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6 *The Greek Notion of Dialect*[†]

ANNA MORPURGO DAVIES

1. 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.¹

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.² It contains a definition of dialect which sounds singularly modern in its formulation: *Διάλεκτός ἐστιν ἰδίωμα γλώσσης, ἢ διάλεκτός ἐστι λέξις ἰδίου χαρακτῆρα 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

[†] Originally published in *Verbum* 10 (1987), 7-27.

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-à-Mousson Rencontre. For clarification, new ideas and new information I am especially indebted to Professors Albino Cassio of Naples and Jean Lallot of Paris.

² For a recent summary of the information available about Gregory of Corinth c.f. N.G. Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium*, London 1983, 184-90.

Greek borrowing) phrases or sentences which refer to ancient Greek dialects.³

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

³ It is a singularly instructive to read through some of the definitions; I quote a few at random. *Oxford English Dictionary* s.v. 'dialect' 2: "One of the subordinate forms or varieties of a language arising from local peculiarities of vocabulary, pronunciation and idiom. (In relation to modern languages 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 "1614 RALEIGH Hist. World ii 496 The like changes are very familiar in the Aeolic Dialect." *Deutsches Wörterbuch* von Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm, Bd. 6 (1885), col. 2684 s.v. 'Mundart': "die wissenschaftliche bedeutung, die auf die in die einzelnen landschaften geltenden unterschiede der lebendigen volkssprache gegenüber einer allgemeinen, haupt- oder schriftsprache zielt, ist schon bei SCHOTTEL vorhanden, ist vielleicht die älteste des deutschen wortes". The *Neubearbeitung* of the Grimm Dictionary, Bd. 6 (1983) col. 852, s.v. 'Dialekt' has: "landschaftlich begrenzte Teilsprache, überwiegend mündlich. 1748 bey den Griechen schrieb ... jedes volk seinen dialekt wie es ihn zusprechen pflegte GOTTSCHED *Sprachkunst* 38". *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*, vol. I (1932), p. 394 s.v. 'dialecte' gives a brief definition: "Variété régionale d'une langue" and exemplifies "La langue grecque ancienne a différents dialectes. Le dialecte attique. Le dialecte ionique. Le dialecte dorique ...". *Tresor de la langue française. Dictionnaire de la langue du XIXe et du XXe 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 confuse, sans le status culturel ou le plus souvent social de cette langue. ... 2. Forme régionale parlée et surtout écrite d'une langue ancienne. Comme ça m'est égal, que certaines des idylles de Théocrite soient en dialecte ionien (RENARD, *Journal*, 1895, p. 290). N. Tommaseo and B. Bellini, *Nuovo Dizionario della lingua italiana*, vol. 2 (1885), p. 133 s.v. 'dialetto': "Particolare linguaggio parlato da uomini d'una o più provincie, che per la differenza d'alcuni vocaboli o modi o costrutti o desinenze o pronunzie, si scosta dall'uso delle altre provincie che parlano la lingua stessa. Nel greco distinguonsi i dialetti Attico, Dorico, Jonico, Eolico, Comune = Infer. Sec. 254. S. Battaglia, *Grande Dizionario della lingua italiana*, vol. 4 (1966), p. 321 ff. s.v. 'dialetto': "Parlata propria di un ambiente geografico e culturale ristretto. ...; contrapposta a un sistema linguistico affine per origine e sviluppo, ma che, per diverse ragioni ..., si è imposto come lingua letteraria e ufficiale. ... Varchi V-137 Ha (il greco), oltre la lingua comune, quattro dialetti, cioè quattro idiomi ...".

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

⁴ 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.

⁵ Hans Wolff, "Intelligibility and Inter-Ethnic Attitudes" in D. Hymes ed., *Language in Culture and Society*, New York 1964, 440-445.

⁶ 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.

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 prehellénistic 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 prehellénistic 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.⁷ It also seems likely that in progress of time both Boeotia and Thessalia adopted a standardized regional spelling which ignored the phonological differences which must have existed in the various areas of 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 Thebes 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 contem-

⁷ For a detailed discussion cf. O. Hoffmann, *Griech. Dialekte*, III, Göttingen 1898, 218–225 and more recently K. Stüber, *Zur dialektalen Einheit des Ostionischen*, Innsbruck 1996.

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;⁸ 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 -οιο or patronymic adjectives in -τος are omnipresent in all prose inscriptions but are obstinately absent from verse inscriptions, though they could have been supported by the epic model.⁹ 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.¹⁰ 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 ἀτεχνῶς οὖν ξένως ἔχω τῆς ἐνθάδε λέξεως ['I am therefore, like a foreigner, without skill in this form of speech']. He then argues that if he had really been a ξένος [foreigner] he would have certainly been forgiven if he had spoken in the accent and manner in which he had been brought up ('Ὡσπερ οὖν ἄν, εἰ τῷ ὄντι ξένος ἐτύχανον ὦν, συνεγινώσκετε δήπου ἄν μοι, εἰ ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ φωνῇ τε καὶ τῷ τρόπῳ ἔλεγον ἐν οἷσπερ ἐτεθράμμην κτλ.). Terminology (the use of ξένος) and context guarantee that here the reference is to a Greek dialect and not to a foreign language;¹¹ 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 *Choephoroi* (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

in Attic but starts with a Laconian exclamation: Ἀλλὰ ναὶ τῷ σιῶ, ἔφη, ταχὺ τοι ὑμῖν ἀποκρινοῦμαι κτλ [Well, by the twin 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.4.10) Pasimachus begins with the same exclamation a sentence which is wholly in Laconian.

¹¹ Obviously we remain in doubt about the exact reference of φωνή and τρόπος in this context; Maurice Croiset (Platon, *Oeuvres complètes* vol. 1 Paris 1953⁶, p. 141) translates with 'accent' and 'dialecte' respectively.

¹² 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 Choephoroi of Aeschylus*, Cambridge 1901, p. 131 ff. on Choe. 561) but this seems to stretch credibility. The scholia [ancient commentaries] to Eur. *Phoen.* 301 (ed. Schwarz 1 p. 287) state that in the passage of the Phoenissae under discussion the chorus of Phoenician women spoke in Greek but with an accent which revealed its foreign origin; as a parallel they quote a fragment of the Sophoclean Ἑλήνης ἀπαίτησις [*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 χαρακτήρ αὐτός· ἐν γλώσσῃ τί με / παρηγορεῖ Λάκωνος ὁσμάσθαι λόγου ['Yes, the accent is

⁸ K. Mickey, "Dialect Consciousness and Literary Language: an example from Ancient Greek", *TPS* 1981, 35–66; *Studies in the Greek Dialects and the Language of Greek Verse Inscriptions*, unpublished D. Phil. dissertation, Oxford 1981.

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

⁹ Cf. e.g. Plato *Phaedo* 62a, where Cebes, a Boeotian, starts his (Attic) talk with a dialect expression: Ἰττω Ζεὺς, ἔφη, τῇ αὐτοῦ φωνῇ εἰπὼν κτλ ["Indeed, by Zeus", he said, speaking in his own dialect] (see also the same exclamation attributed to the Thebans in the Seventh Epistle, 345a3). In Xen. *Anabasis* VI.6.34 the Laconian Cleandrus replies to Xenophon

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.¹³ 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 ξενίζειν, 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.* 2.7) 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

the same! Something about his speech coaxes me into scenting a Laconian way of talking', tr. Lloyd-Jones). H.H. Bacon (*Barbarians in Greek Tragedy*, New Haven 1961, 65 ff.) is certainly right in her interpretation of the scholia 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 comoediographers did. Sophocles' fragment cannot reveal whether there were other indications of Laconian origin in the speech.

¹³ The motif 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 1973, in the commentary to *Aspis* 374 (at p. 92 ff.) and 439–64 (p. 99); Colin Austin, *Menandri Aspis et Samia*, Berlin 1970, vol. 2, 35 ff. on *Aspis* 374 ff.

¹⁴ 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 ξενίζειν; in Plato (*Crat.* 401c) ξενικά ὀνόματα [foreign words] refers to words of dialects other than Attic.

¹⁵ Cf. the recent discussion by A. Cassio, "Attico 'vulgare' e Ioni in Atene alla fine del 5. secolo a.C.", *AION Sez. ling.*, 3 (1981) 79 ff. It is unfortunate that the famous verses by Solon (36, 11–12 West) about Athenians γλώσσαν οὐκέτ' Ἀττικὴν ἰέντας, ὥς δὲ πολλὰ χῆτι πλανωμένους ['no longer speaking the Attic language, so far and wide have they wandered'] are ambiguous; they may refer to the influence of foreign languages or to that of other dialects.

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 γλῶττα/γλῶσσα [glōtta/glōssa] 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 *Περὶ διαλέκτου* [*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-

¹⁶ L.E. Rossi (in *I poemi epici rapsodici non omerici e la tradizione orale*, Padova 1981, 223) reiterates that "da tutto il corpus delfico si vede un palese sforzo di essere omerici ... Delfi fa una scelta linguistica precisa: Omero. Evidentemente per ragioni di universalità panellenica". 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.

ence to Attic in a fragment of the third century B.C. (FGH II p. 263)¹⁷ but 'dialect' may not be the right rendering.¹⁸ Δωρίς 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-

¹⁷ Ἕλληνας μὲν γὰρ εἰσιν οἱ τῷ γένει καὶ ταῖς φωναῖς Ἑλληνίζουσιν ἀφ' Ἑλληνος. Ἀθηναῖοι δὲ οἱ τὴν Ἀττικὴν κατοικοῦντες Ἀττικοὶ μὲν εἰσι τῷ γένει, ταῖς δὲ διαλέκτοις Ἀττικίζουσιν, ὥσπερ Δωριεῖς μὲν οἱ ἀπὸ Δώρου τῇ φωνῇ δωρίζουσιν, αἰολίζουσι δὲ οἱ ἀπὸ Αἰόλου, ἰονίζουσι δὲ οἱ ἀπὸ Ἴωνος τοῦ Ζεῦθου φύντες [For Hellenes [i.e. Greeks] are those who descend from Hellen and "hellenize" in their language [i.e. speak Greek]. The Athenians who inhabit Attica are Attic by descent and "atticize" in their way of speaking [i.e. speak Attic], just like the Dorians who descend from Doros "doricize" in their language [i.e. speak Doric], and those who descend from Aeolos "aeolize" [speak Aeolic], while those who originate from Ion son of Xouthos "ionize" [speak Ionic]']. I quote from the new edition by F. Pfister, "Die Reisebilder des Herakleides", *Sitzungsberichte der Akademie der Wissenschaften (in Wien), Philosophisch-historisch Klasse*, 227 2 (1951), p. 90 l. 27 ff. The text used to be attributed to Dicaearchus and is now attributed to Herakleides Creticus (or Kritikos) who according to Pfister (op. cit. p. 44 ff.) must have written between 275 and 200 B.C.

¹⁸ It is normal to refer in this context to R. Münz, 'Über γλῶττα und διάλεκτος und über ein posidonianisches Fragment bei Strabo', *Glotta* 11 (1921), 85–94, and some data can also be found in R. Calabrese, "I grammatici antichi e i dialetti greci", *Atene e Roma* 12 (1967), 159–165, but now we also have some precious references in an article and a book by W. Ax: "Ψόφος, φωνή und διάλεκτος als Grundbegriffe aristotelischer Sprachreflexion", *Glotta* 56 (1978), 245, and Laut, *Stimme und Sprache*, Göttingen 1986, esp. pp. 100, 113, 120, 201 ff. What emerges is that from its first attestations (e.g. Aristophanes fr. 706 Kassel-Austin, Hermipp. fr. 3 (Koch) διάλεκτος has a generic meaning such as 'talk, manner of speech', which is also that found in Plato. In Aristotle we also find a better defined meaning 'articulated language', and perhaps the beginning of the connection with local distinctions (Arist. *Hist. an.* 536 10). According to Ax the first instance of διάλεκτος in a sense which approaches that of the modern 'dialect' is in a passage by the Hellenistic doxographer Diocles, quoted in Diog. Laertius VII 56, who reports a statement by the Stoic Diogenes of Babylonia (fl. between the second and the first centuries B.C.). The passage reads διάλεκτος δὲ ἐστὶ λέξις κεχαραγμένη ἔθνικῶς τε καὶ Ἑλληνικῶς, ἢ λέξις ποταπῇ, τούτῃστι ποιά κατὰ διάλεκτον, οἷον κατὰ μὲν τὴν Ἀτθίδα θάλαττα, κατὰ δὲ τὴν Ἰάδα ἡμέρη [A dialect is a form of speech marked ethnically and hellenically, or also a form from a certain place, that is to say such according to a dialect, as for instance *thalatta* "sea" according to [the] Attic [dialect] or *hemere* "day" according to [the] Ionic [dialect]']. The interpretation is not obvious (contrast the translation by Steinthal, *Gesch. der Sprachwiss.*, I 293 and that by Hicks in his edition of Diogenes Laertius; cf. also Wackernagel, *De path.* quoted below, p. 51 ff.); for Ax (op. cit. 201) it implies that διάλεκτος indicates linguistic variants of λέξις [lexis, speech] which are nationally or regionally defined and may therefore refer to Greek in contrast with foreign languages or within Greek to Attic or Ionic in contrast with other dialects. The doubt remains whether Diogenes really believed that διάλεκτος could (or should) be used to indicate the contrast between a foreign language and Greek; we could also interpret the text in such a way as to exclude this possibility – and this in spite of the use of διάλεκτος with *barbaros* in Diod. v. 6. However, if so, the difference between the first and second definition would be non-existent. After Diogenes the 'modern' meaning clearly appears in Strabo viii.333 and in Trypho: see J. Wackernagel, *De pathologiae veterum unitus*, Diss. Basel 1876, 57 ff. (= Kleine Schriften, iii, 1483 ff.) where, however, some of the information is outdated. Finally, Jean Lallot points out to me that in order to understand the history of διάλεκτος it would be important to understand why the word is feminine; is it because it belongs to a semantic field which includes a number of feminine nouns such as φωνή, γλῶττα, λέξις (which may have appeared later on the scene) or because it was originally an adjective in agreement with one of these nouns?

fication is largely done on ethnic rather than on linguistic bases.¹⁹ 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.²⁰ 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 ἐστὶ λέξις ἰδιον χαρακτήρα τόπου ἐμφαίνουσα ἢ λέξις ἰδιον ἢ κοινὸν ἔθνους ἐμφαίνουσα χαρακτήρα. Φασὶ δὲ οἱ Ἕλληνες εἶναι τὰς παρὰ σφίσι πέντε, Ἀτθίδα, Ἰάδα, Δωρίδα, Αἰολίδα, καὶ πέμπτην τὴν κοινήν· ἀπεριλήπτους δὲ οὖσας τὰς βαρβάρων φωνὰς μηδὲ διαλέκτους, ἀλλὰ γλώσσας 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.²¹ 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.²² It is also poss-

¹⁹ See J.B. Hainsworth, "Greek views of Greek Dialectology", *TPS* 1967, 62–76.

²⁰ K. Latte, 'Glossographica', *Philologus* 80 (1925), 136–175 (= *Kleine Schriften*, 631–666).

²¹ 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 Κοινή δὲ ἡ πάντες χρῶμεθα, καὶ ἡ ἐχρήσατο Πίνδαρος, ἡγουν ἡ ἐκ τῶν δ συνεστώσα [The common language is that which we all use and which Pindar used, that is to say, that which is formed from all four]. The scholia to Dion[ysius] Thrax repeat the same statements with monotonous regularity (cf. the references in the index to *Gramm. Gr.* I 3 [Hilgard] 607 s.v. διάλεκτοι ε').

²² Ap[ollonius] Dysc[olus] *de coniunctionibus* p. 223, 24 Schneider: Ἄρα. Οὗτος κατὰ πᾶσαν διάλεκτον. ὑπεσταλμένης τῆς κοινῆς καὶ Ἀττικῆς, ἥρα λέγεται [Ara. This in all dialects, except for the koine and Attic, is said *era*']. I owe to Albio 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

ible that in the first century A.D. the same analysis is reflected in Quintilian's anecdote about Crassus (P. Licinius Crassus Dives Mucianus consul 131 B.C.) who mastered *quinque Graeci sermonis differentias* [the five different forms of the Greek language] so that he could give judgement in all of them (*inst.* 11.2.50). 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 Graecae linguae notitiam animo comprehendit ut eam in quinque divisam genera per omnes partes ac numeros penitus 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)'].²³ We have the impression that the much later Grammaticus Meermannianus (Schaefer ii p. 642) who maintains that koine was the beginning of all other dialects and a model for the rest (Διάλεκτοι δέ εἰσι πέντε, Ἰάσις Ἀτθίς Δωρίς Αἰολίς καὶ Κοινή ἡ γὰρ πέμπτη, ἴδιον οὐκ ἔχουσα χαρακτήρα, κοινὴ ὀνομάσθη, διότι ἐκ ταύτης ἄρχονται πᾶσαι. ληπτέον δὲ ταύτην μὲν ὡς (πρὸς) κἀνονα, τὰς δὲ λοιπὰς πρὸς ἰδιότητα ['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.²⁴

which is incomprehensible to the representatives of the four groups of Greek dialects and even to those of the fifth which is known as the koine (M. Meyerhof, J. Schacht, "Galen über die medizinischen Namen Arabisch und Deutsch herausgegeben", *Abhandlungen der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse* 1932. Nr. 3, p. 30: "... wenn sie uns eine ihnen eigentümliche Sprache lehren, welche die Vertreter keiner einzigen der vier Gruppen von griechischen Mundarten verstehen und auch nicht die der fünften, welche als die allgemeine bekannt ist"). Conceivably a reference to the five 'dialects' may also be found in Porphyry *de abstinentia* 3.4.6 where in the course of a controversy about the language of animals it is pointed out that no man is so εὐμαθής ἢ μιμητικός ['good at learning or able to imitate'] that he can learn πέντε πού διαλέκτων τῶν παρ' ἀνθρώποις ['the five languages of men'], let alone the language of animals.

²³ A. Thumb, *Die griechische Sprache im Zeitalter des Hellenismus*, Strassburg 1901, 167 ff., rejects the suggestion that the passage refers to the four Greek dialects and the koine on the ground that in Crassus' time Aeolic and Ionic were no longer spoken and that Quintilian (he does not mention Valerius Maximus) would not have used *sermonis differentias* for dialects. Both points do not seem decisive and even if Thumb was right in assuming that the koine split into five linguistic areas it is unlikely that the source of Quintilian and Valerius Maximus would have referred to this division. That the two authors depend on a common source is shown by the reference in both of them (Quint. loc. cit., Val. Max. loc. cit. and viii.7 ext. 15.16) to Themistocles, Cyrus and Mithridates (see PWRE XIII.336).

²⁴ 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 are 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

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'.²⁵ It is possible that the epic poems made a distinction between barbaric languages and Greek forms of speech but this is far from certain.²⁶ 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 parrot fashion what he had learned but could not resist adding some thoughts of his own. [Cf. now C. Consani, ΔΙΑΛΕΚΤΟΣ, *Contributo alla storia del concetto di 'dialetto'*, Pisa 1991, 62 ff.]

²⁵ Thuc. i.2.3; Strabo xiv.2.28.

²⁶ Mentions of different languages are very rare in the epic poems but the odd descriptions of linguistic confusion (*Il.* 2.204; 4.437) tend to refer to non-Greek languages. On the other hand in the famous description of linguistic mixture in Crete (*Od.* 19, 172 ff.) non-Greek languages and Greek dialects are mentioned together.

classification which divides mankind into two, separating on the one hand τὸ Ἑλληνικόν, the Greeks, and on the other hand all other races "though they are endless and unmixed and do not speak the same language" (ἀπείροις οὔσι καὶ ἀμείκτοις καὶ ἀσυμφώνοις πρὸς ἄλληλα). It is perhaps more important that even the parodies of barbarians and Greeks are different; in Aristophanic comedy the Persian Pseudartabas and the barbarian Triballo 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 Ἑλλάς [Greece] and ἄγλωσσος [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 (Ἑλλάς) 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 (ἔδν ὁμαιμόν τε καὶ ὁμόγλωσσον) 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 (γλώσσάν τε Ἑλλάδα καὶ γράμματα) from his mother who came from Istra. Presumably the mother was Ionian and consequently Greek subsumes Ionian. In viii.135 Herodotus relates the long story of the Carian Mys sent by Mardonios during the Persian wars to consult all oracles. When he came to the Ptoion 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 (ἀντὶ 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.²⁷ 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 Greek or Greece (ἀνὰ τὴν Ἑλλάδα) all cruel acts are called Λήμνια [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 (βοιωτᾶζων τῇ φωνῇ), 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): "Ἕλλην ὦν τοιοῦτός ἐστιν). 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 τοῦτω γε οὔτε τῆς Βοιωτίας προσήκει οὐδὲν οὔτε τῆς Ἑλλάδος παντάπασιν ἐπεὶ ἐγὼ αὐτὸν εἶδον ὥσπερ Λυδὸν ἀμφοτέρα τὰ ὦτα τετυρημένον). 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 ἐλληνίζειν '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 ἀτθικίζειν [speak Attic] while he and

²⁷ Herodotus' story was discussed at length by Louis Robert, "Le carien Mys et l'oracle du Ptoion", *Hellenica* 8 (1950), 23-28; cf. also G. Daux, "Mys au Ptoion", *Hommages*

W. Déonna, Bruxelles 1957, 157-62. I have not been able to establish for certain whether the Ptoion prophecies were normally uttered in Boeotian or not.

his compatriots can ἑλληνίζειν [speak Greek]; the reference may be to the Thessalians who boasted that they were descendants of Hellen.²⁸ By contrast in the fourth century and possibly earlier the derivatives of ξένος [foreigner] (ξενικός [foreign], ξενίζειν [to speak a foreign language], ξένως [in foreign fashion]) may be used to refer to dialects other than that of the speaker.²⁹

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 *Rhetoric* 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 Δωρίδα ... γλωσσάν ἰέντας ['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.

²⁸ The verses are quoted by Herakleides Creticos (op. cit., see note 17) in an interesting passage where the author rejects the normal meaning of ἑλληνίζειν, 'to speak correct Greek' in favour of a meaning 'to speak an inherited Greek language': Ἡ δὲ καλουμένη νῦν Ἑλλάς λέγεται μὲν, οὐ μὲντοι ἐστὶ. τὸ γὰρ ἑλληνίζειν ἐγὼ εἶναι φημι οὐκ ἐν τῷ διαλέγεσθαι ὀρθῶς ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ γένει τῆς φωνῆς· αὕτη δ' ἐστὶν ἀφ' Ἑλληνος· ἡ δὲ Ἑλλάς ἐν Θερραλίᾳ κεῖται· ἐκείνους οὖν ἐρούμεν τὴν Ἑλλάδα κατοικεῖν καὶ ταῖς φωναῖς ἑλληνίζειν, ['What is now called Hellas is something which we speak of, but does not exist. For I say that to "hellenize" [speak Greek] does not depend on speaking correctly but on the origin of the language. This derives from Hellen, and Hellas is in Thessaly; we shall say then that only those [who live in that region] inhabit Hellas and "hellenize" in their language'].

²⁹ Cf. R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, vol. I. Oxford 1968, 41 note 2, and see above note 14 and the passage of the Apology quoted at p. 159. Plato's use of ξενικά δνόματα [foreign names] is discussed by P.M. Gentinetta, *Zur Sprachbetrachtung bei den Sophisten und in der stoisch-hellenistischen Zeit*, Diss. Zürich, Winterthur 1961, 54–6. For ξενικόν Aristotle offers a definition (*Poe[tics]* 1458a 220) which presupposes a related but more general meaning.

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.³⁰ In preellenistic 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.³¹ 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

³⁰ W. Ax. Laut, *Stimme und Sprache*, op. cit., p. 201 note 267, correctly observes that the definition of 'διάλεκτος' by Diogenes of Babylonia offers the first evidence for the term in its modern meaning, but this is "ein Primat, der allerdings nur für den Terminus gilt. Das Faktum regionalssprachlichen Varianten selbst war natürlich schon vorher, z. B. Platon bekannt".

³¹ Jean Lallot (per litt.) obliges me to clarify my thoughts on this subject. As he points out, on one interpretation of the passage quoted above (cf. *supra* [in n. 18]) Diogenes of Babylonia may have wanted to contrast his examples of Attic and Ionic (θάλαττα, ἡμέρη) with the relevant koine forms (θάλασσα, ἡμέρα). If so, we could think that the koine was first identified with the abstract concept of Greek and only later came to be treated as one of the varieties of Greek (though this is not a necessary conclusion). An alternative view is that in the Diogenes passage the various dialects are contrasted with each other and not with the koine. If so, it would be possible to argue that as soon as the koine was recognized as a linguistic form with its own individuality it was treated as the fifth dialect. Obviously we cannot exclude the existence of different schools with different views on the position of koine.

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).³² Here we are concerned with one point only which is best illustrated with the quotation of a fragment by Herodian (649 Lentz): ὁ δελφίς ὁ Τελχίς οὐ καταλήγουσι φύσει εἰς ζ ἄλλ' εἰς ν. τροπή δὲ ἐγένετο τοῦ ν εἰς ζ κατὰ Δορικὴν διάλεκτον ὥσπερ ἦν ἡς. εἵρπομεν εἵρπομες ... καὶ οὕτω λοιπὸν ἀπετελέσθη ἡ εἰς ζ κατάληξις οἷον δελφὶν δελφίς, Τελχὶν 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 δελφίν (Gen. δελφῖνος) but the normal nominative is δελφίς. The solution suggested is that the 'real' nominative is indeed δελφίν but a change has taken place and the final -v has been replaced by an -ς. Similar alternations, it is pointed out, occur between dialects: thus a final -v 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 δελφίν was effectively pronounced as such at an early stage; nevertheless δελφίν 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 δελφίν is 'real-

ized' in the concrete δελφίς.³³ 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.

³³ Blank, *op. cit.*, 45, points out that in Apollonius Dyscolus the same methodology is applied to syntax: a construction like τρέμω σε [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 "τρέμω διὰ σε [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.

³² Cf. Wackernagel, *op. cit.* (in note 18), and more recently D.L. Blank, *Ancient Philosophy and Grammar*, Chico California 1982, 41-49.