

Modern Greek dialects

A preliminary classification^{*}

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Although there are many works on individual Modern Greek dialects, there are very few overall descriptions, classifications, or cartographical representations of Greek dialects available in the literature. This paper discusses some possible reasons for these lacunae, having to do with dialect methodology, and Greek history and geography. It then moves on to employ the work of Kontossopoulos and Newton in an attempt to arrive at a more detailed classification of Greek dialects than has hitherto been attempted, using a small number of phonological criteria, and to provide a map, based on this classification, of the overall geographical configuration of Greek dialects.

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1. Introduction

Tzitzilis (2000, 2001) divides the history of the study of Greek dialects into three chronological phases. First, there was work on individual dialects with a historical linguistic orientation focussing mainly on phonological features. (We can note that some of this early work, such as that by Psicharis and Hadzidakis, was from time to time coloured by linguistic-ideological preferences related to the diglossic situation.) The second period saw the development of structural dialectology focussing not only on phonology but also on the lexicon. Thirdly, he cites the move into generative dialectology signalled by Newton's pioneering book (1972). As also pointed out by Sifianou (Forthcoming), however, Tzitzilis indicates that there has been very little research on social variation (Sella 1994 is essentially a discussion of registers and argots only), or on syntax, and no linguistic atlases at all except for the one produced for Crete by Kontossopoulos (1988).

This paper focuses on another very remarkable absence from the Greek dialectology scene which is not unconnected with the absence of a Greek dialect atlas project. An examination of the literature on the dialects of Modern Greek reveals the interesting fact that, while there are many publications on individual dialects of the three types outlined by Tzitzilis, there are very few works dealing with the dialects of Greek as a whole and, in particular, very few maps attempting to portray the major divisions and subdivisions of these dialects. There are certainly no generally agreed or widely used categorisations, and no widely published maps such as one can very readily find in works on, say, German dialects or varieties of American English.

In what follows, I first discuss reasons, of both a linguistic and social nature, for this absence. I then move on to attempt to fill this gap by supplying an overall categorisation and map of my own.

2. Problems

A number of reasons can be suggested for the relative dearth of overall dialect classifications and maps for Modern Greek.

1. One obvious factor has to do with the topography of Greece. While the geography of much of the Greek mainland does not pose any more, or any fewer, problems for dialectologists than anywhere else in Europe (though see below on mountainous areas), the islands certainly do. Most usually, when plotting dialect boundaries, dialectologists are content to investigate a sample of locations and, where appropriate, draw isoglosses between them, without concerning themselves overly about the accuracy of the absolutely precise location of the isogloss. Lines are most often drawn on maps between the sampling points used in particular dialect surveys, without further investigations on the ground to find out in more detail what happens *between* these sampling points. Overall maps of German dialects will show, for example, the well-known *maken-machen* line between northern and southern dialects, but it will generally not be possible to deduce from these maps exactly where the line runs in terms of, say, precisely which villages occur on one side of the line and which occur on the other. Similarly, in Trudgill (1999) I have drawn many English dialect maps showing isoglosses running between one English town and another. These towns, however, are very often, say, 75 kilometres apart, and it is not possible to tell from the maps exactly where the isogloss really runs; or even if there is actually an isogloss there at all, as such, rather than a zone of

variability (cf. Charalambakis 1991:289f.). Most often, this is a reflection of the fact that I simply did not have sufficiently detailed information about the precise situation on the ground, but for a geographical area like England this does not constitute a serious mapping problem.

Island terrain does not so readily permit this approach. Drawing an isogloss between one island and another is an unmistakable claim that the one island has a dialect feature which the other lacks. In any given case, instead of drawing a rather vague line across a certain area, one is forced to consider whether a particular island lies to one side of an isogloss or the other. This means that maps cannot be drawn for some areas until field investigations, ideally, have been carried out on every single island. Greece has scores of inhabited islands in the Adriatic and Aegean seas — in this article alone I mention almost 60 — and it is unfortunately not the case that dialectologists have worked on all of them in equal depth, or even at all.

2. There are also many locations on the mainland which have not been sufficiently investigated either (see Tzitzilis 2000). The rugged mountainous terrain of some of mainland Greece, and lack of reliable transport at earlier times, was no doubt a deterrent. Moreover, as just noted, unlike in most other European countries, there has been no organised dialect atlas work. Triandaphyllidis's complaint to this effect (1938:66) is repeated sixty years later by Delveroudi (1999:562) with equal validity.

3. In some cases, moreover, it will now be too late to make good this deficiency, the dialects in question, such as Old Athenian (see below), having been replaced by Standard or Standard-like Greek (Delveroudi 1999). In other cases, even if it is actually not too late at the moment, it soon will be, since the dialects in question are undergoing contraction (Malikouti-Drachman 1999, 2000).

4. The history of the modern Greek nation also constitutes a problem. Greece became an independent nation only in 1830, and the modern borders were fixed as recently as 1947. Some areas with significant indigenous Greek-speaking populations, namely Cyprus and southern Albania, remain outside the borders of Greece, a fact which has from time to time led to sometimes very serious political and diplomatic difficulties. Moreover, as a result of conflicts between Greece, Turkey, and other Balkan nations, especially during the first three decades of the twentieth century and thus within the living memory of the very oldest members of the population, large and often traumatic exchanges of populations took place of a type we might today refer to as 'ethnic cleansing'. As a consequence, many areas of what is now Turkey used to be Greek dialect-

speaking but no longer are so, a fact that has eventually led, in most cases (although after the preservation of some of these dialects for a few generations in Greece itself) to dialect death. A notable exception is Pontic, which, far from its Black Sea coastal homeland, still has 300,000 speakers in Greece today (Drettas 1999: 91).

It is perhaps not surprising if linguists have on occasion been deterred by these traumas and difficulties from carrying out work on the overall dialect patterns of the Greek-speaking territories.

5. Similarly, there are a number of areas of Greece that were not originally Greek-speaking and therefore have no truly local dialects. Any dialect map would have to recognise this fact, and it is perhaps not too far-fetched to suggest that the graphic cartographic portrayal of the absence of traditional dialects of Greek from rather large areas of Greece might, in previous generations, have caused political difficulties with certain Greek nationalists for the dialectologist;¹ witness the suspiciously straight line between Greek dialects and non-Greek-speaking areas to the north of them on Newton's map (1972). Many of these areas have, it is true, in the last century received Greek-speaking populations, mainly from formerly Greek-speaking areas in Asia Minor and Bulgaria, but this has led to dialect-mixture and koinisation and the development of somewhat uniform near-standard forms of Greek which would have been of relatively little interest to students of traditional dialects.

I suggest that one solution to problems 4 and 5 is to recognise that any classification of traditional Greek dialects that aims at portraying and summarising the full extent of our knowledge of the geographical configuration of these dialects should ideally be based on a description of the situation existing between, say, 1820 and 1920, when they were at their fullest extent, rather than on the situation today. There are a number of precedents for this sort of procedure: works on German dialects, for instance, typically cover areas of what is now Poland, Lithuania, and Russia, where German dialects are no longer spoken; Polish dialect maps similarly deal with areas of Lithuania and Ukraine, most of which are no longer Polish dialect-speaking; and books on Danish dialects include Scania/Skåne, which has been part of Sweden since the seventeenth century.

In what follows I have therefore selected the notional date of 1900 for a representation of the maximum state of our knowledge about Greek dialects and their geographical distribution. Maps will of necessity then have to incorporate some areas of what are now Albania and Turkey and omit some areas of what is now Greece.

3. Greek dialect classification

Having suggested some general reasons for the paucity of overall classifications and maps of Greek dialects, and a solution to at least some of the difficulties involved, we now move on to the question of to what extent it is possible to develop a classification of this type of any significance. In examining this question, we shall not be employing the usefully descriptive, but for our purposes irrelevant, distinction made by many Greek writers, such as Kontossopoulos (1994) and Argiriadis (1990), between *dialekti* and *idiomata*. ‘Dialekti’ are those varieties that are linguistically very different from Standard Greek: Tsakonian, Southern Italian Greek, Pontic, and Cappadocian. ‘Idiomata’ are all the other varieties. This distinction is reminiscent of the one introduced for English by Wells (1982) between *traditional-dialects* and others, with the ‘traditional dialects’ being, like ‘dialekti’, linguistically divergent.

The earliest serious attempt to produce a Greek dialect classification seems to have been that of Hadzidakis (1892), who distinguished two major dialect groups, north and south, on the basis of High Vowel Loss (see below). This was followed up by Triandaphyllidis (1938:66–68). Although he briefly discusses a number of diagnostic dialect features in this section of his book, his map, reproduced in Tzitzilis (2001:170), employs only three of them: the use of ‘object’ pronoun forms as indirect objects; the absence of pre-nasalisation in voiced stops; and High Vowel Loss. Dawkins (1940) lacks a map.

Argiriadis (1990:192–208) also lacks a map, but he does attempt an hierarchical classification. After making a preliminary division into *dialekti* and *idiomata*, he then divides the *idiomata* into northern and southern, following Hadzidakis and Triandaphyllidis. His lower level subdivision of the southern varieties, however, turns out to be unsatisfactory. This subdivision is into: Old Athenian (see below) plus Mani; Peloponnese; Cyclades; Crete; Dodecanese; Cyprus; and Ionian (Heptonesian). This means that, with the exception of the first category, he has simply used prior-existing geographical categories and ascribed particular dialect features to these areas. As we shall see below, this has little validity.

Kontossopoulos (1983–4) attempts a classification based on the two major regional variants of the word for ‘what’, *ti* being mostly mainland and *inda* mostly insular. He produces an overall map based on two features: this difference between *ti* and *inda*; and High Vowel Loss.

Newton (1972:xii) has also produced an overall map. This map of Newton’s is very helpful, but it is not totally justified, in the text of the book, in terms of

the presence or absence of individual linguistic features. For example, one of the areas Newton portrays on the map is *Cretan-Cycladic*, but nowhere in the book is there a listing of features that are distinctive of this particular area and of no other. Newton's classification of Greek dialects is into six subgroups: in addition to Cretan-Cycladic, there are Peloponnesian-Ionian, South-eastern, Northern, Old Athenian, and Maniot (see also his discussion pp. 13–15). His classification is followed by Horrocks (1997:300) who, however, adds Tsakonian, as well as two varieties spoken outside the contiguous Greek-speaking area, Pontic and South Italian.

I now examine the validity of these different divisions with respect to the contiguous Greek-speaking area and attempt a preliminary classification of my own. This classification is based on phonological features only. (Obviously, it is very desirable that lexical, morphological, and syntactic features should also be incorporated as soon as possible.) It is entirely derived from the work of others — primarily from the work of the doyen of Greek dialectology, Kontossopoulos (1994), but also from Newton (1972), a book based on enormous amounts of fieldwork. These scholars were of course writing well after the year of 1900 that I have selected as a reference point, as was also Triandaphyllidis, but Kontossopoulos in particular, in his book, refers to earlier works and to investigations carried out in the period before the major population movements. Where Kontossopoulos and Newton disagree, I have chosen to go with Kontossopoulos if it seems clear that he is describing a more conservative situation that was no longer available to Newton. Although Newton provides only an outline map, as I have just noted, and Kontossopoulos provides no overall map at all in his book, these two works contain an enormous wealth of data from which maps can be derived. It is, then, the interpretations of the data of these two scholars that are my own. Note that I have not included at this stage the Greek-speaking enclaves in southern Italy, Corsica, Bulgaria, the Bosphorous, the Black Sea coastline, Istanbul, Syria, or the Cappadocian dialects of central Asia Minor (see Christidis 1999a, Arapopoulou 2001), although I acknowledge that this should certainly be done as soon as possible.

4. The Greek-speaking area

Map 1 delimits the Greek dialect-speaking area under review at the turn of the nineteenth century (see above) for which my classification is proposed. It is based on Trudgill (2000). I have attempted here to portray a fairly accurate

borderline between areas that were predominantly Greek-dialect speaking in 1900, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, areas where speakers of dialects of other languages were predominant — the word ‘predominant’ is important here because in most areas there was no clear-cut division. This attempt at accuracy, however unsuccessful it might be, contrasts with the schematic and presumably deliberately vague northern boundary of the mainland Greek dialect area shown on Newton’s (1972) map, as mentioned above.

Note the following features of Map 1:

- a. Cyprus has been ‘relocated’ to the west in order to facilitate cartographic representation.
- b. Areas of what is now southern Albania — northern Epirus — were at the time that we are focussing on — and still are to a certain extent — Greek dialect speaking, and are therefore included in the area.
- c. Much of rural inland Macedonia and Thrace were predominantly Slavic and/or Turkish speaking before 1910. On the limits of the Slavic-speaking area of Macedonia, see Gounaris (1997:78).
- d. An area of north-central Greece was (and still is to a certain extent) predominantly Vlach, i.e. Arumanian, speaking (Beis & Christopoulos 2001).

Of course, at the time relevant here, members of both the Christian Slavic-speaking communities (Gounaris 1997) of Macedonia (as opposed to the Moslem Pomaks of Thrace) and of the Vlach-speaking communities of the Pindus mountains may have been at least somewhat culturally Greek; and urban areas would have had many non-dialectal-Greek speakers. But the local rural dialects would for the most part not have been Greek.

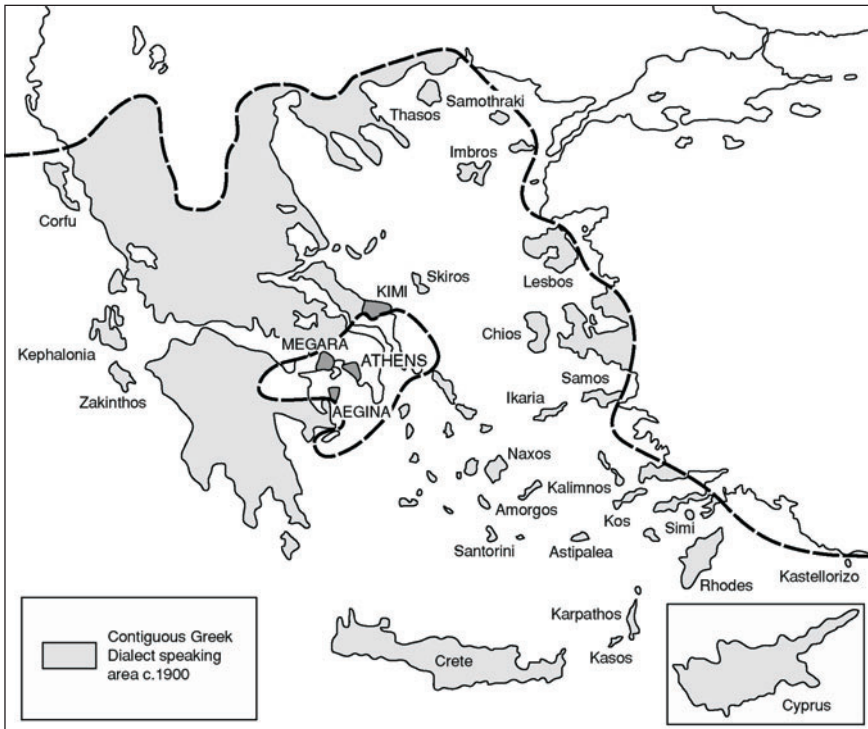
- e. Much of Attica, Biotia/Boetia, Argolida, and neighbouring islands were Arvanitika, i.e. Albanian, speaking in 1900. This same area is shown on Kontossopoulos’s map (1983–4) as “régions ex-albanophones”, but my reading of Empirikos & Tsitselikis (2001) suggests that his “ex” is somewhat premature. (My own research in the early 1970s — see Trudgill & Tzavaras 1975 — revealed even then a fluent Albanian-speaking population in Attica and Biotia of about 30,000.)
- f. There were four Greek dialect-speaking ‘islands’ among or on the edge of this ‘sea’ of Albanian (Kontossopoulos 1994:84): the Kimi area of Evia/Euboea; the Megara area west of Athens; the island of Aegina; and Athens itself. According to Newton (1972:14) “before the War of Independence Athens was an insignificant village whose Greek inhabitants spoke a dialect,

Old Athenian”, with which the dialects of the other three areas had a number of similarities (Newton 1972), suggesting that they had originally formed part of a larger, unified area, before the late mediaeval arrival of Albanian-speakers (see further below) separated them one from the other. All four dialects are now extinct (Newton 1972).

- g. A number of peninsulas of what is now western Turkey were Greek dialect-speaking (see Newton 1972: 15, Kontossopoulos 1994: 113–119), as was the island of Imbros.

5. Phonological features

In order to produce a meaningful characterisation of the main groupings of Greek dialects, I have selected a number of the phonological features discussed by Newton and Kontossopoulos. Unfortunately there are relatively few features



Map 1.

that are available for use in this way. Naturally, I have been able to use only those features for which full, detailed geographical information is available. Some important and well-known features have therefore had to be rejected. For example, a striking and important feature of many Aegean dialects is *voiced fricative deletion*, i.e. the loss of intervocalic /v, ð, ɣ/ so that, for example, /mey'alo/ ‘big’ is /me'alo/ (Newton 1972:60–61). However, in discussing this feature, Kontossopoulos (1994) gives a list of islands where it is found and then writes ‘and maybe others’ (p.58). Newton also cites a number of islands where it is found, but he does not tell us where it is *not* found. (Argiriadis (1990:204) cites this feature as characterising all and only the Dodecanese, but it is clear from the works of Kontossopoulos and Newton that this is not correct.) We cannot therefore have sufficient confidence about our knowledge of the geographical incidence of this feature to employ it cartographically or in our classification.

However, careful study reveals that there are six phonological features in Kontossopoulos’s book which, when supplemented by the work of Newton, are outlined in sufficient geographical detail for our doubts to be relatively few, and which can therefore be used cartographically. I have in this preliminary classification not given more or less weight to any of these individual features.

We now discuss each of these six features in turn.

5.1 High vowel loss

We begin with a well-known feature associated with northern Greek dialects (see Newton 1972:182 ff.). These dialects are divided by Kontossopoulos (1994) into three subgroups. *Extreme Northern* dialects delete all unstressed /i, u/ and raise unstressed /e, o/ to /i, u/, respectively. This gives pronunciations such as ‘Thessaloniki’ /θesalon'iki/ > /θisalun'ik/. *Northern* dialects delete only word-final unstressed /i, u/ and raise unstressed /e, o/. Finally, *Semi-northern* dialects also delete only unstressed word-final /i, u/ but do not raise unstressed /e, o/. High vowel loss is clearly a dialectal innovation that is shared by these northern areas and that has not reached other areas further south. Kontossopoulos’s discussion of these three sub-types of northern dialects is very helpful (pp.95–112), but he does not give sufficient geographical detail for us to be able to distinguish between them cartographically (though we are told, for example, that Lefkada, Skiros, and Mykonos are semi-northern). Nor does Argiriadis (1990:202). Kontossopoulos’s map (1983–4) for this feature also leaves something to be desired cartographically. We therefore treat all three types together here, and outline the entire area where word-final unstressed /i, u/ are lost. This

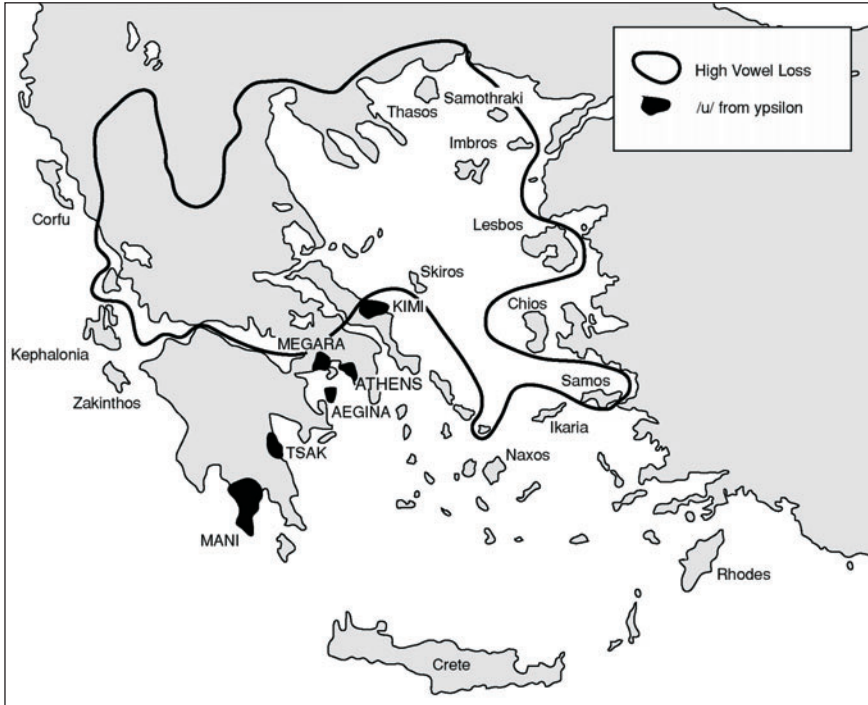
resembles the northern area described by Hadzidakis. The maps provided for this feature by Triandaphyllidis and Newton, however, disagree with the information given by Kontossopoulos, who specifically excludes the western area of Epirus around Igoumenitsa, i.e. Thesprotia. Map 2 follows Kontossopoulos's information, including his map 9 (p. 93), rather than that of Triandaphyllidis and Newton. We should recognise, however, that the accuracy of this well-known isogloss has been called into question by Pantelidis (2001a), who indicates that high vowel loss is, or at least was, also found in the Peloponnese. Note that Samos also has this northern feature, in spite of its relatively southern position. This, as Newton tells us (1972: 14), is the result of the resettlement of the Samos by northern dialect-speakers in the fifteenth century.

5.2 Ypsilon > /u/

Ancient Greek *υ* and *οι* have become /i/ in nearly all varieties of Modern Greek (Newton 1972: 16). As outlined in some detail by Newton, however, a number of areas have /u/, as also shown on Map 2. They are: the four 'oasis' dialects on the edges of or surrounded by the Arvanitika-speaking area, as described above — Kimi, Aegina, Megara, and Old Athenian; the Mani peninsula of the southern Peloponnese; and Tsakonian. Tsakonian is generally reckoned to be the only modern dialect that is not descended from the Ancient Greek Koiné and it is aberrant in very many respects. One obvious conclusion from the geographical configuration revealed by the map is that the four, now extinct, 'oasis' dialects are the last remnants of a large, single area over all of which this feature was once found, before the penetration of Arvanitika (Karatzas 1940) had the effect of dividing and separating these four relic areas from one another.

5.3 Palatalisation of velars

All varieties of Modern Greek front velar consonants in the environment before front vowels and /j/. However, a well-known feature associated with southern Greek dialects is the extreme palatalisation and (af)frication of velar consonants in this same position. Specifically, /k, g, x, γ/ are fronted before /i, e, j/ to [t_ç, dz, ç, z] or to [tʃ, dʒ, ʃ, ʒ]. This is a well-known feature of Cretan, where the former (alveolo-palatal) pronunciations are more common, and in Cyprus, where the latter (palato-alveolar) realisations are usual. (Many descriptions of Greek do not distinguish between the two types, but my own observations indicate this phonetic difference. For Cypriot, see also Malikouti-Drachman 2000: 25, 93). It



Map 2.

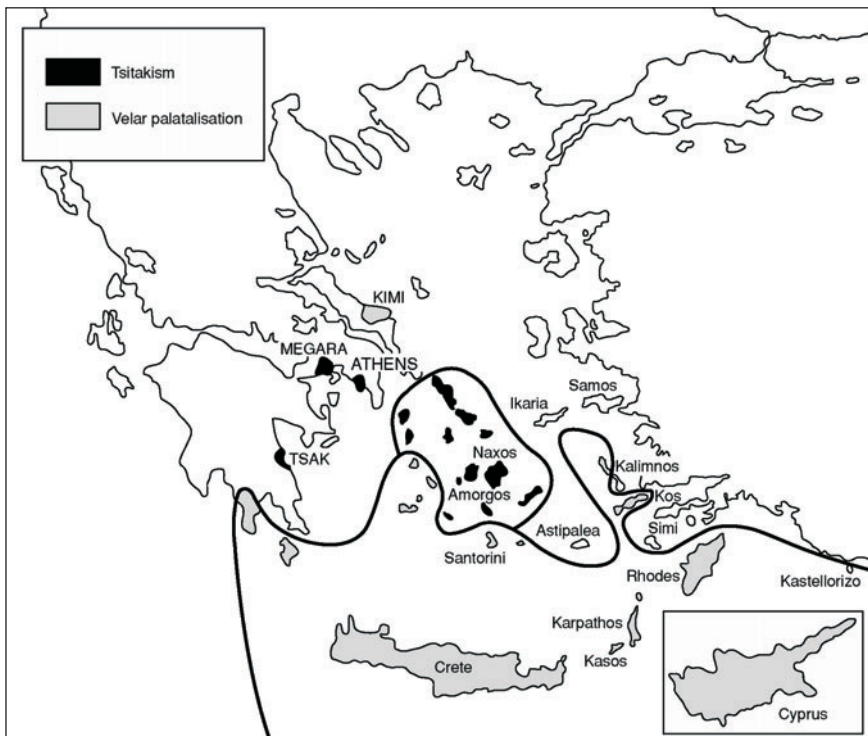
has been claimed that some remote mountainous areas of Sfakia, southwestern Crete, do not have this feature (see the discussion in Kontossopoulos 1994: 30), but, as in one or two other cases, I have taken the decision, for the sake of clarity, not to indicate intra-island differences. (Kontossopoulos 1994 discusses a number of cases of intra-island regional variation, including in some cases with maps, for Crete, Cyprus, Rhodes, and elsewhere.)

According to Newton (1972) and to Kontossopoulos (1994), this feature is also found in Mani, a dialect that has other affinities with Cretan; on Kithira and Antikithira; and on some of the southern Cyclades and Dodecanese islands. Dialects vary in the extent to which of the four velar consonants are affected by velar palatalisation (Newton 1972: 126ff.). The geographically most widespread palatalisation is of /k/ — i.e. some dialects have palatalisation and affrication of /k/ but not of the other velars — and it is areas with this feature that are shown on Map 3 (on the inclusion of Milos in this area, see below). Note that the Kimi area of Evia also has velar palatalisation (see further below).

5.4 Tsitakism

In a region to the immediate north of the velar palatalisation area, we find a feature known to Greek linguists as *tsitakismos*. This involves the further fronting of original /k/ before /i, e, j/ to /ts/, which Newton refers to as ‘depalatalization’. This may lead (Newton 1972: 133) to a merger of /k/ and /ts/. In some places this extends also to /x, g/ > /s, dz/, but here we confine our attention to the /k/ > /ts/ area. This area includes most of the Cyclades islands that do not have velar palatalisation. Tsitakism is also found in three of the ‘oasis’ dialects of Aegina, Old Athenian, and Megara (but not in Kimi). Both velar palatalisation and tsitakism are clearly dialectal innovations.

The geographical configuration of the tsitakism area, also illustrated on Map 3, together with the presence of velar palatalisation to the north of this zone, in Kimi, suggests rather strongly a pattern of fronting of velars that began somewhere in the tsitakism area, including the present Arvanitika area, and



Map 3.

then spread north and south from there, reaching Kimi and Crete in a less extreme form, and geographically peripheral Cyprus, which has [tʃ] rather than [tɕ], in an even less extreme form. That is, we postulate a change sequence [k] > [tʃ] > [tɕ] > [ts], with only the core tsitakismos area having the full degree of fronting, and with the velar palatalisation areas, further removed from the core area, having less.

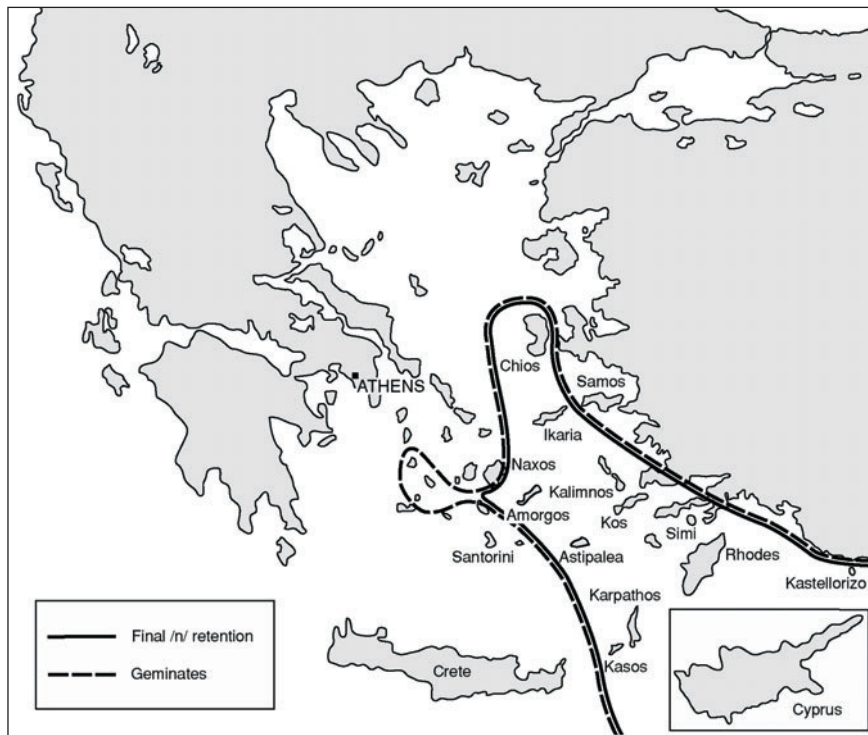
5.5 Gemimates

Another feature which is well known to exist in Cypriot Greek is the preservation of Ancient Greek geminates. This feature obviously represents a retention as compared to Standard Greek. However, Cypriot also demonstrates the development of new geminates, including in word-initial position. In the case of fricatives, nasals, and approximants, this gemination takes the form of simple length, e.g. *nai* “yes” as /nne/. In the case of voiceless plosives, however, it is manifested as not only length (which of course is inaudible in absolute initial position), but also as aspiration. Cypriot minimal pairs (Newton 1972:91) include /filla/ “leaves” vs. /fīla/ “kiss!”; and /mmatin/ “eye” vs. /matin/ “coat”.

The important point for our purposes, however, is that the presence of geminates is not confined to Cyprus but extends to many of the other islands of the southeast. The areas that are listed by Kontossopoulos as having this feature — and he does give a definitive list of islands plus a map — are shown on Map 4.

5.6 Final /n/ retention

Our last feature, which is also typical of Cyprus, is the retention of original word-final /n/. Again this feature actually extends well beyond Cyprus: “One of the characteristic features of the southeastern dialect complex is the retention of an ancient final nasal in various groups of words. For instance, ‘he said’ appears as [ipen] before a pause” (Newton 1972:99). The area that has this feature, according to Kontossopoulos, is also shown in Map 4. (Again, Kontossopoulos is very clear about which islands have and do not have final /n/ retention.) This area, too, clearly represents a zone with a shared retention as compared to Standard Greek.



Map 4.

6. Summary

Map 5 represents a summary of the information given on Maps 2–4. It can be seen that it does not entirely tally with the map presented by Newton, although it owes much to the enormous amounts of data collected by Newton during his years of fieldwork. In particular, Cretan-Cycladic appears not to be a single unit.

The map permits us to divide the contiguous Greek dialect-speaking area at the turn of the nineteenth century into fifteen areas, as follows:

1. Central

Western Epirus, Corfu, Kephallonia, Zakynthos, the Peloponnese. This area corresponds more or less to Newton's Peloponnesian-Ionian area and has none of the six features we have been employing as criteria. This is not surprising in view of the fact that the Ionian islands and the Peloponnese are generally agreed to have supplied most of the input into Standard

Greek (Horrocks 1997:300), although this has been disputed, at least for the Peloponnese, by Pantelidis (2001b). Of course, I do not intend to suggest that there is no geographical differentiation within this area — naturally, there is plenty — but simply that the unity is more important than internal differences.

2. Northern

The northern area is characterised by high vowel loss and consists of: the northern mainland, Lefkada, northern Evia, Thassos, Samothraki, Imbros, Lesbos, Limnos, Skiros, Skiathos, Skopelos, Alonissos (and the other smaller northern Sporades). As we have noted, there is also considerable regional variation within this area in the extent to which this rule is carried through. This area corresponds to Newton's northern area, with the difference, as noted above, that we have excluded Thesprotia, following Kontossopoulos.

2a. Samos

Samos also has high vowel loss. This is classed as a separate sub-area solely because of its geographical separation from area 2.

3. Mani

Mani has /u/ from ypsilon plus velar palatalisation. This area is identical with the one outlined by Newton.

4. Tsakonian.

As we have noted, this dialect is very different from all other Greek dialects in that it does not descend from the Koiné.

5. Old Athenian

This dialect is represented by three separate areas: Aegina, Megara, and the Old Athenian proper of Athens itself. These areas have /u/ from ypsilon and tsitakismos.

6. Kimi

Kimi has /u/ from ypsilon plus velar palatalisation, like Mani. Note that areas 5 and 6 correspond to the single Old Athenian area of Newton.

7. Arvanitika

This is the non-Greek-dialect, Arvanitika-speaking area.

8. Southern

This area has velar palatalisation as the only one of our six features: Crete, Kithira, Antikithira, and Santorini (Thira). I have also, in spite of a lack of information, ventured to include Anaphi in this area on the grounds of geographical probability: it is situated about 40 kilometres east of Santorini.

This may, however, be an error. Milos, too, has been included. This island is not discussed in Newton’s book, and information is lacking for it for most of our six features. Kontossopoulos, however, briefly discusses the linguistic consequences of the proximity of Milos to Crete and to Cretan settlement there (1994:57), and I have taken that as sufficient, if tentative, justification.

9. Southeastern

Cyprus, Rhodes, Karpathos, Kasos, Kastellorizo, Kos, Leros, Patmos. These islands have velar palatalisation and geminates as well as final /n/ retention. Note that this area is considerably smaller than Newton’s South-eastern area.

10. Eastern

Simi, Tilos, Nissiros, Kalimnos, Ikaria, Astipalea, Chios, and adjacent areas of the Asia Minor mainland. This area has geminates and final /n/ retention, but not velar palatalisation.

11. Smyrna

The Smyrna area of Asia Minor, according to Kontossopoulos, had a number of distinguishing features, but not any of the selected six (1994: 113–114). In this respect it is identical with area 1.

12. Central Cyclades

Amorgos, Iraklia, Schinoussa, Keros, Kouphonisi, and Donoussa. These islands have final /n/ retention, geminates, and tsitakism. Argiriadis (1990:204) claims geminates for the Dodecanese, but fails to mention that they occur beyond this area.

13. Western Cyclades

Sifnos, Kimolos, and Serifos have geminates and velar palatalisation, but not tsitakism. Argiriadis (1990:203) claims tsitakism for all of the Cyclades, but Kontossopoulos shows that this is not correct.

14. Mykonos

Mykonos is alone in having northern high vowel loss and central Cycladean tsitakism.

15. Northern Cyclades

Andros, Tinos, Kea, Kithnos, Siros, Naxos, Paros, Antiparos, Ios, and Folegandros. Of the six features, these islands have only tsitakism. In spite of the absence of information, I have guessed that it is also legitimate to include Sikinos in this area, on purely geographical grounds: it is situated between Ios and Folegandros.



Map 5.

7. Conclusion

This paper is, as stated above, a preliminary attempt at a more detailed classification and cartographic representation of Modern Greek dialects than has hitherto been available. It surely contains many errors. Those who know more about individual Greek dialects, or about Greek dialects in general, than I do — and there are many such — will hopefully be able to correct at least some of them. It is also clear that, in the future, further research on those less-explored Modern Greek dialects that are still extant needs to be carried out. It would be desirable, too, to include in a broader classification the additional dialects mentioned at the beginning of this paper from outside the contiguous area, such as Cappadocian. It would also be helpful to include grammatical and lexical features such as some of those dealt with by Triandaphyllidis (1938) and Kontossopoulos (1983–4), if full and detailed geographical information is available. A further goal would be to acknowledge that the categorisation

outlined above is one-dimensional, and to consider the possibility of providing a further hierarchical ranking of divisions and subdivisions.

Notes

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1. When I was planning sociolinguistic research on the Arvanitika/Albanian-speaking communities of Attica and Biotia in the 1970s, I approached the Greek Embassy in London for information, and was told that there were no such communities.

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