The survival of Cappadocian Greek

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1. The Early History of Cappadocia

Cappadocia is a historical region located in Central Anatolia (map 1). Its history goes back to the second millennium BC, when the Hittites ruled over most of Asia Minor from the beginning of the sixteenth century until the collapse of the Hittite Empire around 1180 BC. A number of Syro- or Neo-Hittite kingdoms emerged during the Iron Age in south-eastern Asia Minor and northern Syria, including the Luwian-speaking kingdom of Tabal which was centered around the ancient city of Kanesh about 20 km northeast of Mazaka (Caesarea) and annexed as an Assyrian province in 713 by the Neo-Assyrian king Sargon II (r. 722–705). In the sixth century BC, Cappadocia becomes the battlefield of two great powers: the Lydian Empire under Croesus (r. c. 560–c. 546) and the Persian Achaemenid Empire under Cyrus the Great (r. 559–530). Croesus famously asked the oracle at Delphi whether to send an army against the Persians, upon which he was told, with typical ambiguity, that if he should do so, ‘he would destroy a great empire’. A great empire was indeed destroyed, but it was Croesus’ and not Cyrus’, who took Sardis in 546.

Herodotus tells us that the name Cappadocia (Καππαδοκία) is Persian (Historiae 7.72). As a matter of fact, it is first attested in the famous trilingual Behistun inscription by Darius the Great (522–486), where it is written as Katpatukaš in Elamite, Katpatukka in Babylonian and Katpatuka in Old Persian cuneiform. Herodotus also informs us that the Greeks called the inhabitants ‘Syrians’ (Συροί) and not ‘Cappadocians’, as the Persians did (Historiae 1.72, 5.49), which must be a reference to the Syro-Hittites mentioned above. Writing in the first decades of our era, Strabo (64/3 BC–c. AD 21/2) notes that the Cappadocian ‘Syrians’ this side of the Taurus (ἐν τῷ Τaurusῷ) were called ‘White Syrians’ (Ἀθέαντες Συρίαν), while those who had a darker complexion (ἰκεῖον ἐπικαλαμένιον τῆς χρώματος) (Geographia 12.3-9).

2. The Hellenization of Cappadocia

Under Darius the Great, Katpatuka became the third satrapy in the Achaemenid Empire. Only three Cappadocian satraps are known by name. The last is also the most famous: Ariarathes, who became satrap in 350 and refused to submit to Alexander the Great (r. 336–323) after the latter’s conquest of Asia Minor in 334. As Ariarathes I (r. 331–322), he became the ancestor of the Ariarathid dynasty, who ruled the kingdom of Cappadocia (map 1) from 331 BC until 17 AD, when it was annexed as a Roman province. Despite their Persian descent, the Ariarathids became increasingly philhellenic, as can be gathered from the epitaphs of Ariarathes V (r. 163–130): Εὐσεβὴς Φιλοπάτωρ, about whom Mommsen writes: ‘Durch ihn drang [die hellenistische Bildung] ein in das bis dahin fast barbarische Kappadokien’. During the Cappadocian kingdom, the Greek language spread slowly but steadily in Cappadocia. The process of Hellenization was reinforced after the Roman annexation by Tiberius.
Map 2: Byzantine Empire under Basilius II Porphyrogenitus (r. 976–1025)

3. Cappadocian: the original language

At the same time there is evidence that the original Cappadocian language continued to be spoken in the first centuries of our era. In the story of Pentecost described in Acts, the Apostles began to speak ‘in other tongues’ (έτερας γλώσσας, 2.4), thus enabling the amased listeners to hear them speak ‘in their own language’ (τῇ ἑδίκελττα, 2.6–8). Among the many speakers of other tongues mentioned in this passage are ‘the inhabitants of Cappadocia’ (οἱ κατοικούντες τὴν Καππαδοκίαν, 2.9).

In the so-called Sibylline Oracles, a collection of oracular prophecies written in hexameters by Jewish and Christian writers between approximately 150 BC and 180 AD, both the Cappadocians and the Arabs are called ‘speakers of a foreign tongue’ (βαρβαροφωνον, Oracula Sibyllina 3.516). Xenophon of Ephesus, a second-century novelist, mentions a certain Hippothous who knew the language of the Cappadocians and as a result was treated by them as one of their own.  

The question is what kind of language Cappadocian actually was. It cannot have been Old Persian, as the Ariarathids promted the Greek language and culture and before them Aramaic was the lingua franca in the Achaemenid Empire. Median and Parthian, two other Iranian languages, are mentioned by name among the other tongues spoken by the Apostles at Pentecost (Acts 2.9). Median is also mentioned in what must be the most blatant case of a missed opportunity to identify the Cappadocian language. One of the three Cappadocian Fathers, Gregory of Nyssa (330–395), cites words for ‘heaven’ in different languages:10 ἡμείς οὐρανὸν τοῦτο λέγομεν, σαμαίς ὁ Ἐβραῖος, ὁ Ρωμαῖος κελαύν, και ἀλλὰς ὁ Σύρος, ὁ Μέδος, ὁ Καππαδοκίας, ὁ Μαυρουσιος, ὁ Σκύθης, ὁ Εβραῖς, ὁ Αἰγύπτιος.11

We call it ouranos, the Hebrew śamāyim, the Roman caelum, and still otherwise the Syrian, the Mede, the Cappadocian, the Moor, the Scythetic, the Thracian, the Egyptian.

From this quotation we can deduce that Cappadocian was in any case different from the two Iranian languages Median and Scythian and from Syriac, a dialect of Middle Aramaic belonging to the (Northwest) Semitic language family. But why on earth did Gregory fail to mention the word for ‘heaven’ in the indigenous language of his homeland, where Cappadocian was apparently still spoken in the fourth century AD? This is confirmed by another Cappadocian Father, Basil the Great of Caesarea (330–379), who notes that the use of καὶ ‘and’ instead of σὺν ‘with’ in the doxology12 is obligatory for grammatical reasons in the Syriac traditions of Mesopotamia as well as in his native Cappadocian language.13

Although we can again deduce that Cappadocian is different from Syriac,  

7 Albert Thumb, Die griechische Sprache im Zeitalter des Hellenismus: Beiträge zur Geschichte und Beurteilung des Koinōn (Strassburg 1901), p. 102–103.

8 The juxtaposition of Cappadocians and Arabs confirms the interpretation of βαρβαρόφωνον as ‘speaking a foreign language’, not ‘speaking Greek badly’ (cf. fn. 14).

9 ἡμείς οὖν τὸν τοῦτο λέγομεν, σαμαίς ὁ Ἐβραῖος, ὁ Ρωμαῖος κελαύν, και ἀλλὰς ὁ Σύρος, ὁ Μέδος, ὁ Καππαδοκίας, ὁ Μαυρουσιος, ὁ Σκύθης, ὁ Εβραῖς, ὁ Αἰγύπτιος.11

10 Contra Eunomium = Patrologia Graeca 45.1045. 11 It may be noted that the editor of the Patrologia Graeca, the French scholar-priest Jacques-Paul Migne (1800–1875), inadvertently also included the Hebrew and the Latin words for ‘heaven’ as if they were French: σαμαίς for σαμαίμ (Hebrew šamāyim) and κελαύν for κελοῦν (caelum, in its vulgar Latin pronunciation with monophthongized oe > e). 12 The canonical form is ἡμείς σὺν τῷ Θεῷ, 13 Κατακολούθησα δὲ εὖ τὸν λέγομεν ἡμείς ὑπέρ τῶν Καππαδοκίων ἡμέρας τῶν συμμαχίας τῶν εἰς Καππαδοκίαν. 14 We call it ouranos, the Hebrew śamāyim, the Roman caelum, and still otherwise the Syrian, the Mede, the Cappadocian, the Moor, the Scythetic, the Thracian, the Egyptian. 15 Although we can again deduce that Cappadocian is different from Syriac, 16 Contra Eunomium = Patrologia Graeca 45.1045. 17 It may be noted that the editor of the Patrologia Graeca, the French scholar-priest Jacques-Paul Migne (1800–1875), inadvertently also included the Hebrew and the Latin words for ‘heaven’ as if they were French: σαμαίς for σαμαίμ (Hebrew śamāyim) and κελαύν for κελοῦν (caelum, in its vulgar Latin pronunciation with monophthongized oe > e). 18 The canonical form is ἡμείς σὺν τῷ Θεῷ, 19 Κατακολούθησα δὲ εὖ τὸν λέγομεν ἡμέρας τῶν συμμαχίας τῶν εἰς Καππαδοκίαν. 20 De spiritu sancto (2.9).

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it seems unlikely that Basil’s statement is tantamount to saying that the two languages are otherwise related or, in other words, that Cappadocian might be a Northwest Semitic language related to Syriac. The Syriac word for ‘heaven(s)’ is šmayyā (Syriac, Aramaic šāmāyim) quoted by Gregory of Nyssa not to allow a connection with the Cappadocian word for ‘heaven’, if Cappadocian were indeed a Northwest Semitic language. The best educated guess is that the original Cappadocian language was related to or, indeed, descended from the language spoken in the Neo-Hittite Kingdom of Tabal and even before that in the Hittite Empire: Luwian, an Anatolian language related to Hittite. Unfortunately, the evidence remains circumstantial and not substantial.14

4. Cappadocian: the Greek variety

Whatever the identity of the original Cappadocian language, we do know that it had a profound effect on the quality of the Greek spoken in Cappadocia. Following Strabo, it could be argued that the Cappadocians were known to ‘speak Greek like a barbarian’ (βαρβαρίζειν or βαρβαροφωνεῖν).15 Judging from the following epigram attributed to Lucian, the ineloquence of the Cappadocians was proverbial:16

Figure 1: Gospel according to Matthew in Karamanlidika

He declined with a heavy accent, as is characteristic of the Cappadocians, making his consonants strike together, shortening the long syllables and lengthening the short ones.

The third Cappadocian Father, Gregory of Nazianzus (329–390), too, alludes to the barbaric accent of the Cappadocians in his speech to the conciliated clergy of Constantinople.18

άπηγγελε σαχεία τῆς γλώσσης καὶ ως Καππαδόκας ξύνθες, ξυγκρούσις.

14 Strabo notes that Cappadocian is closely related to another unidentified language from Asia Minor called ‘Cataonian’ (Geographia 12.1.2).
15 Strabo glosses both βαρβαρίζειν and βαρβαροφωνεῖν as ἡξαυτίζεσθαι ‘speak Greek badly’ (Geographia 12.1.28). Cf. fn. 8.
16 Anthologia Palatina 11.436.
17 Vitae Sophistarum 2.13. ‘making his consonants strike together’ refers to the syncope of unstressed vowels (cf. fn. XX).
18 Oratio XXXIII = Patrologia Graeca 36.224.
After the division of the Roman Empire at the death of Theodosius in 395, Greek naturally remained the official language of the Eastern Roman Empire, although the Byzantines continued to call themselves 'Romans' (ῬΩΜΑΙΟΙ) and their language 'Roman' (ῬΩΜΑΙΚΑ). We have no evidence, either direct or indirect, about the quality of the 'barbaric' speech of the Cappadocians in the second half of the first millennium, but we do know that they were considered 'barbaric' in their behaviour.

The Byzantine Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (r. 913–959), discussing the proverbial 'malice' (ΚΑΚΟΤΡΟΠΙΑ) of the Cappadocians, quotes a saying about the 'three worst kappas' (ΤΡΙΑ ΚΑΠΠΑ ΚΑΙΣΙΤΑ): Cappadocia, Crete and Cilicia. The sixth-century poet Demodocus of Leros calls the Cappadocians 'bad as can be' (ΦΑΥΛΕΠΙΦΑΥΛΟΤΑΤΟΙ) and even coins a verb 'Cappadociānize' (ΚΑΠΠΑΔΟΚΙΣΩ). In the twelfth century, Theodore Prodromos called Cappadocia a 'land flooded by barbarians' (ΓΕΒΑΡΒΑΡΟΧΟΥΜΕΝΗ). This, however, is not a reference to the 'barbaric' Cappadocians, but to the Seljuk Turks, who had invaded Cappadocia in the eleventh century. In 1071, the Byzantine forces led by emperor Romanus IV Diogenis

Map 3a: Greek-speaking villages in Cappadocia (Political map of Turkey)
(r. 1068–1071) had been defeated by the Seljuk army led by sultan Alp Arslan (r. 1063–1072) in the battle at Manzikert on the eastern border of the Byzantine Empire (map 2, p. 50). Six years later, the Seljuk commander Suleiman ibn Qutulmish (r. 1077–1086) founded the independent Sultanate of Rûm in Asia Minor, which bore the Turkish name of its Byzantine inhabitants.27 The Sultanate of Rûm lasted until the fourteenth century, when it desintegrated into a number of beyliks (‘principalities’). The most important of these was the Beylik of Karaman, centered around the city of Karaman in Cilicia, named after Kerimeddin Karaman Bey, the thirteenth-century Turkmen founder of the Karamanid dynasty (exact dates unknown). It was eventually annexed in 1468 by the Ottomans under Mehmed II (r. 1451–1481), whose son Mustafa became in 1483 the first governor of the Ottoman Elayet (‘province’) of Karaman, centered around Cappadocia. Fifteen years before the annexation, Mehmed the Conqueror had of course captured Constantinople, thus putting an end to the thousand year Byzantine empire.

In the centuries following the battle of Manzikert, Cappadocia became subject to a process of Turkicization. Linguistically speaking, this entailed widespread Greek-Turkish bilingualism, more often than not resulting in Turkish monolingualism. The shift from Greek to Turkish did not necessarily imply conversion to Islam, as the annexation, Mehmed the Conqueror had of course captured Constantinople, thus putting an end to the thousand year Byzantine empire.28 Notandum est, quod in multis partibus Turcie reperiantur clerici, episopi et arciepiscopi qui portant vestimenta infidelium et locuntur linguam Ipsorum et nihil aliud scient in Greco proferre nisi missam cantare et evangelium et epistolam. Alias autem orationes dicunt in lingua Turcorum.

It has to be noted that in many parts of Turkey priests, bishops and archbishops are to be found who wear the garments of the infidels and speak their language and cannot utter anything in Greek except the liturgy and the gospels and the epistles. The sermons, however, are delivered in the language of the Turks.

The Turkish-speaking Christians referred to in the report are called Karamanlides (Καραμάνλιδες), whose origin is disputed, although their name identifies them as inhabitants of the Beylik of Karaman.29 Their language is called Karamanlidika (Καραμάνλιδικα), an Anatolian variety of Turkish written in the Greek alphabet instead of the Ottoman script derived from the Perso-Arabic alphabet.30 An example is the beginning of the Gospel according to Matthew (fig. 1, p. 51):

\[
\text{Διδοσιι} \ \text{ογλο} \ \text{Δαυ} \ \text{ογλο} \ \text{Ηποο} \ \text{Χριστοοον} \ \text{τιανοοιλοον} \ \text{καταληπη} \text{ει}.
\]

29 Turkish Karaman-lı means (someone) ‘belonging to Karaman’.
30 On Karamanlidika see especially Evangelia Balta, Beyond the language frontier: Studies on the Karamanlis and the Karamanlidika printing (Istanbul 2010), and many other publications by the same author.
31 The diacritics are used in later Karamanlidika orthography to distinguish Turkish from Greek sounds: \(\alpha = \iota, \eta = \epsilon, \tau = \rho\), cf. Stelios Irakleous, ‘On the development of Karamanlidika writing systems based on sources of the period 1764–1895’, Mediterranean Language Review 20 (2013), p. 57–95. Note that \(\theta\) and \(\sigma\) had become fricatives \(v\) and \(\phi\) already in the Roman Period, \(b\) and \(d\) being written \(\mu\) and \(\nu\) in Modern Greek orthography. It should also be noted that the pronunciation of \(\eta\) had changed to \(i\) in the same period and that \(\eta\) is used in Karamanlidika orthography to represent the Turkish \(i\).
32 Dawkins (fn. 28), p. 18.
33 Dawkins (fn. 28), p. 198.
establishment of schools in the Greek-speaking villages, as Dawkins observes in a preliminary study: ‘The difference between the local speech and the Greek of the schools is so great that the schoolmaster’s efforts rather go to substitute another language for the local dialect than gradually correct it’. The use of the phrase ‘another language’ emphasizes the linguistic distance between Cappadocian and the common Greek of the time. The distance between Cappadocian and older Greek was unbridgeable as well according to Dawkins: ‘For the same reason the liturgical use of Greek has had little or no effect. The older generation of priests hardly understood the services, and the people not at all. If it is necessary to make the people understand, Turkish is used. When I was at Fertek, the bishop was there, and the sermon which he preached was Turkish, and so was nearly all his conversation with his flock’.

Dawkins also felt that Cappadocian was threatened by the politics of the ‘constitutional régime of New Turkey’, including a ‘great increase of emigration’ and ‘renewed persecutions’. Dawkins wrote this in his preface dated 24 October 1915, when the Young Turks had restored the Ottoman Constitution following the revolution of 1908. The Ottomans had lost most of their Balkan territories, called Rumelia, in the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913 (map 4) and entered the First World War as one of the Central Powers. During the war, the Ottoman Empire had engaged in a genocide against the Armenian, Assyrian and Orthodox Christians in Anatolia, the first effects of which Dawkins witnessed ‘in the days that immediately followed the outbreak of the war’.

At the Paris Peace Conference, which opened on 18 January 1919, the Greek prime minister Eleftherios Venizelos (1864–1936), who had brought Greece into the war on the side of the Entente Powers, secured allied support to occupy Smyrna (Izmir) and its hinterland in May, an occupation ratified in the Treaty of Sèvres of August 1920, which also forced the Ottomans to cede East Thrace to Greece (map 4). The invasion of Asia Minor was inspired by the so-called ‘Great Idea’ (Μεγάλη ιδέα), an irredentist project which had played a major role in Greek politics since the Greek war of independence (1821–1832) and the resulting establishment of an independent kingdom of Greece. Proponents of the ‘Great Idea’ aspired the restoration of the Byzantine Empire, or as Venizelos would call it ‘Greece of the two continents and the five seas’ (Ελλάς τῶν δύο ἑπτάων καὶ τῶν πέντε θαλασσιών), and its former capital Constantinople, which had been occupied by allied forces since November 1918. It was not to be. The Turkish revolutionaries around Mustafa Kemal (1881–1938), surnamed Atatürk ‘Father of the Turks’ in 1934, launched a counterattack and the ‘Great Idea’ literally went up in smoke in the great fire of Smyrna in September 1922. The Greeks call this event the ‘Asia Minor Catastrophe’ (Μικρασιατική Καταστροφή), a disaster deemed greater than the fall of Constantinople in 1453, as it effectively put an end to Hellenism in Asia Minor. The Allies, who had changed camp during the Greek-Turkish war, abandoned the Treaty of Sèvres and negotiated with the Turkish National Movement the Treaty of Lausanne of July 1923, which recognized the independence

34 Dawkins (fn. 28), p. 362. I have left Dawkins transcription more or less unchanged and refrain from providing a grammatical analysis in order to allow the reader to fully appreciate the extremely ‘corrupt condition’ of Ulağaç Cappadocian. Note, however, the productive Cappadocian imperfect formations in -išk-; γινεκ (ginik), δισκα (disku), πασβότιν (pasbouti), beslëttinškan (besletmek, Turkish beslemek, causative of beslemek ‘feed’). Turkish loanwords are printed in boldface.

35 Dawkins (fn. 28), p. v.

36 Dawkins, ‘Modern Greek in Asia Minor’, American Journal of Archaeology 30 (1910), p. 120 (my italics).

37 Ibidem.

38 Cf. supra with fn. 28.

39 Dawkins (fn. 28), p. v.

40 Ottoman Turkish Rûm-eli (روم ايلي), cf. fn. 27.

41 Dawkins (fn. 28), p. vi.

42 A very good and very readable overview of the establishment and expansion of the Greek state can be found in Richard Clogg, A concise history of Greece (3rd ed. Cambridge 2013).
of the Republic of Turkey and its sovereignty over Ionia, East Thrace and Constantinople (Istanbul).

6. The Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey

The Treaty of Lausanne was preceded by the Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations of January 1923. The ‘Exchange’, as it was simply called in Greek (Ἀνθρωπωθία) and Turkish (Mücaadelen), was in fact a compulsory expulsion of at least 1.2 million Orthodox Christians from Turkey and about 400,000 Muslims from Greece. It was not based on language or, indeed, ethnicity, but instead on religious identity, the Orthodox Christians being members of the Ottoman ‘nation’ or millet (أمة مقدسة) regardless of their language or ethnicity.43

According to a 1924 census, 22 out of 61 Christian communities in Cappadocia were Greek-speaking, i.e. bilingual Greek-Turkish (map 3b, p. 53), whereas 39 were monolingual Turkish-speaking, numbering 22,027 (55%). Some of the monolingual Turkish-speaking communities were entirely Christian, such as Andaval (1812 inhabitants) or Limna (2007 inhabitants), whereas 39 were monolingual Turkish-speaking, numbering 22,027 speakers (55%). The figures for the Muslim population are often estimates and in a few cases lacking altogether, but certainly more than 100,000 against 22,027.

The above figures are extracted from the short demographic introductions to the collection of moving refugee accounts collected in the second of the four-volume series ‘The Exodus’ (Η Εξόδος).48 Many of these tell of the warm friendship with the Turkish neighbours, summarized in a frequently used phrase: με τους Τούρκους, περνώνομε καλά ‘we got on well with the Turks’.49 Another frequently used phrase refers to the day of farewell: κλάψανε οι Τούρκοι μας ‘our Turks wept’.50 The following excerpt from a Greek-speaking woman from Ulaşes illustrates this:51

Εκείνο [i.e. οι Τούρκοι], και μάλιστα οι Τούρκοι, πολύ λυπήθηκαν που φεύγαμε. Εκλαιγάν μας και ως τοις αραμπάδες που ανεβαίναμε έρχοντάς από τίπο τις μας και μάς αγκαλιάζανε και μάς φιλούσαν. “Να ξανάρθετε”, λέγανε, “Έμες άλλοι δεν θέλουμε. Έστει σήτε δικού μας”.

They [i.e. the Turks], especially the Turkish women, regretted very much that we were leaving. They were weeping with us and following us to the carts we were mounting and they were hugging us and kissing us. “You have to come back”, they kept on saying, “We don’t want others. You are our folks”.

Some mention the arrival of Muslim refugees from Greece, as this Turkish-speaking Christian from Kişadas:52

Θεμιμά πού ήρθαν οι Τούρκοι πρόσφυγες; Ελληνικά μιλούσαν και δεν τους καταλαβάζαμε. Λέγανε οι παλαιοί Τούρκοι: Τούρκοι φεύγουν κι Ελλήνες έρχονται.

I remember when the Turkish [i.e. Muslim] refugees came. They were speaking Greek and we didn’t understand them. The old [i. e. local] Turks would say: Turks are leaving and Greeks are coming.

Another, rather funny, story is told by a Greek-speaking Christian from Çeltik:53

Δεν μίνης προτού να φεύγουμε απ’ το Τοπολέ, ήρθαν Τούρκοι πρόσφυγες απ’ την Ελλάδα. Κρητικοί ήταν. Μιλούσαν ελληνικά, καλά ελληνικά. Κι έμες μιλούσαμε ελληνικά, άλλα δεν τους καταλαβάζαμε. Άγριοι άνθρωποι ήταν.

Two months before we left from Çeltik, Turkish [i.e. Muslim] refugees from Greece arrived. They were Cretans. They spoke Greek, good Greek. We, too, spoke Greek, but we didn’t understand them. They were wild people.54

A recurrent theme in ‘The Exodus’ is the nostalgia for the ‘lost homelands’ (χωμένες πατρίδες):55 φεύγαμε απ’ τον παράδεισο και πήγαμε στήν κόλαση ‘we left Paradise and went to Hell’.56 The Greek name for Greece was, of course, Ελλάς in Katharevousa (Καθαρεύουσα) or Ελλάδα in Demotic (Δημοτικά), but the Cappadocians only knew it by its Turkish name Yunanistan (يوغانيستان): Γιουνανιστάν or Γιουνανιστάν, etymologically ‘Land of the Ionians’.57 Although the Cappadocians resettled all over Greece, the majority was sent to the northern regions of Macedonia and Thrace, and to the central regions of Thessaly and Epirus, which had been ceded to Greece relatively recently (map 4). The memory of 400 years of ‘Turkish rule’ (Τουρκοκρατία) was still very much alive in these regions, where the Cappadocian and other Asia Minor refugees were received as if they were Turks:58 portant vestimenta infidelium et locuntur linguam ipsorum.59 In their lost homelands they were called γκιαονιστές.

43 On the Exchange and its consequences for both Christians and Muslims as well as for Greece and Turkey see the contributions in Renée Hirschon (ed.), Crossing the Aegean: An appraisal of the 1923 compulsory population exchange between Greece and Turkey (Oxford 2003), with Hirschon’s introductory papers “Unmixing peoples in the Aegean Region”, p. 3–12, and ‘Consequences of the Lausanne Convention: An overview’, p. 13–20. 44 Cf. fn. 27. 45 As a matter of fact, the Rûm Millet included Greek and Turkish-speaking Orthodox Greeks, Albanians, Bulgarians, Serbians, Vlachs, but also Georgian and Middle Eastern Christians. 46 Dawkins (fn. 28), p. 11. 47 The figures for the Muslim population are often estimates and in a few cases lacking altogether, but certainly more than 100,000 against 22,027.


50 Η Εξόδος (fn. 48), p. 75 et passim. 51 Η Εξόδος (fn. 48), p. 231. 52 Η Εξόδος (fn. 48), p. 224.
‘infidels’, in their new homeland τουρκόστορο ’Turkish bastards’. The negative attitude of the local Greeks towards the Cappadocian refugees provoked a negative self-attitude and identity. It is perhaps no coincidence that in some places Cappadocians still refer to their native language as ‘Karamanlidika’, regardless of whether it is actually Greek or Turkish. Apart from the negative linguistic attitude of the first- and second-generation speakers, which interrupted the natural transmission of Cappadocian from (grand)parents to (grand)children, the real threat came from the ‘absorption into the common Greek’, which was of course many times greater in Greece than it was in Cappadocia. Collaborators of the Centre for Asia Minor Studies (Κέντρο Μικρασιατικών Σπουδών), some of whom native speakers, published studies of the last remains of four Cappadocian dialects (Ulağaç, Aravan, Akso, Anaku) and ethnographic studies of three Cappadocian villages (Anaku, Misti, Akso), but all noted the threat of imminent language death due to the increasing pressure of common Greek.

By the 1970s, Cappadocian was generally believed to be an extinct leaguage. In 1981, the famous Greek dialectologist Kontosopoulos wrote the following interesting statement in his popular introduction to the Modern Greek dialects:

Whoever hears – or rather reads, as today these varieties are no longer spoken, since almost all of their speakers, refugees from 1922, have died – the Cappadocian dialect, does not know whether he is dealing with Turkish spoken by Greeks or with Greek spoken by Turks.

When I started studying Cappadocian in 1992, I naturally had to assume that it had indeed died out in the 1970s. Being the only linguist who was actively publishing grammatical studies of the language at the time, I was invited around the turn of the century to contribute the Cappadocian chapter to a monumental handbook of Modern Greek dialects, all the other contributors of which are Greek. When I submitted the first (English) version of my monograph-length chapter of about 100 pages in 2004, I had contented myself for more than a decade with studying yet another dead language, after Ancient Greek, Latin, Hebrew and Aramaic. Having thus gained some notoriety as an expert in Cappadocian linguistics, it so happened that in May 2005 I was asked by my dear friend and colleague Dimitris Papazachariou from the University of Patras to listen very carefully to a recording of a conversation between himself and two old Cappadocian men, one of whom had apparently said something in ‘the old language’ (τα παλαιά) which Dimitris could not make sense of. As can be imagined, I was very excited when the CD arrived and waiting impatiently for what could well be the last words in Cappadocian, as the speaker apparently had great difficulty in coming up with any. After listening to a long exchange in Greek, whenever Dimitris was involved, and in Turkish, whenever the men were talking among themselves, I finally heard the first spoken Cappadocian in my life:

patéra m’ δώικα φιάτα ἐπ’ ki patétam dôika fíea épki

My father made twelve children

It sounded as if a resurrected Homer had started reciting the Iliad before me! I was very emotional and at the same time very excited, as I could not only understand what the man had actually said, but also determine the particular dialect, which was unmistakably the variety originally spoken in the village of Semendere (map 3b, p. 53), because of the raising of unstressed e to i in dôika < διώκεια and especially the form of the aorist ἐτ’α(ν) instead of the augmentless form σοῖ(κ) or βοίκ(ν) in the two other vowel-raising dialects of Malakopi and Misti. It was perfectly Cappadocian in every respect: no article before a masculine noun in the

60 Christos Trizilis (ed.), Νεοελληνικά διάλεκτα (Thesaloniki 2020, in press).
61 Prof. Papazachariou is the new director of the University of Patras Laboratory of Modern Greek Dialects (Εργαστήριο Νεοελληνικών Διαλέκτων), founded in 2000 by Prof. Angela Ralli.
62 Cf. fn. 33.
I immediately booked a flight to Greece and together with Dimitris embarked on our search for what we believed must be one of the last, if not the last, of the Cappadocians to speak their native language. It soon turned out that there was not one, very old, speaker but many more, including third- and even fourth-generation. Of the fourteen Cappadocian dialects recorded by Dawkins, only Mišotika, the variety originally spoken in Mistsi, is still spoken to some extent, particularly in the villages of Neo Agioneri and Xirolori in Macedonia and Mandra in Thessaly. In 2015, I estimated the number of speakers at 2,800, although it is very difficult to distinguish between full native speakers and semi-speakers whose language is a mixture of Cappadocian and Modern Greek – and anyone in between. The best speakers and so my best informants are first-generation ‘grannies’ (γιαγιάς, many of whom spent most of their lives in and around home without knowing any Modern Greek. Unfortunately, most of them have died in the past fifteen years, including my favourite Kaka Depika (fig. 2). Second-generation women are more mobile and speak Modern Greek in addition to Cappadocian. The men have always been much more mobile than the women, even before the exchange.74 The danger of ‘absorption into the common Greek’ is of course the greatest in the speakers who are bilingual in Cappadocian and Modern Greek. Many of the digital recordings I have been making in collaboration with the Laboratory of Modern Greek Dialects bear witness to the increasing ‘re-Hellenization’ of Cappadocian.75

The Cappadocians meet every summer in August at their annual festival called ‘Gavoustima’ (Γαβουστήμα).76 In 2006, one year after our ‘rediscovery’ of Cappadocian, I was invited to the Gavoustima in Philippi to give a talk, half of which was in Modern Greek, the other half in Mišotika Cappadocian, translated from the Greek by my dear friend Lazaros Kotsanidis.77 The response from the audience was overwhelmingly emotional and grateful: a (visibly) foreign professor had spoken lovingly about their language in their language. The Metropolitan of Drama, His Eminence Paul, came to me and said: ‘You have lifted the shame of my people and restored their pride’. It was hard for me to believe it, and, accept that my long-term study of an extremely ‘corrupt’ and therefore extremely interesting variety of Greek could have such a huge societal impact. And yet it had and continues to have. I have been appointed an honorary member of various Cappadocian associations (σύλλογοι), including the Panhellenic Union of Cappadocian Societies (Πανέλληνα Ενώσεις Καππαδοκικών Σωματείων), who have given me the honorary title of ‘Embassador of the Cappadocians’ (Προσβελτικός των Καππαδοκίων). I have become an honorary speaker at the annual Gavoustima, where I traditionally address the audience in two Cappadocian varieties (Mišotika and Aksenítka) as well as in Pharašótika, a Greek variety related to Cappadocian and Pontic spoken in the southeastern part of Cappadocia (map 35, p. 53). Cappadocian, or at least its Mišotika variety, has seen a slight revival since my active involvement with the language and its speakers. They have become aware much more of the value of their native language which, as any other language, is the depository of their history, culture and identity, and a window to their world-view. There is now a public group on Facebook called ‘Start Learning the Teaching of the Dialect of Mišotiká’ (Εκμάθησης Μιστιτικού Ιδιωτικού),78 where people post questions or facts about their mother tongue. The original cover photo had a text written over it in the orthography designed by another dear friend, Thanasis Papanikolau:

γóż κιλντί, καλός ηρτς! γί έργου σ’ τι είναι σπάου; έμαρχα, άνοιξε ‘να σκόλεξες για ένα μποτάκια. αλλάς, ‘να τάσκω σε μι, ού-λα έμμερξα γέμια, πόμυ αντίμια! πς να πάς να να μάχ!’

χοί καληδ, καλός ιρτς! δ’ έργους τ’ υι τιςαί! άμαξα, ανίκαν ‘να ‘σκόλα. javá’ ni μισιόκιτα. αλίας ‘νι τιςαί ‘νι μι’ υιά ‘μαχα καπανα da, πόμαν ατίμα! τίζ να Ϝά να πάι μάχ!’

Welcome [in Turkish],79 welcome [in Mišotika]! What is your business here? I heard they opened a school. They are learning Mišotika. Is it true? We have all learned it, it still existed.80 Who is going to learn it? The text is decidedly optimistic, but the chances of its ultimate survival are unfortunately very slight: Mišotika is doomed to be absorbed into Modern Greek, as Dawkins had already foreseen in the 1910s.

The title of the Facebook group echoes the subtitle of a Greek version of ‘Teach Yourself Μισιόκιτα’ by Thomas Phates.81 The main title is a very current expression in Mišotika, which I repeat here with the plural form of the personal pronoun, as I believe it is an appropriate ending to this article:82

χογιάς ας χαριά! χογιάς ας χαριά!

God bless you! = Thank you!