
Social Dialect in Attica

Stephen Colvin

1 Social Dialect

Social varieties of speech are commonly designated social dialects or sociolects. The terms refer to speech variation that is correlated with social distinctions: immediately the term is more complicated than the unmarked term dialect, which refers of course to regional dialect. To identify regional dialect we have to know some basic facts about the geography of the speech community; but in the case of social dialect we are committing ourselves to a range of interlocking theories about the social structure of the community, which—at least in the case of a corpus language, and probably also in other cases—cannot be merely observed, but must be abstracted from whatever data are available to the investigator.

The distinction between dialect and social dialect is not necessarily as fundamental as the definitions might imply. The disciplines which both terms pertain to developed in an exotic linguistic and sociolinguistic context, namely Western Europe and North America, and the language model that is in some sense built into them recalls their origin (large political units with standardized national languages and a history of suppressing linguistic competitors). However, in very many cases the distribution of social varieties of language *will* correlate with location: a regional variety will have social implications, for example, whether the region concerned is a relatively large area or a small section of an urban environment. The origins of a social dialect will in many cases be local. One may then ask how a social dialect is maintained without the spatial separation which is normally thought necessary for linguistic difference. There are a number of responses to this. Firstly, and most importantly, sociolinguistic research over the last century has shown that the creation and maintenance of distinct linguistic identities are a central feature of maintaining a specific social identity. Secondly, in the case of varieties associated with socio-economic class, even small-scale spatial separation (such as a small urban neighbourhood) may be sufficient to maintain a distinctive speech pattern; this will

be reinforced by social networks at home and in the workplace.¹ Thirdly, social dialects may indeed be less likely to survive unspotted than their regional counterparts; they are in constant interaction with one another, social identity is fluid, and the rate of change may be rapid.

It hardly needs stressing that a social dialect is not a *declinatio* from the standard or prestige variety, though it may be constructed as such in the discourse of the community. It need not, in fact, be described by reference to the standard, although this may be convenient. A speech variety which is defined as 'social' may in fact have a history more or less independent of the local standard, although interaction with other local varieties, including the standard, is likely to play a role in its development. One reason why a speech variety may be defined as a social dialect is that, for the historical reasons sketched above, we are generally willing to allow just one local dialect per political unit; any further dialects are therefore liable to be classified as social dialects. So, for example, in the case of Attica: it is an unusually large political unit by pre-Hellenistic standards, and unlikely to have been linguistically homogeneous. Nevertheless, owing in part to a standardized orthography, when we look for linguistic variation in Attica we generally set out to look for social dialect. This is perhaps because we are used to thinking of linguistic movement in terms of what Anna Davies has called 'vertical' diffusion (between a higher and a lower variety), as opposed to the 'horizontal' diffusion that takes place without reference to a standard (Morpurgo Davies 1999: 7).

We are thus in danger of being misled by our own terminology when we look for evidence of 'social' variation in Greek, as opposed to geographical variation. Bartoněk long ago pointed out that the term Attic-Ionic is itself a curious hybrid: for Attic is a geographical term, while Ionic is an ethnic term—and ethnicity is a socially constructed quantity (Bartoněk 1972: 9). It is with Attic (and to a certain extent its relationship with Ionic) that I wish to deal in the present paper. On comparative grounds we may start by assuming the existence of social varieties in Attica: next we need to see if we have evidence for (a) the concept of socially differentiated speech in Athens, and (b) the thing itself. We have plenty of evidence for the former from a variety of literary sources, most usefully Greek Comedy:

(1) Aristophanes (PCG 706)

. . . καὶ οὐχ ἡ αὐτὴ μὲν τῶν κατὰ τὴν ἀγροικίαν, ἡ αὐτὴ δὲ τῶν ἐν ἄστει
διατριβόντων. παρὸ καὶ ὁ κωμικὸς λέγει Ἀριστοφάνης

¹ See especially the work of J. and L. Milroy for smaller-scale networks, or communities, which are 'less abstract than social classes' (Milroy 1980: 14).

[Χόρος?] διάλεκτον ἔχοντα μέσην πόλεως
 οὐτ' ἀστείαν ὑποθηλυτέραν
 οὐτ' ἀνελεύθερον ὑπαγροικότεραν.

[the grammarians say that] . . . the idiom of those who live in rural areas is different from that of city dwellers. Concerning which Aristophanes the comic poet says: '[his] language is the normal dialect of the city—not the fancy high-society accent, nor uneducated, rustic talk'.

The question to be considered for my purposes is whether there is evidence for a prestige variety within Attica, or simply for the recognition that different social groups speak in different ways. We are used to the notion that there was no standard language in ancient Greece; whether this was true for the individual city-states is a separate question, and is likely, in my view, to have a different answer in each case, for it seems clear that sociolinguistic culture was no more uniform across the Greek world than the language itself. My answer to this question is that we have some evidence that certain idioms within Attica were disparaged, and for the corollary that others were approved. It is true that some of the evidence comprises what we might consider stylistic features: but some of it also clearly pertains to phonology—for example, we have attacks on popular demagogues for alleged inability to articulate Attic correctly:

(2) Plato, *Hyperbolus* (PCG 183)

Πλάτων μέντοι ἐν Ὑπερβόλῳ διέπαιξε τὴν ἀνευ τοῦ γ χρήσιν ὡς βάρβαρον, λέγων οὕτως:

ὁ δ' οὐ γὰρ ἠττίκιζεν, ὦ Μοῖραι φίλαι,
 ἀλλ' ὅποτε μὲν χρεῖη "δητιώμην" λέγειν,
 ἔφασκε "δητιώμην", ὅποτε δ' εἰπέιν δέοι
 "ὀλίγον", <"ὀλίον"> ἔλεγεν . . .

Plato, however, in his *Hyperbolus* mocked the dropping of *g* as barbarous, as follows: 'He didn't speak Attic, ye gods, but whenever he had to say *diētōmēn* he said *djētōmēn*, and when he had to say *oligos* he came out with *olios* . . .'

Evidence for disfavoured morphological forms is less direct: but the fact of an Athenian 'chancellery' language which retained forms such as *a*-stem dative plurals in *-ασι/-ησι* until the late fifth century² at least indicates what we would have expected, that morphological difference played a role in linguistic variation within Attica.

What is interesting is that some of the evidence connects the disparaged

² See Dover (1981: §2).

features of Attic with a foreign idiom: either with the vague charge of barbarism, or with other dialects of Greek. For example, perceived Ionic characteristics in the speech of what would be called the 'chattering classes' in the Murdoch press are the object of comic attention.³ The evidence that I wish to present here concerns the relationship between Attic and the ideological converse of Ionic, namely Boeotian.

2 Ostracism

We have already noted one of the ways in which epigraphic language is governed by rules which do not necessarily apply to the *Umgangssprache*, and this is the great paradox in looking for colloquial speech varieties in a corpus language. In the case of Attic we can examine graffiti, curse tablets, and a variety of private inscriptions. A potentially valuable source of information is provided by ostraca, since there is a high likelihood that ostrakon votes were in many cases cast by people who did not in general practise the epigraphic habit, and it is precisely by virtue of being semi-lettered that such writers may provide evidence for social dialect. In fact, evidence that many ostrakon-wielding citizens were wholly unlettered is provided both by anecdote⁴ and by the discovery of a cache of nearly 200 pre-inscribed ostraca bearing the name of Themistocles on the north slope of the Acropolis.⁵ Ostracism was introduced by the radical democracy, either under Cleisthenes in 508 (according to the *Ath. Pol.*, 22. 1) or shortly before the first ostracism in 487. The decision whether to hold an *ostrakophoria* was made each year by a full meeting of the popular assembly: the vote itself was held perhaps around ten weeks later. If sufficient votes were cast for an individual, he was banished for ten years.⁶ Ostraca do therefore in some sense represent the *vox pop*; the problem is that 'texts' are generally restricted to the designation of a single individual (that is to say, name

³ See Cassio (1981) and Brixhe (1988) for the similarities between 'barbarized' and low-class Attic.

⁴ Plut. *Aristides* 7: 'Each voter took an ostrakon, wrote on it the name of that citizen whom he wished to remove from the city, and brought it to a place in the agora which was all fenced about with railings . . . Now at the time of which I was speaking, as the voters were inscribing their ostraca, it is said that an unlettered and utterly boorish fellow handed his ostrakon to Aristides, whom he took to be one of the ordinary crowd, and asked him to write *Aristides* on it. He, astonished, asked the man what possible wrong Aristides had done him. "None whatever," was the answer, "I don't even know the fellow, but I am tired of hearing him everywhere called *The Just*!"' (trans. B. Perrin, Loeb Classical Library, 1901).

⁵ Broneer (1938); Lang (1990: 161).

⁶ Details are disputed. Sources (in translation) with bibliography in Dillon and Garland (1994: 130-7); general discussion in Thomsen (1972).

with patronym and/or deme). There are, however, some exceptions to this, particularly in some recently published ostraca from the so-called great Kerameikos deposit.

By the mid-1960s a total of around 1,650 ostraca had been found; in 1968 a further 8,500 were discovered in the Kerameikos excavations conducted by the German Archaeological Institute. A selection of very interesting texts from the collection was recently published by Stefan Brenne, who is preparing the find for publication.⁷ Many of the texts which he publishes, in addition to the obligatory name, contain abuse directed against the individual, his family, or his social class (in this case, the higher social echelons from which the political élite was drawn in the first part of the fifth century). As Brenne has pointed out, there are interesting similarities between the abusive language of the ostraca and the abuse of political figures in Old Comedy.⁸

However, the text which is of central interest in the present paper is quoted merely for its interest as a spoilt ballot:

- (3) Brenne (1994: 21) = *SEG* xlvi. 93; Brenne (2002: 97) no. T 1/79.

τὸν Λιμὸν ὄστρακίδῶ (Fig. 7.1)

This text was known about as early as 1972, when Thomsen published a list of names which appear on ostraca in his *Origin of Ostracism*. He refers to four unpublished texts which designate *Limos* as a candidate for ostracism, remarking that on three ostraca *Limos* has no patronymic or demotic; on a fourth (now published) *Limos Eupatrides* is read:

- (4) *MDAI* [A] 106 (1991), 153; Thomsen (1972: 104); Brenne (2002: 97) no. T 1/75

Λιμὸς Εὐπατρίδῆς

Thomsen suggested that this is not in fact a name, but the noun for 'hunger'. He was not able to publish the verbal form which accompanies the noun, and which is of central interest to linguists. The now-published ostrakon is rather poignant, standing as a comment on the dynastic feuding of the élite Athenian families which had in fact been the driving force in the introduction of ostracism to Attica. The comment comes from a different socio-economic perspective and articulates the perennial complaint that feuding among the political élite does not address the material problems of the demos. The context (other tablets from the deposit which have been

⁷ Brenne (1994); Willemsen (1965) and (1968). See now Brenne (2002: 97–100).

⁸ Brenne (1994: 13–14); see also Brenne (1992).



FIG. 7.1. Ostrakon from the Kerameikos. Photograph courtesy of the German Archaeological Institute, negative no. Kerameikos 26116

published) and the letter forms point to a date in the early fifth century (Brenne 2002: 97 suggests 471 BC).

The question that needs to be addressed is the linguistic and sociolinguistic interpretation of the writing *δοτρακίδδ*. The editors of *SEG* (xvi. 93) comment on the 'new verb': what we are dealing with is surely a mere phonological variant of the familiar *δοτρακίζω* (i.e. *δοτρακιδ(δ)δ*). The interchange of *δ* and *ζ* in Attic inscriptions is extremely rare (I shall come back to the instances), so this is not an obvious spelling mistake. There is, of course, a neighbouring dialect that has *δ* or double *δδ* corresponding to Attic *ζ*, namely Boeotian. There is really no possibility that the ostracon could have been written by a Boeotian, since voting was restricted to citizens and policed by tribes; also, the D-shaped rho in the inscription seems to be characteristic of Attic rather than Boeotian script (although Jeffery 1990: 67 dates this letter-form to 550–525, Immerwahr 1990: 155–6 brings the date down and quotes an example from 490). The notion that a Boeotian metic sat near the voting area and wrote out ostraca seems implausible. I believe that we now have enough evidence to posit the existence of a variety of Attic, marked by a geminate apical stop (single in initial position) where Attic has the cluster [sd] = *ζ*. This variety was not the language of Attic epigraphy, but it was a variety which coexisted with it, and we can label

it a social dialect. By this we mean that it was spoken by a section of the population but was not used in epigraphy; it may have had a regional or social implication in Attica.

3 The Odd Couple: Attic and Boeotian

If this hypothesis is correct, let us consider why we have so little evidence for this Boeotian-looking variant in Attic. We mentioned earlier the question of prestige dialect in ancient Greece: we can now ask ourselves whether there is any evidence that the Athenians (say, in the post-Persian War period) felt good about the way they spoke. Did they feel proud of Attic? We have enough evidence from various literary sources to suggest that they did. It does not follow from this that they felt disparaging about all other dialects: but there is a little evidence that their attitude towards Boeotian was bound up with more general feelings of hostility and scorn towards Boeotia. In the following fragment of Strattis, for example, the Boeotian idiom is an object of critical attention:

(5) Strattis, *Phoenician Women* (PCG 49)

ξυνίετ' οὐδέν, πᾶσα Θηβαίων πόλις,
οὐδέν ποτ' ἄλλ'. οἱ πρῶτα μὲν τὴν σηπίαν
ὀπιτθοτίλαν, ὡς λέγουσ', ὀνομάζετε . . .

You understand nothing, all you people of Thebes, nothing whatsoever. First of all, they say that you call a cuttlefish *opitthotila* ['back-fouler'] . . .

This was partly owing, no doubt, to sheer contiguity (compare relations with Megara); was compounded by Boeotian behaviour during the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars (Thebes especially was detested by Athens); and seems also to have been aggravated by general cultural differences which resulted in an Athenian stereotype of Boeotians as gluttonous, stupid, and boorish. The Boeotian pig, in fact.⁹

Unhappily for the Athenians, their own dialect was marked with at least one striking isogloss with Boeotian which separated them off from the other dialects of mainland and Asian Greece, namely the double ττ in place of σσ. It does not seem to me to be a coincidence that this is the feature of standard Attic which the Athenians were most embarrassed about. One could ascribe this shyness to the feeling that the feature was an Attic provincialism: but terms such as 'provincial' reflect an element in modern thinking about dialect rather than an important part of Athenian attitudes on the subject.

⁹ Pind. *Ol.* 6. 90; Plut. *De esu carniū* 1. 6.

The variant was suppressed because it was a 'provincialism' that Attic shared with Boeotian.¹⁰

This common development of palatalized voiceless geminates has long been recognized, and since the 1950s a partial phonological *Sprachbund* between Attic and Boeotia has been posited to account for it.¹¹ An invisible third member of this group is Euboea, invisible since we class Euboean with Ionic as though the strait of Euboea constituted an important physical boundary between Eretria and the mainland. Bartoněk was moved to propose a change in the traditional terminology, replacing 'Attic-Ionic' with the tripartite 'Attic-Euboean-Ionic', and I think that Eretria and facing Oropus are a useful symbol of the general picture of areal development that is necessary for my argument.¹² There is another dialect which has a parallel development of palatalized geminates to *tt* and *dd*, that of central Crete. This is not, of course, relevant to our ostrakon, but there is a theoretical connection if we accept the idea that this development was particularly characteristic of West Greek (slightly paradoxical in the case of *ττ*, which is thought of as the marker of Attic *par excellence*), and that West Greek influence can be seen in the development of the Boeotian and Attic consonant systems.

My suggestion is, then, that the double *dd* reflex which is associated with Boeotian was heard within the borders of Attica: to put it another way, there was a variety of Attic which contained this feature, a variety which we might call a social dialect. Recalling the division of Attic territory into three broad areas (the City, the Coast, and the Inland), we could speculate that this variety was associated with the Inland or the Coastal regions, while the other basilect for which we have evidence, the proto-Koine which the Old Oligarch complains of, was an *Umgangssprache* of the City and the Piraeus (that is, we need not assume a simple sliding scale of social dialect in Attica from 'top' to 'bottom').¹³ There is other evidence that this feature was heard more widely in Central Greece. Double *dd* is found in Thessalian, at least in the south-western area, the Thessaliothis (ξξανακαδῆν IG ix/2. 257. 8–9, Sotairos inscription). There are also spellings with <ξδ> and <ζ> from other areas of Thessaly, which indicates that there may have been some variation: at any rate, Blümel is perhaps incautious in assuming that the *dd*

¹⁰ The *pp* in ἄρρην etc. is another feature of Attic widely regarded as diagnostic of the dialect, but in fact the distribution of this assimilation is so messy across the Greek world that it can hardly have been as marked a feature as *ττ* (cf. Buck 1955: §80).

¹¹ Allen (1958: 176), followed by Diver (1958) and others.

¹² Bartoněk (1972: 9). For the fluid dialect of Oropus see Morpurgo Davies (1993).

¹³ Old Oligarch: ps.-Xen. *Ath. Pol.* 2. 7–8 (c.425 BC?).

is the standard or 'original' reflex.¹⁴ The evidence for Corinthian, quoted by Bartoněk and Schwyzer, is an isolated form $\Delta\{\beta\}\epsilon\upsilon\varsigma$ on a vase dated to c.570, and is dismissed by Méndez Dosuna, perhaps rightly. However, Wachter has published a new reading $\Delta\epsilon\upsilon\varsigma$ on a Corinthian pinax, which makes the case for Corinthian a little stronger.¹⁵ Megarian *d*-forms are not epigraphic, but attested in the manuscripts of Aristophanes' *Acharnians* and open to the suspicion that they are false dialect forms. It seems to me unlikely that Aristophanes would have made such an egregious error in the case of Megarian, a dialect Athenians must have been perfectly familiar with (Colvin 1999: 164–5). If it is the case that Megarian (like Attic, on this view) had both variants, we could imagine that the playwright used the form that was most marked from the perspective of standard Attic, and if in addition this feature was stigmatized by association with Boeotian, then so much the better. Table 7.1 illustrates the position of Attic between conflicting influences:

TABLE 7.1. Palatalized Apicals and Dorsals

Boeotia		
*t't' (with *ts) and *k'k' fall together (probably as *t't'): merge with tt		▲
Attica, Eretria		▲
(+ boundary) *t't' and *k'k' fall together: merge with tt	[ἐρέττω type]	▲
(– boundary) *t't' (with *ts) > s	[μέσος type]	▼
Cyclades, Ionia		▼
(– boundary) *t't' (with *ts) > s	[μέσος type]	▼
(+ boundary) *t't' and *k'k' > ss	[ἐρέσσω type]	
Boeotia		
*d'd' and *g'g' fall together and merge with dd		
Attica, Eretria Thessaly? Megara? Corinth?		
[*d'd' and *g'g' fall together: merge with dd]		▲
*d'd' and *g'g' fall together as *d'd' > zd		▼
Cyclades, Ionia		
*d'd' and *g'g' fall together as *d'd' > zd		
*d'd' and *g'g' fall together as *d'd' > dz > zz (?) ^a		

^a For which see Nagy (1970: 127). The details of depalatalization in Greek are complex and disputed: the outline here broadly follows Diver (1958).

¹⁴ Blümel (1982: 120): *contra* García Ramón (1987: 142).

¹⁵ Bartoněk (1972: 151) and Schwyzer (1939: 576) on $\Delta\{\beta\}\epsilon\upsilon\varsigma$ (Beazley, *ABV* 96, no. 14), *contra* Méndez Dosuna (1993: 90); see now Wachter (2001: 149, # COP 78a).

I have tried to explain on general grounds why we need not expect that each of our conventionally delineated Greek dialects would have only one reflex of a depalatalized geminate, and why it might not be surprising if a geminate stop were heard in Attica in place of the familiar cluster [zd]. Now we can consider what evidence there might be besides the new ostrakon. We noted above that the interchange of δ and ζ in Attic inscriptions is rare: those instances that exist come, perhaps unsurprisingly, from Lang's *Athenian Agora* publication of graffiti and dipinti. The first example is a graffito on a black skyphos:

(6) Lang (1976: 15): no. C 33, mid-fourth century BC

- (a) Θειοδοσία λαικάδδε[ι] εὔ
(b) λ(αικάστρια)

The obscene verb λαικάζειν and its cognates are frequent in comedy: in this case one could hardly ask for a better match between linguistic register and subject matter (the delta is broken, but still clearly a delta). The second example (inventory scratched on a saucer) is less exciting, but could still be regarded as an appropriately mundane object (the sort of word one *might* get in comedy):

(7) Lang (1976: 10): no. B 13, fourth century BC

ἐπιτραπέδι[α] 'tableware'

These two examples hardly prove the argument, although it should be remembered that statistically ζ is a rare letter. There may be a further pointer to a non-standard pronunciation in a curious snippet of Old Comedy preserved by an ancient commentator, in which ὦ Bδεῦ is quoted for ὦ Ζεῦ.¹⁶ Here the playwright has substituted the phonaesthetically offensive cluster <βδ> for the initial <ζ> of Zeus: added point comes from the echo of the verb βδέω 'break wind'; and if the comment does relate to *Lysistrata* 940 (as commonly assumed), then this meaning will fit well with Kinesias' irritation at his wife's messing around with perfume when he has more urgent concerns. Allen (1987: 56) sees this as support for an Attic pronunciation of ζ as [zd] rather than [dz], if any were needed: but the joke works better, in my view, if the underlying form that resonates is Δεῦ (in this case Kinesias starts off with rude protest at the perfume and changes it half-way through to a standard expletive, one however associated with substandard register).

¹⁶ PCG viii. 83 (Anon. *De com., proleg. de com. vi*) ὁ γέλως τῆς κωμῳδίας ἐκ τε λέξεων καὶ πραγμάτων ἔχει τὴν σύστασιν, ἐκ μὲν τῆς λέξεως κατὰ τρόπον ἑπτὰ . . . ἔκτον κατ' ἐξαλλαγὴν, ὡς τὸ ὦ Bδεῦ δέσποτα, ἀντὶ τοῦ ὦ Ζεῦ.

There is, finally, a passage from Plato's *Cratylus* which might appear to lend support to the theory of a competing *d*-variant in the fifth century:¹⁷

(8) Plato, *Cratylus* 418 B–D

(Σωκ.) οἶσθα ὅτι οἱ παλαιοὶ οἱ ἡμέτεροι τῷ ἰῶτα καὶ τῷ δέλτα εὖ μάλα ἐχρῶντο, καὶ οὐχ ἥκιστα αἱ γυναῖκες, αἵπερ μάλιστα τὴν ἀρχαίαν φωνὴν σώζουσι. νῦν δὲ ἀντὶ μὲν τοῦ ἰῶτα ἢ εἰ ἢ ἦτα μεταστρέφουσιν, ἀντὶ δὲ τοῦ δέλτα ζῆτα, ὡς δὴ μεγαλοπρεπέστερα ὄντα . . .

(Σωκ.) καὶ τό γε ζυγόν οἶσθα ὅτι δυογόν οἱ παλαιοὶ ἐκάλουν.

(Κρα.) Πάνυ γε.

(Σωκ.) . . . νῦν δὲ ζυγόν.

You know that our ancestors loved the sounds iota and delta, not least the women, who are most liable to preserve old forms of speech. But now people change iota to eta or epsilon, and delta to zeta, thinking that they sound grander . . . And you know that the ancients pronounced ζυγόν as δυογόν . . . now, however, we say ζυγόν.

The evidence from the *Cratylus* is, however, dubious: for one thing, all remarks in this dialogue need to be treated with a great deal of caution; and secondly, it might be that the 'old' pronunciation that Plato refers to is in fact the orthodox Attic [zd] as opposed to the voiced fricative [z] which spread quite rapidly in the fourth century.

4 Summary and Conclusion

The new ostrakon is the best piece of evidence that has come to light for a situation which is not a priori unlikely, namely the existence of a variety of Attic which shared a *d*-reflex with Boeotian as the result of an earlier depalatalization. The ostrakon was a protest vote by a citizen who was not *eupatrid*, and whose linguistic repertoire reflected this. We have some reason to think that this feature, if it existed in Attic, will have been stigmatized. Firstly, it is characteristic of Boeotian, a dialect which the Athenians wished to dissociate themselves from, in spite of some inescapable isoglosses.¹⁸ We can speculate that this may be a reason why the chancellery language took such a long time to let go of the disyllabic dative plural that we mentioned above. This phenomenon has many parallels in

¹⁷ Teodorsson (1979: 329), arguing against ζ = [zd] in Attic.

¹⁸ In the ostrakon the second letter of *δοστρακίδω* seems to have been corrected from <T>. This is interesting in view of the fact that ττ for στ is found in literary (not epigraphic) sources for Boeotian: cf. *δοπιτθοσίλα* (*δοπισθο-*) in passage (5) from Strattis (Lejeune 1972: §110). It suggests that the Athenians heard something which the Boeotians chose not to systematize in the writing system. For the possible implications of the reverse 3-bar sigma see Lang (1982: 81–2).

modern sociolinguistic research: in a language-attitude study in Indiana, for example, Preston (1988) found that respondents tried to dissociate themselves from Kentucky, where the language variety is almost identical, but which is considered 'Southern'. Secondly, the Athenians had a certain pride in their dialect, and this seems to have been extended to their *zeta* if we can trust the report of Dionysius of Halicarnassus (first century BC), who describes it as a sweet sound, and the noblest of the double consonants:

(9) D.H. *De compositione verborum* 14

διπλά δὲ λέγουσιν αὐτὰ [sc. τό τε ζ καὶ τὸ ξ καὶ τὸ ψ] ἥτοι διὰ τὸ σύνθετα εἶναι τὸ μὲν ζ διὰ τοῦ σ καὶ δ . . . ἢ διὰ τὸ χώραν ἐπέχειν δυεῖν γραμμάτων ἐν ταῖς συλλαβαῖς παραλαμβανόμενον ἕκαστον. . . . τριῶν δὲ τῶν ἄλλων γραμμάτων ἃ δὴ διπλά καλεῖται τὸ ζ μᾶλλον ἡδύνει τὴν ἀκοήν τῶν ἑτέρων. τὸ μὲν γὰρ ξ διὰ τοῦ κ καὶ τὸ ψ διὰ τοῦ π τὸν συριγμὸν ἀποδίδωσι ψιλῶν ὄντων ἀμφοτέρων, τοῦτο δ' ἡσύχῃ τῷ πνεύματι δασύνεται καὶ ἔστι τῶν ὁμογενῶν γενναϊότατον.

They [sc. ζ, ξ, ψ] are called *double* either because they are composite (the ζ being composed of σ and δ) . . . or because they are equivalent to two letters in the syllables in which they are found. . . . Of the three other letters which are called double the ζ pleases the ear more than the rest. For the ξ and the ψ give off a whistling sound (because they contain κ and π respectively, and are voiceless), whereas ζ has a pleasant voiced quality and is the noblest of this series.

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