# Towards the 'reconstruction' of an Asia Minor Greek Koiné during Medieval times

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## 1    The Asia Minor (Modern) Greek dialects
## 1.1    Sociohistorical background

- A number of Modern Greek dialects spoken in Asia Minor until 1924.
- Pontic and Cappadocian are the two main 'dialect clusters' (Janse 2002).
- A number of lesser spoken dialects also spoken in the area (Anastasiadis 1995; Triantafyllidis 1938)

**Map 1.** *Asia Minor and the Greek-speaking areas (reproduced from Dawkins 1916).*
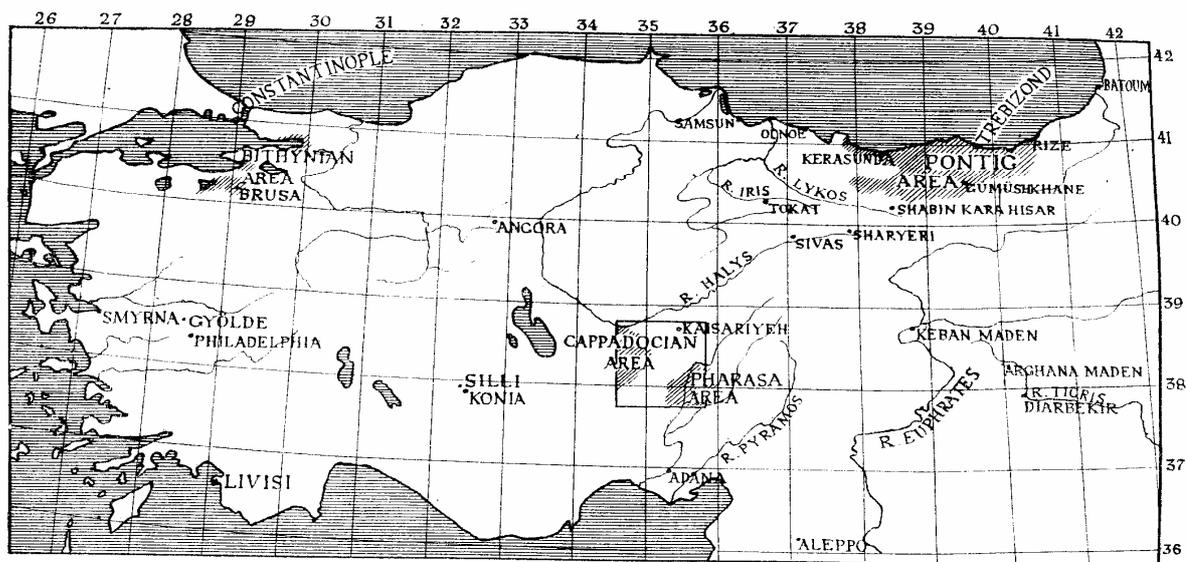


- Political separation of their speaker communities from the Byzantine Empire as early as the 11th century due to Seljuk invasions.
- i.   Linguistic separation from the Greek-speaking contingent,
  ii.  Dehellenisation of much of Asia Minor (Vryonis 1971),
  iii. Disintegration and fall of the late Byzantine Empire in 1453 (but also of the Empire of Trebizond in 1461)
- The Asia Minor dialects developed
  (a) in linguistic isolation, and
  (b) in contact with Turkish and other languages for many centuries.
- The degree of political and linguistic isolation and that of language contact differ across the various dialects.

## 1.2    Linguistic background

- Cappadocian, Pontic and the dialect of Phárasa are the dialects that show the highest number of systematic similarities (Anastasiadis 1995):
    - (a)  sporadic pronunciation of historical *hêta* {*η*} [ɛ:] as [ɛ] and not as [i];
    - (b)  deletion of unstressed high vowels, especially in post-tonic and word-final position;
    - (c)  emergence of a novel noun classification distinction based on various versions of the feature of [ANIMACY].
- Pontic and the dialect of Phárasa share a number of grammatical features of a more 'genetic' nature:
    - (a)  lack of synizesis;
    - (b)  monophthongisation of unstressed [ia] to [æ] or [e],
    - (c)  survival of reflexes of the ancient negative particle *(ou)kí* instead of *ðen.*
- Cappadocian and the dialect of Phárasa present with a number of common grammatical features that point towards areal convergence:
    - (a)  grammaticalization of neuter plurals for imparisyllabic masculine nouns denoting inanimate or non-human entities;
    - (b)  more extensive use of the nominative instead of the accusative case for indefinite direct objects.

## 1.3    An emergent Asia Minor Greek Koiné

- "The resemblances [i.e., between Cappadocian, the dialect of Phárasa and Pontic] are so striking that there is no doubt that they must be regarded as having at one time formed a continuous linguistic area" (Dawkins 1916: 205; see also Dawkins 1910, 1937, 1940).
- "The remote varieties of Pontus and Cappadocia had already started to develop idiosyncratically when the ties with Byzantium were weakened by the Seljuk invasions of the 11th century" (Horrocks 2010: 382).
- "[The Seljuk invasions do not] provide sufficient time for the development of the distinguishing characteristics of the Asia Minor dialects (. . .) it seems probable that the Arab invasions of the seventh and eighth centuries, together with the local peculiarities of Koine Greek in Asia Minor, provided the conditions in which the speech of these areas began to be significantly differentiated from common spoken Koine" (Browning 1983: 130).
- "It seems to me legitimate to deduce from agreement between Pontic, Cappadocian, and Cyprian characteristics of an ancient 'Eastern' κοινή. (...) To the establishment of an Eastern κοινή I attach particular importance for our views of Hellenistic Greek" (1914: 199-200; see also Bubenik 1989; Horrocks 2010: 113-114).
- Material illustrating the spoken language of the area before the 19th century is extremely scanty and very problematic (chronology, authorship, place of production, transmission of manuscript(s) etc).
- The lack of historical records is counterbalanced by the diversity found among the Modern Greek dialects of Asia Minor which very often illustrate different stages as far as many crucial diachronic developments are concerned.

## 1.4    Today's talk

- ✓  An attempt to 'reconstruct' the common ancestor of the Asia Minor dialects on the basis of the available dialectal material.
- ✓  A case of morphological change in the Asia Minor Greek dialects: the extension of the genitive singular and plural endings of *i*-neuters such as *spítin* 'house' or *peðín* 'child' to nouns belonging to other inflectional paradigms.

✓ Factors operative in the language change process:
  i. phonological: stress;
  ii. morphological: gender;
  iii. semantic: animacy.
✓ Implications of the change for the organisation of nouns into inflectional paradigms in Asia Minor Greek.
✓ Conclusion: nominals in the Asia Minor dialects exhibit strong neutralisation tendencies.
✓ Proposal: The neutralisation tendencies go back to the common ancestor of the Modern Greek dialects, an Asia Minor Greek Koiné spoken during Medieval times.

## 2 Inflectional neuterisation in the Asia Minor Greek dialects
### 2.1 The neuter i-paradigm in Asia Minor Greek

*Table 1.* *The neuter i-paradigm in Asia Minor Greek.*

|  | stressed -*i* | unstressed -*i* |
|---|---|---|
|  | 'child' | 'house' |
| SINGULAR |  |  |
| NOM/ACC | *peðí(n)* | *spít(in)* |
| GEN | *peðí(u) > peðjú* | *spití(u) > spitjú* |
| PLURAL |  |  |
| NOM/ACC | *peðía > peðjá* | *spítia > spítja* |
| GEN | *peðíon > peðjón* | *spitíon > spitjón* |

Note: Elements in brackets are subject to interdialectal variation.

- As a neuter paradigm, it is comprised of nouns denoting **non-human** or **inanimate** entities.
- It contains a large number of **loanwords** from Turkish, Russian and other languages.
- It is the **most productive** of all nominal inflectional paradigms (Anastassiadis-Symeonidis & Chila-Markopoulou 2003; Christofidou 2003; Ralli 2009). According to Wurzel's (1989: 149) criteria of productivity, this is the paradigm that has the ability to:

  i. acquire new words (borrowings and neologisms)

  (1)  Turkish *kapak* 'cover'        >    Pontic        *kapák(in)*
       Turkish *kütük* 'log'          >    Cappadocian   *kütük(i)*
       Armenian *t'arax* 'pus'        >    Pharasiot     *taráxi*

  ii. attract nouns from other inflectional classes

  (2)  *θíra* 'door.F'               >    Pharasiot     *θíri*
       *fósa* 'pit.F'               >    Cappadocian   *fosí*
       *táfros* 'dike.F'            >    Pontic        *tafrín*
       *potamós* 'river.M'          >    Cappadocian   *potám(i)*

  iii. resist losing words to other inflectional classes.

## 2.2 The extension of the inflectional endings of i-neuters in Asia Minor Greek and beyond

- The *i*-paradigm is **extremely productive** in the Asia Minor dialects.
- It exerts a **strong influence** on the other neuter and non-neuter paradigms of the Asia Minor dialects.
- One manifestation is the extension of its **reanalysed** inflectional endings to the other neuter paradigms but also to masculine and feminine paradigms.

(3) Morphological reanalysis of the genitive singular and plural endings of the neuter *i*-paradigm

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| SINGULAR | NOM/ACC | *peðín* 'child' | | |
| | GEN | *peðí-u* | > | *peð-íu* |
| PLURAL | GEN | *peðí-on* | > | *peð-íon* |

### 2.2.1 *The evidence*

- In Pontic (Drettas 1997; Oikonomidis 1958; Papadopoulos 1955), the overwhelming majority of nouns form their genitive plural with the inflectional ending *-íon* (cf. (3)), which has spread across all the nouns in the dialect:

(4)    Pontic, genitive plural

a.    masculine
| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *petinós* 'cockerel' | - | *petin-**íon*** | expected | *petinón* |
| *ðéskalos* 'teacher' | - | *ðeskal-**íon*** | exp. | *ðeskálon* |

b.    feminine
| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *jinéka* 'woman' | - | *jinek-**íon*** | exp. | *jinekón* |
| *mána* 'mother' | - | *manað-**íon*** | exp. | *manáðon* |

c.    neuter
| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *élaton* 'fir' | - | *elat-**íon*** | exp. | *eláton* |
| *nerón* 'water' | - | *ner-**íon*** | exp. | *nerón* |

- On the analogy of the genitive plural ending, the reanalysed genitive singular ending of the *i*-paradigm starts spreading to non *i*-nouns. This change, though, appears to be **conditioned**, as the ending is found in all neuter nouns except oxytone *o*-neuters, and in inanimate, primarily non-oxytone, *os*-masculine nouns:

(5)    Pontic, genitive singular
a.    neuter
| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *próvaton* 'sheep' | - | *provat-**í(u)*** | expected | *provátu* |
| *ksílon* 'wood' | - | *ksil-**í(u)*** | exp. | *ksílu* |

but

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *nerón* 'water' | - | *nerú* |
| *fitón* 'plant' | - | *fitú* |

b.    masculine
pólemos 'war'          -      polem-í(u)    exp.      polému
kósmos 'world'         -      kosm-í(u)     exp.      kósmu

but

petinós 'cockerel'     -      petinú
alepós 'fox'           -      alepú

- The spread of the genitive plural ending *-íon* (and of its reflexes *-jón*, *-íun* and *-jún*) and of the genitive singular ending *-íu* (and of its reflex *-jú*) are found in **all the Asia Minor Greek dialects** and also in a number of dialects spoken on some Aegean islands just off the coast of Asia Minor:

*Table 2. The extension of the genitive endings of the neuter* i-*paradigm to non* i-*nouns in Asia Minor Greek.*

|  | Nominative Singular | Genitive Singular | Genitive Plural |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Phárasa** | (Data from Dawkins 1916, Andriotis 1948) | | |
|  | *nomátis* 'lad.M' | *nomat-**jú** > nomatú* | *nomat-**íun*** |
|  | *néka* 'woman.F' | | *netʃ-**íun*** |
|  | *ɣónato* 'knee.N' | *ɣonat-**jú** > ɣonatú* | |
| **Sílli** | (Data from Dawkins 1916, Costakis 1968) | | |
|  | *ártopos* 'man.M' | *artop-**jú*** | *artop-**jó(n)*** |
|  | *papás* 'priest.M' | *papar-**jú*** | *papar-**jó(n)*** |
|  | *kásturu* 'castle.N' | *kastur-**jú*** | |
| **Cappadocian** | (Data from Costakis 1964, Dawkins 1916, Kesisoglou 1951, Mavrochalyvidis & Kesisoglou 1960, Phosteris & Kesigoglou 1960) | | |
|  | *árapus* 'man.m' | *arap-**jú*** | |
|  | *ðjávulus* 'devil.M' | *ðjavul-**jú*** | |
|  | *próvato* 'lamb.N' | *provat-**jú*** | |
| **Lésvos/Kydoníes** | (Data from Anagnostou 1903, Kretschmer 1905, Melissaropoulou 2007, Saccaris 1940) | | |
|  | *áθrupus* 'man.M' | *aθrup-**jú*** | *aθrup-**jún*** |
|  | *ánimus* 'wind.m' | *anim-**jú*** | |
|  | *átzilus* 'angel.M' | | *atzil-**jún*** |
|  | *síðiru* 'iron.N' | *siðir-**jú*** | |
|  | *kókalu* 'bone.N' | *kokal-**jú*** | |
| **Sámos** | (Data from Zaphiriou 1914, Zaphiriou 1995) | | |
|  | *ádiru* 'intestine.N' | *adir-**jú*** | *adir-**jún**-is* |

- The extension of the genitive endings from the neuter *i*-paradigm to other paradigms has progressed in varying degrees in the various dialects. Overall, the extension of the genitive plural ending appears more widespread than that of the genitive singular ending.

### 2.2.2  *Stress placement uncertainty as a trigger of morphological change*

- The extension of the genitive endings, especially of the genitive plural ending *-íon*, has progressed considerably in Pontic, which is the most well-documented source of data. The material coming from the other Asia Minor Greek dialects, in cross-examination with the Pontic data, is more indicative of what might have conditioned the extension of the genitive endings of the neuter *i*-paradigm.

- Recall that, in Pontic, the genitive singular ending *-í(u)* is found in all neuter nouns except oxytone *o*-neuters and in inanimate, primarily non-oxytone, *os*-masculine nouns:

(6)     Pontic, genitive singular
      a.     neuter
            *élaton* 'fir'            -        *elatí(u)*
            but
            *nerón* 'water'          -        *nerú*

      b.     masculine
            *pólemos* 'war'          -        *polemic(u)*
            but
            *petinós* 'cockerel'     -        *petinú*

- The data from the other dialects included in Table 1, while not as systematic as the Pontic data, appear to confirm this stress related generalisation.

- The nouns in which the genitive singular (in Pontic) and the genitive plural ending (in the other dialects) are found are the ones that are characterised by an **uncertainty as to stress placement** in the respective cells of the nominal paradigm (Clairis & Babiniotis 2001; Holton, Mackridge & Philippaki-Warburton 1997):

(7)     Modern Greek
      a.     genitive singular
            *élato* 'fir.N'          -        *élatu*        or        *elátu*        ?
            *pólemos* 'war.M'        -        *pólemu*                *polému*        ?

      b.     genitive plural
            *ðáxtilo* 'finger.N'      -        *ðáxtilon*     or        *ðaxtílon*     ?
            *ðáskalos* 'teacher.M'   -        *ðáskalon*              *ðaskálon*     ?
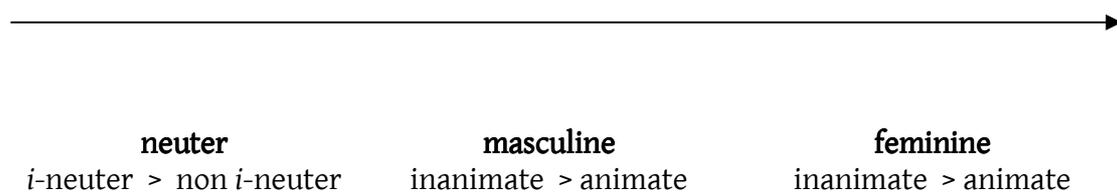
- This uncertainty is caused by the **clash** between the inherited, Classical Greek rule of stress movement and the later tendency of Greek for columnar stress (Hatzidakis 1905; Holton & Manolessou 2010; Thumb 1912; Triantafyllidis 1963).

- The extension of the genitive endings of the neuter *i*-paradigm served as a **repair strategy** in order to solve the stress uncertainty in the most affected inflectional paradigms as it provided with both a very productive inflectional paradigm and one in which stress placement is very stable.

(8)     Asia Minor Greek
      SINGULAR     NOM     *élato* 'fir'
                  GEN     *élatu*   or     *elátu* ?        ☞        *elatíu*
      PLURAL       GEN     *élaton*  or     *eláton* ?       ☞        *elatíon*

### 2.2.3 *Gender and animacy conditioning the spread of the innovative genitive forms*

- Grammatical gender and animacy appear to condition the spread of the innovative genitive forms to more nouns.

- In Pontic, the genitive singular ending *-íu* spreads first to neuter paradigms other than the *i*-paradigm (*o-*, *os-*, *as-* and *ma*-paradigms) and then extends to inanimate masculine nouns and animate/human nouns with problematic stress in the genitive singular. Feminine nouns appear to be the least affected by the spread of the genitive singular ending.

- Despite the fact that the spread of the genitive plural ending *-íon* is nearly complete in Pontic and therefore does not offer any insights on whether this spread progressed along similar lines, the data from the other dialects seem to point towards a similar scenario holding for the spread of both genitive endings.

- The genitive endings of the neuter *i*-paradigm spread to nouns that are either **morphologically neuter** or **semantically [−ANIMATE]**.

*Figure 1.* *The spread of the genitive endings from the neuter* i-*paradigm to other nouns in Asia Minor Greek.*

| **neuter** | **masculine** | **feminine** |
|---|---|---|
| *i*-neuter > non *i*-neuter | inanimate > animate | inanimate > animate |

## 2.3   Implications for the organisation of nouns into inflectional paradigms

- As the genitive endings start spreading from the neuter *i*-paradigm to other neuter nouns and later to non-neuter nouns in Asia Minor Greek, membership into specific inflectional paradigms becomes unclear in the affected cells of the nouns' paradigms.

(9)      Asia Minor Greek

|  |  | Inherited masculine paradigm | | Novel masculine paradigm | | Neuter paradigm |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  | 'war' |  | 'house' |
| SINGULAR | NOM | *pólemos* |  | *pólemos* |  | *spítin* |
|  | GEN | *polému* | > | ***polemíu*** | : | ***spitíu*** |
| PLURAL | GEN | *polémon* | > | ***polemíon*** | : | ***spitíon*** |

## 2.4   Other neutralisations

- In Cappadocian and the dialect of Phárasa, imparisyllabic *as*-masculine nouns denoting inanimate or non-human entities have neuter plurals in *-ia*, the reanalysed nominative/accusative plural ending of the *i*-neuters:

(10)     imparisyllabic *as*-masculine nouns
   a.      Delmesó Cappadocian
   *papás* 'priest'       –       *papáðes*       but
   *keratás* 'snail'      –       *keratáðja*

      b.     Phárasa
           *papás* 'priest'    -    *papáðes*    but
           *prakanás* 'beetle'    -    *prakanáðe* (< *prakanáð**ia***)

- In Asia Minor Greek, grammatical gender is also affected by changes in agreement (Karatsareas 2009, in progress). In Cappadocian, for example, all nouns take neuter agreement in all the domains where agreement appears in more 'mainstream' Modern Greek dialects, that is both within the noun phrase and beyond it, in predicate-argument constructions.

## 3      Summary

- The extension of the genitive endings of the neuter *i*-paradigm to nouns belonging to other inflectional paradigms is found widely and most extensively in the dialects of Asia Minor but also in the dialects of Lésvos and Sámos, which are genetically distinct from the Asia Minor dialects but suspiciously spoken in close proximity to the area.

- This suggests that the extension of the neuter genitive endings was a more widespread phenomenon in the area of Asia Minor and the North-Eastern Aegean islands at a very early point in time, given the dialect split and the genetic distance between the Asia Minor dialects, on one hand, and the Northern Greek dialects, on the other. In light of this, it is proposed that the first manifestations of the extension probably date back to the common ancestor of the Asia Minor Greek dialects, an Asia Minor Greek Koiné spoken in the area during Medieval times.

- The trigger for the extension of the genitive endings of the neuter *i*-paradigm was the uncertainty as to stress placement in the inflectional paradigms that were affected by the clash between the Classical and Modern Greek stress rules.

- The spread of the innovative genitive singular and plural forms was further conditioned by gender and animacy.

- The change discussed here is only one manifestation of a wider-scale series of neuterisation changes affecting nouns in Asia Minor Greek by rendering them more neuter-like in terms of their morphosyntax (**inflectional neuterisation**).

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