

XXXI. On the Dual Pronunciation of *Eta*

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When an Athenian or Ionian poet—say Sophocles or Bacchylides—set about writing some choral lyrics, which according to custom had to be in the “Doric” dialect, how did he decide in any given instance whether or not to use α instead of η ?

In the case of Bacchylides I think there is clear evidence as to the answer to this question; and I wish to suggest that the answer is the same with respect to the Attic dramatists. In doing this I do not expect to formulate any new doctrine, but rather to repeat and emphasize, or put into better focus, some points which are already known. To a certain extent we may be enlightened by a study of poets, such as Pindar and Theocritus, in whose own speech the α was used; and we must disregard the inaccuracies and vaguenesses of editors. I call attention to the statement of H. Kynaston in his edition of Theocritus:¹ “we find in this dialect α used instead of η universally”; and of R. Jebb in his edition of Sophocles’ *Oedipus rex*:² “The Doricism of scenic lyrics was not thoroughgoing.” In neither of these citations are the exact circumstances defined. C. D. Buck³ is almost as vague: “The retention of original $\bar{\alpha}$. . . is the most conspicuous characteristic of the choral lyric, and the only non-Att.-Ion. feature which prevails with any approach to consistency (even this not complete) and persists in the choruses of Attic tragedy.” And E. Schwyzler⁴ seems to imply that the exceptions, or errors, in the tragic choral odes are more frequent than is actually the case. A more precise analysis is to be found in two thorough studies of this question, by Hermann

¹ *The Idylls and Epigrams Attributed to Theocritus*⁵ (Oxford 1892), page xx.

² *Oedipus tyrannus*, school edition (Cambridge 1897), note to line 1339. Line citations from the tragic poets refer to the Oxford text editions of Aeschylus (ed. G. Murray, 1955) and Sophocles (ed. A. C. Pearson, 1924) and the Teubner text of Euripides (ed. A. Nauck, [Leipzig 1900]).

³ *The Greek Dialects* (Chicago 1955) 345. (Actually the third edition of this work, but with a changed title; see note 12, below.)

⁴ *Griechische Grammatik* (in Müller’s Handbuch) 1 (Munich 1939) 186.

Schaefer⁵ and Gudmund Björck,⁶ with lists and discussion of all the anomalous instances in the choral odes of Attic tragedy.

We must recognize that, to all intents and purposes, nobody can write or speak in a dialect not his own without making mistakes; rare or partial exceptions can occur only as a result of long and intimate association with the speakers of the dialect, or a thorough understanding of the linguistic factors involved. Witness the garbled representations of American⁷ or Scottish speech found in English novels; also, in American English, the inaccurate imitations of Southern speech often produced by Northerners. Two illustrations of this rule occur to me which seem especially pertinent:

1. Writings in pseudo-Scots commonly use a form *tæ* for *to*. This cannot exist in the dialect, since the word comes from OE *tō* and never had an *ā*, which is the source of Scots *a* as in *hame* = Eng. *home*. Robert Burns, who was a native speaker of the dialect, although he does have some artificial forms belonging to a sort of literary Scottish, regularly uses *to*; and *tæ* should be regarded as a hyper-Scoticism made up by persons who erroneously thought that Scottish *a* must (universally, as Kynaston said in connection with Theocritus, as quoted above) correspond to *graphic* English *o*, and were misled by the English spelling of this word.

2. I remember being present in Munich on an occasion when an American student, who spoke excellent German but paid little attention to the Bavarian dialect, tried to join in a conversation in the dialect, and was laughed at by all those present for saying *bloab'n* for Ger. *bleiben*. He knew of some words in which Ger. *ei* appears in Bavarian as *oa*, and thought it was true universally; but the word he used does not exist. Actually, MHG *ei* and *i* have fallen together in modern Standard German as *ei* (examples: *heim* and *mein*, respectively), but are kept distinct in many of the dialects.

Why should the Greeks do any better?

⁵ *De Dorismi in tragoediis Graecis usu* (Cottbus 1866).

⁶ *Das Alpha Impurum und die tragische Kunstsprache* (Uppsala 1950) 164–80 and 358–64.

⁷ See H. L. Mencken, *The American Language*⁴ (New York 1936) 255–59; also his *Supplement I* (New York 1945) 506–11. He gives numerous examples and cites earlier articles on the subject. A more recent study is by Jane W. Stedman, "American English in Punch, 1841–1900," in *Am. Sp.* 28 (1953) 171–80.

While the "Doric" of literature is a mixed dialect, containing Epic, Aeolic, and genuine Doric words and forms in varying proportions as they happened to be familiar to the poet and suit his purpose (metrical or stylistic) of the moment, the forms with α appear with great regularity and in the correct places, and may be regarded as one feature which is unconditionally required in this type of writing. Of course it would be easy enough for Sophocles *et alii* to learn a few simple rules to govern the interchange of α and η , which would cover the majority of cases. Of special utility would be the rule that α appears in the endings of all first-declension nouns and adjectives (however the Greeks of the fifth century B.C. may have described them). It would also be easy to learn a short list of common words similarly affected, such as *μήτηρ*, *δῆμος*, *ἵστημι*; but then there remains a residue of words not in the list and not covered by any rule. That is, I consider that it would be impossible to learn a list of *all* the instances in the Greek language of these α - η correspondences. Yet the treatment of them by the poets in question shows a high degree of consistency,⁸ and I think explanations can be found for most or all of the exceptions.

Later poets, however, make a larger number of errors. For instance, in the 253 lines of the recovered (papyrus) text of Timotheus of Miletus there are about half as many instances of η for original \tilde{a} (20 or more) as in the choral parts of the entire corpus of Attic tragedy (40-50). Likewise, the pastoral poems ascribed to Bion show more instances than does Theocritus: for example, in the *Epithalamium of Achilles and Deidamia*,⁹ in 31 lines of text, there are 8 examples of η against 27 examples of α , where α is expected—in other words, 23% wrong—and also one example (*φιλάματα*, line 6) of an apparently incorrect α . It is interesting also to note that Bion appears to have a hyper-Doric form in *ἐντι* (Fr. 10, line 13) used as a singular; in true Doric this is normally only a plural, although the same usage does occur in a Rhodian inscription,¹⁰ probably of the fourth century, where Buck merely remarks "pl. for sing."

⁸ Not in Aristophanes. He jumps from Attic to Doric and back again to suit the demands of his sense of burlesque.

⁹ *Idyl* 2. Bion's authorship of this poem has been challenged; but if not by him, it is evidently by some poet of similar background, i.e. of Ionian origin and of late Hellenistic date.

¹⁰ *IG* xii.i.677, line 11; Buck (above, note 3) No. 103, page 299.

In this connection we may consider two cases of false α in Euripides: *ἐπποάθης*, *Iph. Aul.* 586, and *ἐξεπónασεν*, *Iph. Aul.* 209; the latter is verified by its occurrence also in Pindar, *Pyth.* 4.236. These words may be compared with *φώνασε* in Pindar, *Ol.* 13.67, and with the fluctuation between α and η in derivatives of *φιλέω* in the pastoral poets; the example given above (*φιλάματα*) is paralleled by several others, representing both the noun and the verb, as in Moschus (1, lines 4, 5, 26, and 27) and Theocritus (3.19 and 20 and 6.41), while the same poets also use the forms with η which would have been expected, and Homer has a couple of forms with α , as in *Il.* 5.61. The probable explanation in all these cases is that in various dialects some of the contract verbs vary between *-άω* and *-έω* inflections. Buck gives some examples,¹¹ and it seems likely that we have here some further instances, otherwise unattested, of the same type of variation. Certain similarly surprising forms with α occur in the dialects for *εἰρήνη* and *κρήνη*, and here Buck says:¹² "They are apparently from different forms of the root." This may well be the explanation for some of the apparent violations of the normal equivalences in the choral lyric. Even within Attic, by the way, there are similar fluctuations among different forms of *χράω*.

To revert now to our original question, four methods occur to me which could be used, singly or in combination, to determine when to use α (aside from the memorizing of rules and lists, already discussed):

1. Nowadays we should rely on comparative linguistics and the derivation of each individual word. This method was obviously not available to ancient writers. They had no conception of linguistic history, and when they did attempt to guess at etymologies, the results were merely fanciful.

2. Just as some of our dictionaries contain a glossary of Scottish words and phrases (whether genuine or not), so the Greeks could have had available a glossary of Doric forms. I think we must reject this hypothesis too. The scholars of the Hellenistic and later periods might conceivably have compiled such a glossary,

¹¹ *Op. cit.* (above, note 3) §161.2 (page 125).

¹² *Introduction to the Study of the Greek Dialects*² (Boston 1928) 306, note on §8. This statement is omitted from the 3rd ed. (above, note 3), which merely says (§8c, page 21) that these forms "are anomalous and variously explained."

and of course did include many Doric forms in their larger compilations—although I do not know of one devoted exclusively to the Doric dialect; but there is no evidence that any work of this kind had been done in the fifth century. A variant of this idea would be to assume that our poets were so thoroughly familiar with all the works of Pindar, Alcman, and other predecessors who were speakers of α -dialects that they could simply draw on this fund of knowledge, and that they never tried to use a word which did not occur in those authors. A superhuman job.

3. One might suggest that each poet had at his elbow a Dorian friend, or a slave of Dorian origin, as his adviser on dialect, who could tell him on each occasion what the correct Doric form was. This also seems improbable. We can hardly believe that an Aeschylus or a Sophocles worked in that way; nor is there evidence that across-the-border friendships were common. Furthermore, when the writers, especially the scholars, of the Hellenistic and Roman periods have so much chit-chat about the great men of the past, it seems (although I recognize that this is an *argumentum ex silentio*) that some one of them would have mentioned So-and-so as the Dorian friend or amanuensis of the poet in question, if such a person had existed.

I think that the very statement of these three propositions is enough to lead us to discard them. Therefore we are compelled to examine attentively the remaining possibility.

4. I mentioned to begin with that there is clear evidence as to the answer in the case of Bacchylides (and Simonides). The early inscriptions of some of the islands make a distinction in spelling between original \bar{e} and the η developed from original \bar{a} ; and indeed, the epichoric alphabets of Naxos, Amorgos, and Ceos have a special letter for this secondary η . Unquestionably the secondary η was originally more open than the inherited \bar{e} (approximately [æ:] contrasting with [ɛ:]), and they gradually became more and more alike until the phonetic and phonemic distinction was lost. Buck says “both soon became identical,”¹³ but I do not know what he means by “soon,” and he gives no details as to dialect differentiation. E. H. Sturtevant¹⁴ argues that because η was used for the \bar{e} of both origins when Athens borrowed the Ionic alphabet, “The inference is that the Attic

¹³ *Op. cit.* (above, note 3) 19.

¹⁴ *Pronunciation of Greek and Latin*² (Philadelphia 1940) 34.

vowels were virtually identical with the Ionic in the fifth century." I do not believe that this is necessarily true; all known parallels, including the original Greek borrowing of the Phoenician alphabet, would indicate that while a borrowed alphabet is, naturally, adapted to its new use as well as possible, there are almost inevitably some respects in which it must be inexact in representing the sounds of the borrowing language. Sturtevant also gives no details as to the dates when these two vowels became identical in the various dialects. The fact is that the latest evidence on this point dates from the sixth century for Naxos, from the fifth century for Amorgos, Paros,¹⁵ and Thasos, and from the fourth century for Ceos. Perhaps the most interesting inscription for our present purposes is one from Iulis in Ceos,¹⁶ the native place of both Bacchylides and Simonides; it dates from approximately the last quarter of the fifth century—two or three generations *later* than the formative years of Bacchylides. This is the text of a law, and contains 31 lines, mostly pretty well preserved. The distinction between the two vowels is carefully made, with only two errors in a total of 51 occurrences.¹⁷ Thus it is clear that the distinction was still made in pronunciation throughout the fifth century in Ceos, and that Bacchylides or Simonides needed only to realize that where he pronounced [æ:] the Dorians pronounced [a:] and he should write α, and where he pronounced [ε:] it was the same in Doric. In the first case the substitution was made just as automatically as the interchange of "flat *a*" and "broad *a*" in *aunt* etc. in different varieties of modern English.

The Ionic dialects of the Aegean islands are generally considered to have been more conservative than those of Asia Minor, and it seems likely that in the latter area our two vowels had already fallen together at the date of the earliest inscriptions from Ionia and Samos, or, we may guess, about the eighth century; and this leads to the conclusion that the distinction survived in Ceos for three or four hundred years longer than in East Ionic. But now where do we stand with regard to Attic? Björck¹⁸ observes:

¹⁵ According to the epigraphic evidence. However, F. Bechtel, in *Die griechischen Dialekte* 3 (Berlin 1924) 31, argues, on the basis of some forms in Archilochus, that the two vowels were the same in Paros by the seventh century.

¹⁶ *IG* xii.v.593; Buck (above, note 3) No. 8, page 191.

¹⁷ Both errors are in the endings of third-person singular subjunctive forms (δαπανθῇ line 17 and θάνῃ line 23), which are written with Η as if from original *ā*.

¹⁸ *Op. cit.* (above, note 6) 362.

A priori wäre es natürlich nicht ausgeschlossen, dass schon in der gewöhnlichen att. Aussprache ein Qualitätsunterschied zwischen $\eta < \bar{e}$ und $\eta < \bar{a}$ bestanden hätte, wie ihn die alten Inschriften von Naxos, Keos und Amorgos verraten.

He then rejects this notion, giving no reasons but merely saying that it is unlikely. But this is precisely what I wish to suggest was the case: that Attica shared the conservatism of its near neighbor Ceos in this respect, and that the tragic poets had the same facility as Bacchylides in substituting Doric α for the [æ:] of their own speech.

There is actually almost no other evidence to prove or disprove this proposition. Schwyzer, to be sure, argues¹⁹ that the two η 's were distinguished in pronunciation until the fifth century because masc. nouns in $-\eta\varsigma$ of the first and third declensions (with original \bar{a} and \bar{e} , respectively) were kept distinct, adding that when the 3rd-declension nouns begin to appear with accusatives ending in $-\eta\nu$ this phenomenon proves that the pronunciation of the η was now the same. The argument is inconclusive, and is rejected by Sturtevant.²⁰ I would say rather that so long as the sounds were distinguished, the two declensional forms were *likely* to be kept distinct,²¹ but that they *could* be preserved even when their nominatives came to have identical endings; compare English *house*, *mouse*, plu. *houses*, *mice*, or German *Gedicht*, *Gesicht*, plu. *Gedichte*, *Gesichter*. Thus Schwyzer's argument is at best only a weak sort of corroboration, a suggestion pointing in the same direction as the theoretical consideration above.

Appeals are sometimes made to the inscriptions for proof of the point in question. Unfortunately, while the epigraphic evidence is, in some cases, illuminating or even conclusive, in this case it tells us nothing. We have always known that the old Attic alphabet had only one sign—E— for all e -sounds, which represented three different sounds which are distinguished in our standard Greek spelling. This letter was used for a short close e , which we write ϵ ; for a long close e , which we write $\epsilon\iota$; and for a long open e , which we write η . I would add a fourth sound, an

¹⁹ *Op. cit.* (above, note 4) 186; see also Bechtel (above, note 15) 31.

²⁰ *Op. cit.* (above, note 14) footnote on page 33.

²¹ Although even here there are contrary cases, in dialects where the first declension never has η , such as Lesbian and Arcadian, where nevertheless accusatives of s -stems are found ending in $-\eta\nu$. See Buck (above, note 3) §108.3, page 90.

extra-open (Schwyzer calls it “überoffen”) long vowel between *e* and *a*, namely [æ:], which we also write *η*, and which came to be identical with the other *η* [ɛ:] probably about the beginning of the fourth century. The fact that the Athenians wrote this sound with an *e*-symbol rather than with an *a*-symbol shows, I think, only that they considered it important to indicate in writing the distinction, in the last syllable, between *θαλάττης* (gen. sing.) and *θαλάττας* (acc. plu.), or in the first syllable between *ἄξιω* (pres.) and *ῥέξιουν* (imperf.), but thought it of less importance to indicate the distinction between the second syllables of *φίλη* and *φιλήσω*. The Attic alphabet was neither perfectly phonetic nor perfectly phonemic, and wrote, for example, all the vowels of *ἔτη* and *ἔχειν* alike (ETE, EXEN); the introduction of the Ionic alphabet in 403 B.C. represented an improvement, which, however, still fell short of perfection.

It remains to consider the violations occurring in the choral lyric. If the poet, as we have argued, knew automatically from his own speech which instances of *η* needed to be changed to Doric *α*, how is it possible to find any mistakes or exceptions at all? I think that there are three answers to this question, one or another of which will cover every case of such violations—aside from the possibility of occasional corruptions in the manuscript tradition.

1. We have already mentioned (page 493) some examples where apparent anomalies are believed to be attributable to varying forms of the words in question in the dialects. Thus *κτῆμα* occurs even in Pindar with *η*, as though it were derived only from *κτέομαι* (attested in Ionic) instead of Attic *κτάομαι*. Similar dialect variants may account for an inconsistency in handling the derivatives of *πλήττω* and of *τλάω*, which sometimes appear with *α* but also sometimes with *η*; also of *κλήρος*, which has *η* in Euripides, *Ion* 908, and Sophocles, *Ant.* 814, but *α* in Aeschylus, *Suppl.* 360; also of *ζῆλος*, which has *η*, as should presumably be expected, in Bacchylides and Euripides (*Hipp.* 168, *Iph. Taur.* 1117), but *α* in Pindar. Perhaps the same explanation applies to the connecting vowel in such compounds as *θαλαμηπόλος* (with *η* in Soph. *Oed. rex* 1210, and in Aesch. *Sept. con. Th.* 359 according to the manuscripts), *ὑπερήφανον* (Aesch. *Prom.* 404), *ἐκηβόλοισι* (Eur. *Ion* 214, contrasted with *ἐκαβόλον*, Soph. *Oed. rex* 162),

θαναταφόρα (Soph. *Oed. rex* 181); also to *θνήσκω*, which usually has *η* in the verb-forms but *α* in *θανός*.

2. The dialects have not preserved exactly the same vocabulary,²² but the poetic style readily borrows words from several dialects, particularly from Epic. Now if an Athenian writer used words which did not exist in his own dialect, but which he borrowed from Homer or from some later Ionian poet, he would know the words only in their contemporary Ionic form, in which original *ā* and original *ē* were identical, pronounced approximately [ε:] (see above, p. 495)—that is, the same as original *ē* in Attic—and he would have no reason to suppose that in some cases the Doric form should have *α*. We may therefore expect such words to retain *η* even in the choral lyric.²³ A few examples: *ἡλιβάτοις* (Eur. *Hipp.* 732, Aesch. *Suppl.* 352); *ἀμφίκης* (Ar. *Nubes* 1160, Aesch. *Prom.* 692, Soph. *El.* 485); *ῥμαρ* (Eur. *Bacch.* 910, Soph. *Oed. Col.* 682, and *ῥματι* *Oed. Col.* 688), an Epic word (but *ῥματι* in Eur. *Phoen.* 1579 and *Alc.* 232); forms of *πήνη*, “thread” (Eur. *Hec.* 471, *Ion* 197), a rare word found only in poetry; similarly *ῥμος* (e.g. Eur. *Hec.* 915) and *πῆμα*. A revealing instance of the same principle is *πολιήτας* (Aeschylus and Euripides, whereas Pindar has *πολιάτας*); this form was unfamiliar to the Athenian ear, since Attic has *πολίτης* instead.

3. F. G. Kenyon²⁴ states “Bacchylides avoids having the *ā* sound twice in successive syllables, and in such cases retains *η* in the first. Thus he regularly has *φήμα*, *εἰρήνα*,²⁵ *κυβερνήτας*, *ἄδμήτα* (but *ἄδματοι* in xi.84, where the final syllable has not an *ā*).” A number of examples of the same phenomenon occur in the dramatic choruses: *ἄδμήτα* (Aesch. *Suppl.* 149, -αν Soph. *El.* 1239); *πηγά* several times, although *παγά* is more frequent; *φήμα* (Eur. *Hipp.* 572) and *φήμαν* (Soph. *Phil.* 846, although some MSS. read *φάμαν*). But in addition to these there are cases where the *η* does not occur in successive syllables, where in spite of an intervening syllable, or even two, the first *η* is preserved

²² As pointed out also by Björck (above, note 6) 361.

²³ This point is adumbrated by Björck 182: “wird ein Stamm in [lyrischen Partien] mit *ā*, [im Dialog] mit *η* gesprochen, so war er im 5. Jahrh. Normalattisch.” He neglects to state the converse, that if the word, or root, was *not* normal Attic, we cannot count on finding this regular correspondence of *α* and *η*.

²⁴ *The Poems of Bacchylides* (London 1897) xlv.

²⁵ An ill chosen example, since the -*ρη*- shows original *ē*; see above, page 493.

while the second appears as α : ἡδονᾶ (Soph. *Oed. rex* 1339, -άν Soph. *El.* 1277), καταρξάμαν (Eur. *El.* 1222), ἐφηψάμαν (Eur. *El.* 1225), ἡδίσταν (Eur. *Herc. F.* 675), μηχανάν (Eur. *Alc.* 221 and *Or.* 1422), ἡνυτόμαν (Aesch. *Ag.* 1159), ἡλακάτα (Eur. *Or.* 1431), γηγενέτας (Eur. *Ion* 1466, -τα Eur. *Phoen.* 128), ἡδομένα (Eur. *Bacch.* 874). Most interesting is an example where the vowels are actually in different words: δυσφήμους φάμας (Eur. *Hec.* 194); cognate words in juxtaposition, yet treated differently.²⁶

I believe that Kenyon has put the wrong emphasis on this phenomenon. He seems to think that the poet(s) objected to \bar{a} in successive syllables. I would suggest rather an automatic sound-change in the speech of Attica and Ceos: when $\eta < \bar{a}$ [æ:] occurred in two syllables of the same word (or even closely associated words), the first became [ε:] by dissimilation.²⁷ The poet was changing to α only those vowels which he pronounced [æ:], and so the first vowel in these cases was unaffected.²⁸ I think that this hypothesis tends to reinforce the theory that η still had two pronunciations in fifth-century Attic.

CONCLUSION

Sturtevant²⁹ gives a diagram showing the chronological development of the long *e*-sounds of Attic and Hellenistic Greek. I believe this should be revised approximately as follows (omitting special cases, such as the dissimilation just discussed and the different treatment of original \bar{a} after ϵ , ι , and ρ):

²⁶ The explanation given here (next paragraph) does not apply to the occurrence in successive lines in Euripides (*Tro.* 802–3) of Ἀθῆνα and Ἀθήνας. The first is normal, even under this dissimilation theory, since in Attic the goddess is named Ἀθηνᾶ, and there is no form of the name which has η in the third syllable. I cannot, at present, account for Ἀθήνας; Euripides himself has Ἀθάναις in *Alc.* 452.

²⁷ In this connection it may be noted that \bar{a} in Homer in ἀήρ, δυσαής, ζαής is ascribed to dissimilation; see Schwyzler (above, note 4) 187. Incidentally, there may be sufficient reason to believe that the sound-law proposed here operated in the latter half of the sixth century, as it seems not to appear in Simonides.

²⁸ It is impossible to say whether, when this change was once established in some forms of a word, it was extended also to other forms where $\eta < \bar{a}$ did not follow. If not, we have a difference in pronunciation in the inflection of the word; thus πηγῇ sing., πηγαί plu., pronounced [pɛ:gæ:] and [pɛ:gaj]. There is a little evidence of leveling (i.e., making it [pɛ:gaj]): πηγᾶς (Aesch. *Prom.* 401, MSS.), πηγᾶτος (Eur. *Alc.* 99), πανσέληνος (Soph. *Oed. rex* 1090); but there is also contrary evidence, as in παγαί (Eur. *Med.* 410).

²⁹ *Op. cit.* (above, note 14) 41.

(which were not used before about the third century A.D., except in Laconian), we omit *h* where it occurred in the interior of a word, we omit the *ι* subscript (although it was pronounced until about the end of the second century B.C.); and in particular we confuse all the long *e*-sounds and *e*-diphthongs: four, or, as I would say, six, different phonemes and phoneme clusters which finally came to be identical about the ninth century A.D.—namely, the two sounds of *η*, the false diphthong *ει*, the true diphthong *ει*, and the two long diphthongs written *η*—and we generally pronounce them all alike! To be precise, we tend to give them all the sound which originally belonged to the true diphthong *ει*, which was one of the earliest to disappear (that is, soon after the extra-open *η* [æ:] coming from original *ā*).

Nevertheless, I am not prepared to advocate that we attempt to revise our entire practice as to the pronunciation of ancient Greek. There are several difficulties which would need to be carefully considered; in some respects our knowledge of the classical pronunciation is incomplete or inadequate, and, as I have just pointed out, in some respects an ideal perfection is probably unattainable. Then, in view of the multiplicity of dialects and the long period covered by Greek literature, one must ask whether it would be wise even to try to be accurate in reproducing the pronunciation of each writer. We can go on reading Thucydides with the same pronunciation as Plutarch, and Homer the same as Theocritus (given identical spellings), while recognizing that we are partly wrong in each case. (After all, we read Shakespeare with a modern English, or modern American, accent, and seldom even think about how funny it would sound to Shakespeare himself; and the Germans do much the same in reading Middle High German.)

But I do think this is a matter which would bear thinking about.