκτου [On Dialect] of Antisthenes, a pupil of Socrates, did indeed talk about dialects; the first conventional studies about dialects must have belonged to the first century. The word διάλεκτος (in the plural) is used with refer-

14 L.E. Rossi (in I poemi epic i rapoduci non omerica e la tradizione orale, Padova 1981, 223) reiterates that "da tutto il corpus delico si vede un palese sforzo di essere onesti; ... Delì fa una scelta linguistica precisa. Omero. Evidentemente per ragioni di università pannellica ... It is difficult to know what has priority; could it be that the choice of the Homeric language was determined by a choice of the hexameter as the obvious form? If so, we would still have to argue that the choice of the hexameter was determined by the prestige of Homeric poetry, which would of course have led to the choice of the language as well as of the metrical form. It is of course otiose to speculate, but if the choice had already been made by the seventh century this might imply that as early as that period there was in existence some notion of panhellenic language.

15 The same! Something about his speech coaxes me into scenting a Laconian way of talking', tr. Lloyd-Jones]. H.H. Bacon (Bartharian in Greek Tragedy, New Haven 1961, 64 ff.) is certainly right in her interpretation of the scholion but I have great difficulties in assuming that in the classical period a dialect accent was used in the performance of tragedy more or less in the same way it was in that of comedy; if that did in fact happen it is not clear why the playwright would not have modified his text accordingly as the comediaephoroi did. Sophocles’ fragment cannot reveal whether there were other indications of Laconian origin in the speech.

16 The most starts in the Old Comedy and is continued through the Middle and New Comedy; cf. for the references A.W. Gomme and F.H. Sandbach, Menander. A Commentary, Oxford 1971, in the commentary to Aspis 374 (at p. 92 ff.) and 439–44 (p. 99); Colin Austin, Menandri Aspis et Samia, Berlin 1970, vol. 2, 33 ff. on Aspis 374 ff.

From the context it seems more likely that the accent was influenced by another Greek dialect than by a foreign language and this view is supported by the use of ξενιζέω in Plato (Cra. 401e ξενιζέων [foreign words]) refers to words of dialects other than Attic.

17 Cf. the recent discussion by A. Cassio, “Attico ‘volgare’ e lioni in attene alla fine del 5. secolo a.C.,” AION Sez. Ling., 3 (1981) 70 ff. It is unfortunate that the famous verses by Solon (56, 11–12 West) about Athenians γλώσσαν οὐκέτ’ Άστειην ἔνεαν, ὁδ ὄντος ταλαγοθ’ are ambiguous; they may refer to the influence of foreign languages or to that of other dialects.
ence to Attic in a fragment of the third century B.C. (FGH II p. 263) but 'dialect' may not be the right rendering. Apollonius refers to the Doric dialects in Thucydides (iii.112, vi.5), but the classification of the Greek dialects into Ionic, Attic, Doric and Aeolic which is frequently found in the first century may be first attested in the third century text just mentioned. Even then it seems clear that this classi-

ification is largely done on ethnic rather than on linguistic bases. Admittedly there was from an earlier period a lively interest in dialect words and Latte has argued that Plato may have had at his disposal earlier collections of lexical correspondences between dialects. Yet so far nothing obliges us to think that the Greeks had before the period of the koine a concept of dialect similar to our own or to that which is presupposed by Gregory's definition.

Should we then think that the 'modern' concept of dialect, that found in Gregory, arose after the diffusion of the koine, so that a Greek dialect was seen as a dialect of the koine? Unexpectedly it is just the work of the late grammarians that gives us pause. Gregory, as we have seen, is not original. His definition is obviously based on earlier material. We may compare the not too dissimilar definition by Clemens Alexandrinus (Stromateis I.142; second/third centuries A.D.), who must also have made use of earlier sources: Διάλεκτος δὲ ἔστι λέξεως ἱδιόν χαρακτῆρα τόπου ἐμφανισθέντος ἡ λέξεως ἱδιόν ἢ κοινών ἔθνους ἐμφανισθέντος χαρακτῆρα. Πασί δὲ ἐκ Ελληνίζειν τὰς παρὰ φιλότεν, Ἀττιδα, Ἰάδα, Δοριδα, Αἰολίδα, καὶ πέμπτην την κοινήν ἄπειροποιεῖ δὲ οὕσως τῶν βαρβάρων φωνῶν μηδὲ διάλεκτος, ἀλλὰ γλάσσους λέγεσθαι, 'A dialect is a form of speech which shows the individual character of a place or a form of speech which shows the specific or common character of an ethnos. The Greeks say that they have five ('dialects', Attic, Ionic, Doric, Aeolic and fifth the koine. The phonai of the barbarians since they are incomprehensible are not called 'dialects' but glossai.' The striking point here is the listing of the koine as a fifth dialect. A careful reading of Gregory of Corinth shows that he too treats the koine as a dialect, and in general the scholia are unanimous in including the koine among the five dialects. There are earlier examples: in the second century the koine is treated as one of the dialects or as the fifth dialect by Apollonius Dyscolus and by Galen. It is also possi-

17 See J.B. Hainsworth, "Greek views of Greek Dialectology", TPS 1967, 62-76.
18 K. Latte, 'Glossographica', Philologus 86 (1925), 136-175 (= Kleine Schriften, 631-666).
19 Gregory, after his initial definition lists the four dialects, Ionic, Attic, Doric and Aeolic, and for each mentions a main exponent (Homer, Aristophanes, Theocritus, Alcaeus). He then continues Κοινὴ δὲ, ἡ πάντες χρησάμενα, καὶ ἡ ἑργάσθηκε Πινάκος, ἀνέκδοτος τῶν διαλέκτων ["The common language is that which we use all and which Pindar used, that is to say, that which is formed from all four"]. The scholia to Dionysius Thrax repeat the same statements with monotonous regularity (cf. the references in the index to Gramm. Gr. 13 [Hildgard] 607 s.v. Διάλεκτος].
20 Apollonius Dyscolus de coninctonibus p. 223, 24 Schneider: Ἀριστοτέλεις ἐκ τῆς κοινῆς καὶ Ἀττικῆς, ἰδιώς τῆς τοῦ ἐκ τῆς κοινῆς, τῆς Ἀριστοτέλειας ἀναφοράς αἱ διάλεκτοι, ἀλλὰ ἐκ τῆς κοινῆς ἀναφοράς αἱ διάλεκτοι, is said erea]. I owe to Alibio Cassio an important reference to an Arabic translation of a lost text by Galen de vocibus in arte medica usitatis. In the context of an anti-Atticist debate Galen reproaches his adversaries for teaching a language
Maximus would have given his sources for the dialects. Quintilian obviously borrows from the same source as the somewhat earlier Valerius Maximus (viii.7.6) who reports that when Crassus went to Asia as consul tanta cura Graecia lingua notttim animo comprehendit ut eam in quinque divisam genera per omnes partes ac numeros penitius cognosceret. 'He was so careful to master the Greek language that, divided as it was into five branches, he learned each of them thoroughly in all its parts and aspects (tr. Shackleton Bailey').

We have the impression that the much later Grammaticus Meermennianus (Schaefer ii p. 642) who maintains that koine was the beginning of all other dialects and a model for the rest (Diālēktoì dē eisai pentê, 'Âs' Âthês Dories Aiolíes kai Koinê ëis ápêiptê, idion óuk ēxousa charaktêrâ, koinh ânûmaïthâ, idiotê ëk tàtûrês ârkhon tâpâs. Lipteûn dē tàtûn mēn ës (pros) kânona, tâs dê loiptê prōs ìdîntêta' ['There are five dialects, Ionic, Attic, Doric, Aeolic and the Common dialect [Koine]. The fifth [dialect], which has no specific characters of its own, was called "common", because all [dialects] originate from it. This one must be taken as the canonical form, while the others are specific cases']) represents a still later tradition and remained relatively isolated.

These statements are bizarre: why should the koine count as a fifth dialect instead of counting as the language of which the other dialects are dialects? If the koine, at a later stage at least, is seen as just one of the dialects, can we still think that the concept of dialect which we find in Gregory is based on an interpretation of the Greek data which was only possible after the creation of the koine? At this stage it is perhaps necessary to reconsider the earlier evidence for the concept of dialect.

5.1 Before the fifth century there is little to say; the ancients already discussed whether Homer had the concept of 'barbaric' or 'barbarian'. It is possible that the epic poems made a distinction between barbaric languages and Greek forms of speech but this is far from certain. In the fifth century, on the other hand, though the texts do not give us any technical terminology for dialects, we find first an awareness of the existence of linguistic variety which seems more pronounced than in e.g. Homer; secondly, an awareness of the contrast between foreign languages and Greek dialects; thirdly, an awareness of the 'Greekness' that all dialects have in common, joined to a feeling that in some sense 'Greek' can serve as an umbrella for all dialects. We may illustrate these three points, however sketchily.

The examples of deliberate dialect switching for specific purposes which I mentioned earlier (Orestes in the Choephoroe etc.) imply that the Greeks (or at least those who left us some evidence) not only made use of dialect variety but were also conscious that they could do so and, a fortiori, were conscious of the existence of dialect variety. The use of dialects to create laughter in comedy leads to the same conclusions.

Starting with the fifth century, and obviously as the results of political events, the contrast between Greeks and barbaroi is frequently mentioned. From a linguistic point of view it is clear that a conscious distinction is now made between all dialects on the one hand and all barbarian languages on the other. Linguistic facts are perhaps not prominent, though they are certainly not absent in the famous passage of Plato (Politicus 262d) where he attacks the type of all dialects and that it is a kanon. Either the grammarian (or his source) used different and contradictory sources or he repeated a parrot fashion what he had learned but could not resist adding some thoughts of his own. [Cf. now C. Consani, ΔΙΑΔΕΚΤΟΣ, Contributo alla storia del concetto di 'dialetto', Pisa 1991, 62 ff.]

We wish we knew more about the sources of this statement, but its very formulation seems to imply that it is late. There is a basic inconsistency between the first and the second part. On the one hand we have told that the koine is a dialect like the others, on the other hand we are told that it does not have a specific (ethnic?) character of its own, that it is the origin of
classification which divides mankind into two, separating on the one hand to Ἑλληνικόν, the Greeks, and on the other hand all other races “though they are endless and unmixed and do not speak the same language” (ἀνέχειτος ὄντα καὶ ἀμικτοῖς καὶ ἀσυμφώνοις πρὸς Ἑλληνικόν). It is perhaps more important that even the parodies of barbarians and Greeks are different; in Aristophanic comedy the Persian Pseudartabas and the barbarian Triballus produce incomprehensible gibberish as contrasted with the funny utterances of those who speak dialects other than Attic. Barbaric languages, at a popular level, are compared to the twittering of birds; Greek dialects are not similarly treated. In the Trachiniae (1060) Heracles contrasts Ἑλλας [Greece] and ἀγκακασσός [and without language]. The implication is that the Greeks have a (real) language in contrast with the barbarians who do not. We may ask what language.

Even more striking are the frequent references which show that different forms of local speech are all labelled Greek and that Greek (Ἑλλᾶς) can represent them all. A few examples are necessary even if the enumeration may be tedious.

The statement by Herodotus (viii. 144) about τὸ Ἑλληνικόν which is defined as including among other things community of blood and of language (ὁν διαμοιρὴν καὶ διαγγλίσσων) is too well known to be striking but cannot be forgotten. It implies that the Greeks have a common language and again we ask which one. Herodotus also provides a multitude of passages where various dialects are all labelled “Greek”. In iv. 78 we are told that a Scythian learnt the Greek language and letters (γλώσσαν τὰ Ἑλλάδα καὶ γράμματα) from his mother who came from Istra. Presumably the mother was Ionian and consequently Greek subsumes Ionian. In vii. 135 Herodotus relates the long story of the Carian Mys sent by Mardontios during the Persian wars to consult all oracles. When he came to the Proion sanctuary, which belonged to the Thebans, he was accompanied by three selected citizens who were going to write down the oracle’s statement. Yet the promantis [prophet] started to prophesize in a barbaric language; the three Thebans were astonished hearing a barbarian language instead of Greek (ἀνὸς Ἑλλάδος), but Mys took the tablet from their hands and started writing because he said that the language was Carian. If the oracle normally prophesized in Boeotian here it is Boeotian which is called Greek. The list could continue but Herodotus also gives us evidence of how Greece, the whole of Greece irrespective of dialect, could be treated as a linguistic unit. In describing the cruel acts perpetrated by the Lemnians against the Athenians (vi. 138 ff.) he adds that as a result through the whole of Greece or Greece (ἀνὰ τὴν Ἑλλάδα) all cruel acts are called Λήμνα (Lemnian deeds). The general impression is that Ἑλλάς has become a cover term for a number of linguistic forms which if necessary can be further defined. This point may be hammered home by a story told somewhat later by Xenophon.

In the Anabasis we find a certain amount about foreign languages, interpreters, etc.; we find an immense amount about ethnic differences within Greece (Athenians vs. Spartans etc.); we find very little indeed about dialect differences. There is an exception. In a difficult moment for the expedition Xenophon himself gives a firm speech (iii. 1.15 ff.) exhorting the Greeks to show courage and initiative. There is no opposition, but a certain Apollonides, who spoke in Boeotian (μοιστὰς τῷ φώνῃ), objects that it is dangerous and unwise to oppose the Great King (iii. 1.26). Xenophon replies in indignation: the man dishonours his country and the whole of Greece because being a Greek he behaves in this manner (iii. 1.30): Ἑλλὴνς ὁ τοιοῦτος ἐστίν. At this stage a third person intervenes who shouts: “But this man has nothing in common with Boeotia or Greece in general; I have seen that he has ears pierced like a Lydian” (iii. 1.31: Ἀλλὰ τούτῳ γε ὡς ὀνεή τῆς Βοιωτίας προσεχεῖ οὐδὲν οὔτε τῆς Ἑλλάδος παντάπασιν ἐπεὶ ἐγὼ αὐτὸν εἶδον ὄσπερ Λυδόν ἀμφότερα τῷ ἀτα τετραπτημένον). It is true and the man is sent away in ignominy. The dialect, Boeotian, is mentioned at the beginning to show that the man is a Greek; other facts, cultural facts, prove that he is not.

Clearly in the fifth and fourth century those which we now call dialects could be subsumed under ‘Greek’. The use of the verb Ἑλληνίζειν ‘to speak Greek’ confirms this point. Thucydides (ii. 68) uses it for people who started to speak Greek under the influence of the Amprakiotai; these, we know, must have spoken a form of Doric. Later the meaning of the verb shifts to include a criterion of correctness: it means to speak or write correct Greek (Ar. Rhet. 1407 a 19).

It is likely that in Athens this was taken to refer to correct Attic; at the beginning of the third century a New Comedy poet, Poseidippus (fr. 28 Koch), reminds the Athenians through one of his characters that in speaking they can only ἀποδείκνυειν [speak Attic] while he and
his compatriots can ἔλληνις ἐίην [speak Greek]; the reference may be to the Thessalians who boasted that they were descendants of Hellen. By contrast in the fourth century and possibly earlier the derivatives of ἴόνος [foreigner] (ἐνενικός [foreign], ἔβρις [to speak a foreign language], ἴόνος [in foreign fashion]) may be used to refer to dialects other than that of the speaker.

To sum up: at some stage, conceivably well before the fifth century, the inhabitants of Greece (or at least some of them) started to feel that they spoke and wrote Greek. Yet Greek as such did not exist; there were instead a number of linguistic varieties distinguished by important structural differences of which the speakers were well aware. Some of these varieties must have acquired higher prestige than the others, but in the classical period at least none of them came to be identified with Greek. Aristotle in the Rhethoric is still able to exemplify his stylistic points about correct Greek by quoting Herodotus (who wrote in Ionic) and Homer (whose language is dialectically mixed). The Greeks presumably did not worry about this situation because they could not envisage a different one. “Greek” was and remained an abstract concept which subsumed all different varieties, much as a federal government subsumes the component states or an ethnos subsumes a number of individuals and a polis a number of citizens. A still closer comparison is that with denominations such as Doric, Aeolic etc. The obvious distinctions are those between the dialects of specific cities and regions and yet as early as the fifth century Thucydides speaks e.g. of the Messenians as Δορίδα ..., γλώσσα τῆς ἐνθείας [speaking the Doric language] (iii.112). He also says (vi.5), however, that at Himera, a joint Chalcidic and Syracusan foundation, the language was mixed between Chalcidian and Doric – where Doric obviously refers to the Syracusan dialect.

and yet there was no such thing as Doric; Doric was as abstract a concept as Greek.

6. Against the general background of these assumptions we may now explain why the grammarians when confronted with the koine could treat it as an another variety of Greek. That ‘Greek’ existed had been known at least since the fifth century, and since then (if not earlier) the different forms of speech of the Greek towns and regions were treated as forms of Greek. By the third century B.C. at the latest all Greek dialects were also classified into Attic, Ionic, Doric or Aeolic. Consequently when the existence of the koine was acknowledged it was possible to accept this new linguistic form as yet another variety of Greek. To give it a respectable pedigree the grammarians concluded, somewhat anachronistically, that it was the language used by Pindar so that all main varieties of Greek had their own writer. Some argued, on the basis of a concept of language mixture which is at least as old as Thucydides, that it had arisen from a mixture of the four other varieties of Greek.

The conclusion must be that the concept of dialect (even if not necessarily the word) precedes the formation of the koine. In prehellenistic times the dialects are seen as different linguistic forms subsumed by an abstraction, Greek; in the later period the koine is added to the list but Greek, for some grammarians at least, remains an abstract concept which can subsume the koine as well as the dialects. From this point of view when our modern or not so modern dictionaries speak of a dialect as “a variety of speech differing from the standard or literary language” (OED s.v.) they do indeed innovate with respect to the Greeks who at first did not have a standard or literary language and later failed for a while to identify the newly created koine with the standard language. Yet the existence of Greek as an abstract entity should not really surprise us. First, we are
now more aware than we used to be of the great speech variety which exists even in the most closely knit linguistic community; yet we are not amazed when the layman speaks of such communities as if they had one and not many linguistic forms. For whatever reason the speaker's assessment of the speech of his own community abstracts from the variety of performance. Secondly, in the history of Greek scholarship we have, at a more sophisticated level, innumerable examples of how the grammarians operated with an abstract concept of language and language forms. One example may be sufficient. Some one hundred and ten years ago Jacob Wackernagel published his doctoral dissertation where he discussed the various works dedicated from the first century B.C. onwards to the study of language πάθη (accidents). Here we are concerned with one point only which is best illustrated with the quotation of a fragment by Herodian (649 Lextz): ὁ δὲλφις ὁ Τελχίς ὁ διὰ καταλήγουσι φύσιν εἰς ἄλλ᾽ εἰς ν. τροπή δὲ εὑρέθη τοῦ ν εἰς γ. κατὰ Δορικὴν διάλεκτον ὀσπερ ἡς. εἰρπομεν εἰρπομες ... χαι οὐτω λοιπὸν ἀπετελέσθῃ ἡ εἰς ν. καταληκτὸς αὐτον δελφιν δελφίς. Τελχίς Τελχίς ['delphis “dolphin” and Telkhis do not end by nature in -s but in -n; there was a change from -n to -s in the Doric manner, as en [becomes] es or eirpomen [becomes] eirpomes ... Thus eventually the ending -s came about as in delphis from delphin and Telkhis from Telkhin'].

The problem here is that a regular declension would call for a nominative such as δελφίνιν (Gen. δελφίνος) but the normal nominative is δελφίς. The solution suggested is that the ‘real’ nominative is indeed δελφίνιν but a change has taken place and the final -ν has been replaced by an -ς. Similar alternations, it is pointed out, occur between dialects: thus a final -ν in, for instance, the ending of the first person plural -μεν is ‘replaced’ by -ς in the Doric first person plural -μες. These statements are not historical statements, i.e. it is not implied that δελφίνιν was effectively pronounced as such at an early stage; nevertheless δελφίνιν is taken to be the ‘real’ Greek form (we feel tempted to say the underlying form), though this form has undergone a change just as the -μεν ending has undergone a change in Doric. In other words those concerned with ‘pathology’ operate with an underlying form of Greek which through the operation of various rules can be made to yield the attested form. In an even more outdated terminology we could say that the abstract δελφίνιν is ‘real-

ized’ in the concrete δελφίς. Is this attitude at all connected with that which, at a much lower level of sophistication, led to the notion of dialect which we have been exploring and to the abstract concept of Greek which we have found in existence in the fifth century B.C.? If so, perhaps we do not need to ask why it was possible in Greece to have ‘dialects’ of a non-existing language and why the koine was not instantly identified with the language of which Doric, Ionic etc. were the dialects.

11 C. Wackernagel, op. cit. (in note 18), and more recently D.L. Blank, Ancient Philosophy and Grammar, Chico California 1982, 41-49.

12 Blank, op. cit., 45, points out that in Apollonius Dyscolus the same methodology is applied to syntax: a construction like τρέμα σοι [I tremble in front of you] is treated as irregular because the verb behaves as if it was transitive but does not have a passive. Hence Apollonius concludes that the phrase is an elliptical form of τρέμα διο σοι [I tremble on account of you] (which is not attested). Pathology then not only explains the divergent forms of the dialects but also explains the anomalous forms of current language (i.e. of the koine) which are treated as realizations of underlying regular forms. It is tempting, but probably far-fetched, to assume that at this stage the abstract concept of Greek which we discussed earlier was identified with the (abstract) set of regular forms from which both the forms of the dialects and those of the koine are derived. This would explain the equal ‘dialect’ status of the koine and the four dialect groups. On the other hand it is possible that the studies of pathology started with the specific purpose of explaining the differences between the dialects and the koine, and if so the hypothesis would probably not work.