

The Re-Hellenization of Greek since 1750

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Lecture to the Society for Modern Greek Studies, Hellenic Centre, London, 17 May 2014

One of the reasons I've chosen this title for my lecture is that it's untranslatable into Standard Modern Greek – and this is precisely because of the ideological transformation that has taken place among the Greeks since the late 18th century. Till about 1800, Greeks used the word ελληνικά to refer to Ancient Greek, whereas they either called their modern language Ρωμαίικα or they described it periphrastically by using phrases such as απλή γλώσσα or κοινόν ύφος. The historian Socrates Petmezas has written that “A “proto-national” consciousness existed [among the Greeks] before the 18th century, but it was a Romaic one, clearly distinct from the Hellenic which, as an imagined community, would be constituted at its expense.”¹ At the same time, Greeks' sense of their modern language as being “Romaic” (in other words, the language of the post-Byzantine Orthodox Christian communities of south-east Europe and Asia Minor) was superseded by their sense that their language was “Hellenic” (in other words, the language of the descendants of the Ancient Hellenes).

The “re-Hellenization” of Greek entailed not only the replacement of loan words from foreign languages by Greek words, but also the replacement of medieval and modern vernacular words of Greek origin with ancient Greek words (or new words constructed out of AG roots); by Ancient Greek I mean either Classical or Hellenistic.

Those of us who have spent a lot of time researching the history of the Greek language controversy have tended to become fixated on whether a particular linguistic feature – or indeed a whole text – belongs to demotic or *katharevousa*. This polarized thinking has tended to blind us to the fact that while the language controversy was raging in *theory*, the language itself went on developing *in practice*: people were speaking and writing in many varieties of Greek which were differentiated according to geographical region and stylistic register, and the ways in which they were speaking and writing during this period were constantly changing over time. The changes in the use of different varieties of Greek have hardly been investigated: in particular, I hardly know of any book or article that studies the linguistic development of *katharevousa* over the period from 1800 to 1974. Whereas traditional histories of other European languages have focused on the development and

¹ Socrates D. Petmezas, "The Formation of Early Hellenic Nationalism and the Special Symbolic and Material Interests of the New Radical Republican Intelligentsia (ca. 1790-1830)", *historein* 1 (1999), p. 51.

standardization of the learned language, histories of Greek have largely confined themselves to the development of the vernacular language to the exclusion of official varieties that have contributed to the standardization process.

The reason for this neglect of the development of *katharevousa* is a perfectly understandable reaction against dominant attitudes which were held by influential Greeks in the past. Learned Greeks repeatedly expressed their contempt for the Greek people and their language. Yet, despite what is often claimed, it was not the Orthodox Church that preserved the Greek language throughout centuries of foreign rule, it was the Greek people.

Until a few decades ago, generations of Greeks were taught at school that the Greek language was unique in its expressive capabilities, but that spoken Modern Greek was a debased and corrupt version of it. This led many Greeks to be ashamed of the language they actually spoke and to reject much of its vocabulary and grammar in favour of ancient or learned equivalents.

Dimitris Tziovas recently talked about what he called the decolonization of the Greek past, in other words the process whereby the modern Greeks have reclaimed their past, and particularly their ancient past, from western Europeans.² One could say that the re-Hellenization of Greek aimed to decolonize the language: the attempt to purge the Greek language of words and other features that had been introduced into Greek under the influence of foreign rulers (Romans, Franks, Ottomans) was intended to efface the impact of centuries of foreign rule and restore the Greek language to an ideal pristine past.

The removal of a great many Turkish loanwords de-orientalized and de-Balkanized the standard variety of the Greek language (the Turkish loanwords that are found in all of the Balkan languages were among the factors that contributed to the so-called Balkan Sprachbund, which is one of the bonds that united the Balkan peoples in a common culture). But at the same time as the removal of Turkish loanwords de-orientalized the Greek language, the removal of a great many Italian words de-westernized it.³ The purging of these loans virtually removed Greece from its geographical and historical position in post-Ottoman south-east Europe and Asia Minor, so that, in terms of its language, Greece became an island unto itself, culturally alienated from its geographical neighbours.

² Lecture given at Oxford 27/2/14.

³ Massimo Peri too (in Amalia Kolonia e Massimo Peri (ed.), *Greco antico, neogreco e italiano: dizionario dei prestiti e dei parallelismi*, Bologna 2008, p. 102) talks of the expulsion of Western loans in the name of Westernization (i.e. Hellenization).

In his history of the Greek language, Henri Tonnet 2003, p. 259 wrote: “Since the eighteenth century the history of Greek has no longer been that of a natural evolution, but the story of the difficult construction of a modern national language”. I fully endorse this statement.

Many of the phenomena I’m discussing in this lecture are the result of what can be called “linguistic engineering”, in other words deliberate changes to the language brought about by Greek intellectuals in order to achieve an ideological transformation in their national culture and to affirm the identity of the modern Greeks as Hellenes rather than Romioi. It is significant that the declaration of Greek independence signed at Epidaurus on 15 January 1822 begins by describing the modern Greeks as “the descendants of the wise and benevolent Nation of the Hellenes and the contemporaries of the present enlightened and well-governed nations of Europe”.⁴ One of the major developments in the history of the Greek language in this period has consisted of a double process of Hellenization and Europeanization: the form of the language (the *signifiants*, in other words the vocabulary and the morphology) has been partially Hellenized (and therefore partially archaized), while the semantic content of the language (the *signifiés*) has been Europeanized (and therefore modernized). The first of these aspects has made the connections between Modern and Ancient Greek more clearly perceptible (in this respect, linguistic engineers have viewed language as an object, a precious heirloom and an ideological symbol of national identity), while the second has enabled the mutual translatability of expressions between MG and other modern European languages (in this respect, linguistic engineers have treated language as a vehicle of practical communication, both within the Greek-speaking community and between Greek-speakers and the speakers of other European languages).

The re-Hellenization movement in the 19th century did two things, one positive and the other negative: on the positive side it added a wealth of words and grammatical forms that have now become an indispensable part of SMG; on the negative side it substituted a number of ancient or ancient-looking words and forms for perfectly functional equivalents that already existed in the vernacular language. When linguistic purism adds features of vocabulary, phonology and morphology to what already exists in the vernacular, it results in enrichment; when it replaces existing vernacular features with learned equivalents, it can sometimes result in impoverishment.

Archaists tried to stifle the living body of the MG language by laying the corpse of AG on top of it. Literary demoticists from the 1880s onwards tried to salvage the living

⁴ “Απόγονοι του σοφού και φιλανθρώπου Έθνους των Ελλήνων, σύγχρονοι των νυν πεφωτισμένων και ενομούμενων λαών της Ευρώπης...”

vernacular Greek words and phrases before they were crushed out of existence. (It's not for nothing that I once described *katharevousa* as a 'zombie language'.) These writers were in the business of linguistic conservation, trying to protect living linguistic features that were in danger of becoming extinct. Like zoologists who rescue creatures and place them in zoos before their natural habitat is destroyed by development, demoticist writers tried to rescue vernacular words and expressions from their natural habitat before it was violently destroyed by the construction of linguistic edifices. The sometimes exaggerated λεξιθηρία (word-hunting) and γλωσσοπλαστία (word-making)⁵ of some demoticist literary writers was due to their desire to demonstrate that not only did the existing vocabulary of vernacular Greek possess an expressive richness, but that the derivational morphology of the vernacular possessed a rich potential to create new words.

In parenthesis I would say that the modern word λογο-τεχνία the Greek language recognizes that literature is the supreme art of language, which keeps λόγος alive and stretches it to its expressive limits, whereas the western term *literature* emphasizes letters (not sounds or even meanings)!

The Greek purists believed that the only legitimate words were either those that were found in ancient texts or words that had been constructed on the basis of the ancient vocabulary and according to the ancient rules of derivation. These words were supposed to say what they meant in a literal, intellectual way, without ambiguity and without emotional connotations. Yet these words can often be sterile, bloodless, colourless, tasteless and odourless, deprived of the features that might connect them with the world of the senses. Demoticist writers got their own back by using words with vivid emotional connotations, evocative words that embodied their referents in a sensual manner.

Some decades ago, when I was reading *O Dodekalogos tou Gyftou* (1907) by Kostis Palamas in the edition published by the Kostis Palamas Institute in the 1960s, I was struck by the extent of Yorgos Savvidis' glossary of almost 500 words that Palamas used in his poem.⁶ Why did Palamas use so many words which, 50 or 60 years after his poem was published, apparently required a definition and therefore impeded the readers' comprehension of the poem? (I wonder whether modern readers would need so much linguistic assistance in order to be able to read an English poem written at the same time. Well, maybe a glossary would

⁵ Stephanos Koumanoudis, *Συναγωγή νέων λέξεων* (Athens 1900) gives 1890 as the date of his first sighting of the word *glossoplastis*; for γλωσσοπλαστία, γλωσσοπλαστικός [εργαστήριο, απόπειρα, κλπ.] he cites Μαυροφρύδης 1861.

⁶ Savvidis compiled this glossary at the behest of the Palamas Institute, whose chairman at the time was George Katsimbalis.

help readers with the more lyrical parts of Thomas Hardy’s vast and ambitious historical epic drama “The Dynasts” (1904-8), which deliberately use archaic language.) Is it that the Greek language had changed so much between the 1900s and the 1960s that so many words that Palamas used had become obsolete, or did he deliberately choose to use outlandish words? Maybe it’s a bit of both. Some of the words defined in Savvidis’ glossary are so-called “historical words”. Palamas set his poem near Constantinople around 1453, and for this reason he used a lot of words he found in history books. But most of the words in the glossary are not “historical words”; they are words that were used in his time in various parts of Greece, and were perhaps familiar to Palamas’ Athenian readers at the time when he wrote his poem. An advantage of studying Palamas’ language is that he didn’t come from some outlying area of the Greek-speaking world; he was born in Patra and brought up in Mesolongi – right in the centre of the original Greek state that was formed as a result of the War of Independence. In fact, the chief reason why I was puzzled at the extent of Savvidis’ glossary was that by the time I read the *Dodekalogos* I had already read a large amount of 19th and early 20th-century Greek literature, in which I had already encountered a large number of these words several times. Many of the words in Savvidis’ glossary would nowadays be classified as “literary” or “poetic” – but that may just be because the language has changed in the meantime, not only because of linguistic engineering (i.e. standardization and Hellenization), but also because of the major shift from rural to urban ways of life during the last 100 years.

Here are four sample entries from the glossary, followed by Savvidis’ translation into SMG:

- απλωσιά: έκταση
- απόκοτος: υπερβολικά τολμηρός
- λαλούμενα: λαϊκά πνευστά όργανα
- ρουμάνι: άγριο δάσος

Notice the specific and expressive nature of these words: απλωσιά isn’t just an expanse of land but a wide open space (though the glossary doesn’t say this);⁷ απόκοτος means not just daring but excessively daring (‘audacious’); ρουμάνι (from *orman*, the everyday Turkish word for ‘wood’ or ‘forest’) isn’t just a wood but a wild wood; λαλούμενα are not just musical instruments, but wind instruments.

⁷ Some of the words in Savvidis’ glossary have a more concrete sense as well as a more specific one than the SMG equivalents. When someone writes “Η Τίρυνθα [...] χουζουρεύει μες στην απλωσιά του κάμπου της” (a phrase I found on the internet) it’s not the same as saying that Tiryns lounges amid the extent of its plain; απλωσιά is somehow more concrete and visual than έκταση (i.e. ‘broad expanse’).

In most of what follows I'm going to continue to focus on vocabulary. But similar observations could be made about the names of people and places. Take the name Αχιλλέας Πηλείδης, which appears on the surface to be Ancient Greek for 'Achilles, son of Peleus' (Πηλείδης 'son of Peleus' < Πηλεύς). In fact, however, Πηλείδης is a literal translation of the Turkish surname (originally a nickname) Çamuroğlu ('son of mud', < *çamur* 'mud', translated as πηλός), perhaps by way of the Turkish-Hellenic hybrid form Τσαμουρίδης.

Placenames

Greek towns are full of streets named after figures from ancient Greek history and mythology. In most cases these streets didn't have names before they were given them by state and local authorities from the 1820s onwards.

The poet and essayist Zisimos Lorentzatos once remarked how when he travels by train through Attica the stations he passes through bear ancient names that were given to them in the late 19th or early 20th centuries in an effort to efface the old familiar (?Albanian) names of the villages that are served by the stations:

- Μενίδι had become Αχαρναί
- Κιούρκα had become Αφίδναι (since 1919)
- Σάλεσι had become Αυλών

This led Lorentzatos to feel a sense of alienation from his home province, similar to that expressed by the speaker in Seferis' poem "Με τον τρόπο του Γ.Σ." when he hears people speaking in *katharevousa*:

Τι θέλουν όλοι αυτοί που λένε
πως βρίσκονται στην Αθήνα ή στον Πειραιά;
Ο ένας έρχεται από τη Σαλαμίνα και ρωτάει τον άλλο μήπως «έρχεται εξ Ομονοίας»
«Όχι έρχομαι εκ Συντάγματος» απαντά [...].

Παράξενος κόσμος που λέει πως βρίσκεται στην Αττική και δε βρίσκεται πουθενά.

Seferis shows how *katharevousa* could make the most banal statements seem important (σοβαροφανή: 'pretentiously self-important': another neologism).

Now let's go back a bit further than Palamas and see how things have changed since the 18th century.

A translator of the Arabian Nights in the 1790s wrote the sentence:

Το βασιλόπουλο ο Αλής δεν απέβαλε το πρόβλημα το υποχρεωτικόν του
πραγματευτού 'Prince Ali didn't reject the merchant's obliging suggestion'.⁸

In SMG this might become:

Ο πρίγκιπας Αλής δεν απέρριψε την εξυπηρετική πρόταση του εμπόρου.

- In SMG the vernacular βασιλόπουλο has been replaced by the loanword πρίγκιπας (< *L princeps*; unusually, a rather folksy native Greek word has been superseded in SMG by a more prestigious word of foreign origin;
- πρόβλημα, which meant 'suggestion, proposal' in Medieval and Early Modern Greek, gave way to πρόταση in SMG but was retained in the sense of 'problem';
- υποχρεωτικός in the quotation means 'obliging' (i.e. 'helping, courteous, kind'), whereas today it usually (though not always) means 'obligatory'.⁹
- The medieval words πρα(γ)μάτεια 'merchandise' and πρα(γ)ματευτής 'merchant' (meaning 'business representative' from Plutarch (c. 100 AD) onwards) were replaced by the ancient words εμπόρευμα and έμπορος.

Έκαμε και το σπίτι μου τιμαρχανάν γκιράν τζικάν μπελισής. 'He made my home into a madhouse where nobody knows who's going in or out.'¹⁰ (T *tumarhane* 'lunatic asylum'; *giren çikan bellisiz*)

This is from the earliest surviving letter written by Adamantios Korais; Korais, working as a merchant in Amsterdam, is writing in 1774 to his senior business partners in Constantinople and Chios to complain about the behaviour of his assistant Stamatis Petrou. It's interesting that the 26-year-old Korais uses a complex Turkish phrase, which shows he knew the language and he expected the recipients of his letter to understand it; in the same way, a Greek of the same age today might use English phrases in the middle of Greek when writing an e-mail message or a contribution to an internet forum. Also from the same letter:

Μου επροφασίζετο πότε το κάμπιον, πότε τους μαμελέδες. 'He would sometimes use the exchange rate as his excuse and sometimes the interest rate.'¹¹ (< It. *cambio*, T *muamele*)

⁸ *Νέα Χαλιμά* (Vienna 1791-4), in Kechagioglou, *Pezographiki anthologia* (Thessaloniki 2001), vol. 1, p. 861.

⁹ However, the Babiniotis dictionary (1998) states that υποχρεωτικός can mean περιποιητικός, εξυπηρετικός, and the Triandaphyllidis dictionary (1998) offers υποχρεωτική συμπεριφορά as an example of its use.

¹⁰ Korais, *Allilographia*, vol. 1 (Athens 1964), p. 5 (23 Sept. 1774)

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

And here are a few examples of phrases from a late 18th-century Greek translation of comedies by the Venetian dramatist Carlo Goldoni; because the anonymous translator was from Constantinople, he or she uses many more words from Turkish than from Italian, e.g.:

- Δεν είναι τεβεκελί αυτός ο λόγος.¹² ‘What he just said isn’t accidental.’ (T *tevekeli* = SMG τυχαίος, attested since Plutarch)
- Κατσιρδίζομεν λόγια. ‘We let words slip out.’¹³ (< T *kaçırmak* ‘to allow to escape’)
- Άτζαπα έχει κέφι; ‘Is she in a good mood, I wonder?’¹⁴ (T *acaba*) (still used in a number of Greek dialects, including Cypriot; = SMG μήπως, which has in fact been used throughout the history of the Greek language from ancient to modern times; but in AG only in negative expressions such as expressions of fearing)
- Άλλος τσαρές διορθώσεως δεν μ’ έμεινεν.¹⁵ ‘There’s no other way left for me to put things right.’ (> T *çare* ‘means’ [= SMG τρόπος], but also ‘remedy, help’)

Loanwords replaced by words of Greek origin (either ancient or newly coined according to ancient models)

Loanwords from Italian

- βίζιτα ‘visit’ (It. < *visita*) has been replaced by AG επίσκεψις [SMG επίσκεψη] (except in certain special uses: nowadays the word βίζιτα has been demoted to two specific uses: in the phrase αρμένικη βίζιτα (literally ‘Armenian visit’) to refer to a visit that lasts longer than the hosts would like, and on its own to denote a home visit by a prostitute to a client); in Ancient and Medieval Greek this word meant ‘inspection’
- μιλλιούνι[ον] ‘million’ (< It. *milione*) has been replaced by the neologism εκατομμύριο[v], lit. ‘hundred myriads’ (Korais 1805)¹⁶
- πόστα ‘post’ [i.e. postal service] (< It. *posta*) has been replaced by the neologism ταχυδρομείο[v] (1833 according to Koumanoudis invaluable *Συναγωγή νέων λέξεων*

¹² *Dieci commedie di Goldoni tradotte in neogreco* (Padua 1988), p. 8.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁶ Korais, letter Vasileiou, 6/3/05, in *Allilografia*, vol. 2 (Athens 1966), p. 244.

(1900)¹⁷ < AG ταχυδρόμος, originally adjective meaning ‘fast-running’, from about 500 AD also used as a noun to mean ‘courier’,

- φαμελιά ‘family’ (> Lat. *familia*) and φαμελίτης ‘man with a family’ have been replaced by οικογένεια (introduced in or before 1817)¹⁸ (AG: ‘the status of a slave born in the home’) and the neologism οικογενειάρχης (1833) (notice that this neologism introduces a hierarchical element!); similarly the adverb φαμελικώς ‘with the whole family’ was superseded by οικογενειακώς,

Loanwords from Turkish

- αμανάτι ‘pledge, security (e.g. object left with pawnbroker)’ (< T *emanet* ‘anything entrusted to another’) has been superseded by AG ενέχυρο(ν) (the Greek-French dictionary by Désiré-Félix Dehèque, *Dictionnaire grec-moderne français* (Paris 1825), which presents quite a realistic picture of the vocabulary of Greek in common use at the time, has both αμανέτι and ενέχυρον ‘gage’)
- μουσαφίρης has been superseded by the substantivized participle φιλοξενούμενος (AG φιλοξενῶ and φιλόξενος)
- μουστερής ‘customer, client’ (< T *müşteri*) has been superseded by AG πελάτης (‘one who approaches; dependant, client’; πελάτης is not listed in Kriaras’ dictionary of medieval vernacular Greek, which attempts to cover all available texts written between the 13th and the 17th century, so it seems to have been revived since then),
- οντάς ‘room’ (< T *oda*) has been superseded by the Hellenistic δωμάτιο(ν) (1st attested frequently in Plutarch; not in Kriaras, thereforev apparently not used between 13-17 cents)
- σερμαγιά ‘financial capital’ (< T *sermaye*) been superseded by AG κεφάλαιο(ν) (‘chief point’; Kriaras lists only one instance of this word being used in the sense ‘sum of money’, which suggests it was v rare till modern times).

Replacement of one native Greek word by another (further examples like πρόβλημα and πραγματευτής above)

¹⁷ We need a Συναγωγή παλαιών λέξεων!

¹⁸ Πολιτικός κώδιξ του Πριγκιπάτου της Μολδαβίας (1817), Index, where οικογένεια is glossed as «πατριά, φαμιλία, Familia», and defined in para. 48 of the Code as parents and πάντες οι κατιόντες αυτών. Koumanoudis, expressing ignorance of its first use in its modern meaning, gives Pikkolos 1819 and Korais 1821; he adds that Voulgaris 1801 uses φαμιλία (Koumanoudis doesn’t refer to the Moldavian Code).

- vernacular noun διάφορο, primarily ‘profit’ and secondarily ‘interest’ (medieval)¹⁹ was replaced by AG κέρδος in the sense of ‘profit’ and τόκος in the sense of ‘interest’ (AG ‘childbirth’ and metaphorically ‘profit’)
- early modern ζήτημα ‘demand, request’ was replaced by the AG words αίτημα ‘demand’ and παράκλησις ‘request’ (AG ‘appeal, invocation’), while ζήτημα came to mean ‘matter or question (for discussion)’ (closer to its AG meaning)
- vernacular καρβοτσάκισμα, the expressive noun meaning ‘shipwreck’, has been replaced by the less forceful AG ναύαγιο(v)
- vernacular ξεφαντώνω ‘enjoy oneself’ (extremely common in Medieval Greek) has been replaced by διασκεδάζω (AG διασκεδάννυμι ‘scatter’; διασκεδάζω doesn’t appear at all in Kriaras)
- vernacular χωρατό ‘a joke’ & χωρατεύω ‘I joke’ have been replaced by αστείο & αστειεύομαι (the verb was used in this sense esp. from early centuries AD onwards); Dehèque gives the first pair (χωρατό & χωρατεύω) but not the second (αστείο & αστειεύομαι), though he has the adjective αστείος and the verb αστείζομαι, both of which were also used in AG²⁰
- vernacular ανταμώνω and ancient and medieval απαντώ ‘I meet’ were largely superseded in that meaning by συναντώ, whereas in SMG απαντώ means ‘I answer’
- vernacular γιάνω and γιατρεύομαι ‘I am cured’ have been largely superseded by θεραπεύομαι (θεραπεύω in Classical & Medieval Greek has wider senses: ‘serve, attend to, take care of’ etc.) – but cf. Ιατρέ, θεράπευσον σεαυτόν [Luke 4,23] ‘Physician, health thyself’ = modern vernacular Γιατρέ, γιάτρεψε τον εαυτό σου)

Formal archaization of existing vernacular words in SMG

The forms of a number of vernacular words have been re-archaized in SMG, though the older vernacular form may still exist as a colloquial alternative. Examples:

- γιοφύρι ‘bridge’ has become γέφυρα
- ποτάμι ‘river’ has become ποταμός
- κορφή ‘summit’ has become κορυφή

¹⁹ ‘Profit’ rather than ‘interest’ in Pappasynadinos (Paolo Oderico, *Conseils et mémoires de Synadinos prêtre de Serrès en Macédoine (XVIIe siècle)* (Paris 1996), pp. 186-7). Also, in some varieties of Greek, the adjective διαφορετικός meant ‘profitable’ rather than ‘different’ (its present-day meaning).

²⁰ In addition, μετ(ε)ωρίζω and μετ(ε)ωρίζομαι were used in Medieval Greek for both ‘enjoy oneself’ and ‘joke’.

- νιος ‘young man’ has become νέος
- σύγνεφο ‘cloud’ has become σύννεφο
- αρμυρός ‘salty’ has become αλμυρός
- νοίκι ‘rent’ has become ενοίκιο[v]
- υστερώ: AG and SMG ‘I lag behind’; in medieval/early modern ‘I deprive’, due to confusion with στερώ (AG and SMG ‘I deprive’); now corrected to στερώ in this meaning.
- παρρησιάζω ‘I present’ (medieval/early modern, while the passive παρρησιάζομαι was used in both its “correct” and its “erroneous”: ‘I speak openly’ and ‘I present myself’); corrected to παρουσιάζω in the sense of ‘I present’.²¹

Words apparently unavailable to Iakovos Polykas in 1859 when translating Solomos’ Italian thoughts on his poem “Οι ελεύθεροι πολιορκισμένοι”:

- *processo*: Polykas έργο ‘work’ (now διαδικασία, which in AG meant ‘law suit’, which is another meaning of Italian *processo*)
- *destini*: Polykas μέλλον ‘future’ (now πεπρωμένα)
- *transcendente*: Polykas υπερφυσικός ‘supernatural’ (now υπερβατικός; Koumanoudis notes that this adjective, which has been revived to mean ‘transcendent’, was used in AG in a technical sense in the study of grammar and rhetoric to refer to a writer ‘who frequently uses *hyberbaton*’!) (change of normal word order: the soon to be announced plans). The modern use of υπερβατικός is a wonderful example of the way Greek linguistic reformers picked up disused and sometimes highly abstruse linguistic material and recycled it to provide old-fashioned Greek clothing for modern European thought – it’s a bit like taking your grandparents’ clothes to Oxfam so they can be worn by a younger generation.
- Cf. also *soggetto* [‘subject’ in sense of ‘theme’] (Polykas υποκείμενο,²² properly θέμα; though he does use υπόθεσις for the subject (plot) of a literary work; Koumanoudis dates the adjective υποκειμενικός ‘subjective’ to 1871 and αντικειμενικός ‘objective’ to 1861, and αντικείμενα = πράγματα (F *objets*) to 1853).

²¹ The medieval/early modern confusion between the verbs παρουσιάζω and παρρησιάζω didn’t affect the noun phrase Δευτέρα Παρουσία ‘Second Coming’.

²² This use of υποκείμενον for ‘subject’ (e.g. of discussion) is found in other texts from the Ionian Islands (Platon Petrides?), perhaps under Italian and English influence.

Many ancient words were revived in order to denote modern institutions and modern abstract concepts (note that the semantic fields of some of the words in MG are often narrower and more specific than in AG), e.g.

- Ἄρειος Πάγος ‘supreme court’ (AG: originally ‘hill of Ares at Athens’),
- βουλή ‘parliament’ (in reports from France published in the Greek newspaper *Εφημερίς*, Vienna, 1791-7)²³ (AG: ‘will, determination, advice, design, deliberation, decree, Council of elders, Senate’; Medieval Greek usually ‘opinion, advice, thought’) (εφημερίς (SMG εφημερίδα) ‘newspaper’ is another such revived word: in AG a diary or journal recording daily events)
- γυμνάσιο[v] ‘high school’ (AG: ‘exercise, gymnastic school, school’),
- δήμαρχος ‘mayor’ (AG: at Athens, ‘chief official of a δήμος’),
- δραχμή ‘drachma’ (AG: ‘drachm (weight); a silver coin worth six obols’),
- μουσείο[v] ‘museum’ (AG: ‘shrine, seat or haunt of the Muses, home of music or poetry, philosophical school and library’),
- νομός ‘prefecture (administrative region)’ (by 1817)²⁴ (AG: originally ‘place of pasturage’),
- πολιτισμός ‘civilization’ (Korais 1829) (Hellenistic: ‘the administration of public affairs’),²⁵
- πρύτανις ‘vice-chancellor, rector’ (AG: ‘ruler; at Athens, member of the tribe presiding in the βουλή or ἐκκλησία; chief magistrate’),
- συνέδριο[v] ‘conference’ (AG: ‘council, meeting, council-chamber’) and
- φροντιστήριο[v] ‘private tutorial school’ (AG: ‘thinking-shop’ in Aristophanes’ *Clouds*).

Re-Hellenization often entails semantic westernization (cf. πρόβλημα above)

In SMG some words of AG origin have been semantically aligned to the meaning of cognate words in modern western European languages.

²³ Tonnet (internet). Cf. βουλή: «το τουρκιστί Διβάνι» (*Πολιτικός κώδιξ του Πριγκιπάτου της Μολδαβίας* (1817), Index, s.v.).

²⁴ *Πολιτικός κώδιξ του Πριγκιπάτου της Μολδαβίας*, Index; [Herodotus]: division of land in Egypt after the Nile flood, *ibid.*, s.v. χωραρχία, which is glossed as “my” (i.e. prince Skarlatos Kallimachis’?) translation of καδλίκι, which the Moldavians call τζινούτον and the Wallachians Ζουδέτζον [Rom. *județ*], and some call νομός.

²⁵ The word was introduced in its modern meaning by Korais in 1829. In antiquity it is only attested once: in Diogenes Laertius (third century AD).

- κριτήριο, which meant ‘law court’ in Ancient, Medieval and Early Modern Greek, gave way to AG δικαστήριο(v) in this meaning, while κριτήριο came to mean ‘criterion’.
- βάσις: AG orig. ‘step’, now ‘basis’ and ‘base’ (like Fr. and It. *base*).²⁶
- ιστορία:
 1. AG orig. ‘enquiry’;
 2. medieval ‘narration’ and ‘picture’, and even ‘the act of decorating a church with frescos’ (associated with verb (ι)στορώ);²⁷
 3. SMG ‘history’ and ‘story’ (like Fr. *histoire* and It. *storia*) (note that the visual sense of the word in medieval/early modern Greek has been abandoned).
- θεωρία: the multiple meanings of this word in Ancient and Medieval Greek have given way to a more precise and limited meaning in SMG:
 1. medieval/early modern:²⁸ ‘view; spectacle; appearance; good looks; gaze, glance; ornament; dream, vision; visit’; also adjective θεωρητικός ‘who has an impressive appearance’;²⁹ (all these meanings are related to the visual; cf. the associated medieval/early modern verb θ[ε]ωρώ ‘I see’).
 2. SMG: ‘theory’ (abstract rather than visual).
- μαθηματικός: AG ‘fond of learning; mathematical; mathematician’; early modern ‘learnèd, skilled’; SMG ‘mathematical; mathematician’
- κυβερνώ: AG ‘I steer; I govern’; medieval/early modern ‘I run or manage [something]’, including in a financial sense (e.g. κυβερνώ το σπίτι μου³⁰ ‘I run/manage my household’); SMG ‘I govern’, like *gouverner, governare*, etc. in western European languages.

Neologisms

Since the late eighteenth century many thousands of new Greek words have been invented to cover aspects of modern culture and science. Almost all of these were formed in order to translate already existing terms in western European languages, and they were mostly formed

²⁶ See Peri 96.

²⁷ E.g. Papasynadinos, p. 246.

²⁸ Based on Kriaras.

²⁹ Still in Terzakis’ novel, *Η πριγκιπέσσα Ιζαμπώ* (1945).

³⁰ Papasynadinos, p. 278.

from *Ancient* Greek stems and according to *Ancient* Greek rules of derivational morphology, e.g.

- πανεπιστήμιο[v] ‘university’ (1810),
- ισολογισμός ‘balance sheet’ (1813),
- λογοκρισία ‘censorship’ (1826) – all of the above were created by Korais,
- στρατοδικείο[v] ‘court martial’ (1847),
- νομοσχέδιο[v] ‘draft law’ (1849: calque – i.e. literal translation – of G *Gesetzentwurf*),
- αμερόληπτος ‘unbiased’ (1856),
- αντιπολίτευσις/η ‘opposition party’ (1856),
- νηπιαγωγείο[v] ‘infant school’ (1865),
- ψυχραιμία ‘*sang-froid*’ (1873: calque).

The Department of Lost Words

The folklorist Jean Pio wrote in 1879 of “the rich treasure of folk tales which the common people of the Greek lands still possess, but which the progress of enlightenment threatens to efface overnight”.³¹ Zisimos Lorentzatos adapts this quotation to apply to the vernacular Greek language rather than folk tales.³² As I’ve already implied, disappearing words and disappearing languages are like disappearing species and disappearing genera in the natural world: their disappearance leads to a decrease in the biodiversity of a particular region and of the world as a whole.

Nouns may drop out because the things they denote have disappeared as a result of changes in ways of life and material culture. For this reason it’s instructive to look at a couple of adverbs whose meanings are not subject to cultural changes. I’ve chosen the Greek equivalents of ‘opposite’ and ‘deliberately, on purpose’.

Opposite, i.e. facing (e.g. ‘she sat opposite me’)

³¹ “le riche trésor des contes populaires que le bas peuple des pays grecs possède encore, mais que le progrès des lumières menace de faire disparaître d’un jour à l’autre”: Jean Pio in J.-G. de Hahn, *Νεοελληνικά παραμύθια/Contes populaires grecs* (Copenhagen 1879), p. xi.

³² Partially quoted in Zisimos Lorentzatos, *Στου τιμονιού το αυλάκι* (Athens 1983), p. 101.

I will focus on three adverbs that have been used in this spatial sense in Medieval and Modern Greek: *αγνάντια*, *αντίκρυ* (or *άντικρυ* or *αντικρύ*) and *απέναντι*. There's also *καρσί* (< T *karṣi*), which I won't deal with.

AG has *ἄντικρυς* 'straight on' and *ἄντικρύ* 'opposite', but the former also came to be used to mean 'opposite'. *ἀπέναντι* too is ancient, though it is more common in Hellenistic than Classical texts.³³

Kriaras' dictionary of medieval vernacular Greek includes all three of these adverbs. While *αγνάντια* and *αντίκρυ* are frequently used in texts from the 13 to the 17 centuries, *απέναντι* is only attested twice. By contrast, only *απέναντι* is normally used in SMG.

The historical dictionary of the Academy of Athens (which, unlike Kriaras, is based, on oral sources) lists no fewer than 16 distinct derivatives of *αγνάντια*, including the verb *αγναντεύω* 'I observe from afar or from high up' and the noun *το αγνάντεμα* 'act of observation from afar; high place from which one can observe from afar', which Papadiamandis uses as the title of one of his most famous stories.

The Academy's historical dictionary shows *αντίκρυ* (with all three stresses and with a number of variants) to have been geographically widespread. It also lists 7 distinct derivatives of *αντίκρυ*, including the verb *αντικρύζω* 'I face', the adjective *αντικρυστός* 'facing' and the adverb *αντικρυστά* 'opposite'.

The Academy dictionary also shows that *απέναντι* was considerably rarer in the Greek dialects than either *αγνάντια* and *αντίκρυ* – in fact, it only cites one instance of its use, from Andros. Unlike *αγνάντια* and *αντίκρυ*, *απέναντι* has no derivatives, either in the dialects or in SMG.

Dehèque (1825) gives all three adverbs in the sense 'vis-à-vis'.

I don't know when *απέναντι* took over from the other two alternatives, but it must have been comparatively recently. *Αντίκρυ* is not often used nowadays except in literary registers, and *αντικρίζω* 'I face' is not that common either; only the noun *αντίκρισμα* is still commonly used, but chiefly only in metaphorical senses (including 'guarantee, security' in financial sense): *επιταγή χωρίς αντίκρισμα* (a cheque drawn on an account that has insufficient funds to cover it). As for *αγνάντια*, it has more or less completely disappeared.

Deliberately, expressly, on purpose

³³ Most of the citations in LSJ are from the Septuagint and the New Testament

One of the most frequently used words for this in SMG is *επίτηδες*. This seems to have been revived from AG. In Medieval and Early Modern Greek there are several sets of words meaning ‘on purpose’, including

- (α)ξάργου (*Φορτουνάτος*), ξαργού (Roumeli & elsewhere), (α)ξαργιτού (*Ερωτόκτιρος, Ροδολίνος*) (all from a phrase *εξ έργου*),
- *επιτούτο(ν), επιταυτού*³⁴
- (ξ)απόστα (Ionian Islands) (< It. *apposta*),
- *μαχσούς* (Constantinople) and *μαξούς* (e.g. Epirus, Macedonia, Mani, Crete, Chios, Lesbos) (< T. *mahsus*),

Korais mentions *ξάργου* several times in his writings on the MG language, as though it was very familiar to him. He says that it is equivalent in meaning to ancient *Επίτηδες* and *Εξεπίτηδες*. Typically, instead of insisting on the use of one or other of the ancient equivalents, Korais suggests using an etymologically “corrected” version of the colloquial word, concluding that “in this way our language gains an elegant adverb *Εξέργου*, not *Εξάργου*”.³⁵ This was part of his misguided effort to “defend” the use of MG against the attacks of the archaists by proposing the use of hybrid forms rather than purely ancient or purely modern ones. Typically, Korais’ corrected version didn’t catch on: like many of his attempts at “correction”, it was rejected by archaists and vernacularists alike.

Dehèque (1825) gives both *ξάργου* and *επίτηδες* in the sense ‘à dessein, exprès’. Both Dehèque and Babiniotis (1998) have *επιταυτού*, but it’s rarely used nowadays. Kriaras too has *επιταυτού* (with a single reference to the 17th-century Cretan writer Agapio Landos). Babiniotis doesn’t list any of the others.

Kriaras does not list *επίτηδες* at all, while he only quotes one instance of *εξεπίτηδες*.³⁶ The Academy’s historical dictionary hasn’t got as far as epsilon yet!

As with *απέναντι*, so with *επίτηδες*, it remains a mystery how this particular word came to prevail in SMG.

Morphological archaization

³⁴ Βηλαράς, “Βατραχομνομαχία”, l. 268. It requires a gloss in modern schoolbooks, such as when Photis Kondoglou uses it in “Ο αστρολάβος”.

³⁵ “κερδαίνει λοιπόν κομψόν επίρρημα η γλώσσα μας το *Εξέργου*, και όχι *Εξάργου*”. Korais, *Άτακτα*, vol. 1 (1828), p. 166.

³⁶ From the New Testament translation by Maximos Kallioupolitis (1638).

The AG final accent has been restored in the gen. pl. of 1st-declension nouns: των τεχνίτων ‘of the artisans’ and των επιστήμων ‘of the sciences’ have given way to των τεχνιτών and των επιστημών’.

Syntax & expression

SMG has been greatly enriched by the learned tradition in the use of AG discourse markers, and in particular logical connectives. These include άρα ‘therefore’, δηλαδή ‘that is to say, in other words’, ενώ ‘while’, εξίσου ‘equally’, εξού ‘hence’ and επίσης ‘also’.³⁷

Re-Hellenization can sometimes neutralize semantic distinctions

The archaization of formal varieties of Modern Greek was partly intended to make it richer and more expressive. Yet there are some instances where a distinction that was made in vernacular Greek has been lost in archaized formal styles. An example of this is the adverb πλέον. Babiniotis’ dictionary gives two quite distinct uses of πλέον in the examples ο πλέον σημαντικός συγγραφέας ‘the most significant author’ and ό,τι έγινε τότε ανήκει πλέον στο παρελθόν ‘what happened then now belongs to the past’. Vernacular Greek distinguishes between these two senses by using two distinct forms: πιο to form the comparative of adjectives and adverbs, and πια for the temporal use: ο πιο σημαντικός συγγραφέας and ό,τι έγινε τότε ανήκει πια στο παρελθόν. While πλέον is an ancient form, neither of these uses of it is Classical. Kriaras mentions only one medieval author (Kartanos) who uses the form πλέον to form a superlative (τα πλέον χειρότερα and none in the temporal sense. I suspect that πλέον here is a pseudo-archaization of πιο & πια.

Another example is the avoidance of the doubling object pronoun, which neutralizes a useful communicative distinction:

- Τον πρόεδρο υποδέχτηκε στο αεροδρόμιο ο Υπουργός Εξωτερικών instead of
- Τον πρόεδρο τον υποδέχτηκε στο αεροδρόμιο ο Υπουργός Εξωτερικών

³⁷ According to Kriaras’ dictionary of medieval vernacular Greek, άρα is only attested in a single text (laws of Cyprus), δηλαδή only once (Prodromos; the ancient conjunction ήγουν [same meaning] was used frequently in Medieval and Early Modern Greek but is now obsolete), ενώ in a single text (*Chronicle of the Morea*, but in a spatial sense ‘where’), εξίσου only twice, εξού rarely (and in a different meaning) and επίσης rarely (and only in the meaning ‘equally’ rather than ‘also’).

It's as if the writer of the first example is emphasizing that it is the president that was welcomed by the minister of foreign affairs, as opposed to someone else. In 1800 no Greek except an archaist would have constructed a sentence in this way.

Conclusion

The result of these transformations in the Greek language is that the Greeks today possess what I have called “a language in the image of the nation”: in keeping with the transformations in the communal identity of the Greeks, a language which clearly displayed the influence of Italian and Turkish as well as its relationship with Ancient Greek and which embodied and expressed a common Balkan culture has been transformed into a language which even more clearly displays its relationship with Ancient Greek but which at the same time is capable of embodying and expressing a common modern European culture. Thus through their language the Greeks demonstrate that they are, in the words of their Declaration of Independence, both the descendants of the Hellenes and the contemporaries of the present nations of Europe.