

# INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF MODERN GREEK

by

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Οὐ συνίασιν ὅπως διαφερόμενον  
ἑαυτῷ ὁμολογεῖ

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Professor B. D. Meritt

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## PREFACE

**T**HIS short essay is an introduction to a "Modern Greek Grammar for Classical Students" now in preparation.

This explains its tone and the treatment of material. It is intended neither for readers with no interest at all in philological problems, nor for those already familiar with Modern Greek philology. The first would find that I go into too many details in order to justify my assertions; the second, that my assertions are all too often left unsupported. All I can attempt in the short space at my disposal is to indicate briefly to classical students some ways of approach to present-day Greek, and to show them the interest and profit for their own subject in the study of Modern Greek. Accordingly, the reader is supposed not only to have all his interests centred on Ancient Greek, but also to have a strong prejudice against the Modern—and this to a degree which, I hope, is not often found in reality. It must then be taken as a merely methodical assumption.

I am fully aware that the concluding section runs the risk of being interpreted as a somewhat partial treatment of the "language question" in Greece—and I am ready to take this risk. For I do not believe that in speaking of Modern Greek one has the right to pass over the question in silence, or to hide oneself behind vague and non-committal statements.

I take this opportunity of mentioning with gratitude Prof. A. Mirambel and M. Thrasso Castanakis, under whose stimulating guidance I made my apprenticeship in Modern Greek at the School of Oriental Languages, Paris; and also the late J. Psicharis, whom I had the privilege of having as my first master at the School.

## I.

“THE Greeks (most famous of old both for Arms and Arts, and every thing that’s truly valuable) are so wonderfully degenerated from their Forefathers, that instead of those excellent Qualities which shine in ’em, particularly, *Knowledge, Prudence, and Valour*; there’s nothing now to be seen among ’em, but the Reverse or contrary of these, and that in the highest degree . . . Yea, the knowledge of the ancient Greek in its former Purity is not only lost among the vulgar sort of People, but also almost extinguished even among those of the highest Rank.”

Thus, at the beginning of the 18th century, wrote P. Gordon the geographer. Since then the attitude of cultivated Europe has changed but little. There was a short outburst of indiscriminating enthusiasm for the resuscitation of Greece, which brought into momentary vogue Greek popular poetry, just then revealed to Europe by Fauriel. But this was soon followed by a general—and rather naive—disappointment: the liberated country did not seem to embody the classical ideal in the precise way it was expected to do. And even now, to many a devout admirer of classical antiquity Modern Greece still appears as an annoying obstacle between him and the Greece of his *rêve familier*. One has to accept its regrettable existence on the sacred ground—it cannot be helped—one has to put up with it; just as of old the pious pilgrims journeying to Jerusalem had to put up with the infidels in whose power an unjust fate had placed the Holy Land. Thank Heaven there is still the unchanged vision of land and sea, there are ruins and museums, there is a Pausanias in one’s pocket to guide one’s steps! And this suffices. . .

But the interest once awakened by Fauriel’s *Chants populaires de la Grèce Moderne* (1821) did not vanish among scholars as entirely as it did among the general public. The study of the living folklore of Hellenic lands has been progressing, slowly but steadily, throughout the last century, and the work has been carried out not only by searchers who would merely collect the material or consider it statically



and in isolation, but sometimes also by classical scholars. Thus something has been done to lay bare certain living connections between Ancient Greece and the Greece of to-day. To quote a few instances only, Prof. R. M. Dawkins (*J.H.S.* 1906) has shown the striking persistence of some elements of the Dionysiac ritual in modern Thrace, the old home of Dionysos; Prof. A. J. B. Wace (*B.S.A.* 1909-1910) has investigated and described other festivals, celebrated over a wide area in North Greece, in which the survival of the same or similar features is clearly traceable. One may hold different opinions as to the importance of the evidence provided by the Viza carnival and other similar performances, but once stated it henceforth cannot be—and has not been—ignored in any serious discussion of the fundamental problem of the origin of Greek drama. Several other links between Ancient and Modern Greece have been suggested in J. C. Lawson's stimulating book on *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion* (1910), and many pages in Prof. A. B. Cook's *Zeus* demonstrate how, by pushing investigation far beyond the borders of the classical age and right down to our own day, a student of ancient religion can obtain valuable light on his subject.

Thus it has appeared that some scattered treasures of the past are still faithfully preserved in the memory of the people; that certain essential motives which dominated the spirit of a Greek peasant some twenty-five centuries ago, are still active in the Greek peasant of to-day, and continue to influence his whole attitude to things human and divine. So the study of Modern Greek folklore has already opened up a few unexpected ways of approach to the ancient psyche, thrown light on more than one obscure point of the past, and revealed firm and subtle connections where one might have supposed a total breach of continuity. And much can be expected from further research.

Yet popular beliefs and practices are not the only domain where persistence of the past in the present can be observed. Elsewhere the recurrence of certain essential patterns is no less striking. Thus, nothing perhaps is more illuminating for the understanding of Greek prehistory and early history than the study of the geographical distribution and modes of life of the present populations of that country. Since so far this kind of evidence has been hardly utilised at all, I may say a few words about it.

As an example, I will take Thessaly. Here, more than anywhere else in Greece, the peculiar structure of the lands, imposing a definite

range of possibilities and limitations on the inhabitants, has acted as a mould, shaping their fates according to the same unalterable pattern. It is the specific combination of low, dull, fertile plains with lofty alpine pasture-lands, that has determined the vital rhythm of the region by making a great part of the population men of a double home, and tracing for ever the routes of their annual migration ; it has also set an unextinguishable feud between the sedentary dwellers in the plain, who till the ground, buy and sell and work, and those others whom every spring leads to their highlands.

In Homer we read of the struggle between the Lapithai who dwelt on tilth along the Peneios, and the ' mountain-haunting ' Centaurs of Pelion. Men of a double home, the mountain-haunters moved back and forth between the plains and the highlands—a cause of trouble and a permanent menace to their sedentary neighbours, the Lapithai of the plain—" Hence was the feud begun between the Centaurs and these men." Some thirty centuries later we meet with a new version of the eternal Thessalian tale : the rude mountain-haunter—shepherd, warrior, and robber—reappears under a new name, the Kleft. The Kleftic poetry shows how a national struggle, a fight for independence, becomes reshaped according to the familiar pattern, and takes the form of the old feud between free unattached mountaineers and those " slaves who dwell in villages, in the plain." And to-day there are the local Thessalian papers to remind us that the feud is not over ; that rioting still goes on between the peasants and the half-nomadic shepherds.

This key-note of Thessalian history may modulate with the changing circumstances of the age, but the pattern remains the same, the struggle is eternal and forms the lasting pivot round which all events revolve. The persistence of the essential pattern of Thessalian life, the immutability of habits and routes of annual migration, provides valuable clues for relating and interpreting the obscure, scattered data preserved by mythical and literary tradition. Of this I can quote here only a single instance, that of the Enienes, concerning whom there is the much-discussed entry in the Homeric Catalogue of Ships. Their chieftain Gouneus is said to have joined with his band the Achaean army going to Troy, and his domain is described as including the region " about wintry Dodona " as well as the banks of " lovely Titaresios."

Thus an obscure chieftain of a small tribe appears to hold a district—a vast empire indeed—extending from the eastern borders

of Thessaly along the whole course of the Peneios, up to and beyond its sources, beyond Pindus and down to Dodona. This is of course absurd. So all the scholars who have exercised their ingenuity on the riddle of the Enienes have tried to explain away the distance between the Titaresios and Dodona—postulating either a second Dodona in Thessaly near the Titaresios, or a second Titaresios near Dodona.

Yet all becomes clear once a simple fact has been realised (obvious to anyone familiar with Thessaly): namely, that Gouneus' domain was not a clear-cut barony occupied by a sedentary people, but the fixed area of annual migration of a half-nomadic tribe. Further, it appears that the area covered by their migration corresponds exactly to that of a definite group of Vlach shepherds of our own day. The perennial routes (up the Arachthus and Peneios valleys) once followed by the Enienes, still lead these Vlachs every spring from their winter abodes (the district of Elassona on the banks of the Titaresios, and the district of Yanina "about wintry Dodona") to the grassy highlands above the sources of the Peneios. Here they meet and spend together the summer months, kinsmen from both sides of Pindus—

οἱ περὶ Δωδώνην δυσχέμερον οὐκ' ἔθεντο  
οἱ τ' ἄμφ' ἱμερτὸν Τιταρήσιον ἔργα νέμονται

(Il. II. 750-751)

This region of summer reunion of the tribe is the Homeric Aithikes. And in fact Aithikes, Plutarch tells us (*Q. Gr.* 13) was the dwelling place of the Enienes. Further we learn from him (and from other sources) that the disturbing Enienes were finally expelled from Thessaly by the Lapithai and had to limit their migration area to Aithikes and Epirus. And little by little the whole history of the small tribe with its successive homes—from Dotion Pedion (the common cradle of Lapithai, Centaurs and Phlegyai) down to their abode in historical times—emerges into light, and the disjointed bits of evidence begin to coalesce into a perfectly consistent whole.

But this kind of investigation, however useful it may prove in this or that particular case, is of relatively limited application; and it is doomed to lose its object in the near future when a strongly centralized government and the unifying influences of the West will have succeeded in finally wiping out local life-patterns.

For the same, or similar, causes, the living folklore too is rapidly vanishing from Hellenic lands. Moreover the study of Modern Greek folklore by a classical scholar has its particular dangers and

limitations. There have been in this domain decisive changes, gaps that can never be bridged. Continuity can be established, or postulated, between certain details—but only between details. And in spite of all the partial analogies or the survival of this or that tenacious element, there is an essential incommensurability between the past and the present, as a whole. Thus, in recognizing in a given element of the present the survival or direct outcome of a definite element of the classical past, there is always inference from particular to particular; by the very nature of the object one is forced to make abstraction of their place and function in the respective wholes to which they belong—for they belong to two different and unconnected wholes between which there is no common measure. For instance, the identity of certain elements in the Viza-carnival, mentioned above, with those of the Dionysiac ritual is established by the mere fact of a striking similarity in some details which practically excludes the hypothesis of simple coincidence. At this point one has to stop. Any attempt to strengthen the identification by comparing the elements identified in their relation to the whole religious outlook and ritual practice of the 6th century B.C. and the 20th century A.D. respectively, would only obscure the question and reveal a lack of method. How tempting it is to transgress the limitations imposed by this kind of research is illustrated by many a development in J. C. Lawson's book, mentioned above.

But there is one domain in which continuity has been really uninterrupted throughout the three millenia of Greek history—the Greek language. Here, and here only, no connections between details can be established and tested except in their relation to the whole. For it is precisely the whole that has persisted through all changes of detail: a living unity permanently in the making, ceaselessly shaped and informed by the same particular complex of tendencies which once determined the differentiation of Greek from the parent Indo-European and are still at work to-day.

This is why the study of continuity and survival in language is at once incomparably more precise and more significant than in any other domain of Greek civilisation. Here only there is no gap between past and present. And hence also the primary methodological importance of linguistic evidence in any study of survivals (stressed by A. Thumb in *Cl. Q.* 1914, p. 205); it provides the main—I should say the only—safe test for linking together two phenomena belonging to different epochs. To return again to the case of the Viza-carnival, it is the occurrence here of the word *λενε* (< anc. *λενον*)—and



with the particular sense "cradle"—which provides one of the strongest points in favour of a Dionysiac survival (see *J.H.S.* 1906 pp. 196, sq., 203). To take another example, Lawson's hypothesis concerning the persistence of Centaurs in Modern Greece (*op. cit.*, pp. 190-255) reposes largely on his derivation [καλλι]κάντζαρος < κένταυρος (pp. 211-221, 232-236), and if this derivation is to be rejected on philological grounds—as I think it is—then the whole ingeniously constructed edifice must collapse.

Whether the derivation holds or not does not concern us here. But the chapter on Centaurs in Lawson's book may be profitably used as material for methodological observations concerning the specific character of the philological analysis in its application to the comparative study of folklore. The treatment of a subject of that kind requires continuous oscillation between two modes of investigation, which must be clearly delimited and duly connected (in Lawson they are neither). The one, we have seen, consists in marking analogies, and thus establishing connections, between isolated features in ancient and modern folklore; the other is the analysis of linguistic evidence involved. As long as one is limited to the first, one is entirely at the mercy of mere similarities (or coincidences?) which can be tested by nothing outside themselves, nor related to any general law or formula. In passing to the second kind of investigation the situation changes. In the instance quoted, the different folk-tales in which the *Kallikantzari* figure, the various forms in which the name occurs and their respective contexts, its frequency and distribution in space and time, the changes of its meaning, the particular dialectal and ethnical media of its occurrence, etc.—all these scattered data acquire quite a new significance. For, when considered from the philological standpoint, any particular feature—a sound-change, a semasiological shifting—reveals the action of the sum-total of laws and tendencies of the language, in terms of which it can now be formulated and tested. From any given point one can radiate in different directions, towards different levels of generality and permanence. Thus, the analysis becomes capable of generalisation without losing touch with the individual and accidental; it acquires precision without ceasing to be a qualitative analysis ("les faits linguistiques sont qualitatifs," as A. Meillet remarks).

In short, once the research has shifted onto the philological plane, the phenomenon under examination, however limited, becomes the point of meeting and interaction of the most particular with the most general. For in language, the whole is entirely present in everyone of its parts.

The development of Greek reveals a unity of which no analogy is offered by the history of any other Indo-European language. The cutting of this development into two—Ancient Greek and Modern Greek—is, at least from the linguistic standpoint, a quite arbitrary division. In fact, as Prof. H. Pernot puts it, “between the Homeric language and the *κοινή*, which both belong to ‘Ancient Greek,’ the divergences are far deeper than between the *κοινή* and the Greek of to-day” (*D’Homère à nos jours*, p. 59).

Still, the dichotomy, although philologically unjustifiable, is to be maintained for other reasons: it is convenient (without implying any linguistic but only a cultural breach) to set aside the idioms of the Ancient Greek Civilisation. But it is neither convenient nor accurate to speak of a Modern Greek ‘language.’ There is no such thing. There is only the present state of Greek. And this in a very strict sense, not in the wide sense in which we can speak of French or Italian as the present state of Latin, or of modern English as the present state of Anglo-Saxon. From *Beowulf* to *The Waste Land* the linguistic change is immense, the line of development by no means straight, several factors intervening from outside have deeply disturbed and modified the growth of the language. Faced with the two texts, only a philologically trained mind could discover, without knowing it beforehand, that they represent two stages of the same tongue. Now consider the evolution of Greek throughout the whole of the period covered by our textual tradition—a period, that is, more than twice as long as that which separates *Beowulf* from a modern text. Here, from the earliest lays underlying the Homeric epics to a poem by Palamas, our contemporary, there is a slow, organic, uninterrupted growth; and to a reader of Palamas, who has never learned Ancient Greek, Homer will appear more familiar and intelligible than would a 12th century Middle English text to a contemporary Englishman.

It can, in fact, be shown that taking into account all phonetic, morphological, lexical and other changes, the difference between 12th century and 20th century English is as great as that between Homeric and present-day Greek<sup>1</sup>; (and by ‘present-day Greek’ I mean, of course, not the artificially archaic *καθαρεύουσα* but the living speech of the people and the poets); whilst if we consider sound-change alone, even Chaucer, two centuries nearer our own

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<sup>1</sup> cf. Atkinson, *Greek Lang.*, p. 306.

time, presents more differences from modern English than Homer from Modern Greek. Now if we use this concordance as a kind of common measure, the peculiarities of the evolution of Greek, as compared with that of English, stand out very strongly.

The same measure of linguistic change covers in the one case eight centuries—or about six if sound-change alone is considered; in the other, almost three millennia. The same measure of linguistic change translates in the one case the straight development of a single nation, stable and fully constituted racially, culturally and politically; in the other case it coincides with racial, cultural and political changes, total and decisive. Yet through and above all these collapses and resurrections, all the struggles and shiftings of populations, and foreign conquests—bridging all gaps and striding over all breaches—lives and grows the Greek language, a language “in which there never was any revolution” (Meillet, *Aperçu*, p. 222).

A language, in de Saussure's words, is “*un système où tout se tient.*” And it is so not only “synchronically,” that is, at any given moment of its evolution (the sense in which de Saussure himself uses this expression), but also “diachronically,” throughout evolution; a moving equilibrium ceaselessly recreated, a process indivisible, and of which no stage can be considered in isolation.

More than any other language, Greek, in the entire extent of its development, is a living whole which cannot with impunity be divided into watertight compartments. By doing so one not only misses the unique opportunity of following step by step the growth of a language through three thousand years of rich and uninterrupted textual tradition. This, a classical scholar might say, is not after all his business; what he is after is the study of Ancient Greek civilisation, and Greek matters to him only in so far as it is the language of that civilization. Quite so. But in limiting one's horizon to a section of Greek, one inevitably distorts one's perspective and limits one's possibilities of understanding *within* that very section. Taking the two traditional sections—Ancient Greek and Modern Greek—they cannot be fruitfully studied or rightly understood or, above all, truly felt, except through one another.

What Modern Greek loses when it is torn from its roots and deprived of its depth in time, hardly needs emphasizing—even in our time, when the study of “Modern Languages” (including one's own) tends to be cut away from its original base.

But Ancient Greek loses even more by being divorced from Modern. And this is not merely a question of the extent and precision

of knowledge (which both have much to gain from Modern Greek studies, as will be shown later): it is the very nature of one's knowledge of Ancient Greek that changes through familiarity with Modern—I mean thorough familiarity, spoken as well as philological.

Imagine two students of Old French, both equally well equipped in their subject, reading the *Chanson de Rolland*. One of them is a Frenchman, while the other (an absurd supposition, of course, where Old French is concerned) has no spoken knowledge of present-day French and has never lived in the atmosphere of that language. For the latter, however deep his learning and acute his insight, the *Chanson de Rolland* will forever remain a poem written in a "dead language" to which any but theoretical access is forbidden to him. But the other, through spoken French, is made a participant in the living tradition of the language, and working his way backward to meet the older stage he will be able to reach it and achieve a concrete organic contact with it, that no amount of theoretical knowledge alone can ever provide.

The main among the several advantages offered by Modern Greek is of a similar kind. Through the spoken language of to-day—the only *living* survival of the classical past—one can link oneself to the perennial tradition of Greek, and become actually incorporated into it. This, I repeat, is not a question of mere knowledge but also of concrete experience. Knowledge provides only the main lines along which the experience is to be shaped and organised. By painful groping and readjustment one has slowly to train oneself not to divide the past and the present, never to lose sight and feeling of the whole and, being at any point of the whole, to connect the nearest with the remotest. To achieve this, one has, among other things, to overcome a certain inertia of an emotional kind which naturally forms itself in a classical scholar.

If I recall my own first contact with Modern Greek, it was something like this. I came to it of course through Ancient Greek to which, I clearly saw, it was the only key. But instead of finding the unity I had hoped, I found myself divided between two worlds: the one familiar yet remote, and on which all my real interests were centred; the other, which was just opening before me and taking possession of me more and more, but which seemed to have nothing in common with the first. The two worlds would not form one—they remained for a long time totally unconnected. Not rationally; rationally, all the connections lay bare before me and the unity of the



language was obvious ; but concretely, intuitively. I had to struggle obscurely to make the two coalesce, slowly digging as it were from both ends, until they would meet. But still they did not. And when finally it happened, it happened quite differently from what I had expected. I had to lose my Ancient Greek until I found it again, and to merge totally and with passion into the other. And when I found it again, emerging into it as after a deep dive, I found it quite transformed : no longer a " dead language," but fully alive.

There must be a general—and quite irrational—difficulty in linking up the two worlds ; for, in spite of the fact that the indivisible unity of Greek has been clearly demonstrated by scholars and is (theoretically) obvious to everyone, they still remain unconnected in practice. In no country is Modern Greek included in the Classical curriculum where it should hold a place of honour, *before* Latin. If it is taught at all, it is taught in no connection with Ancient Greek. It usually forms a kind of appendix to Byzantine studies. Or it is even treated as a " Modern Language " without ancestry and takes its place in the lecture list somewhere between Roumanian and Serb ; and since it is supposed (quite wrongly) to have no valuable literature, it is learned mostly as a tongue of merely practical value, all right for business men and commercial travellers, but needed by a scholar and gentleman only in so far as it helps him to make himself understood by his guide and innkeeper. And already a new kind of specialist begins to appear here and there in European universities : the " Neo-Hellenist," the teacher of Modern Greek with no knowledge of or interest in the Ancient—a natural complement to the classical scholar whose virtues and limitations are of the reverse kind. No advantages that may be claimed for this " useful division of labour " can compensate for the harm it causes.

In fact, one can hardly imagine a student of Middle English who would dispense with the knowledge of English as spoken to-day, or a student of Old French who would consider superfluous any familiarity with living French. But a classical scholar with no notion of living Greek is still a common phenomenon, I should say a general rule. Of course, when a man goes to Greece he often learns some, he may even become genuinely interested in it. But even so, this new interest and his old experience of Ancient Greek are carefully kept apart ; they have, it seems, nothing to do with one another.

Strange and paradoxical attitude. One starts on a pilgrimage in search of concrete, intimate contact with a world to the study of which one has perhaps devoted one's life ; one is faced, for once,

not with a ruin or a museum-piece, but with a vital part of this world, miraculously preserved alive by a unique coincidence of historical vicissitudes, rich with the flavour of millennia and yet living and young, changed and yet essentially the same—and one fails to recognise it. But Greek is still with us, and the same fundamental tendencies that moulded the speech of the Ionian minstrels, and ordained the syllables of the first songs sung on the sacred dancing-ground of Dionysos, were still active in a Byzantine liturgy, in a Thessalian dirge or in the war-song of an Epirote Kleftis, and are active to-day in the lullaby of a Greek mother and even in the shouts of a Piræean street-boy begging for a tip.

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All that precedes and much of what will follow may be summed up in a humble but typical instance, with which I may conclude these preliminary remarks.

There is a certain fish, mentioned several times by classical writers: the *συναγρίς*. "The *συναγρίς* enjoys an unnecessary anonymity in our dictionaries," Krumbacher remarks in his commentary on a Mediaeval Greek "Fishbook" published by him (*Sitz-Ber. d. Bayer. Akad.*, 1903, p. 368). And he goes on to quote the main German dictionaries which all define it simply as "ein Meerfisch." It is no better in Bailly or Liddell and Scott, where I find *s.v.*: "une sorte de poisson de mer" and "a kind of sea-fish." None, it is true, of the classical writers who mention the fish gives any indications by which it might be identified, so it was doomed to remain vague also in our dictionaries. And this in spite of the fact that the *συναγρίδα* (the name occurs in that form already in Hesychius *s.v.*) is still one of the commonest fishes in Greece; it is the French *denté* (*dentex vulgaris*). But certainly none of the learned scholars who thus treated the fish had failed to visit at least Athens, and when there could hardly have missed enjoying more than once the succulent *συναγρίδα με μαϊονέζα* which is one of the favourite Athenian dishes. All that was required of them was a curious glance at the menu, then a walk to the fish-market—delightful and instructive experience for a lexicographer!—and the gap in our dictionaries would have been filled. But this was not done. The vague and familiar classical *συναγρίς* had to remain looming dimly in Aristotle's *Historia Animalium* and elsewhere, totally unconnected with the other—concrete and savoury but modern—hastily consumed by the busy lexicographer between two visits to the museum.

## II.

### PHONOLOGY

IT is the phonetic aspect of Modern Greek that seems at first to distinguish it most strikingly from the Ancient. How far this is really so, what is the exact relation between the two sound systems and what the meaning of this relation, we shall see presently.

To begin with, let us analyse the impression which a classically nurtured traveller receives when he first hears Modern Greek spoken. It is inevitably an impression of alienating unfamiliarity. Some of the words he sees on shop-signs and street-signs and in newspapers may still look familiar to him and even venerable, but on the lips of a native the same words assume a strange and unexpected shape. Indeed, it does not sound at all like the Greek Play; and he feels shocked as at a profanation. He simply refuses to recognize the language he has piously learned from Homer and Plato in what, to prejudiced ears, seems only odd Levantine noises.

But is it really the difference from "Ancient Greek pronunciation" that strikes him in the present-day speech? The main varieties covered by the term "Ancient Greek pronunciation" are, it is true, fairly well known to us—theoretically. Yet to our lips and ears they remain perfect strangers; they mean nothing to us *concretely*. In reading a classical text no one attempts to reproduce the pronunciation of the time and place to which the text belongs; no one even takes the trouble to imagine how it actually sounded. Instead of that, one automatically transposes it into some purely artificial idiom in which divers ingredients are incorporated in various proportions, and whose general character is determined by the speech-habits and even spelling conventions of one's native language.

Every country has some such transposition—more often several rival systems—which reflect in varying degrees the native speech and the history of classical education in that country, but have nothing

to do with Ancient Greek as it was actually spoken. All are quite arbitrary substitutes, usually farther from the original than is Modern Greek (whose sound-system, however different, is at least the natural outcome of the ancient one). From one's first contact with Greek one hears it pronounced in one of these conventional ways, and is taught to do so too; hence the language becomes entangled in an alien and artificial sound-attire, and this becomes so charged with emotional value that any deviation from it is felt as a kind of sacrilege.

Thus, what is actually perceived when one hears Modern Greek spoken is its difference, not from Ancient Greek, but from one of these hybrid pseudo-Greek idioms which are still cultivated in the schools and universities of Europe. Between any of these and Modern Greek, of course, no connection or similarity can be discovered by even the best trained ear—for there is none; they belong to totally different lines of development. Thus, Ancient Greek as pronounced by an Englishman or by a Frenchman belongs to the phonetic evolution of English and French respectively, not to that of Greek. But one who had trained himself to hear and pronounce Ancient Greek as it actually was in different stages and domains of Greek civilisation (and of this we now know enough to make the task worth while), could not fail, on first hearing the Greek of to-day, to perceive through all the differences that he is still listening to the same tongue. Contact with Modern Greek would be for him yet another—and the most living—lesson in relativity: the relativity of any particular form or phase of Greek, and the persistence of the informing principle.

The Sound-aspect of a tongue is its most concrete aspect; and one learns from it (more than from any study of morphological and lexical changes) to feel language as an *ἐνέργημα*, not an *ἔργον*. On this point, too, any conventional pronunciation—including compromise solutions such as the "new pronunciation" of Greek in England—proves very misleading. By adopting a single pronunciation for Ancient Greek of whatever period or region, a fixed and unified sound-system is substituted for the moving diversity of the real language. This creates the false feeling that Ancient Greek was phonetically one—a static and changeless unit throughout its history. I say *feeling*, for theoretically everyone knows that the same graphic signs disguise ever-changing phonetic values, so that in reading Plutarch, for instance, one ought to adopt a pronunciation closely approaching that of Modern Greek.



But to pronounce Homer and Plutarch in exactly the same way is not merely to sin against historic phonology ; it is to falsify that which the sounds are there to express. For a language is not a mere system of graphic signs to which any phonetic value may be given, provided the right sense be attached to them. It is above all a unique and living system of sounds and articulations with which the meanings are indivisibly correlated and fused. We cannot distort one without affecting the other. In learning a language, the mind, the throat and the ear must work together ; and in this Ancient Greek is no exception. One cannot train and reshape one's mind to make it participate in a distant and different mode of thought and feeling without at the same time training one's throat and ear in a different mode of sound and articulation. That is to say, in reading a Greek text (especially, of course, a poetic text) one must attempt to pronounce it as it was actually pronounced at the particular time and place to which it belongs.<sup>1</sup> It is true, on many a point our knowledge here is still rough and insufficient, and even what we know well we are not always able fully to reproduce in action (*e.g.*, pitch-accent and quantity). Still, we know enough to attempt ; and it is our duty to reproduce the sound-aspect of Ancient Greek—however imperfectly—to the full extent of our knowledge and capacity. We must try not to read into ancient texts our own familiar sounds, just as we try not to read into them our modern thoughts and feelings—and this notwithstanding the fact that we shall never fully succeed in either. Both go together, and effort in both directions is at bottom one and the same effort.

For those who judge the attempt impossible, or not worth while, there is only one reasonable and consistent solution of the difficulty : to pronounce Ancient Greek as Greek is pronounced to-day. This is a poor solution, if a solution at all and not a mere labour-saving device, and I need not insist how much one loses by it. But at least the pronunciation thus adopted, however late and different from the ancient, will not be an artificial substitute but a genuine Greek pronunciation, strikingly faithful to the original tendencies of Greek.

The relation between the two sound-systems—or rather between the two phases of the same system—we shall now consider in some detail.

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<sup>1</sup> This and what follows concerns Greek scholars, of course, and is not meant to apply to the teaching of Greek in schools, where some compromise is probably the only practical solution.

To ask what the difference is between ancient and modern Greek pronunciation is of course an absurd question to which no answer is possible ; since the first term of the comparison is a vague collective name covering, in time and space, a shifting variety of pronunciations, while the second term, though much less indefinite, is still rather vague. Even a more limited question, such as ' What is the difference between Athenian pronunciation of the 5th century B.C. and that of to-day ? ' allows of no precise answer. Pronunciation presents considerable variations according to social level, and, as we shall see, it was particularly so in 5th century Athens. Moreover, thus reduced, the question could not be treated by itself ; and even if it could, it would be of somewhat limited interest.

Another question often asked is, When this or that phonetic element of Modern Greek first originated and when it became finally fixed. This is an important question, but again it cannot be treated in isolation. It is of great interest to know when and where the *i*-sound of  $\eta$ , for instance, first appeared and how it spread until it became general usage. But these facts cannot be rightly understood until they have been incorporated into the complex group of phenomena of which they form a part—' iotacism.' But iotacism has been operating through almost the whole period covered by our textual tradition, and is still not completed except locally. And iotacism itself is to be correlated with various other phenomena (some of which go back to prehistoric times), and finds its explanation in the most general tendencies inherent in Greek from its first origins. In short, one cannot treat the present sound-system except in its relation to the whole phonetic evolution of Greek.

We will start with the examination of isolated phonetic elements, noted by the Greek alphabet, tracing each to its original value and following, very briefly, the main phases of transformation until its present state.

By original value (or sound) is meant the value a given element had in Common Greek. And by Common Greek is meant not the *κοινή*, but the state of Greek after its separation from the parent Indo-European and before its differentiation into dialects. This Common Greek, previous to any written records, is reconstructed from the dialects of historic times in the same way as the parent Indo-European has been reconstructed from comparison of the various Indo-European languages. Like this, Common Greek is a purely hypothetical entity (only much richer in details), and is no less

important for understanding the history of Greek than the parent Indo-European is for the comparative study of the daughter-languages (see Meillet *op. cit.* p. 12 and *Introd.* pp. 35-50).

It must be noted that any chronology and topography of phonetic changes is doomed to remain only approximate. When a change manifests itself and comes to our notice, this provides only a rough *terminus ante quem*. For a change may be (and usually is) much earlier than the time when it is first betrayed incidentally in notation. Pronunciation is always in advance of notation. On the other hand, a change becomes first traceable in some definite point of the Greek-speaking area. We can neither assume *κατὰ τὸ σιωπώμενον* that it is absent elsewhere, nor can we affirm the contrary; it may or may not still be an isolated phenomenon which will take time to propagate in space and also, so to say, vertically: to all social levels. A cultivated minority may affect and preserve carefully some linguistic feature centuries after it has disappeared from common usage.

In transcribing sounds I am reduced to using plain Latin letters. When not otherwise stated, the vowels are given their 'continental value,' while consonants have their value as in English.

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#### SIMPLE VOWELS.

The vowels noted by *a, o, ω, ι, ε*, whose original sound in Greek (disregarding quantity and the finer shades of quality) may be roughly transcribed as *a, o, i, e*, have remained practically unchanged in Modern Greek. But they have lost their fixed quantities. This important change, strictly correlated with another—the replacement of pitch-accent by stress-accent—goes beyond the study of isolated sounds and will be examined later on. As for quality, only *η* and *υ* have changed perceptibly: both have developed into an *i*-sound.

Modern Greek *η* represents the sound resulting from the long open *e* of Common Greek (which is also that of Indo-European), and from the long open *e* proper to Ionian-Attic (originating, in prehistoric time, from the long *a* of Common Greek). The gradual closing of this open *e* is a very old process. It becomes clearly traceable in the 5th century B.C.—first in Thessalian-Boetian (where it is usually noted by *ει*) and in Ionian-Attic. Then the process spreads and appears also in inscriptions from Thera, Messenia, Arcadia, Delphi and Lesbos (for details and references, see Schwyzler *Griech. Gram.* pp. 184 sq.). That in Attic *η* (of both origins) was early a very close *e*—closer even than *ε* (the original close *e*)—appears from the follow-

ing considerations. It has been established (Meillet, *op. cit.* p. 204) that in Attic popular speech the loss of quantitative distinction between  $\eta$  and  $\epsilon$  had set in as early as the 5th century B.C. Yet the two cannot have sounded identical, or their later development would not have been different. In fact, it is  $\epsilon$  that has preserved its original  $e$ -sound till to-day, while  $\eta$  evolved in Attic into an  $i$  about 150 B.C. (see Schwyzer's chronological table of sound-changes, *op. cit.* p. 233). Hence it may be deduced that this latter was more closed than the former (cf. Pernot, *op. cit.* pp. 129-130). This deduction is confirmed by the fact that popular speech of 5th century Athens seems to have already completed the closure of  $\eta$  and reduced it to the sound it has now:  $i$ . This appears from a pun in Aristophanes (*Pax*, 925-927) which is based on the phonetic identity between  $\beta\omicron\iota$  and the first syllable of  $\beta\omicron\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\nu$  (the speaker, it must be noted, is a servant). Sill, in cultivated Athenian speech,  $\eta$  must have for some time remained an  $e$ , however close, since otherwise Cratinus (fr. 43) and Aristophanes himself (fr. 642) would not have noted by  $\beta\eta$  the bleat of a sheep (cf. also the onomatopoeic word  $\beta\eta\beta\eta\nu$ , sheep or goat, Hesych. s.v.). In face of the facts quoted above one cannot of course deduce from this (as Dr. Atkinson does, *Gr. L.* p. 30) that, since the sheep bleats on an open  $e$ ,  $\eta$  was still an *open* sound in 5th century Attic. The two poets had no open  $e$  at their disposal, and of the two close  $e$ 's available they naturally used the long one,  $\eta$ , even though it did not exactly reproduce the quality of a sheep's bleat. (Similarly Lewis Carroll makes the White Queen turn into a sheep while pronouncing the word "better, be-etter," in which the  $e$  is described by English phoneticians as close). It may then be assumed that in cultivated Attic speech of the 5th century B.C.  $\eta$  had the value of *long close e*, while in popular speech it was already tending to take on its present value,  $i$ . This value becomes general in Attic about 150 B.C., and towards the beginning of our era the "modern" pronunciation of  $\eta$  is extended to the whole of Greek.

Such is the main line of evolution of the sound noted by  $\eta$ . But a 'main line' is always a crude abstraction, where the development of Greek is concerned. The real evolution is always more complex and continuous. A particular change or a group of correlated changes is here permanently in process of becoming, never finally completed and stabilised. We have seen that for an Athenian servant  $\eta$  was an  $i$  in the 5th century B.C., but in our own days it was still  $e$  to a Greek peasant of Pontus, and to some extent also in Cappadocia (Schwyzer pp. 87, 186, Dawkins, *M.G. in Asia Minor*



p. 69, Thumb in *Class. Q.* 1914, p. 182). Only the intervention of external forces—the Turks who exterminated the Greek populations of Asia Minor—has brought the process of transformation to an abrupt stop and final completion. The slow continuity of change, the coexistence and interplay of the nearest with the remotest, is the main characteristic of Greek. Of this, more striking instances will be offered by other cases which we are about to consider.

The original value of the vowel noted by  $\upsilon$  was  $u$  in Common Greek (as in Indo-European). And this value it preserved in the majority of dialects even in the beginning of Hellenistic times. But in the Ionian-Attic group a process of closing, similar to that of  $\eta$ , sets in from a very early date, and  $\upsilon$  becomes a sound like that of French  $u$  or German  $\ddot{u}$ . In Ionian-Attic the change goes back into prehistoric times (Schwyzer, p. 183) and as Meillet has pointed out (*Bull. Soc. Ling. Paris*, 1924, p. 75) it is here the expression of the same tendency that had led to the closure of the original long  $a$  into  $e$ , a basic phenomenon of that dialectal group and fraught with consequence for the later development of the language. In Attic the new value of  $\upsilon$  is an accomplished fact from the very beginning of our textual tradition: it appears here in the earliest inscriptions, where  $\upsilon$  is preceded only by kappa, never by 'koppa' (a sign which is joined only to back vowels). Hence, and also from certain cases of assimilation, it can be deduced that  $\upsilon$  represented a front-vowel and no longer an  $u$ . For a long time the change remains confined to the dialectal group in question, and even there it is not quite general; Western Ionian seems to have preserved the original sound, as appears, for instance, from a Euboean inscription where  $\upsilon$  is found in combination with kappa. In the rest of the dialects the  $u$ -value remains unchanged (saved for a few passing and sporadic variations). The new pronunciation of  $\upsilon$  becomes generalized only through the  $\kappa\omicron\iota\nu\eta$  (another analogy with the Attic-Ionian  $\eta$ ), and this not at once: the inscriptions of early Hellenistic times betray a confusion on this point and show the coexistence of the two values of  $\upsilon$ .

But when was the development of  $\upsilon$  pushed still further, till it became unrounded to its present sound,  $i$ ? On this point our information is vague. According to Pernot (p. 140) the new pronunciation did not become quite general until as late as the 10th century A.D. (for this time we have the witness of a foreign traveller). That the change must have been recent, Pernot deduces from the arrangement of Suidas' dictionary (11th century A.D.) where words are disposed according to their initial letters and vowels with similar sound are

grouped together. Now, *v* is not included among the vowels which have the *i*-sound. But this in itself is not conclusive proof. The particular order of letters, which we find only in Suidas, may have been taken over by him from some much earlier grammarian or lexicographer whose work has not reached us. On the other hand, Thumb (*Cl. Q.* 1914, p. 187) has established that in the 5th century A.D. Greek pronunciation was already divided between the two values of *v*. (In the paper referred to, the state of Greek in the 5th century A.D. is reconstructed by Thumb from its present state by purely philological methods, independently of any textual tradition, though this, on every point where it is available, confirms his deductions). Thus we must be content to date the final fixation of the value of *v* only very roughly: somewhere between the 5th and 10th centuries A.D.

But here again, as in the case of *η*, the evolution is much more complex than it appears in our survey. Although in Ionian-Attic the original sound had been altered at least as early as the 8th century B.C., it still survives intact in modern Tsaconian, the direct descendent of the ancient Laconian dialect (see Hatzidakis, *Einleitung*, p. 8; the numerous examples of isolated survivals of the original *u* elsewhere than in Tsaconian—pp. 103 sqq—must be taken with caution: some of them are not survivals at all, and have a different explanation).

#### DIPHTHONGS.

Diphthongs are generally a very unstable element in all Indo-European languages. Greek is no exception: at different dates, all its diphthongs ended by becoming simple vowels, so that, to use Meillet's words, "dès les premiers siècles ap. J.C., il ne subsistait plus en grec aucune des diphtongues indo-européennes."

However, in Common Greek the system of diphthongs still represents fairly well that of the parent language. Only diphthongs with a long first element had already disappeared (coalescing with those with a short first element) except at the ends of words; in other positions such diphthongs are rather rare, and whenever they occur they are recent combinations, formed within Greek. Of the four diphthongs with long first element that occur in Greek, *ηv* presents a development similar to that of *εv* and *αv* and will be examined together with these. The remaining three had an evolution quite apart: their change to monophthongs consists not in a fusion of the two elements into a single vowel (as in the diphthongs with short first element) but in a simple elimination of the second element. These

three are generally known as *α*, *η* and *ω* with 'iota subscriptum.' But to the ancient the 'iota subscriptum' was unknown (the convention arose c. 7th c. A.D.); they simply placed the iota after the long vowel. Still, the second element tends very soon to be eliminated in actual pronunciation. For *α* the first traces of this change appear in the 5th c. B.C. in Lesbian and Thessalian inscriptions, and from the 4th century in Attic also; for *η* and *ω* similar facts are observed from the 6th c. in Aeolic of Asia Minor and from the 4th c. in Attic. Towards the 2nd century B.C. the 'iota subscriptum' seems to have generally vanished from pronunciation and even from notation; and when in the 1st century A.D. Strabo (14.1.41) says that people write their datives without an iota, it is clear that he is contrasting this with an obsolete spelling convention with no phonetic reality to back it. Thus, when reading classical texts, we have to pronounce the 'iota subscriptum,' and can ignore it with impunity only in texts of our era.

There remain the diphthongs *ει*, *ου*, *αι*, *οι*, *αυ*, *ευ*, and *υι*. The last—formed within Greek, and of relatively rare occurrence—need not detain us. Save for a temporary elimination of *ι* in Attic, which remained without consequence, *υι* followed the development of *υ*, and the value of this diphthong at a given period can more or less be deduced from that of its first element.

The original diphthong *ει*, with the value of *ei*, very early became a monophthong. This appears from the following facts. There was another sound in Greek, resulting from recent contractions, which, it has been proved (by Brugmann and G. Meyer, see the arguments summed up in Schwyzer, p. 193) was a monophthong from the start and had the value of a very close long *ε*. At first, although long, this sound was noted by *ε*, e.g., *ΒΑΣΙΛΕΕΣ* (for *βασιλείς*). Then from a certain date (varying according to place) it becomes figured by *ει*, and both *ει*'s—the "false diphthong" and the true one—are treated in exactly the same way in all respects. This shows that both now represented the same sound: a long close *ε*. The change first appears in Corinth (7th c. B.C.), then in Argos (6th c.) and at about the same time, though at first sporadically, also in Attica. In 5th c. Attic the change becomes general and is proved by ample evidence. Still, in reading Aeschylus, the poet faithful to the vanishing spirit of Old Athens, it would perhaps be better strictly to distinguish between the two *ει*'s, giving an *ε* sound to that resulting from contraction and preserving in the other its old diphthongal value. But even for

Sophocles the distinction is hardly justifiable, not to speak of Euripides : their *ei* is always a close long *e*.

The process does not stop here. Side by side with the *e*-value of *ei*, the *i*-value begins already to appear sporadically in 5th c. Attic. Elsewhere the step had already been taken : in Boeotian and Argive since the beginning of the century *ei* had become what it is now. As for the date at which the new value was generalized for the whole of Greek, opinions are divided between the 3rd c. and the 2nd c. B.C.

The history of *ov* is much the same. Here again we have an original diphthong *ov=ou*, and a monophthong resulting from contractions—a very close *o*—noted at first *o*, then *ov*. The two *ov*'s are identified in pronunciation, and thenceforth undergo a common transformation towards *u*. The process—identification of two sounds of different origin—starts again in Corinth (7th c. B.C.) and towards the end of the 6th c. sets in also in Attic. The 'false diphthong' with which the original *ov* became identified was, as we have noted, a long close *o* to start with. When did both become *u*? All we know is that in Attic *ov* was already *u* in the 4th c. B.C., since the Boeotians, in adopting the Attic alphabet to transcribe their dialect, took this sign to note their *u*-sound (they could not use *v*, for in Attic this sign represented *ü*).

The transition from *ou* to close *o* implies the intermediate stage of a sound similar to that of modern English *o* in "no"—i.e., a diphthong with an extremely weak second element. At this stage the evolution of *ov* represents a process parallel and inverse to that of the English sound in question : in English a close *o* developing into the diphthong found in "no"; in Greek a diphthong of identical nature becoming close *o*.

The question arises, what value should we give to *ov* in reading Aeschylus? Since the first traces of confusion between the two *ov*'s (marking the adoption of the *o*-value for the old diphthong) appear in Attica only at the very end of the 6th century, the *u*-value seems practically excluded : the transition from *ou* to *o* and thence to *u* could hardly have been completed and become general in some half-century. But must we treat the two *ov*'s in Aeschylus identically, giving to both the value of long close *o*? I feel reluctant to do so, yet I am afraid this is the right solution. The date of the first traces of the confusion in Attic inscriptions proves nothing by itself : the old pronunciation might have persisted among the élite. But there is a sign of the confusion to be found in Aeschylus himself (fr. 430) :



the genitive  $\beta\omicron\upsilon$ , clearly formed by analogy with the group  $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ , in which the  $\omicron\upsilon$  is always the result of contraction. If the nominative  $\beta\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$  (where the diphthong is original) and such words as  $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$  sounded to Aeschylus different—as “*bous*” and “*ἡῶς*”—the genitive  $\beta\omicron\upsilon$  could not have arisen (cf. Pernot, p. 136).

The passage from  $ai$  to  $e$  through the intermediate stage  $ae$ , is a common phenomenon in Indo-European languages. Thus in Latin:  $rosai > rosae$  (3rd c. B.C.)  $> ros\grave{e}$  (in popular speech of 2nd c. B.C.). This was exactly the evolution of the diphthong  $ai$ , from  $ai$  of Common Greek to  $e$  as it is now. The notation  $ae$  for  $ai$  often occurs, from the beginning of the 5th c. B.C., in inscriptions from the districts of Tanagra and Platea. This shows that here the  $ae$  stage had already been reached. The next stage is reached in Boeotia about a century later. Here again it is the adoption by Boeotians of the Attic alphabet that supplies the evidence. It was the sign  $\eta$  that the Boetians chose to note their  $ai$ . This shows at once two things: (1) that in Boeotian the  $ai$  was already a monophthong with an  $e$ -sound; (2) that in Attic it still represented a diphthong (this is why the Boeotians could not use it for their purpose). It is curious to observe that Attic, usually in the vanguard of phonetic innovations, remains in the rear in its treatment of  $ai$  (and also of  $oi$ ). About 300 B.C. Attic inscriptions betray sometimes a confusion between  $ai$  and  $a$ . Is this a sign that  $ai$  was already a simple vowel, an  $a$  verging towards  $e$ , something like the English  $a$  in ‘cat’? No, since some cases of dissimilation in inscriptions of the same time show that it still had the original value. It seems, in fact, that Attica was the last to adopt the innovation, while in a region so remote from Boeotia as Egypt, papyri show signs of confusion between  $ai$  and  $e$  as early as the 4th c. B.C., and about 150 the new value seems to have been generalised everywhere except in Attica, where the final fixation of the  $e$ -sound of  $ai$  took place only in the 2nd c. A.D.

The transition of  $oi$  to  $\ddot{u}$ , via  $oe$ , is strictly parallel to that of  $ai$  to  $e$ . In Boetia  $oi = oe$  in the 5th c. B.C., and about 250 B.C. the value  $\ddot{u}$  for  $oi$  is traceable both in Boetia and in Crete. About 150 B.C. it is so also in Egypt. The occurrence of the phenomenon in such distant and linguistically different points of the Greek-speaking area, points to the fact that the change has become general. Attica seems alone to preserve its  $oi$ -diphthong, and it does so even longer than with  $ai$ —till the 3rd c. A.D. From this moment  $oi$  and  $\upsilon$  represent everywhere the same sound,  $\ddot{u}$ . The unrounding of this  $\ddot{u}$  into  $i$

must then have occurred at the same time for both notations. In dealing with *v* we have seen that the exact dating of this unrounding presents difficulties, and must be placed some time between the 5th and the 10th c. A.D.

*Av* and *ev* form a group apart. They, like the rest, cease to be diphthongs, yet their second element does not fuse with the first to form a single vowel sound, but develops into a labial spirant which is voiced—*v*—before voiced consonants and vowels, and unvoiced—*f*—before unvoiced consonants. Thus *av* and *ev* appear in Modern Greek as *av*, *af*, *ev*, *ef* respectively, according to position. To these the rare diphthong *ηv* is to be joined, whose first element follows the evolution of *η* (i.e., becomes *i* towards the beginning of our era) while *v* becomes *v* and *f* at the same date and in the same positions as that in *av* and *ev*. It has, then, in the Greek of to-day the value *iv* and *if*.

When did the change occur? It is hard to say. The notation *α* (or *ε*) + digamma, frequent in 6th and 5th c. inscriptions (especially in Corinth) proves nothing. As Schwyzler rightly remarks (p. 197) the digamma stands here merely as an *u* not forming a syllable. But the modern value of *av* and *ev* clearly appears in certain notations of Boeotian inscriptions of the first half of the 3rd century B.C. (Orchomenus and Thespieae), and about the same time in Smyrna also. A little later it also occurs in Egypt and, sporadically, in some other parts of the Greek-speaking domain. There is also the *ΕΠΙΣΤΕΦΕΕ* (= *ἐπιστεφει*) in a Delphic inscription of the 2nd c. B.C., often invoked in this connection, but here the notation remains quite isolated. With some reserve it may be said that the new pronunciation became general during the first centuries of our era. It was so in any case by the 5th c. A.D., as results from Thumb's reconstruction of the state of Greek at that time (referred to above).

By this survey, if we leave aside some dialectal peculiarities, the whole range of Modern Greek vocalism is covered. For the isolated sounds here examined preserve their value in any position or combination, with one exception: that of *ι*, which, when unstressed and followed by a vowel, loses its syllable-forming character and becomes a semi-vowel, like *y* in "yonder."

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The main changes which we have examined can be recapitulated as follows:—

Original value.	Transitional.	Final.	Present value becomes general.
(1) $\eta$ = long open $e$	long close $e$ :	$i$	1st c. A.D.
(2) $v$ = $u$	$\ddot{u}$	$i$	5th to 10th c. A.D.
(3) $\zeta, \eta, \varphi$	long $a, e, o$	$a, i, o$	1st c. A.D.
(4) $\epsilon i$ = $ei$	long close $e$	$i$	3rd or 2nd c. B.C.
(5) $ov$ = $ou$	long close $o$	$u$	1st c. B.C.
(6) $ai$ = $ai$	$ae$	$e$	2nd c. A.D.
(7) $oi$ = $oi$	$oe$ $\ddot{u}$	$i$	Between 5th and 10th c. A.D.
(8) $\alpha v$ = $au$	$ao$ ?	$av, af$	} First centuries of our era.
(9) $\epsilon v$ = $eu$	$eo$ ?	$ev, ef$	
(10) $\eta v$ = $eu$	$iu, io$ ?	$iv, if$	

As for dates, it appears from our table that the Modern Greek vowel system was already fully constituted towards the beginning of our era, save for a minor detail—the unrounding of  $\ddot{u}$  (noted by  $v$  and  $oi$ ) which took place in Byzantine times.

Nos. 2, 3, 4, and 7 form together the important group of phenomena known as ‘iotacism’: a process of reduction of various simple vowels and diphthongs to the single value  $i$ , a sound so characteristic of Modern Greek vocalism. We have seen that the process starts in the 7th century B.C. by the passage of  $\epsilon i$  into a close  $e$  in Corinthian, which is soon followed by Attic (6th c.); and almost simultaneously, in Boeotian, the  $\epsilon i$  reaches its final state,  $i$ . Meantime, in different points of the Greek-speaking world, other changes have already set in—all working in the same direction. We see  $\eta$  gradually reshaped and narrowed, variously at different dates and according to the varying linguistic media and accidents of notation—until finally the innumerable local processes of growth and transformation converge and fix its definitive value: again  $i$ . And it is towards  $i$  too that  $v$  and  $oi$  are working their way, through their long common stage of  $\ddot{u}$ ; until belated unrounding of this sound seems to complete finally a process started some 15 centuries before. But in point of fact it is not completed, though on the surface of the language the movement in this direction seems to have died down long ago. The process is still going on—locally, as it started,—waiting to break out again and impose new changes on the common usage. To observe the last stage of “iotacism” we have to turn to Modern Greek dialects. These may be roughly divided into two groups: the Northern and the Southern. It is in the former (embracing the speech of Thrace, Macedonia, Thessaly, the Northern islands, Epirus, etc.) that the phenomenon in question has reached

its utmost form : here, every unaccented *e* (*i.e.*, *ε* and *αι*) become *i*. (Parallel to this some other changes of a similar nature are also observable : unaccented *i* and *υ*—however noted—tend to be reduced or eliminated, and accented *ο* becomes *υ*).

Now what is the tendency which expresses itself in this curious phenomenon ? For it must be a fundamental tendency of the language, one that has worked ceaselessly for twenty-five centuries. Physiologically speaking, all the changes constituting it reveal the movement of fronting, raising, and closing ; that is, a displacement of articulation forward-upward and reduction of the resonating cavity by narrowing the supraglottal passages that mould the sound. Considering the quality of the sounds produced, the same facts may be described as a tendency to emit ever higher, lighter, sharper and narrower vocal sounds.<sup>1</sup>

Thus defined, the phenomenon appears as a particular expression (no doubt the most striking) of a more general tendency which manifests itself also in other facts with which 'iotacism' can now be correlated. Indeed, the same shifting of the articulation-base upward and forward, the same predilection for sharper and narrower sounds, is revealed also by the two other changes we have examined (*ου* > *υ* and *αι* > *ε*) and also by a third, which we had not to examine as it is previous to textual tradition and goes far back into prehistoric times. I mean the change of the original Indo-European long *α* to *ε*, which forms the watershed between the Ionian-Attic group and the rest of the Ancient Greek dialects. It is also the watershed between the first Greeks who penetrated into Greece and became participants in the Aegean civilisation, and those others who lingered on for centuries in their Northern grasslands and highlands, and found their way to the Mediterranean only later. The leading rôle of the Ionian-Attic group in almost all subsequent vowel-changes of this kind is also very significant in that connection. We have also noticed the pioneering part which Boeotian and Corinthian had played in the reconstruction of Greek vocalism—especially the former. Now it can be shown that the very peculiar development of the Boeotian branch of Aeolic (characterised above all by a peculiarly 'advanced' state of vocalism) is due to the action of a powerful Ionian substratum, linguistic as well as ethnic. In Corinth, where the original base of

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<sup>1</sup> To a present-day Greek the northern "fullness" of speech is very surprising. "Has everybody in your country got such a thick voice (*τέτοια χοντρή φωνή*)?" I was once asked. Their high, thin voices seem no less astonishing to us.



the population was Ionian too, similar facts are observable. But the presence of an Ionian substratum in Boeotia and Corinth, though it appears from ample and varied evidence, has hitherto remained unnoticed, and I cannot embark on a long discussion which would be quite out of place here.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand Doric which (with the significant exception of Corinthian) remains in the rear of phonetic innovations, represents linguistically the opposite pole to Ionian-Attic, and is also the speech of the latest comers to Greece who long remained unaffected by their new surroundings. And it is no accident that the original *u*-sound, which elsewhere underwent two successive transformations, has remained unaltered till to-day in Tsaconian, the direct descendant of Laconian Doric, the speech of those Spartans who rigorously kept for centuries the Nordic spirit, customs and blood, pure from Mediterranean alloy.

If now we compare the original Greek vowel-system with that of common Indo-European, we find nothing in it that betrays the process under examination. In none of the changes that brought about the differentiation of Greek vocalism from that of the parent tongue can we distinguish the action of the 'fronting-raising-closing' tendency. The passage from *a* to *η* is its very first manifestation, and this occurs among the earliest invaders of Greece at their contact with Aegean lands. The tendency must then be due to the linguistic influence of the—numerically prevalent—native Aegean populations, and its increasing action coincides with the fusion of the natives with the newcomers and marks the gradual 'Mediterranization' of the invaders. In its first stages it is the expression, on the phonetic plane, of that particular blend of Nordic and Mediterranean elements which, in the integrity of its manifestations, we call Greek Civilization.

First brought into action at the time when vaulted tombs were being built and unrest was reigning among the "peoples of the sea," the force has not ceased to work, and it has moulded in its main features the vowel-system of Greek as we find it to-day.

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Till now we have been considering the vowel-changes only as they express the 'fronting-raising-closing' process. But the

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<sup>1</sup> I may refer the reader to my thesis on *Thesaly in the 13th century B.C.* (to be published shortly) where the existence of a 'North-Ionian branch' and its distribution are discussed in detail (especially the chapters on the "Aeolidae," the Minyans and Poseidon Heliconius).

same changes reveal also the working of another and quite different tendency—one that had not been acquired, however early, through contact with a foreign linguistic medium, but is inherent in the very essence of Greek, whose differentiation from the parent tongue it had to some extent determined.

What exactly distinguishes the vocalism of the original Greek from that of the common Indo-European?

(1) A reduction of the range of simple vowels. This consists in the elimination of the neutral vowel "schwa" (becoming short *a*) and of the whole series of syllable-forming sonants and liquids (to which Greek substitutes *ag*, *ga*, *al*, *la*, and *a*).

(2) The reduction of the range of diphthongs :

(a) diphthongs with "schwa" as first element are replaced by *ai* and *av* ;

(b) all the six diphthongs with long first element have disappeared (coalescing with those with short first element) except that three of them still survive at the ends of words.

This represents a total loss of five distinct Indo-European diphthongs and a much reduced occurrence of 3 more.

(3) Frequent accumulations, within a word, of vowels not separated (i.e., unprotected) by consonants. This is due to the total disappearance in Greek of intervocalic *s* and *j* (soon followed also by the loss of digamma in Ionian-Attic). The consequences of this we shall see presently.

It appears from points (1) and (2) that simplification and unification of the vowel-system marks the very origin of the language. We shall observe the same process also in examining the treatment of consonants and the formation of the inflexional system peculiar to Greek. As for vocalism, it is clear that it became distinct from that of the parent tongue by unifying different vowels and diphthongs under a single value, and so reducing the variety of sounds. Subsequent development only carries this process further.

But this is to say very little. All Indo-European languages arose in this way ; that is, by levelling out the primal complexity of the parent tongue. Speaking of Greek, one has to show the direction—proper and peculiar to that language—in which the unification proceeded. To some extent the direction was given only later—by the 'fronting-raising-closing' tendency examined above ; but in certain other respects it had been already fixed at the time when Greek

was first becoming Greek. Take for instance the treatment of Indo-European diphthongs with long first element. After three of them had been eliminated, and the occurrence of the remaining three gravely restricted, the next step—complete loss of these also—was predetermined (this is No. 3 in our table of vowel-changes). Also we have seen, in the evolution of *av*, *ev*, and *ηv*, the specific way in which a vowel-sound had been ruled out by passing into the corresponding consonant (Nos. 8, 9 and 10 of the table). The same procedure is prefigured to some extent in the original elimination of two Indo-European vowels—vocalic *r* and *l*—which appear in Greek as the corresponding consonants.

But it is the 3rd point which is of special interest and importance in this respect. Greek starts by eliminating intervocalic *s* and *j* (=English initial *y*), and in this it stands alone among Indo-European languages. The disappearance of these two consonants—more than any other feature of the original Greek—determines the future development of its vocalism. It brought about the innumerable encounters of vowels in Common Greek. And this results in various fusions (contractions) of the juxtaposed and “uncovered” vowels, distinct syllable-forming sounds running together into a single syllable or single sound. Then the process which originally started by the loss of intervocalic *s* and *j* is completed by the loss of digamma, the *w*-sound (a prehistoric loss in Ionian-Attic). Thus one more obstacle falls between vowels, and the vocalic fusion goes on with increasing force.

Yet although this process had been predetermined from the first origins of Greek, its working is gradual and fills the whole history of the language. We can still get some idea of what the vocalism of Common Greek was like at the time when the intervocalic barriers had been lifted but the resulting contractions were only starting their levelling action. It is in the Homeric language that we can catch a brief glimpse of something that still recalls that state. Here, side by side with contracted forms, forms yet uncontracted are delightfully abundant. In these the consonantal dams have been washed away but the vowels have not yet run together—and there is a liquid, continuous vocal flow, a slow, free gliding of the voice from vowel to vowel. This is a glorious and passing moment in the history of Greek. For precisely that which constitutes the charm of Homeric vocalism is also the germ of its future decay. And the decay is already apparent in the contracted forms.

In the earliest Attic texts we meet with a much more advanced stage of the process. And everywhere the transformation is going on. While old diphthongs collapse and the resulting vowels, together with the original ones, are being narrowed under the action of the 'fronting-raising-closing' tendency, contractions ceaselessly level down the variety of vocalic juxtapositions which, becoming diphthongs or simple vowels, are in their turn seized and shaped further by the first tendency. Of this we have seen some examples in the development of *ei* and *ou*, where the two processes meet and join. In fact, their workings are always closely interwoven and often indistinguishable. Both carry Greek vocalism towards the state it reached in the first centuries of our era—which is on the whole also its present state.

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#### CONSONANTS.

The evolution of consonants (of which we know rather little) was apparently much simpler than that of vowels. And as a whole the consonantism of Modern Greek differs from the original sound-system far less than does its vocalism. And this in spite of the fact that out of 15 distinct consonantal sounds noted by the Greek alphabet (*i.e.*, not counting  $\xi$  and  $\psi$ ) only eight have preserved their earlier value; and even among these, four assume new values in certain combinations. The remaining seven have all changed, and to them must be added the digamma, and initial *h* ("rough breathing") which have both disappeared. Let us begin with the last two.

In a different connection we have seen that the loss of digamma took place in Ionian-Attic in prehistoric time and that this loss was the natural completion of a process started at the very beginnings of Greek.

Digamma would not have detained us, but that it offers one more striking example of how changes really occur in Greek. In the main line of development which leads from the Homeric language through Attic and the *κοινή* to the common usage of to-day, the loss of digamma must be dated 8th c. B.C at latest, yet in reality, though continuously vanishing, it has never completely vanished from Greek. When it was no longer in Ionian-Attic, it still persisted, *e.g.*, in Arcadian (only initially) and in Corinthian, where it remained in all positions for some centuries. In Laconian it survived throughout, and still emerges here and there in Tsaconian speech. Here as elsewhere Greek offers the curious example of a language in which the



successive stages of evolution are coexistent, contemporary. Of course, facts not unlike this occur also in other languages, but nowhere so persistently, and nowhere for more than short fragments of development; whilst here, as in the case of *v*, the development covers 27 centuries.

Initial *h*—‘rough breathing’—was aspiration preceding the initial vowel of certain words (it represents Indo-European *s* and *j* in the same position). This was a sound of little resistance, and at the beginning of historical time it no longer existed in East-Ionic or Lesbian. To these, the *φιλωτικοί*, ancient grammarians oppose the *δασυντικοί*, such as the speakers of Attic, among whom the rough breathing still persisted. But with Attic the question is very much obscured by the adoption in 403 B.C. of the East-Ionian alphabet, in which there was no sign for the rough breathing. So from this time on, the sound no longer figures in notation, and it is difficult to follow the process of its elimination from actual usage. Still, certain new formations, arising after the reform of spelling, point to the fact that initial *h* was still extant and active. On the other hand, before 403, inscriptions betray a confusion which suggests that *en plein* 5th century the Athenians were already beginning to ‘drop their aitches.’ The ruling-out of the sound seems to have been a very complex process, varying according to social level, and we may conjecture that in Attic, as in English, the ‘psilosis’ began from below; and, meeting with organised resistance, it took a long time to propagate upward. We know even less of how the process went on in other dialects, in which the sound had not been lost from the start. It was not till the first centuries of our era that initial *h* had disappeared generally.

The remaining changes fall into two groups. The first is represented by *β, δ, γ*, and *ζ*. From their original values—*b, d, g* and *zd*—these consonants developed respectively into *v*, voiced *th* (as in Engl.), a fricative *g*, or *j* as in German (according to position), and *z*.

As for the present value of *γ* it is, before back-vowels and consonants, a fricative *g*. This sound has no parallel in the Indo-European languages I know, except in the Ukrainian dialect of Russian.<sup>1</sup> Before front-vowels *γ* sounds now as the English initial *y*.

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. George Thomson, of King's College, kindly informs me that this sound is identical with *gb* in modern Irish.

The sounds *b*, *d*, *g*, have not disappeared from Greek:  $\pi=b$  when preceded by  $\mu$  or  $\nu$ ;  $\tau=d$  when preceded by  $\nu$  (and in the combination  $\tau\delta$ );  $\kappa=g$  after  $\gamma (>n)$ , and  $\gamma$  itself is still *g* after  $\nu$  or  $\gamma (>n)$ . As a matter of fact,  $\delta$  too has preserved its original value after  $\mu$  or  $\nu$ , at least in living Greek. But in this case it is usually noted by  $\tau$ , e.g.,  $\delta\nu\tau\rho\alpha\varsigma$  in face of the traditional spelling  $\delta\nu\delta\rho\alpha\varsigma$  (pronounced with voiced *th* by pedants). It may be added that  $\sigma$  when followed by a voiced consonant becomes voiced; but this was probably so already in Classical times (cf. Schwyzer, p. 217).

As for topography and chronology of these changes, we are ill-informed, as ever with consonants.

The *v*-value of  $\beta$  is betrayed from 4th and 3rd centuries B.C. in Laconian, Cretan, Boeotian, and in Egypt. A little later digamma for  $\beta$  begins to occur also in Elis, and in Smyrna we have  $\epsilon\beta$  for  $\epsilon\nu$  from the 3rd c. In Attic the change is first traceable only c. A.D. in transcriptions of Latin names, such as  $\Lambda\epsilon\iota\beta\iota\alpha$  for Livia.

For  $\delta=th$ , signs appear much earlier, in the 6th c. in Rhodes and Elis, where  $\delta$  is used for  $\delta$ . But the spread of the change cannot be followed.

For  $\gamma$ =fricative we have the witness of Pamphylian, Argive and Attic inscriptions from the 4th c. B.C. (ex.  $\Pi\rho\epsilon\iota\alpha\varsigma$  for  $\Pi\rho\epsilon\gamma\iota\alpha\varsigma$ ).

From these data one would place the passage of  $\beta$ ,  $\delta$ , and  $\gamma$  to fricatives sometime before A.D. But Pernot (pp. 155 sqq.) points out a fact which suggests a later date. We have seen that Greek still possesses the sounds *b*, *d*, *g*. So it is able to preserve these by special notation in borrowing foreign words in which they occur; and this it usually did. But there is a group of words borrowed, as their forms show, from Vulgar Latin not earlier than the beginning of our era. Now in all these borrowings the Latin *b*, *d*, *g* are simply noted by  $\beta$ ,  $\delta$ ,  $\gamma$  (not by  $\mu\pi$ ,  $\nu\tau$ ,  $\gamma\kappa$ ), which shows that at that time these sounds still had their original value. We may therefore place the generalisation of the change in the first centuries A.D., say about 300.

The original value of  $\delta$ — $\tau d$ —is not absolutely certain. The notation covers a compound sound (or sounds?) of different origins, so in certain cases it might have been  $d\tau$  or even already  $\tau$ . However, the later development is fairly clear:  $\delta$  was  $\tau$  in common usage about 300 B.C.

The second group of consonantal changes is formed by  $\varphi$ ,  $\theta$ ,  $\chi$ —originally  $p$ ,  $t$  and  $k$  each followed by an aspiration, and at present  $f$ , unvoiced  $th$  (as in Engl.) and  $ch$  (as in Ger. "Buch").

In Laconian inscriptions the notation  $\sigma$  for  $\theta$  is current from the 4th c. B.C. But earlier still, Aristophanes in imitating the Laconian speech puts  $\sigma$  for  $\theta$ ; and the same sigma appears also in the formula  $\nu\alpha\lambda\ \tau\omega\ \sigma\iota\omega$  (dual of  $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ , i.e., the Dioskouroi). Now this is just how the Modern Greek  $\theta$  and the English unvoiced  $th$  appear to those whose language does not possess this very peculiar sound, and in his attempt to emit it a foreigner usually produces a kind of messy  $s$ -sound. It is thus clear that the present pronunciation of theta was already fixed in Laconia in the 5th c. B.C., but not yet in Attica. This is almost all we know. It is worse still with  $\varphi$  and  $\chi$ . It is impossible to reconstruct from the sporadic and uncertain data at our disposal how the change spread in time and space. So it is no wonder that opinions vary between 3rd c. B.C. and 4th c. A.D. as the date when the loss of the old aspirates became general in Greek usage.

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To sum up, from original Greek to that of to-day, the main consonantal changes were these:—

<i>Original value.</i>	<i>Present value.</i>	<i>Present value becomes general.</i>
(1) Digamma= $w$	disappeared	c. 8th c. B.C.
(2) Rough breathing=initial $b$	disappeared	} First centuries of our era.
(3) $\beta=b$	$\nu$	
(4) $\delta=d$	voiced $th$	
(5) $\gamma=g$	$g$ -fricative	} c. 300 B.C.
(6) $\zeta=z$ ( $dz$ ? $z$ ?)	$z$	
(7) $\varphi=p$ +aspiration	$f$	} First centuries of our era.
(8) $\theta=t$ +aspiration	unvoiced $th$	
(9) $\chi=k$ +aspiration	$ch$ (German)	

The Modern Greek system of consonants (like that of vowels) was then fully constituted near the beginning of the Christian era. In comparing the two systems it appears that, although some of the original consonantal values have changed, no unification of distinct sounds under a single value has ever occurred. So that the new system presents the same variety of sounds as the old one. In fact, the early loss of digamma and the subsequent disappearance of the rough-breathing are compensated by the preservation, in special conditions, of the  $b$ ,  $d$ ,  $g$  sounds (noted above).

In this, the evolution of Greek consonantism is strikingly different from that of its vocalism. In the former there is no sign of the simplifying and unifying tendency which characterises the latter. Consonantal changes have operated in a different direction. This we have now to determine.

No. 1 stands apart from the rest. The early loss of digamma in common usage forms a prelude to the consonantal evolution, rather than an event within it. It marks, as we have seen, the last stage of the process which had already largely determined the structure of Common Greek; and its main importance lies elsewhere, in the consequences it brought about in the domain of vocalism.

The rest of the changes translate two processes: (1) the vanishing of aspiration; (2) the dissolution of stops into corresponding fricatives. The first is expressed in no. 2, the second in nos. 3 to 6, and both processes are fused in nos. 7 to 9.

The reduction of aspirated elements had started early. The original Greek constituted its consonantal system by breaking down the complicated array of aspirates of the parent-tongue. The whole series of Indo-European voiced aspirates had been abandoned, and their function assumed by the only three that remained—unvoiced aspirates *θ*, *φ*, *χ*. The ruling-out of these too was left to historic time. With this process (the vanishing of aspiration within a word) must be correlated the loss of the initial aspiration. The two express the same tendency and are certainly connected. The latter, which sets in earlier, might to some extent have facilitated the former.

The second process is more curious; It is manifest throughout the 7 changes (nos. 3 to 9). In fact the three aspirated stops *θ*, *φ*, *χ*, have not merely lost their aspiration, but have also developed into corresponding fricatives. It is of course vain to inquire whether it was the aspiration that undermined the stop which preceded it, by provoking an anticipatory removal of the obstacle necessary for the production of a stop; or whether, on the contrary, it was the raising of the obstacle (the dissolution of the stop) that drowned the distinct aspiration. The fact remains: the stop passed into the corresponding fricative, and the distinct second element—the aspiration—vanished.

In nos. 3 to 6 the process is simpler. In all of them we have merely a resolution of voiced stops into corresponding voiced fricatives (in no. 6 it is more exactly the removal of the stop-element in a compound sound).



Thus, of 10 original stops only 3 have survived as such: the three unvoiced stops  $\pi, \tau, \kappa$ ; the remaining 7 are now all fricatives. According to Meillet (p. 22)  $\pi, \tau, \kappa$ , represented the only stable element in the system of stops of the original Greek, the rest were from the start very weakly articulated, and were slowly undermined by "*une tendance à ne pas réaliser pleinement le mouvement de fermeture.*" So the tendency whose action through the historic period we have been examining had already started its work.

Thus, the consonantal system of to-day, no less than the vocalism, is the product of forces that have been moulding Greek from its remotest origins.

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Another phenomenon that has occurred in Greek is of far wider purport than all the changes of isolated phonetic elements, or groups of elements, which we have been examining so far. It is the replacement of pitch-accent by stress-accent and the abolishing of the fixed quantities of vowels and syllables, on which the rhythm of the language—a purely quantitative rhythm—was originally based.

The two facts are closely correlated and are necessarily simultaneous. The pitch-accent does not affect the quantity of the syllable upon which it falls (although it is itself dependent on this to some extent). Being a mere difference in height, it cannot interfere with the rhythm of the word constituted by the play of quantities: it operates on a different plane. While stress-accent consists no longer in a heightening of tone, but in a greater intensity of articulation which involves the lengthening of the stressed vowel, while the unstressed ones are perforce weakened and tend to become uniformly short.

According to Meillet (p. 204) the loss of distinction between long and short vowels is traceable in popular Attic as early as the 5th c. B.C., and becomes more obvious in the 3rd c. About that time the confusion is betrayed also in Egyptian papyri. Thus, Meillet concludes, "the feeling of quantitative distinctions tended to disappear from Greek from before the 3rd c. B.C." But in versification the quantitative rhythm, which becomes more and more a mere literary convention, remains for a long time rigorously preserved. Here the first attempt at a compromise with the real state of the language was made only about 200 B.C. by Babrius. And Babrius, it must be remembered, was a Syrian.

The change in question can hardly be interpreted as the outcome of tendencies proper and peculiar to Greek. It is only a particular episode of that wide-spread process of transformation that embraced the whole Indo-European family, and sooner or later brought each of its members to abandon the original quantitative rhythm. (Only the Letto-Lithuanian group has to some extent kept it; and here it is a case of 'arrested development' rather than the living persistence of the primordial type). The meaning of the change cannot be discussed here, and reluctantly I have to content myself by merely stating the linguistic event without touching on the complexity of its cultural and psychological implications.

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Thus the original rhythm of Greek was abolished, vowel quantities were levelled, and the main accent became one of intensity. Yet stress has not entirely ruled out pitch. This still survives to some extent in modern speech (for a particular region the fact has been verified experimentally by Pernot, see *Phonétique des parlers de Cbio*, p. 50 sqq.). The stressed vowel is always accompanied by an elevation of tone varying between a third and a fifth. And it is curious to remember that in describing the ancient accent Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*De comp. verb.*, 11) estimates at a fifth the raising of tone which it involved.

Thus accompanied by pitch, the stress has never been strong in Greek, and this was of great consequence for the development of the language. Although the primal melody of the speech has been subdued and its rhythm changed, at least the architecture of words is remarkably preserved: the place of accent and the number of syllables in words have in very few cases changed since classical times. Compare with this the destructive action a strong stress-accent has exercised in most Indo-European languages, where it brought about a general shrinkage of words and an almost total collapse of their endings (cf. Meillet, p. 222). Of this the most striking instance is English, where the greater part of the original vocabulary has been reduced to monosyllables. Chaucer's language is still rich in native dissyllabic nouns, verbs and adjectives, and of these practically none has come down to modern usage without losing the second syllable. And of the abundant loan-words of Romance origin, very few have retained the accent on the final syllable, where it was in the 14th century. In these two points the change since Chaucer has been greater in English than the corresponding change in Greek since

Homer ; and this is true of the phonetic change as a whole (though not of morphology or syntax).

We have seen that there have been 10 main vowel-changes (2 simple vowels and 8 diphthongs) from Original to Modern Greek. From Chaucer to the present day there have been 13 vowel-changes in English (4 diphthongs and 9 simple vowels, if we include the loss of final unstressed *e*). Moreover the suppression of *r* except initially and between vowels has led in innumerable cases to a levelling of distinct sounds under one (e.g., bird, word, learn, etc.). For consonants the comparison cannot be formulated numerically. In Greek the greater part of consonantal changes (though not all) is covered, once we have indicated the new values acquired by 7 signs of the alphabet and the loss of 2 others. In English this would mean nothing : only one distinct sound has been lost (*gh*=Mod. Gr. *χ*), and no single letter as such has acquired a new value (if we ignore the finer shades). Instead of this there have been countless losses, shiftings, fusions and interchanges in particular positions and combinations.

Since Chaucer is usually pronounced in the modern way, an Englishman is rarely aware of the phonetic gulf which separates the 20th century from the 14th. Nor, for that matter, is a Greek of to-day, in reading Homer, conscious of any change of the sort. You may still deeply offend a village schoolmaster, an ardent reader of Homer, by expressing doubt whether the poet pronounced Greek exactly as he does.

### III.

## MORPHOLOGY

THE process of unification and 'raising of obstacles' which we observed in the evolution of sounds finds expression also on the plane of morphology.

The splitting off from the parent tongue and the formation of Greek is marked by a considerable levelling out of the infinite complexity of the Indo-European inflexional system. Here the changes were much more radical than in phonetics, the first step more decisive—and the new system thus constituted proved more enduring. Save for the creation of the Article, at the dawn of our textual tradition, and the early loss of the dual, no loss or innovation of any importance is to be registered in Greek morphology till about the beginning of our era. Then a process, long kept in check, sets in: the inflexional system undergoes a second transformation in the direction fixed from the start, and c. 500 A.D. the declensions and conjugations in the spoken language become roughly those of to-day. But for a long time the old morphology still persists in varying degree in literary texts, which only incidentally and indirectly betray the real state of the language. To some extent this is so even to-day, and brings about the curious phenomenon of *διγλωσσία* and the ensuing *γλωσσικὸ ζήτημα* to be discussed later on.

Now let us survey briefly some of the most prominent features of Greek morphology and see how they developed. We will limit ourselves to declension and verb-morphology, referring to the rest only incidentally.

The history of declension well illustrates the peculiar character of the morphological evolution of Greek; that is, a very radical beginning followed by a remarkably conservative later development.

Take for example the treatment of the category of case. All Indo-European languages began by reducing the number of cases



of the parent tongue, but none of them, it seems,<sup>1</sup> did this at the beginning so decidedly as Greek : out of the 8 Indo-European cases it took over only 6. Russian has even now six cases and vestiges of a seventh.

But on the other hand, Latin, for instance, started with 6 cases, yet none of these has survived in the Romance languages ; while of its 5 original cases Greek has lost only one, the Dative. This means, as we shall see, two things ; first, that the analytical mode of expression made its appearance in Greek earlier than elsewhere ; second, that it never became strong here. So much so, that in accordance as in all other respects Modern Greek is still among the best representatives in our family of the archaic inflexional type.

The loss of the Dative is the main event in the history of Greek declension, just as in its formation the loss of 3 Indo-European cases had been the chief innovation. Both express the same tendency, and it appears that to some extent the two events are even directly correlated.

Of the 5 Indo-European cases preserved in the original Greek, each expressed a definite grammatical relation (Nom.—the subject, Accus.—the direct object, etc.). The three cases abolished by Greek had all purely concrete meanings : the Ablative, the Instrumental and the Locative. The function of the Ablative was assumed by the Genitive, while the Dative took over the functions of Locative and Instrumental.

Thus the same case had often to express now a variety of distinct meanings, and it could do this only in a very general way. Hence, to make the meaning more specific, the necessity of using prepositions, whose importance goes on increasing in Greek. That is to say, the case-ending becomes incapable of expressing by itself the precise meaning required, and has to be supplemented by an additional word ; or else the meaning is distributed between the elements of a periphrastic formula. This is the analytical mode of expression as opposed to the purely inflexional one, in which the morphological characteristics of a word are able to bear and specify its full and exact meaning.

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<sup>1</sup> I say " seems " because some of the Indo-European languages elude our knowledge in the first stages of their development. Thus when Germanic first comes to notice (Gothic), it has only 4 cases—but this is the 4th c. A.D., and in a much more advanced state than Homeric Greek. While Slav, Lithuanian, Armenian, even in their later stages, have more cases than the original Greek.

In such circumstances an ever increasing part of the meaning of a case devolves on the concomitant prepositions, or is taken over by periphrastic formulas; while the case-ending as such tends gradually to lose its expressive force, until it becomes finally divested of any specific significance, and the case itself vanishes from usage.

In Greek this happened only with the Dative. Why precisely with the Dative? Because it was the Dative that, at the formation of Greek accidence, happened to receive the largest share of functions. And by their growing complexity it later became overburdened and at length collapsed. It had been charged to express at once: (1) the indirect object (the original function of the Dative); (2) place (the function of the abolished Locative); (3) instrument or cause (the function of the lost Instrumental). And each of these main senses is capable of innumerable variations and extensions, which become necessary and multiply, as Greek life goes on increasing in complexity, and Greek civilisation grows, in Hellenistic times, into a world-civilisation. But when too many distinct senses have accumulated under a single formal characteristic, it becomes unable to convey them, and must vanish, making way for other and more effective means of expression.

That is why the category of Dative formed the point of least resistance in Greek noun-inflection: it was from the start too wide a category and so was doomed to become also too vague—and hence superfluous.

The vanishing of this case was long and gradual: starting about the beginning of our era, it was completed only in the 10th c. A.D. The process was a very complex one, variously interrelated with other changes in morphology and syntax. Among other things, it was closely connected with the gradual rehandling of the use and meaning of prepositions, which it affected and by which it was affected in turn. E.g. At a certain moment, *ἐν* tends to coalesce with *εἰς*, the second assuming the functions of both. Thus we read in the Gospels (Luke 11, 7): *τά παῖδα μου μετ' ἐμοῦ εἰς τὴν πόλιν εἰσόν*. That is, the Dative, together with its prepositional prop, is beginning to vanish in its locative function, and the distinction between "rest in" and "motion towards" is being taken over by the "context." In other words, the meaning is differently analysed and distributed; namely, not between *ἐν* and *πόλιν*, but between *εἰς*, *πόλιν*, and *εἰσόν*. Thus the sense is preserved, and the means are reduced by the removal of the two elements felt as superfluous, since no longer "expressive."

But I cannot here go into any details. For the ten centuries which the Dative took to disappear we have a careful monograph by J. Humbert, *La disparition du datif grec* (Paris, 1930), to which I refer the reader. Humbert's survey starts with the 1st c. A.D. and deals only with the process of actual abolishing and supplanting of the Dative. Thus the previous evolution of that "doomed case" remains outside his scope. But the facts collected and classified by Humbert fully confirm my deductions concerning the original cause of the process. Among other things, it is curious to observe that the Dative first vanishes in the two functions which are not proper to it, and by which it had been burdened since the abolishing of the Indo-European Locative and Instrumental, which marked the formation of Greek accidence. For the locative function, the first signs of decay are obvious from the 1st c. A.D., for the others from the 3rd. While in its true function, as "datif proprement dit," it shows a striking resistance to substitutions. "Ce n'est pas avant le IXe. ou le Xe. siècle qu'on peut relever dans les ouvrages littéraires des exemples à peu près nets de substitution" (p. 161).

Surveys such as that made by Humbert are very much needed, especially if carried out through the whole development of Greek (which this one is not). We are much better provided with synchronic surveys of Modern dialects, or groups of dialects; among these we have works of such lasting value as Kretschmer's book on the Lesbian dialects, Dawkins' on those of Asia Minor, and Pernot's on the dialects of Chios. But diachronic sections of the linguistic evolution along some definite and limited morphological phenomenon exist only for the ancient period.<sup>1</sup> Yet only such works would prepare the material for a History of Greek. For this we shall have long to wait. At the moment, all we have is the brilliant but all too short and general sketch by a great philologist: Meillet's *Aperçu*.

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There is not much to be said concerning the category of number. As in all other Indo-European languages, it remains in Greek what it had been originally, except of course for the early loss of the Dual. For Homer already the Dual is a mere archaism which he uses quite inconsistently. In historic time it is entirely absent from Ionic as well as from Lesbian, but is still strictly used in Attic inscriptions

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<sup>1</sup> We have, it is true, Psichari's *Essais de Grammaire Historique Néo-Grecque* (1886), which was a great pioneering work in that line, but much of it is now out of date.

till 409 B.C., and in literature till somewhat later. Then even there it becomes more and more sporadic, and disappears completely about 330 B.C. As for the subsequent revival of the Dual in Atticising diction, this " n'a été que l'amusette sans portée de lettrés archaïsants " (Meillet).

The loss of the Dual is one more expression of the unifying and simplifying tendency, but it is not peculiar to Greek. Nor can the actual process of its elimination throw any light on the subsequent evolution of the language, or be correlated with any particular fact of that evolution. So we will not mention the Dual again when dealing with the Verb.

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An innovation of primal importance for the morphology and syntax of the Noun was the creation of the Article. This does not go back to Common Greek, but takes place to some extent before our eyes. In Homeric usage the Article is still in process of becoming, oscillating as it is between its former, demonstrative, function, and the one to be finally assigned to it later. Even in some archaic inscriptions it had not yet taken its place fully and firmly. But once established and fixed in its new rôle, the Article retains it without any perceptible change till to-day. In Modern Greek its use has even been extended (e.g. with proper names). Side by side with the old Definite Article, an Indefinite Article has arisen, the numeral 'one' having assumed this new function. As for declension, that of  $\delta$  and  $\tau\acute{o}$  has remained unaltered save for the fall of final  $\nu$  before certain consonants (except in the Gen. plur.). Further, the Nom. plur. of  $\eta$  is assimilated to that of  $\delta$ , and its Accus. plur. is  $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\varsigma$ . These changes reflect the transformation undergone by the Greek declension as a whole, which we can now consider.

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Indo-European declension seems to have been extremely complex. It presented an infinite variety of stems, and the expression of case and number involved subtle variations within the stem itself: changes in tone, in quantity and quality of vowels, disappearance and reappearance of the vowels themselves. Of this some Ancient Greek declensions—that of  $\pi\alpha\tau\acute{\eta}\rho$  for example—can still give some idea. But such anomalous types were from the beginning in the minority, and their number gradually decreasing. On the whole, Greek tends from the first to confine marks of case and number to the endings, and to constitute wide and uniform groups each characterised by the same type of stem and by identical case-endings—such as the



groups in -ος and -α (or -η). On the other hand, there is a marked tendency to unify distinct morphological groups under a single inflexional régime. It is true, the distinctive line between noun-inflexion and adjective-inflexion was probably vague even in Indo-European; but in Greek many pronouns, too, had lost their particular declension and became assimilated with adjectives (cf. *καλός* and *οὗτος* as opposed to *bonus* and *iste*, where the distinction had been preserved). However, within the inflexional system thus unified, the diversity of stems and types of declension remains considerable.

Modern Greek represents a further step in that direction. In the wide whole embracing all declinable words—nouns, adjectives, pronouns and numerals—uniformity has greatly spread. Apart from numerous partial survivals, only two old types remain unaltered (save for the loss of the Dative, of course): those of *γάμμα* and *ἔθνος*. The ancient “First” and “Second” declensions continue to form distinct groups, but their case-endings have slightly changed. The former has even been widely increased by assimilating feminine nouns of the ancient “Third” declension: *γυναῖκα*, *πόλη* (<*πόλις*), etc. The “Third” declension itself has dissolved and the various irreducible types which it included (except for the two mentioned above) have been unified, some joining the “First” declension, some going to constitute new uniform groups—such as that of masculines in -ας (gen. sing. in -α): *πατέρας κόρακας*, etc. A wide group apart is that of neuters in -ι (<*ιον*), fed mostly by diminutives; etc.

Together with the unification of types, that of case-endings is apparent. Thus the Nom. plur. ending -ες of the ancient “Third” declension had been extended (with few exceptions) to all masculine and feminine nouns, adjectives and numerals, and to almost all pronouns.

The character and meaning of all these changes will best appear from some particular instances.

ἔμπορας	Sing. Nom.	ὁ ἔμπορος	ἡ γυναῖκα	ὁ πατέρας
ἔμπορα	Voc.	ἔμπορε	γυναῖκα	πατέρα
ἔμπορα	Acc.	τὸν ἔμπορο	τὴν γυναῖκα	τὸν πατέρα
ἔμπορου, ἔμπορα	Gen.	τοῦ ἐμπόρου	τῆς γυναίκας	τοῦ πατέρα
ἔμποροι, ἔμποροι	Plur. Nom.	οἱ ἔμποροι	οἱ γυναῖκες	οἱ πατέρες
ἔμποροι, ἔμποροι	Voc.	ἔμποροι	γυναῖκες	πατέρες
ἔμποροι, ἔμποροι	Acc.	τοὺς ἐμπόρους	τις γυναῖκες	τοὺς πατέρες
ἔμπορους	Gen.	τῶν ἐμπόρων	τῶν γυναικῶν	τῶν πατέρων

These examples belong to the three most usual types and show together the relative parts of change and persistence in Modern Greek declension.

In the first example, Case and Number are expressed throughout by inflexion, and the displacements of accent which characterise the underlying ancient paradigm have remained everywhere. The only innovation is the *-ες* ending of the Nom. plur., now common to all declensions (though for this group *οι* is still frequent in general usage). As for the fall of final *ν* in the Acc. sing., it is a purely phonetic phenomenon. In the Gen. plur. the phonetic change has been counteracted and the *ν* preserved, because here it has a morphological function (since the displacement of accent, only an additional case-mark, does not occur in dissyllabic words).

In the second example the change is wider. It shows how the unification of types proceeded. The prevalent (and hence significant) form of the stem, which occurs in all cases of the ancient inflexion except Nom. and Voc., is extended also to these; and thus reshaped, the word can join the wide group in *-α* without losing its main element. In this way, many anomalous types were resolved. It will be noticed also that the *α* of the Nom. sing. is maintained in all cases. More important is this: by the fall of the final *ν* in Acc. sing. and the extension of the *ες*-ending to Acc. plur., the distinction between Acc. and Nom. in both Numbers is left without any morphological mark. It is then expressed by the form of the Article and sometimes, when the Article is omitted (which is rare), even by the "context."

The third example shows again the resolution of an anomalous type. But masculine nouns of the former Third declension are not reshaped according to an old type, but constitute a new group in *-ας* with Gen. *-α*. In this group, too, 2 cases of the plural and 2 of the singular are not distinguished morphologically. Thus, to a limited extent, the analytical tendency has found its way into Modern Greek declension, which yet on the whole remains a typical representative of the old inflexional type.

The constitution of the new system began early. Forms like Accus. *πατρίδαν* or Nom. plur. *ἔχουσες* (for *ἔχουσαι*) have been attested from the 1st c. A.D. And such "mistakes," which break out in written texts since that time with an ever-increasing persistence, cannot be easily disregarded. In Thumb's words (*loc. cit.* p. 190), "that which actually lies in the direction of Modern Greek develop-

ment cannot be a mere slip of the pen or an individual blunder, it must be evidence of the linguistic condition of its age."

On the other hand, the unification attempted in the new system, as it had been earlier attempted by the old, has never been fully achieved. Of our three examples, the first represents a type fully unified already in Common Greek, and the two others belong to newly unified groups in which all anomalies are resolved. In this sense the examples are misleading. They give no idea of the actual complexity of the present system, which swarms with old and still unresolved anomalies. It is also curious to observe that, side by side with these, some quite new irregularities have arisen which defy the levelling process going on round them. Thus, although most of the ancient imparisyllabics have been levelled, and others are being levelled, new imparisyllabics have been constituted in the meantime, such as a group of nouns in *-ας* and *-ης* with plural in *-αδες* and *-ηδες*.

All that has been said refers only to common usage, and takes no account of any dialectal peculiarities. But if from the relatively smooth and stable surface of common usage we turned to popular speech, in all the diversity of its local variations, the picture would become infinitely more complex. There, the language is in perpetual creative fermentation, and forms of the distant past are living side by side with those belonging to the far future of Greek.

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Before passing to the Verb, a few words may be said on the category of Gender.

Greek took it over from Indo-European, and even somewhat strengthened it. Thus, in Indo-European the distinction between masculine and feminine nouns had no morphological sign and was expressed only through agreement (masculine nouns agreeing with masculine adjectives, etc.). This way of expressing Gender is made clearer in Greek by the creation of the Article, which marks the Gender of a noun even in the absence of an adjective. Moreover Greek fortified the distinction by providing it often—though by no means always—with morphological characteristics. Modern Greek goes further in this direction: here the gender of a noun is practically always marked, at least in spelling, by its nominative-ending. But concerning Gender, Modern Greek presents a curious peculiarity: a striking increase of the neuter at the expense of masculine and feminine. All these new neuters clearly betray their origin: they

are diminutives (usually neuter in Greek) in form, not in meaning. The process is, then, a common one. A language with a long past tends often to refresh the expressiveness of old words blunted by usage by giving them a diminutive form which implies no diminutive meaning whatever. Thus, in reading Apuleius' novel, one accustomed to classical Latin has the queer impression of a continuous "baby-talk," until he realises that all these diminutives must not be taken as such. And one knows also the large number of nouns in Romance languages for which corresponding diminutive forms must be postulated, or are actually found, in Vulgar Latin. Yet in Latin, diminutives preserved the gender of the plain form; and in the thorough linguistic reorientation which led to the formation of Romance languages, it was the Neuter that dissolved, and nouns belonging to that gender emerged into new life as masculines. In Greek there has been no such rehandling of Gender.

Thus the Neuter has kept its widely extended domain, which goes on extending almost before our eyes; and I see no process operating in the opposite direction. In peasant speech the tendency is working towards its climax. Here, more and more nouns tend to acquire a diminutive form and become neuter. Conjointly with this there are signs of confusion pointing in the same direction. I have noticed that some feminines in  $-\eta$  ( $=i$ ), especially abstract nouns (belonging to the ancient group in  $-\iota<-\eta$ ), are sometimes treated as neuters in  $-\iota(<-\iota\sigma)$ . Also (but this is of very limited purport), old feminine place-names in  $-a$  are often perceived as plural neuters, e.g. τὰ Ὀλύμπια (thus accented). (οὗτοι οἱ οὐρανοὶ τῶν ὀλύμπων)

As far as my impression goes (for I have made no methodical investigation), the tendency is not confined to any particular region or group of dialects—though it may vary in strength from place to place—but is general in popular usage. One can almost imagine a time when all nouns will have been levelled under a single gender—the neuter—and the category of Gender itself, thus losing its meaning, will vanish from Greek.

These are very tentative remarks. As far as I can see, the fact has escaped notice so far. Only detailed research—resulting in statistics of all relevant facts in time and space—would permit one to draw general conclusions and formulate a prognosis.

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In Indo-European most verbs, like most nouns, were derived straight from Roots (and only occasionally nouns from verbs and



verbs from nouns, as in Greek). And what was thus derived was not a verb as a whole, which would then differentiate into various 'tense-stems'; each tense-stem was derived from the Root directly. Thus all the stems of a verb were independent and not deducible from one another; they were unconnected formally, except through their common Root. Root was, then, a distinct and perceptible unit, always capable of new derivations.

From its origin Greek knows no 'radical derivation.' Roots as such have ceased to be perceptible, and words are derived only from one another. Yet there was in Common Greek a vast quantity of radical verbs taken over from the parent tongue. The various stems of any such "Strong" verb point no longer to their common Root. Nor are they always susceptible of being deduced from one another according to any rule, since they stand to one another in no definite relation of form: *πάσχω*, *πέσσομαι*, *ἐπαθόν*, *πέπονθα*—each form is autonomous and irreducible. They simply exist side by side and are connected only by a common meaning which each of them specifies in a particular 'tense'-direction.

But together with these radical verbs, there are the more recent derivative verbs formed from nouns, mostly within the language itself, and ever increasing in number. These fall into clear-cut and unified types, and each is provided with a regular set of tense-stems which, except for the present-stem, can all be deduced from one another according to fixed rules. It is these verbs which set the general model of inflexion perceived as the norm. While the others, which represented the normal type in Indo-European, have become mere anomalies in Greek. And the anomalies tend gradually to be reduced.

Thus two groups are distinct and opposed in Greek from its origin: the old radical verbs with their irrational complexity of stems and inflexion, and the new ones, strengthened by their regularity and their growing number. And the second tends from the start to encroach on the domain of the other. This encroachment is clearly perceptible even in Homer. For in Homer, already some old verbs are treated as if they were 'regular,' and provided with normal tense-stems and conjugations—*κρήπτω*, for instance. By this the main theme in the evolution of Greek verb-inflexion is set; the main, but not the only one. Conjointly with the reduction of 'strong' verbs to normal types, other processes of unification go on, which operate in the domain of the 'regular' verbs themselves, abolishing or

simplifying morphological marks, levelling distinct categories under the same marks, etc.

On the other hand, processes of a quite opposite nature arise, ceaselessly counteracting or undoing the work of the unifying tendency. Often the reduction of an old anomaly leads directly to the rise of a new one, and unification results in increasing differentiation. Strong verbs are far from being abolished. There are still in common usage hundreds of verbs in which certain tense-stems cannot be foreseen or deduced by any rule. And not all of these are old radical verbs; some are former 'regular' verbs with newly constituted anomalies. So that, on the whole, Modern Greek verb-morphology is hardly less varied, complicated, and rich in expressive anomalies, than the Ancient.

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The main lines along which the rehandling of verb-inflexion proceeded can be briefly stated as follows :—

- (1) Elimination of old anomalies (e.g. strong forms replaced by 'regular' ones).
- (2) Unification of distinct types of inflexion (e.g.  $\mu$ -verbs assimilated to  $\omega$ -verbs).
- (3) Simplification of morphological marks (e.g. temporal augment eliminated; aorist endings extended to imperfect).
- (4) Morphological marks of distinct categories become identical (e.g. forms of Passive and Middle identified in all tenses).
- (5) Certain categories cease to be morphologically expressed (e.g. Dual, Optative, Infinitive).
- (6) Certain simple tenses replaced by compound tenses (future, perfect, pluperfect).

All these points show the movement towards unity and simplification. But a process of differentiation is equally apparent :—

- (7) Rise of innumerable new anomalies.
- (8) New tense-distinction acquires expression.
- (9) A new category acquires expression (constitution of Conditional Mood).
- (10) Two categories originally unified under the same marks become morphologically distinct (the Absolute and the Continuous Future). This translates a more general process :
- (11) An old category originally obscured is brought to fuller expression (the category of Aspect).

Conjointly with this there is, of course, continuous enrichment of the analytical resources of the language, providing various new ways of expressing categories which had lost their morphological marks.

Now let us see these processes at work (without always keeping to the order in which they have just been enumerated), and the final result of their joint action.

In some of their manifestations they are coextensive in time with the language itself. Thus Homer, with all the complexity of his stems and inflexions, represents a state of Greek in which many strong forms have already been levelled and many conjugations regularized. Classical Greek carries on this work of unification. Fifth century Attic, it is true, does not show much advance in that direction (here the process sets in later, and more abruptly). But contemporary Ionic represents a decisive step further, and conjugations like *οἶδαμεν*, *-ατε*, *-ασι* are frequent in Herodotus. In the *κοινή*, *οἶδα*, *-ας* (already in *Od.* I. 337) etc. becomes the rule. And *οἶδα* is only one of many strong verbs which are being thus reshaped.

On the other hand, from the 4th c. B.C. begins the dissolution of the group of *μι*-verbs. From a much earlier date there were, side by side with the *μι*-forms, a few parallel formations in *-ω*, such as *ἀπολλύω*, *δεικνύω*, etc. They occurred sporadically here and there, but remained without importance. But in the *κοινή* such forms tend more and more to become prevalent, and ever new *ω*-forms arise to replace the corresponding verbs of the original type.

These and similar phenomena, ever increasing in frequency, seem all to point towards the same final goal: the reduction of conjugations to a single type and, within this type, complete elimination of isolated peculiarities.

If from the early signs of the process we turn now to its present results, they appear somewhat surprising. It is true, all verbs may be said to have actually been reduced to one type, since all conjugations are now characterised by the same endings—from this neither the former *μι*-verbs nor the strong verbs make any exception. These uniform endings themselves have been simplified, as well as reduced in number (aorist endings being extended to the imperfect). Besides endings, some other inflexion-marks have undergone a similar transformation; e.g. the temporal augment exists no longer, and the syllabic augment is usually omitted if unstressed.

But this superficial unification of the whole has everywhere resulted in an increased complexity in details, and was made possibly partly by it. Take for instance the loss of the temporal augment. Since it leads to no confusion between tenses it is obviously a simplification. Verbs beginning with a vowel take no augment—the rule is clear and general. But there are some verbs in Modern Greek whose present-form has lost its initial vowel: these escape the action of the new rule and as of old continue to take the temporal augment. Thus *θελω* gives the imperfect *ἤθελα*—totally unforeseen and irrational in the present linguistic context. A complication is eliminated, but there are always some persistent fragments of the abolished norm that evade destruction; once normal, they are mere anomalies now.

Some other simplifications not only breed complexity, but are themselves bred by it; e.g. extension of aorist endings to the imperfect. If this was possible without divesting the two tenses of morphological distinction, it was mainly because the old gulf between the present-stem and the aorist-stem, far from becoming narrower or being bridged by some rule of formation, has even widened and become more irrational. Verbs whose aorist can be formed or deduced from the present are far less numerous in Modern Greek than they were in Ancient. Only a few of the old strong verbs have been entirely remodelled according to the regular pattern. A verb such as *πάσχω* still has aorist *ἔπαθα*; here, one sees, the unifying tendency has touched only the surface, smoothing down the ending, but not striking at the core of the old form.

But side by side with the persisting old strong aorists, innumerable new ones have arisen. These are all the results of unification—mostly fragments of dissolved autonomous groups. Once 'regular' within the limits of their particular groups and, to some extent, "previsible" by analogy with other members of the same group, they now defy all rules and escape all analogy; each is perfectly unique and individual. Thus, when an independent *μ*-group still stood apart in the ancient inflexional system, and *δίδωμι* and *ἵστημι* were its representatives, such forms as *ἔδωκα* (imp. *δός*) and *ἑστάθην* were by no means irregularities, but normal elements of a consistent type of conjugation. But the old group-autonomy had broken down since late Hellenistic times; and now that the two verbs belong to the type common to all Greek verbs without exception—the *ω*-type—there is no relation between their present-forms *δίνω* and *στένωμαι* and their aorists *ἔδωσα* (imp. *δός*) and *στάθηναι*;



these have become absolute anomalies (here again, only the endings have been remodelled according to the pattern now common to all verbs).

Now consider another group, the Contracted Verbs, which still stand apart since their endings preserve the peculiarities due to ancient contractions. This group, formed of recent derivative verbs, was a paragon of regularity in ancient verb-inflexion. Since then it has undergone much simplification, which is to say that it has become very complex. First, the group has been reduced to two types only; the verbs in *-άω* have ceased to be 'contracted,' being provided with new present-stems (mostly in *-άνω*). The conjugation of the remaining two types—*ἀγαπῶ*, *-ᾶς* and *πατῶ*, *-εῖς*—has been simplified: it differs for the two only in Pres. Active. But at the same time many new complications have arisen. Thus the verbs in *-έω* present unforeseen divergences in aorist-stems, e.g. *πατῶ*, *πάτησα*, *φορῶ*, *φόρεσα* and *θαρρῶ*, *θάρρεσα*. And inside the type in *-άω*, the Medio-Passive forms of most verbs are made on a special stem—e.g. *ἀγαπιέμαι*—while others preserve the same stem—*χοιμοῦμαι*, etc. ὡσιμῶμαι

It appears from these few examples that in Modern Greek as in Ancient, the expressiveness of a verbal form is mainly individual. While in the rare fully 'regular' formations like *ἔλυσα*, the particular sense is obtained so to speak mechanically, by mere addition of fixed morphological marks to a changeless stem—a form like ancient *πέπονθα* or modern *ἤρα* is unique and thoroughly *αὐταρκής*: engendering and bearing in itself the indivisible fulness of its meaning.

We have seen that any such form is always the result of a struggle: each is the persistent fragment of some abolished order. In Ancient Greek they were all survivals of the Indo-European inflexional system. Some of these Modern Greek has preserved, adding to them many unresolved survivals of a more recent past, and thus re-establishing anew the living equilibrium between the two tendencies presiding at the growth of a language: the drive towards uniformity, and the opposing powers of differentiation. The process which on the surface appears one of mere unification was in fact a double process—*παλίντροπος γὰρ ἀρμονία*—diversity ceaselessly asserting itself through, by means of, unification, and balance being ever maintained by the struggle of two irreconcilable forces. If one of these gives up, and yields to the other—a language is doomed to decline. But this has not happened in Greek.

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Another aspect of the same process appears from a different group of phenomena.

Certain categories have confused their distinct marks, while others have entirely ceased to be expressed morphologically. The first happened to the Middle and Passive. From the start, although the difference in meaning between them persisted through all tenses, it was expressed formally only in the future and aorist. At present the formal difference has vanished from these two tenses also, and passive forms have prevailed throughout for both voices. Yet the original distinction in sense between them has fully survived with all the wealth of shades attached to it. And it is no less perceptible now in the future and aorist than it has always been in present or imperfect, where it never was marked formally.

Thus the identification of marks does not imply in itself a confusion of the underlying categories. Nor does the loss of morphological expression for a category necessarily mean that the category itself has been lost. This was clearly not so in the earliest and simplest fact of that sort, the disappearance of the dual; it was merely a question of economy of means.

But the loss of the optative, which occurred next, is less simple. Besides Greek, the Indo-Iranian languages alone, and only in their earliest stages, preserved the subtle original distinction between the optative and the subjunctive. And in Greek, as elsewhere, it begins from a certain moment to atrophy. From the 4th c. B.C. onward, the use of the optative gradually decreases (see statistics in Meillet, p. 211) until finally, in the first centuries of our era, it disappears, and the subjunctive remains for some time the only mood opposed to the indicative. An economy of means had certainly been realised by the removal of the complex array of optative forms, but there was no doubt much more in this than mere economy. The loss of formal expression seems here to imply, if not actual loss, at least a perceptible shifting of the category expressed, and a general reorganisation of the perception of moods. This reorganisation is completed in Modern Greek where, side by side with the old subjunctive, a new modal category has arisen and found morphological expression—a mood not coinciding in sense with the lost optative, though partly overlapping with it. This is the Conditional or Unreal mood, provided with a complete set of compound forms for two tenses—present and past.

Far more puzzling is another loss which followed that of the optative, and whose first traces appear here and there from the beginning of our era—in the language of the New Testament, for instance. It is the infinitive that begins to lose its place, and by now it has totally vanished from Greek. (See the relevant facts in Prof. D. Hesselning's essay, *Etudes de Phil. Néo-Grecque* ed. by J. Psichari, 1892.)

This is something very different from the case just examined. There we had a category taken over from the parent tongue, which is undermined by a new perception of moods and finally collapses, together with its morphological expression. Here we have a category first conceived and a form first created by Greek itself. And unlike other kindred tongues in which the infinitive also appeared, Greek gave it peculiar prominence and made it a unique means of expression. This means is now lost. The disappearance of the form cannot here be explained by the loss or shifting of the underlying category. The category still exists, and continues to be expressed analytically. But the analytical way this time leads only to complications and inconvenience: it is clumsy, involved and often ineffectual, where Ancient Greek would have easily triumphed with a winged infinitive. So no economy of means or effort has been thus achieved, and this explanation also is to be rejected. Nor can there be any question of foreign influence, which is sometimes claimed. The process is so slow and continuous, and its first signs so early, that similar and quite recent facts in neighbouring languages (Roumanian, Albanian, Bulgarian) could perhaps be explained by Greek influence, but not the reverse.

The matter, it must be admitted, remains unexplained. It seems, however, that there is some connection between the loss of the infinitive and its particular treatment in Ancient Greek. For what distinguished the Greek usage from that of other languages was the tendency to treat the infinitive more and more as a mere *nomen actionis*, preceded by an article and thus provided with a kind of declension. Duly restrained, this use offers unique opportunities of swiftness and supple concision. But it bears the seed of its own destruction, and the language of a writer like Polybius, swarming with such nominalized infinitives, shows a stage in which this treatment has gone too far. Or take these few examples from a papyrus of the 2nd c. B.C. (quoted by Hesselning, p. 9):

... τῷ δὲ μὴ ἡμᾶς εἶναι σὺν αὐτῷ. ...

... ὑπὲρ τοῦ μὴ εἰληφέναι παρὰ τῶν ἱερειῶν ...

Μετά τὸ γράψαι τήν πρὸ ταύτης ἐπιστολήν. ... etc.

The subtle balance constituting the specific tension proper to the Greek infinitive is here broken; its verbal character is completely obscured, and the form, losing its expressiveness, ceases to justify its existence. So one can to some extent conceive how a revulsion would arise against the hybrid form, one can imagine a growing reluctance to using it, and a preference for putting plain nouns or plain verbs instead. This is precisely the modern usage. If the verbal character is felt vividly, a Greek will use a plain verb: *θέλω να καπνίζω*—"I want to smoke" (one can use also the aorist stem, with a perceptible difference in meaning, but of this later). Where the verbal character is inessential, he will put a plain noun: *ἀπαγορεύεται τὸ κάπνισμα* Smoking Prohibited. But in official places one often sees instead: *ἀπαγορεύεται τὸ καπνίζειν*—official jargon is the only context where infinitives are still to be met with.

Some minor phenomena translate the same aversion from forms in which the verbal character has become too much obscured. (This provides an indirect confirmation of our hypothesis concerning the loss of the infinitive). Verbal adjectives are now of very limited occurrence, and participles have been considerably reduced. Strictly speaking, there are only two participles that have fully maintained themselves in common usage: the present active and the aorist passive (<anc. perf. pass.). The former preserves nothing of its adjectival character. By losing its declension it appears to have become "re-verbalised." In face of the ancient *τρέχων*, modern *τρέχοντας* is a form with a far more dynamic meaning. Properly speaking it is not a participle at all (i.e. verbal adjective); in sense and in use it is something very like the Russian gerund, indeclinable and intensely verbal—very different from the Latin gerund, declinable and fully nominalized.

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The rehandling of the system of tenses presents a curious interplay of various forces: new tense-distinctions seeking for expression, the analytical tendency dissolving simple forms into compound formulas, and an old half-forgotten category reasserting itself on all levels of the tense-scale. Compared with the old, the new system thus constituted shows at once persistence, innovation and reversion to type.

Instead of the 7 tenses of the ancient conjugation we now have 8: three simple (present, imperfect and aorist), and five compound



(perfect, pluperfect, future perfect, continuous future and absolute future).

Of the compound tenses, the first three arose to replace the original perfect and the two tense-forms based on it; all three are due to the collapse of the ancient perfect-form. This collapse is interesting. We have here not a mere replacement of a simple form by a compound one, but the rise of a new tense-distinction requiring a new expression. As for pluperfect and future perfect, the change is secondary and mainly formal.

In Modern Greek the difference in meaning between present and perfect is one between action *now being performed* and action *now (already) achieved*. The difference, then, has as little to do with time as in Ancient Greek: it takes place on the same time-level, the present. But ancient present and perfect express a distinction of a different kind: between action now being performed and *the state of one that has achieved it*. Thus, where in Mod. Greek we have *δένω* = I am binding, and *έχω δέσει* = I have bound, in Ancient Greek *δέω* = I am binding, but *δέδεκα* = (something like) "I *am* having bound." Similarly in the passive: *γλώσσα δέ οί δέδεταί* (Theogn. 178) = he is tongue-tied (his tongue is tied). While in Mod. Greek *άλλ' ή γλώσσα του έχει δεθεί* would mean: his tongue has been tied; and to give the exact meaning of Theognis' words one would have to recur to the passive aorist participle: *μά ή γλώσσα του είναι δεμένη* or *μά τή γλώσσα του, τήν έχει δεμένη* (lit. but his tongue, he has it tied). The difference, however subtle, is a real one, and in the Mod. Greek perfect a new form translates a new tense-distinction—if one can use this term to indicate a difference which is not temporal.

As a matter of fact, before giving a new meaning to the perfect, Greek had to lose the old one. It is clear from the use of the perfect in Hellenistic times that the difference between it and the present was more and more perceived as a temporal one, and the perfect came to be felt as expressing a past and completed action. But this is also the main sense of the aorist. Hence the growing confusion between the two tenses in Hellenistic texts (see some typical instances in Hatzidakis, *Einl.* p. 204 sq.). Hatzidakis (*ib.*) quotes a curious passage from Ammonius—4th c. A.D.—from which it appears that the meaning of the perfect was by then a complete mystery even to a learned grammarian: *άπέθανε και τέθνηκε διαφέρει · άπέθανε μὲν νῦν, τέθνηκε δὲ πάλαι, ὡς περιεπάτησε μὲν ὁ δεινα σήμερον, περιπεπάτηκε δὲ πάλαι.*

A form which has thus lost all its meaning must disappear. And it is clear that Modern Greek perfect is not only different from Ancient, in form and in sense, but totally unconnected with it historically. It is not the result of rehandling the old perfect (which, having acquired the aorist sense, simply vanished), but a quite independent formation. And the only survival of the ancient perfect—the passive participle—became naturally attached not to the new perfect but to the aorist: it is now the passive aorist participle.

As for pluperfect and future perfect, which the perfect involved in its collapse, they have re-emerged in a changed form, but their meaning and use remain more or less the same.

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The category of future has differentiated in Modern Greek into three distinct “tenses,” as against the two of the Ancient conjugation. The meaning of the future perfect, corresponding to that in Ancient Greek, is partly temporal, partly not, while the difference between Continuous and Absolute future is devoid of any temporal sense: it is merely a difference of “aspect.” Here we come to the most curious phenomenon of Modern Greek morphology: the revival of the Indo-European category of Aspect which was considerably weakened and obliterated already in Ancient Greek.

It is not easy to explain the archaic category of Aspect to the speaker of a language in which it has been entirely superseded by that of Tense, and survives only as a shade attached to this or that tense. Yet it is perfectly obvious to a Greek who has now recovered it, or to a Russian who never lost it. In Russian the category has been preserved in its integrity, and correspondingly the tense-scale has remained extremely vague and primitive: there is only a present, a past and a very rudimentary future, which is not really a ‘tense,’ but rather a peculiar future-shade attached to the present of certain verbs (cf. Anc. Gr. *εἶμι*). In fact, Aspect and Tense translate two different perceptions of time and action, and one usually predominates at the expense of the other.

In a developed system of tenses, actions are classified and neatly distributed along the line of time. Time is here ‘spatialized’ into a kind of scale with levels marked on it—present, various pasts and futures characterised by their different distances from the present, the ‘zero’ of the scale. What a tense expresses is, then, above all the place which a given action occupies on the time-scale: I am doing,

I have done, I was doing, I did, I had done, and so on. Aspect is not a projection of actions into spatialised time according to their sequence, relative positions and distances on the scale. It expresses the specific character and tension of an action: as incipient, imminent, or recurrent, perceived in the state of becoming or as become, in its process or in its results, grasped as a whole or in a fragment of its duration, etc. To use Bergsonian language, we are here not in "geometric time" but in the living "durée." That is why one can always explain to a pupil the system of tenses in a language, but one can only make him *feel* a system of aspects. One who has taught or learned Russian knows only too well that, to master the Aspect, one has to reorganize the whole perception of time and action as it has been shaped by a modern Western tongue.

But as a matter of fact, there is no language which would present a pure system of aspects quite unaffected by the category of Tense. Nor is the reverse possible, and in a system of tenses, however advanced, there are always perceptible aspect-shades added to the dominant, temporal, meaning of this or that tense. Take the English sentence: "When he came into the room I was reading." By putting the first action in the preterite and the second in the imperfect, their level and mutual position on the time-scale is clearly fixed: both are situated in the past, and the first action in its whole extent coincides with a part of the extent of the second, which had begun earlier (further from the zero-point, the present). This is a purely temporal relation, but it is not the only one expressed. The juxtaposition of preterite and imperfect conveys also a different relation: that between an action grasped as a whole, in its completeness (I came), and an action perceived in its duration, as a process (I was reading). (For a modern language, it is true, English is peculiarly rich in aspect-shades, always expressed analytically). The constant interplay of the two categories is more pronounced in Ancient Greek. From its origin, Greek built up a highly developed and organised system of tenses. But in many points of that system the aspect-sense is clearly apparent, completing or even replacing the temporal meaning of a tense-form. We have seen that the distinction between ancient present and perfect has nothing temporal in it, although it takes place on a definite time-level, the present. That between *λελυω* and *ελιπον* is partly temporal, partly not. But if we take the corresponding infinitives, the distinction between them is not only not temporal in itself, but it is totally removed from time and is perceived on no time-level whatever.

The origin of Greek Aspect and its revival, we will now briefly consider.

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In Indo-European, the Verb was entirely dominated by the category of Aspect; that of Tense was vague and poor. The time of action was marked—if at all—not by a particular stem, but only by inflexion, and sometimes also by the augment. While the so-called “tense-stems” had no temporal sense whatever, and were much rather “aspect-stems.” These were five in number, each independent of the others and derived straight from the root. Their original meanings in Indo-European and their treatment in Greek may be summed up as follows:—

(1) A stem expressing action in process of becoming. This is the Greek present-stem. Projected on to the time-scale it differentiated into two distinct tenses, the present and the imperfect. Both preserved, however, each on its own time-level, much of the original aspect-meaning, as opposed to:—

(2) A stem expressing action as such—an act complete and indivisible. This is the Greek aorist-stem, which also finds its place on the time-scale, becoming a past, but keeps its first sense intact, especially in moods other than the indicative.

(3) A stem expressing the state resulting from action accomplished—the Greek perfect-stem. On the time-scale it differentiates into a kind of present (perfect), a past (pluperfect) and a future (future perfect). As we have seen, it disappeared from Greek later; but the meaning of the new perfect and its derivatives, although different from the old, is not purely temporal.

The two remaining Indo-European stems have not resulted in Greek in definite tense-formations. These were:—

(4) A stem expressing action in its causative, productive aspect (a similar meaning is sometimes expressed in Greek by aorists with reduplication, e.g., *λελαχέν* as opposed to *λαχέν*).

(5) A stem expressing action in its passage to realisation. To these must be added numerous other “aspects” not provided with special stems, but conveyed in Indo-European, and sometimes also in Greek, by various other means (suffixes, etc.)—such as the inchoative, the momentaneous, the iterative aspects, and so on.

The two main aspects, 1 and 2, are usually called the *durative* or *imperfective* and the *perfective* (or, quite inadequately, the *momentaneous*,



which is a different aspect altogether). The distinction between them was to some extent obscured in Ancient Greek. In fact, by being projected onto the time-scale, it became attached to certain levels of that scale while it is absent from others. Thus it is fully marked on the level of the past: the imperfect (formed from the present-stem) expresses past durative action; the aorist, past perfective action. But the present, since it is formed from stem 1 is, in principle, bound to translate only durative action, and in the few particular cases where it actually expresses perfective action, this specific sense is not marked formally; nor can it be transmuted, for the same verb, into the corresponding imperfective sense. That is, Ancient Greek has no means of expressing on the level of the Present the fundamental difference between perfective and imperfective action, at least in the indicative mood.

Neither is Ancient Greek capable of conveying the two aspects on the level of the future. Not that the future is bound, like the present, to express only one aspect. Being a recent formation not attached to any definite Indo-European aspect-stem, it is generally devoid of any aspect-meaning, and its sense is merely temporal.

This deficiency of Greek in marking the two aspects on all time-levels was felt especially in the earlier stages of the language and led to various particular uses applied to remedy it, such for instance as the "aorist-present" (e.g. *Il. IX. 398*) or the "aorist-future" (e.g. *ibid. 411*).

Now let us ask what would be, theoretically speaking, the complete expression of an aspect-distinction in a language with a fully constituted tense-system. The answer is clear: the possibility of marking the distinction on all time-levels. Since in Greek the durative aspect is attached to the present-stem, and the perfective to the aorist-stem, it would mean here the possibility of forming from *both* these stems not only pasts but also presents and futures. And this is just what happened in Greek.

There are now two futures: one formed from the present-stem and expressing the durative aspect—*θα (<θέλω να) καπνίζω* "I will smoke" ("be smoking"); the other formed from the aorist-stem and expressing the perfective aspect—*θα καπνίσω* "I will smoke" (roughly, "have a smoke").

As for the present, the revival of the aspect-sense has not yet resulted in the formation of two distinct and fixed presents for each

verb. Yet the language seems to be slowly moving in that direction. Side by side with the ordinary durative present (based on the present-stem) some verbs tend to constitute a second, perfective, present formed from the aorist-stem, e.g. *πάσχω* (aor. *ἔπαθα*) and *παθαίνω*.

In surveying the inflexional system of Modern Greek we had to register persistence, rehandling or loss of this or that form or category. But on this particular point the new system, if compared with the old, presents neither loss nor rehandling nor mere persistence, but a reversion to a more archaic type. A category half-obliterated already in the original Greek has now come to full expression—

Namque aliud putrescit, et aevo debile languet ;  
Porro aliud concrescit, et e contemptibus exit.

I cannot attempt here to discuss the various new possibilities of expression resulting from the revival of the Aspect. And this is hardly necessary, since a synchronical survey of aspect-expression in Greek has been recently and brilliantly made by Prof. A. Mirambel. I can only refer the reader to his essay: *Les divers valeurs de l'aspect verbal en Grec Moderne* (Bull. Soc. Ling., Paris, 1932, pp. 31 sqq.). Among other things, it appears from M. Mirambel's analysis that the expression of Aspect has gone beyond the domain of the verb. A certain group of nouns, derived from verbs, preserve in meaning and use the marks of Aspect.

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This short consideration of the main morphological elements of present-day Greek will suffice for our purpose. As for Modern Greek Syntax, it need not and cannot be treated separately in this Introduction. A survey of the various common types of sentence and the usual ways of connecting them belongs to Descriptive Grammar; while the general character of the new syntax, which alone concerns us here, is fully stated once we have stated the range, character and meaning of the present morphological resources of the language. The "autonomy of syntax" recently advocated by Prof. V. Broendal of Copenhagen, is an illusion. It supposes, as a necessary counterpart, an equally "autonomous" morphology—a study of pure isolated forms, abstracted from their significance and treated in no connection with other significant forms. Such a study is of course impossible. One cannot examine the form of the dative, for instance, without examining the category of the dative in its

relation to other categories and other means of expression (inflectional and analytical). That is, Morphology and Syntax of the dative are one.

This being so, Syntax as an autonomous domain does not exist; and even as a separate study, based on morphology, it can be advocated only for pedagogical purposes. In so far as the structure and connection of sentences is *determined* by the morphological resources of the language, it falls into the domain of morphology; in so far as it is not determined, but left to choice or aesthetic preference, it belongs to stylistics. There is no place left for Syntax as such. Thus in Modern Greek the expression of the category of the Infinitive by means of a noun, or by *vā* (<*iva*) + subjunctive (aor. or pres.), is determined by the loss of the infinitive-form. And we have had to examine it in that connection. While, on the other hand, the inflexional means of Modern Greek make possible practically all the complex ways of subordination used in Ancient Greek. If in our days a speaker or writer usually avoids them, and prefers co-ordination to subordination and short sentences to long periods—a new literary fashion may change all that. It is a question of taste and style, which does not concern us here.

But all the possible changes of taste and style can operate only within the limits firmly fixed by the morphological structure of the language, described above. And it appears from our survey that in Modern Greek, as in Ancient, these limits are particularly wide. Much that is rigidly fixed by Grammar in a language of the analytical type, like English or French, is ruled in Greek by supple requirements of style and expression: the order of words, for instance. This is so because Greek, while acquiring innumerable new possibilities in the direction of analysis, has lost scarcely any of the old advantages of an inflexional language of the archaic type. "In this respect" says M. A. Meillet (p. 249), "it shows, even in its most popular forms, a conservative character comparable to that of Russian or Lithuanian"; that is, the two most archaic tongues in our linguistic family.

## IV.

### VOCABULARY

THE phonetic and morphological evolution of a language is constituted by the multiple interplay of various laws and tendencies. Some of these, inherent in the nature of language as such, or expressing the essence of this particular language, are of very general and permanent character; others are less so, in varying degrees. But within its domain, which can be more or less clearly delimited, each acts with regularity and constancy. Hence the evolution, as a whole or in any of its details, can be interpreted in terms of these laws and tendencies.

Thus, in dealing with Greek vocabulary, it is usually possible to explain why and how a given word—e.g., Anc. Gk. *ἄρνις*,—has acquired in modern Greek the form *ἀρνίθα*—why indeed it *had* to acquire it. And even if *ἄρνις* had vanished from all ancient texts, it would still be possible to deduce it, with some probability, from the modern form, and claim for it the rights of an *addendum lexicis*.

But no amount of knowledge could enable one to deduce the present *meaning* of the word ("hen") from the ancient ("bird") and vice versa, or to explain how and why the meaning evolved in that direction. It would not help much to say that we have here a typical instance of semantic alteration by "restriction" (specification) and to quote the exactly parallel change in English—from "fowl" = "bird" to "fowl" = "hen." Why there should be any change at all, and why it operated by "restriction" and not by "extension" or "displacement," remains unexplained in this case, as in any other where semantic change is concerned. It may be convenient to classify facts of that sort in such or such groups and sub-groups—but this does not mean that we are explaining them, or establishing the general laws of the semantic evolution of a language.

Yet these are precisely the facts constituting the domain proper to the study of vocabulary. Vocabulary must be defined as the



ensemble of words of a language considered in their semantic value ; and the development of a vocabulary consists in purely semantic events : words changing their meanings, or meanings changing the words by which they are denoted. Changes of form are accounted for by the two other branches of philology ; but they are closely connected with the changes of meaning and must therefore be constantly referred to in semasiological study. Morphological and phonetic considerations are here of great assistance. They often enable us to identify two forms very unlike in appearance as representing the same word at different stages in its evolution—e.g. Anc. Gk. *ῥμμα* and Mod. Gk. *μάτι* (<*ῥμμάτιον*)—and this allows us to trace an etymology or to register a shifting or persistence of meaning. In other cases they make it possible to form a more precise notion of the extent of vocabulary at a given period by completing it with words not attested in textual tradition. In this way many words have been added to the *κοινή*, e.g. the adj. *σύμπληγος*, lit. “knocking together”—“adjacent” (related to Anc. Gk. *Συμπληγάδες*) deduced by Thumb from Mod. Gk. *σύμπλιος* “neighbour,” *σύμπλια* “near” (*Indog. Forsch.*, XIV. pp. 349 sqq.), or the verb *λαβῶω* “to wound,” deduced from Mod. Gk. *λαβῶνω* (*Cl. Q.* 1914, p. 194).

Yet it must always be borne in mind that Phonology and Morphology, however indispensable for the study of Vocabulary, have different objects, and above all a different method. They proceed by generalization, they deduce from particular facts the underlying laws and tendencies, and, conversely, can explain other facts by these. Whereas semantic events are as such incapable of generalization, they are by their very nature unique and individual. One can collect and classify innumerable changes of meaning ; it will still be impossible to deduce from them any general law or tendency ruling semantic changes in the language. What they have in common is of little use or interest. Each must be left to speak for itself, for each has its own story to tell. The story is often puzzling. Take, for instance, the Anc. Gk. *φηγός*. It is the same word as Lat. *fagus*, Ger. *Buche*, Russ. *buk*, Eng. *beech*, and other words of the same root in various Ind. Eur. languages. They all have the same meaning as the English—beech—and point to a word with this meaning in the parent-tongue. Yet in Ancient Greek, and here alone, *φηγός* means something different : a kind of oak, probably *Quercus Aegilops*. Now *φηγός* has survived in Modern Greek, but here it has come to mean again “beech” (see E. Legrand *Dict. Gr. Mod.-Français*, s.v.). This

late recovery of a sense lost at the time when the future Greeks broke off from the parent-stock, is neither more nor less strange than the passage from "bird" to "hen"; both are determined by no formulable law, and so allow of no general "explanation." We must not ask of them what they cannot give, but must take them for what they are: "accidents." Only so can a semasiological change teach us anything.

With these considerations in mind, we can now look at Modern Greek vocabulary.

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What strikes one most in this vocabulary—next to its overwhelming numeric wealth—is the strange scarcity of foreign borrowings. Most words look familiar, purely Hellenic, transparent in their structure and their etymology. And of those which are not, so many go back to the obscure immemorial stratum of alien words with which Greek began its life in Aegean lands. Compared with these prehistoric and early Hellenic borrowings, the number of foreign words acquired later, in post-classical times, is less considerable. This translates in the domain of vocabulary a more general fact, thus formulated by Thumb (p. 202): "I must maintain emphatically that foreign influences play but a small part in comparison with the great number of innovations which have altered the character of Classical Greek. For in their general characteristics, Hellenistic and Modern Greek are a natural development of Attic Greek."

The purity of vocabulary is the more surprising, since for the last 2,000 years or so Greek history has been a continuous series of racial and cultural shiftings and fusions, of alien invasions, infiltrations, conquests and dominations. All that has, no doubt, left many indelible traces in Greece—but not on the Greek language.

Latin words, which form the oldest stratum of post-classical borrowings, are relatively also the most numerous. Even so, they are very few, and among common terms, *οἶκος* (<*hospitium*), "house," *βάρβαρος* and *νόστρον* are their only prominent representatives. Greek is as quick to eliminate foreign words as to adopt them. *Ῥωμαῖοι*, which once became the name by which Greeks designated themselves, vanished again before the old *Ἕλληνες*. It left behind it the adj. *ῥωμαϊκός*, which is now used in familiar speech, with a pejorative shade: "*ῥωμαϊκὰ πλά(γ)ματα*," a Greek will say, shrugging his shoulders, when he speaks of some typical and reprehensible feature

of Greek life, such as the state of roads or the dishonesty of the government.

Next in time and in number are the Italian borrowings: 'Αντίο (*addio*), σαλάτα, καπιτάν(ιος) < (Venet. *capitano*), σαφδέλλα, βαπόρι (Venet. *vapor*) "steamer," and λοῦστρεος (voc. *λουστρο*), the familiar Athenian figure of the shoe-black and general factotum. This is practically all that survives.

Slav and Albanian have left no traces except in place-names, and Turkish is represented now-a-days only by three common words: *πιλάφι*, *γιαούρτι*, and *λουκουῦμι* (Turkish-delight), which are not peculiar to Greek, but sum up the Turkish contribution to the common treasury of civilization. There were many more words in use during the Turkish rule, but all were terms of Turkish administration, and the like, for which no Greek words could, or should, have existed. Together with the *fez*, the *effendi*, the *bey*, and their *ντεβλέτι* (government), the borrowed words which designated them in Greek have also vanished from the language. Greek words are perhaps less quick to disappear from Turkish: in Constantinople, in any case, though it has been renamed Istanbul, the power of the Greek language, if not of Greek arms, has reasserted itself against the Barbarians. Istanbul is *εἰς τὴν Πόλιν* whose *o* became *u* in accordance with the laws of vowel-harmony in Turkish.

The most recent and ephemeral stratum of borrowings in Greek is formed by a few French words (terms of "elegance and refinement"), and a few English (terms of sport), which are current only in large towns and among a limited section of society.

The attitude to borrowing foreign words varies much from language to language, and it is always very significant.

Take for instance English. With its great assimilating power and an insatiable hunger for words, it is at the same time notably lacking itself in capacity for word-formation. So it borrows freely, but thoroughly digests the adopted alien elements, transforming them into its own flesh and blood.

It is quite otherwise with modern French, whose assimilating power is very small. Here a loan-word rarely acquires a thoroughly native air; it usually remains a foreign body in the vocabulary. That is why loan-words are so few in French. The language recoils from borrowing and tends to satisfy its lexical needs by word-formation, for which its capacity is, however, rather moderate.

In French, as in English, the attitude to borrowing is only a particular manifestation of more general tendencies. Together with a restricted power for assimilation and word-formation, there is in French an instinctive revulsion from "rich" vocabulary. The language naturally tends to obtain its expressiveness through choice, precision, and reduction of lexical means, not through their extent and variety, as in English. And it is no accident that the greatest English poet has something like 24,000 words at his command, a "richness" which has no parallel in all European literatures. Whereas the greatest French poet, Racine, achieves his task with what can be claimed to be the "poorest" vocabulary that a great poet ever had at his disposal—1,500 words, if I remember rightly. It is from this supreme limitation that he draws his highest power.

In its violent lexical greed, Modern Greek far surpasses even English. But to satisfy it, Greek need not have recourse to foreign borrowings. So these are naturally few. Not that it recoils from loan-words, as French does. In its passionate demand for words, ever more words, Greek is rather quick and ready in borrowing foreign ones whenever they happen to be at hand. Only they do not remain in the language; quickly adopted, they are as quickly discarded. So great, and always available, are the lexical riches accumulated by the language, so unrestrained its power of forming new words, that the hastily-borrowed foreign word soon ceases to justify its existence and vanishes from usage. How could it not?—since for its meaning there are always words already in existence, and many more are potentially there, waiting to form themselves on the lips of the speaker, and ready to catch and convey the particular shade required at the moment. Greek vocabulary is permanently in the making. New words are always springing up on the spur of the moment, no dictionary is able to give a precise idea of the extent of the vocabulary, since part of it remains potential.

This superabundance is not without its drawbacks, and it would be convenient to quote here the impression of a distinguished scholar of Modern Greek, who is a Frenchman and thus, in respect of vocabulary, stands as it were at the opposite pole to Greek: "Quand on parcourt un dictionnaire grec, on est frappé à la fois de la surabondance des termes et de la difficulté qu'on éprouve à y trouver l'équivalent courant de beaucoup de mots étrangers tout à fait simples. Il y a en même temps pléthore et insuffisance." (H. Pernot, *Leçon d'Ouverture*, p. 13).



The greed for words and the unrestrained freedom in forming them, which make Modern Greek vocabulary what it is, will best appear from particular instances.

Take τὸ παλληκάρι, which is a very usual word, full of life and savour. It means "young man," and is generally used with the special shade "bold lad," "young brave." *Mutatis mutandis*, it is the modern equivalent of *ἥρως*. Side by side with this form, there are two more, each specifying the main meaning in a definite direction: παλληκαρᾶς, which gives it a more familiar shade, and is used also like the English "tommy" or the French "poilu," and with a slightly pejorative sense it comes to mean "braggart, boaster"; and παλλήκαρος, which gives the word a less popular, a somewhat heavy, official or literary, air. From these there are innumerable derivations: verbs like παλληκαρῆνω (to be in the flower of youth, in full strength; to be, or behave as, a παλληκάρι); nouns like παλληκαριά (bravery, daring, generosity, etc.); adjectives, each provided with a corresponding adverb, παλληκαρήσιος, παλληκαριάτικος, παλλικαρόστικος, etc.; not to mention the various diminutives—παλληκαράκι, παλληκαροῦδι—whose number can be increased at will to translate all the range of caressive, diminutive, pejorative and other shades with which the Greek mind is so amply furnished. These are only the few most frequent derivations; one could write a whole monograph on παλληκάρι and its family—and on many other words, for that matter.

Besides derivation, another type of word-coining is very characteristic of Modern Greek and contributes to the continuous enrichment of the vocabulary. An old privilege of the language—the freedom to form compounds—has been fully preserved. Compounds are no less characteristic of Modern than of Ancient Greek; and not only in the literary language, but also, and perhaps even more, in popular speech. The most familiar conversation swarms with them, and they intervene sometimes on most unexpected occasions; thus, the idiomatic way of saying "knife and fork" is μαχαίροπέρωνο. Formations of this sort are strikingly frequent: things closely connected or occurring together tend to assert their correlation on the verbal plane by coalescing into complex and articulated wholes.

But I need not here enumerate the different types of compounds (they are exhaustively classified by Thumb, *Handbook*, pp. 31 sq., 112). The main ways of their formation have remained the same as in Ancient Greek, so that sometimes a new compound coincides in form with an old one, long since obliterated and forgotten: e.g.

the familiar word *ἀνδρόγυνος*(ν) (often spelt *ἀντρογύνος* to preserve the *d*-value of *δ*). It is the proper word—not for the androgyne, as one would expect—but for a married couple; it means “husband and wife.” It is certainly not the descendant of the ancient *ἀνδρόγυνος*, but an independent popular formation, which spontaneously followed the old way and led to the same word, though with a quite different meaning. Semasiologically the comparison of the two “androgynes” is interesting too. There is between them identity not only of formation, but also of the main elements of sense: “man and woman” in both. It is the slight shifting of the connecting “and”—from “at once” to “together with”—which results in the total difference of meaning. (A similar semantic shifting I once witnessed in a train, where I overheard a passenger describe Bedales as “one of those bi-sexual schools.”)

By means of compounds Modern Greek is able to achieve effects of condensation possible in no other language. A compound is sometimes a picture given in bold foreshortening, such as *χαμηλολογιάζω*—“to muse staring at the ground, with bent head.” And sometimes it is a whole poem, like one of those pointed distichs that spring spontaneously to the lips of a Greek peasant—only condensed into a single word. Behind any such word there is usually a whole story, a long process of preparation: changes of sense, constitution of more and more concise formulas in which words occur in ever closer juxtaposition until finally, without losing their distinct meanings and characteristics, they grow together to form one word. Of this let us take an example, chosen not because it is particularly striking but because it is the simplest.

The verb *βασιλεύω* has kept its main sense “to reign.” But the denotation remaining the same, it has acquired a new connotation, gathering round it in the atmosphere of the Byzantine Empire a crimson halo of splendour and magnificence. The main sense has developed by way of metaphor another which, in a particular connection, is no less frequent. To say *ὁ ἥλιος βασιλεύει*—“the sun is reigning, the sun is in its full glory and splendour, it is vested with royal purple”—is now the only way of saying “the sun is setting.” Hence *τὸ βασίλειμα τοῦ ἡλίου*, “sunset.” One step more, and we have *τὸ ἡλιοβασίλειμα*, the proper term for “sunset” in Modern Greek.

This and similar formations must not be mistaken for “dead metaphors.” They are fully alive in Modern Greek, and are perceived with all the complexity of their implications. Since their components

remain in use, occurring with their original and metaphorical meanings, separately and in juxtaposition, they are prevented from fusing together into an unarticulated mass in the compounds also. There are words more interesting and complicated of this kind, but I must resist the temptation to quote and analyse them here. Among other things it is the abundance of such words that makes colloquial Greek—especially peasant Greek—unique in its concreteness and variety of shades (while the *καθαρεύουσα* swarms with faded words and dead metaphors, and is intolerable to anyone accustomed to meet them alive in ancient texts).

M. Pernot may be quite right in complaining that Modern Greek vocabulary is lacking in exact equivalents for many foreign words “tout à fait simples.” Still, the practical inconvenience resulting from that is more than compensated by advantages of a quite different kind.

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To satisfy their growing or changing lexical needs, all languages with a past and a literary tradition possess another resource besides word-coining. All of them, though in varying degrees, are able to reintroduce into their present vocabulary lexical elements fallen into disuse.

It is to a quite unusual degree that Greek is endowed with the will and the capacity for keeping old words alive, or revitalizing afresh words long lost and forgotten. (I am speaking again of the living Greek, not of the *καθαρεύουσα* which uses only dead words, preventing the old from becoming alive, and killing the new by distorting them to fit an artificial pattern). I have already mentioned that in Greek the lexical treasures accumulated in the past remain constantly and directly available. M. Pernot quotes somewhere the saying of a witty Athenian lady: “The register of the Greek vocabulary records only births, never deaths.” And this is true. No Greek word ever formed can be considered as dead. If it does not actually occur in use, it still continues to exist so to speak potentially, and may at any moment be called back to life at the will of a poet. In his morphology and his sound-system a Greek poet is bound to follow present usage—just as an English poet is bound to write in English, and not in Anglo-Saxon or in Indo-European. But unlike the English, the Greek poet is strangely free in his choice of vocabulary. Here he is limited only by his own power to revive, and his personal taste

and tact. What a great poet of our own day can attempt and achieve in this direction, appears best from the work of Kōstis Palamas.

But even without the intervention of the poet, a word, often after millennia of hidden germination, may re-emerge in current usage, sometimes with the same meaning as in the ancient period, sometimes with a new one, and sometimes—still more curious—with a meaning so old that it was already forgotten in classical times. There are many words of that kind in use to-day. We will mention two of them.

In a quite different connection we have already met the *παλληκάρι*, “young man.” Now in this word the old stem *παλλαι*—almost lost in classical Greek—has re-emerged with its original meaning, forgotten already in Homer’s time. (The stem points probably to the same root as *Παλλάς*, *-άδος* on the one hand, and the large group *πάλλω*, *πέλω*, *πόλος*, etc., on the other.)

In fact, the only representative of this stem traceable in ancient literature is *παλλακίς*, its synonym *παλλακή* and their derivatives (most of them still in use). But in Homer already *παλλακίς* has lost its original sense “young woman” and has narrowed down semantically to mean “concubine.” Yet the original sense has survived obscurely elsewhere, and has left traces in the lower strata of our textual tradition, where the words *πάλλαξ*, *πάλληξ* and *παλλακίς* occur with the meaning “young man, young woman” (see the references in Stephanus’ *Thesaurus*, s.v.). *Πάλληξ* by way of the diminutive, gave *παλληκάριον* becoming *παλληκάρι*.

The proper word for “mountain,” “hill,” in Modern Greek is *τὸ βουνό* (less popular form *ὁ βουνός*). *Ὄρος* has fallen into disuse, though it has not altogether disappeared. It survives in a few derivations, compounds and fossilized formulas, like *Ἄγιον Ὄρος*, i.e. Mt. Athos; and one may still hear it sometimes on the lips of a pedant or schoolmaster, ashamed of the supposed barbarous intruder *βουνό*. This was already the opinion of Aelius Dionysius (c. 100 A.D.) quoted by Eustathius (in *Il.* IX. 710) and of Eustathius himself, who takes it for a Libyan word. The word first occurs in Herodotus (IV. 199); the Cyrenians, he tells us, called *βουνός* (acc. pl.) the part of their land between the coast-plains and the highest mountain-region—the hill-country, that is. *Βουνός* was then perceived by Herodotus as a local Cyreniac word that needed explanation. Could it then actually have been borrowed by the Greek colonists from their African neighbours? By no means, as appears from the following facts:



(1) The corresponding adjective *βοῦνις* occurs twice in Aeschylus (acc. *βοῦνιν Suppl.* 17 and voc. *βοῦνι ib.* 776). As its form shows, the adjective is not derived from *βουνός*, but is a parallel, and consequently original, formation.

(2) Another adjective, this time derived from the noun, was the cult-epithet of Hera, whose temple stood on the Acrocorinthus: Hera "the lady of the hill"—*Βουβάλα* (Paus. II. 4.7).

(3) A third adjective occurs in the *Anthol. Palat.* (VI. 106) as the epithet of Pan: *Πᾶν Βουνίρα*. The case is parallel to the preceding, and one may conjecture that we have here an old Arcadian cult-epithet.

(4) The grammarian Phrynichus (p. 355, ed. Lobeck) says that the word *βουνός* was usual in Syracusan poetry and was introduced into Athenian comedy by Philemon (c. 330 B.C.).

It is clear from the form and date of *βοῦνις*; from the geographical distribution of the word and its cognates or derivatives; from the use of the two adjectives as cult-epithets (attested beyond doubt in the first case)—that we have to do with an old Greek word, belonging to the deepest strata of the language.

But it is also clear that the word had early disappeared from usage and survived only locally. It must have been an archaism even in Aeschylus' time since, shortly after, Herodotus when he meets it in Cyrene treats it as a local word and thinks it necessary to give an explanation to his mainly Athenian audience. That it was entirely unknown in Athens in the beginning of the 4th c. B.C. is evident; otherwise Philemon would not have had to introduce it about that time from Sicily. Much later, in the 2nd c. A.D., it must still have been rare, since Hera's transparent epithet *Βουβάλα* remained a mystery to Pausanias and to his Corinthian informants (see his far-fetched explanation, II. 4.7).

I need not follow the later history of the word. How it spread and reasserted itself in common use until it finally superseded its rival *ἄρεος*—this is a long story, instructive in more than one respect; but it does not concern us here. All we have to show is, how a half-forgotten archaism in Aeschylus' time, a curious local term to Herodotus, an obscure fossilized epithet of Pan and Hera throughout classical and Hellenistic times, has mysteriously re-emerged, and lives again on the lips of the Greek people.

These eclipses and re-emergences of words, together with their semantic changes, persistences and reversions, sometimes open strangely wide perspectives on the past. What they reveal is essentially concrete and individual. In following step by step the life of a word, one finds oneself situated in the very heart of the living flux, where the most divers forces and factors are intimately interwoven. Here one is no longer concerned with language alone, but with life in its integrity, of which language is the supreme manifestation. There is a manifold interplay of everything with everything. Historical and cultural events, geographical shiftings and redistributions, growth and decay of beliefs, fluctuation of fashions and tastes, changes of morals and modes of life—all this determines and illuminates the life of a word and is illuminated by it. A study of this kind requires, then, the collaboration of very various sorts of knowledge and methods, and faculties ranging from acuteness of intuition and daring in synthesis to careful minuteness in observing, collecting and classifying the infinitesimal data involved. Anyone who would undertake to write the history of a single word—such as *τραγῶδι*, “song,” or the more humble *βουνός*—would have to write a history of Greek Civilization, from its origin till to-day; and to write it not in the diffused and general manner of a historian, but as reflected and condensed in the living microcosm of a word.

This field lies as yet entirely untouched. But I do not doubt that such analysis will reorient and enrich the study of civilisation as decisively as microanalysis did other branches of knowledge.

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But from these too general, and perhaps premature, considerations, let us return to the more limited gains that the study of Modern Greek vocabulary affords a student of Ancient Greek. And here I cannot do better than quote at length the passage in which A. Thumb sums these up in a few significant instances.

“Above all it (Mod. Gk.) throws light on the meaning of single words. Thus Hellenistic lexicography gains by the study of Modern Greek. Exactly as we use the latter in reconstructing Hellenistic phonology and accidence, we may ask whether the meaning of certain modern words may not be applied to their ancient prototypes.

“ . . . In Euripides *Cyclops* (v. 694) we find *κακῶς* in a context which excludes the usual sense of the word. The Dutch philologist Cobet has therefore conjectured *ἄλλως* ‘in vain.’ The Greek *Pallis*

reminds us of Mod. Greek τοῦ κᾶκου 'in vain,' and the difficulty disappears if we give this meaning to κακῶς in the passage of Euripides. Pallis, who has translated the New Testament into vernacular Greek, has also explained Mark vii. 19, by interpreting the word βρώματα not as 'food,' 'meat,' but as 'stench,' 'impurity,' with the Modern Greek meaning. Again, he has translated ἡμέρα εὐκαιρος in Mark vi. 21, not as 'convenient day,' but as 'an empty day,' 'a holiday,' according to the Modern Greek meaning of εὐκαιρος. Thus a layman, whose mother tongue is Modern Greek, has been able, without scientific study, to enlighten philologists and theologians . . . If even a superficial knowledge of Modern Greek, without scientific research, promises such advantages, a thorough enquiry into the language will be still more profitable. A short paper by the Greek Kujeas (*Hermes* XLI. 478 sqq.) furnishes a good illustration. In the *Characters* of Theophrastus a children's game is described and the expression ἀσπὸς πέλεκυς is used with the alternate lifting up and setting down of children. The expression has puzzled philologists, but Kujeas has found the solution of the riddle in a saying of his Peloponnesian home (Avia in Laconia). Those words accompany the action of lifting and setting down, and mean 'light like a leather bottle' (which floats) and 'heavy like an axe' (which sinks in water)." (*Cl. Q.* 1914, p. 191).

At the time when Thumb wrote this, lexical research was still at its first stages, handicapped as it was by the absence of any exhaustive publication of relevant material in the form of a Thesaurus of Modern Greek; the material available was far from complete, and what there was had to be gleaned from various dictionaries, monographs, and papers in periodicals not always easy to obtain. Now the much-needed Thesaurus has begun to appear (see Prof. P. Koukoules' article on it in *J.H.S.* 1933, pp. 1 sqq.). With this publication the study of Greek vocabulary enters on a new phase: that of interpretation and synthesis.

## V.

**I**N 1772 the French philologist Villoison stated in a memoir the curious coexistence in Greece of three distinct idioms: (1) the language of the people, (2) that of the Church, and (3) Ancient Greek.

To some extent this statement is true even now. There are still three languages in existence, though they do not correspond to those mentioned by Villoison. His (1) has split into two, and his (2) and (3) have been incorporated into a new mixed idiom. Thus we have:

(1) Popular usage with its variety of dialects and local peculiarities.

(2) The unified and refined language of literature and cultivated speech, based on the first.

(3) An official jargon, the *καθαρεύουσα* or "expurgated language"—an odd and distasteful mixture of Attic, Byzantine and modern elements. This idiom is not one: it presents a great number of varieties, ranging from the rigid *καθαρεύουσα* with its quasi-Atticising airs, to the different forms of "mild" *καθαρεύουσα* in which the living Greek is more or less slightly and inconsistently distorted to accord with the Byzantine model. The Katharevousa is, in principle, the language of the Army, Lawcourt and office, but it is also enforced in schools, where living Greek is officially persecuted. The Katharevousa is also imitated in the diction of the lower journalism and of publicity. By none is it spoken, in any of its varieties; but the speech of pretentious half-education is strongly infected by it, while it is equally alien and laughable to the people and to the real élite.

It is the existence of this *third* "language," forcibly maintained by the authorities, that constitutes the peculiar and abnormal factor in the present linguistic situation of Greece, and has brought about the passionate struggle round the "language question"—*τὸ γλωσσικὸ ζήτημα*. Although, with the progress of education in Greece, it has now greatly subsided, the struggle still divides the country into two hostile camps: the people and the élite on the one hand, and on



the other the half-educated mob led by journalists and politicians. And one can easily understand that in a young country, ardently in love with "progress," and but recently emerged from the dark centuries of Turkish domination, the party of half-education must be particularly strong. The advance of real enlightenment and the constitution of a powerful élite will naturally cancel the painful problem. But in the meantime, no one interested in the fate of Greece and her language has the right to remain neutral in the conflict that is still going on.

But to take sides one must understand first what the conflict is really about. And before all one must be clear on one important point. The opposition is not between the literary language and the popular language. For the Katharevousa is not, and never has been, a literary idiom. Literary and popular Greek are both opposed here to a usage which is neither literary nor popular. Thus, what we have in Greece is really a *τριγλωσσία*. But no one, of course, will use such a term, and it is the word *διγλωσσία* that fully sums up the state of things. The popular and the literary language—though they are more distinct than, for instance, in English—are never perceived by a Greek as two different languages: they are two forms of living Greek, different yet organically connected. In Modern Greek as in Ancient—or in any language that has a literature—the literary idiom is a stable, generalized and idealized projection of the shifting diversity of the popular language, by which it is continuously fed and kept alive. In no language are the two ever either identical or wholly unconnected. The exact relation between them varies greatly from language to language, and within a language from period to period, from school to school and from writer to writer. And there are often heated disputes concerning the due relation and boundary between the two. But that has nothing to do with the "language question" in Greece. There are writers whose style tends to approximate very closely to popular or even regional usage, and there are others whose diction is very remote from it; but they are all on the same side in the *γλωσσικό ζήτημα* since they all write living Greek and refuse to adopt a jargon which is neither living, nor Greek, nor a language. To understand what it actually is, and how and when it was made (for it is manufactured, not grown), and why it could assert itself in Greece, we must for a moment go far back.

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The literary language of Classical Greece was deeply rooted in the soil. It was not, like the literary idiom of India, a language

rigidly fixed and unified from the first. It always kept in touch with the changing variety of actual speech, without however coinciding with it, except in some of the Attic prose and to a certain extent in Attic, Lesbian and Syracusan poetry (cf. Meillet, p. 46). One and manifold, it reflects and expresses the unity and the living diversity of the Greek people—though in a stabilized and generalized form: local peculiarities crystallised into distinctive characteristics of styles, limits between dialects outgrew their primitive significance and became ideal bounds circumscribing the domain of this or that literary form or genre.

It is different with the literary language of the Hellenistic period. The *κοινή* (taking this term in a very wide sense, to embrace also the artificially Atticising diction) translates on the linguistic plane the diffusion—and hence the inevitable dilution—of a culture thinly spread over a vast and racially diverse area. Like Hellenistic civilisation, Hellenistic Greek, with its smooth superficial unity, disguises rather than expresses the moving multiplicity of the human media over which it is imposed. From the very start it is detached from the soil and tends to become inorganic: a stable, conventionalized system of forms that may persist endlessly, but that lives and grows no longer.

In like conditions Latin survived; but to survive it had to decay, to lose its unity, and to rise again in new and varied daughter-tongues. Yet on the surface, in the domain of letters, the lifeless frame of Augustan Latin remained unchanged and undecayed for centuries and centuries, hiding the growth of new life.

What happened to Greek was similar in some respects, but very different in others. The Greek-speaking area soon shrank almost to its original limits, to a domain geographically, culturally and for a long time politically, one. From time immemorial this domain has acted, and still acts, as a kind of mould rapidly reshaping the changing human elements attracted within its bounds into a real unit. But this only partly explains the integral survival of the language, for which no explanation can fully account. Here, as in times past, we have again the *Miracle Grec*. For when, two thousand years later, Greek reappears, it is not a group of quite new languages, but a language *one* through all its dialectal variations, and as essentially Greek as it was before it disappeared beneath the smooth surface of the *κοινή*.

The process of growth and transformation which led to the present state of Greek remains in great part hidden from us. Germs of the modern usage early appear here and there, in the language of

the New Testament for instance. But how these germs grew and developed is seldom visible. The stream of living language went underground. On the surface, in literature, there is a dry desert with few signs of life or change—and most of these are unintentional faults against grammar and good taste. This is true already of the Egyptian papyri of the Hellenistic age. "What for a philologist is interesting in these texts," Meillet remarks (p. 194), "what gives them their value, is the faults against the rules of the literary and traditional language." The rules and conventions of the literary usage no longer serve to bring to fuller and higher expression the forces and tendencies obscurely fermenting in the spoken language; they only hide and disguise them. From being a means of expression, the literary idiom has become an obstacle to it, thus defeating its own end. And the later the text, the more this is so. Throughout the Byzantine period the written language changes but little. The learned Phanariots of Constantinople in their laborious literary exercises cultivated the same fossilized tongue down to the middle of the nineteenth century. As time goes on, of course, faults and deviations become more and more frequent and significant, and here and there we have even conscious attempts to compromise with the actual usage—the living forces underneath try, and sometimes succeed, to break through the hard Byzantine crust. Yet till the very end of the eighteenth century, no writer, however "vulgarizing," can be taken to represent the true state of the language in his time: we can only guess from his writings what his actual speech must have been.

But there is one very remarkable exception: Cretan poetry, and above all Cretan drama of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The language we find here is neither a mixture of fossilized and spoken forms, nor a local dialect. It has all the characteristics of a fully developed common poetic idiom, supple and pure. Only here and there it betrays slight traces of the local speech. It is significant that this first renaissance took place in Crete, which was not under Turkish but under Venetian dominion. In 1669 the Turks took Crete and put an end to this short blossoming.

More than a century later, with the first promises of Independence, came also the first signs of a new linguistic revival. Naturally they came not from Constantinople, which remained the stronghold of the Byzantine tradition, but again from a spot of Greek land not under the Turks—the Ionian Isles. This second renaissance is the so-called Ionian School of poetry, with Solomos (1789-1856), the greatest poet of Modern Greece. Again, as in Crete, the language of

this poetry is neither a sort of Koine nor a dialect. How could this come about? The explanation is found in the Greek folk-songs which began to be collected not long before this time. These songs, to which the Ionian School must be linked, show clearly that, below the dead literary jargon and across the dialectal divisions, a common and living poetical language had developed in popular tradition—who knows for how many centuries?

Thus, leaving aside the Cretan drama, Modern Greek in all its fulness and purity comes to our notice only towards the beginning of the nineteenth century. But it must not be forgotten that what we are witnessing here is not the formation, but the re-emergence, of a language already fully constituted. As we find it in folk-songs it is the culmination of a long process whose stages remain hidden and can be only partially observed in, or conjecturally reconstructed from, literary evidence. The folk-songs themselves, as far as their language is concerned, bear no witness to their origin in time. Most of them are timeless by their very nature—dirges and love-songs. Others, referring to events that can be situated chronologically, are always the same in tone, style and idiom, whether the event is the fall of Constantinople or the defence of Souli. And yet many of them are very old. It has been proved, for instance, that the Byzantine epic dealing with the exploits of Digenis Akritas, which is at least as early as the thirteenth century, is based on popular songs some of which are still current among the people (cf. Hesseling, *Litt. Gr. Mod.* p. 40). But in their wanderings through ages and through various dialectal media, the language of most of these songs was gradually divested of all traces of time and space and became common Greek, as the songs themselves are a common heritage of the Greek people. And the same language, in a more complex and refined form, becomes that of the poets of the nineteenth century and of our own day. Thus the Modern Greek poetic idiom is from the beginning quite distinct from the Byzantine diction, and essentially one, though it may here and there be slightly tinged with local peculiarities marking the region where the song was collected or where the poet was born. In literary poetry there are also peculiarities due to classical and occidental influence, but this of course is not a difference in language but a characteristic of the literary style as such. No poet has ever attempted to write anything but the living Greek; poetical exercises in Katharevousa, such as those of the brothers Soutzos or of Rangavis, do not belong to the history of Greek poetry—they have only the interest of curiosities.



So much concerning the poetic idiom. In prose, as we shall see, the situation is not so simple.

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When Greece became independent she naturally needed a stable and unified language for school, law, army and administration. The common poetic idiom was here of little use. The fossilized idiom of literary prose, which had lost touch with life thousands of years ago, was not suitable either. It was fit only for caricaturing ancient models, and unable to express the needs of modern life. Moreover, it was almost unintelligible to the majority of the nation. On the other hand, spoken Greek, like every living language, varied perceptibly from region to region. Also, though this rich and supple language was full of promise, it could not at once fulfil all the requirements of a state hastily organised on occidental lines; it would need time for slow adaptation. There was only one way out—to adopt some compromise between the actual usage and the pastiche-idiom of churchmen and scholars.

Such a compromise had already been attempted by Korais, a great Greek scholar of the eighteenth century. Korais felt torn between admiration for Ancient Greek and his natural sympathy with the Modern. He wanted to be at once colloquial and learned: *πρέπει να λαλή τις όχι μόνον σαφώς ἀλλὰ καὶ σοφῶς*. And being a man of his century, he thought it possible to combine the two advantages by composing a language of his own making. By mixing and twisting Attic, Byzantine and Modern elements, he manufactured an artificial Greek with a strong French flavour.

It was this mixed idiom—*γλῶσσα φευτική, φρασεολογία*—that was finally adopted by the resuscitated country as the official language.

Some time before its official adoption, a dramatist of the period, Rizos Neroulos (1778-1850), gave a lively parody of the rising linguistic situation in an Aristophanic play called *Κοραϊστικά* (1813). The word—literally “rook-language”—means “gibberish,” “jargon.” It is here also a pun on “the language of Korais.” The scholar is represented trying in vain to teach peasants an odd “rook-language” of his own making. The other side of the situation is shown by Neroulos in a later play, *Βαβυλωνία*—Babel. Each of the characters speaks his own dialect, hence various misunderstandings and finally utter Babel. Between the Rook-Language and Babel is there a third way? The dramatist does not say. And if asked, he would probably have advocated a return to pure Attic. But in fact

the true solution is implicit in the second play. As Prof. Hesseling has pointed out, the play is based on an obvious contradiction. Its chief idea is that dialectal differences in the speech of that time led to misunderstandings and confusion. But if the characters do not understand one another, the spectators are supposed to understand them all, to follow and enjoy the play. And they certainly did—the play was extremely popular, and is so even now; though written in 1836 it still holds the stage. This means that through all the local peculiarities the language was perceived as one and was intelligible to everybody even in these very peculiarities.

To understand how the "rook-language" came to be adopted as the official language, and still remains as such, one must remember that when Greece came into independent political existence she had no social hierarchy organically grown. Of the only two classes that always and everywhere preserve and carry on the living tradition of a language—peasantry and gentry—Greece had only her admirable peasantry; and it was certainly not of them that the new governing class was formed. For want of any traditional title to their superiority, the new rulers seized, and are still jealously preserving, the "rook-language," the Katharevousa, as their only mark of distinction from the common herd. "It is easy to understand," says M. Meillet (p. 250), "that politicians and journalists delight in this learned idiom. All the half-educated who have mastered the vocabulary of the 'purist language' and are able to conform to the principal rules of its grammar are proud of their superiority. This is everywhere one of the marks (*tares*) of half-education."

One can to some extent see the reasons for the official adoption of Korais' jargon. The linguistic situation was after all very complex, and there was urgent need of a stable and unified idiom. But what followed can by no means be justified.

Instead of diminishing, the distance between the living and the official Greek only increased. The former very soon became capable of expressing all the shades of modern life and thought; in spite of this, the Rook Language did not dissolve, but became ever more rigid. Starting from the mild compromise of Korais, it ended by urging total divorce from present usage. In 1853 P. Soutzos proclaims: *Ἡ γλῶσσα τῶν ἀρχαίων Ἑλλήνων καὶ ἡμῶν τῶν νεωτέρων ἔσεται μία καὶ αὐτή. Ἡ γραμματικὴ ἐκείνων καὶ ἡμῶν ἔσεται μία καὶ αὐτή. Αἱ λέξεις, αἱ φράσεις ἐκείνων ἔσονται μόναι παραδεκταί—*and so on. One may laugh at that, but the situation had also a very serious side.

The Katharevousa manifested itself not only in absurd caricaturing of Ancient Greek (an example of which I have just quoted); it held firm not only on shop-signs, in offices and in daily papers; but also in schools and even in universities, where it was imposed by law. Hence the paradoxical fact that schools became a real plague to Modern Greece, and the schoolmaster—*ὁ δάσκαλος*—the very symbol of the half-educated pedant, unable to speak his own language. In short, Greek was officially prohibited in Greece. It is hard to believe, but it is a fact, that not till September, 1917 (owing to some passing change in government) was the living Greek first allowed in elementary teaching (see Hesselings, *loc. cit.* p. 122 and note). But in Greece, the government changes often, and the fate of the language is entirely at the mercy of every political fluctuation. . . . So the *γλωσσικὸ ζήτημα*, it is evident, is far from being a merely literary question.

The movement in favour of the living language and the constitution of a new literary idiom was closely connected with—and dependent upon—the formation in Greece of a real élite. That is why the movement first began in the Ionian Isles, where a mild and enlightened foreign rule did not interfere with the rise of a stable and independent Greek nobility. Count Solomos was one of these, and the Ionian School of poetry reflects the particular conditions of this single spot of Greek land that had never been enslaved by the Turks. The Katharevousa—linguistic by-product of Turkish domination—could not impose itself here. Its cradle and centre of irradiation was naturally Constantinople, where the upper stratum of Greek society was recruited from those who knew how to please their masters and were willing to serve as instruments and agents of Turkish rule and oppression. The part they played in the formation of the independent Greek kingdom is well known. It was the Klepts who conquered Greek freedom, but it was the supple and cunning Phanariots who, pushing aside the rough and simple warriors, succeeded to impose themselves as the rulers of the liberated country. And with them came the Katharevousa.

From his island, Zante, Solomos looked with hope and apprehension on the decisive events that were taking place on the mainland. And in his memorable *Dialogue*, written in 1824, he expressed with power and calm lucidity the point of view which later—and with some exaggeration—became the war-cry of the champions of living Greek. The great poet noticed with alarm the efforts of unqualified expurgators to substitute for the national tongue “a language which nobody speaks, nor has spoken, nor will ever speak” (*Ἀπαντα* p. 248).

And he saw clearly that the reviving country had two enemies to defeat: the Turk who plotted against her freedom, and the Pachtaw (Σοφολογιώτατος) who attempted to defile her language (*ib.* p. 246).

Victory over the Turk was not long in coming; but by this, it so happened, the second enemy was only strengthened. During the whole nineteenth century the struggle for the national language went on with increasing heat. But until the last quarter of the century the cause of living Greek was supported not so much with theoretical arguments as with works written in this language. These are, of course, the best possible argument; but they counted for nothing to the partisans of the official idiom, nurtured on second-rate occidental literature. Only the approval of the West would attract the attention of the purists to works in their native tongue, and they continued to believe that the only way to pass in the eyes of Europe—and in their own eyes—for true successors of the Ancients was by caricaturing the ancient diction.

The real war was declared in 1883, when *Τὸ ταξίδι μου—My Journey*—by Ioannis Psicharis appeared. Here the programme of the movement was carried to extremes, and the struggle entered on a new phase—the *Ψιχαρισμός*.

Psicharis (1854-1929) was not only a copious writer and poet, he was also a philologist of European note, and above all a man of action; and he placed his art, his erudition and the violence of his uncommonly passionate nature at the service of "the cause." His eminent academic and social position in Paris was not the least of the arguments which impressed the purists, with their servile idolatry of Europe.

Nowadays, looking back, it is clear that Psicharis' literary work is of doubtful value. His many philological writings are full of gusto, erudition, and a somewhat flashy brilliance, and there is still much to be gleaned from them. But most of his linguistic theories and arguments count no more, based as they are on the current views of his day when philology seemed a kind of natural science. And his polemical zeal often led him to strange exaggerations and sometimes made him blind to quite obvious facts in the history of the language. Thus, since he believed—quite rightly—that the spoken and the literary usage should be organically connected, he was led to believe also that there never was any divergence between the two in Greek of the past, that a Byzantine writer, for instance, is to be taken as representing the spoken usage of his time. Here, as on



almost every point of the past history of Greek, it was not Psicharis who was right, but his eternal antagonist and *bête noire*, Prof. Hatzidakis, the learned leader of the purists. In short, Psicharis appears now in all respects much less convincing than the others who did not shout and argue, who did not contend that the popular idiom was the only one to be written—but simply wrote it, and produced works of lasting value. And yet it was through him—the stubborn and turbulent fighter, the scholar lacking in objectivity, the writer of doubtful taste—that a great and powerful truth has asserted itself and come to triumph. His very exaggerations and lack of moderation have proved salutary. The exaggerations were naturally abandoned, and no orthodox Psicharists are to be found nowadays. Traces of his action are visible everywhere, however. No matter that his own prose will not survive, the prose of his disciples—the whole of Modern Greek prose—would not be what it is without him. Also it is thanks to him that the immense majority even in the opposite camp are now half-converted to the living Greek, and if the Rook Language persists, it persists only by *inertia* and will be gone to-morrow.

Now that he is dead, the old quarrel seems to be subsiding; his merits have forced even official acknowledgment and the statue of the great fighter—*ὁ μέγας Ψιχάρης*, as they call him now—has been erected in Chios, in the white village of Pyrgos from which his stock came.

With the mention of my late master I may conclude this short introduction to the study of Modern Greek.