

# ACCUSATIVE-GENITIVE SYNCRETISM IN THE NOMINAL INFLECTION OF MODERN GREEK DIALECTS\*

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This article deals with the replacement of the genitive by the accusative plural in the nominal inflection of various Modern Greek dialects. The aim of the article is to provide an explanation of the factors that triggered this unusual development that is not found in the majority of the Modern Greek dialects and Common Modern Greek. Apart from presenting the data on its dialectal distribution, it will be argued that the phenomenon is an extension of the already established pattern of the accusative-genitive syncretism in the personal pronouns that can be found almost everywhere in the Modern Greek-speaking world.

## 1 Introduction

As can be seen in the following example, Cypriot Greek has lost the distinction between genitive and accusative plurals of masculine nouns, as the latter can function as possessives (Menardos, 1896: 440):

- (1) τα                      βελόνια                      τους                      ράφτες  
the:N/A.PL.N    needle:N/A.PL.N                      the:ACC.PL.M    tailor:N/A.PL.M  
“the needles of the tailors”  
# Common Modern Greek τα βελόνια των [GEN.PL] ραφτών [GEN.PL]

This is an instance of contextual case syncretism following Calabrese (2008), i.e. a type of syncretism that does not apply to all paradigms, as feminine and neuter nouns have maintained their genitive plural forms in Cypriot. This type of syncretism is opposed to absolute syncretism, cf. the complete loss of the dative and the use of the genitive for its functions in the “southern” dialects.

Furthermore, the accusative-genitive syncretism discussed here needs to be distinguished from the phenomena of phonological overlap and the indeclinable use of nouns with the genitive

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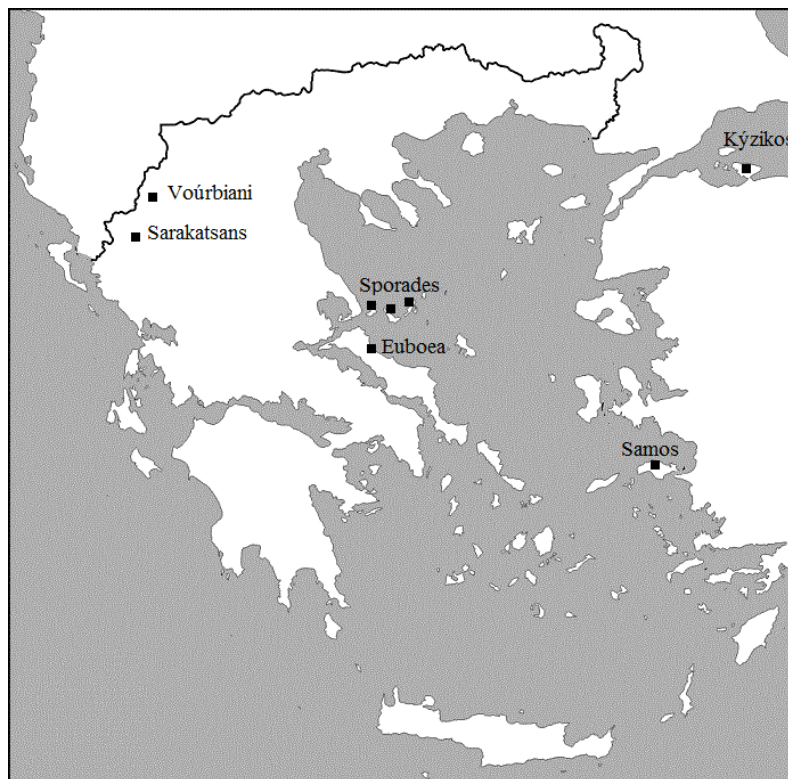
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forms of the definite article. As regards the former, phonological overlap between case forms does not constitute a true instance of syncretism (cf. Luraghi, 1987: 355) and will not be dealt with here; thus, the homophony between genitive and accusative singulars of  $\alpha$ - $\eta$ -masculines - caused by the loss of final /n/ of the accusatives during Medieval Greek - is a distinct phenomenon, as can be demonstrated by the use of determiners that mark the genitive-accusative distinction, e.g. του ναύτη vs. τον ναύτη.

Turning to the latter, the use of the genitive forms of the definite article with a noun that does not have a genitive suffix is not related to accusative-genitive syncretism, as it does not affect both the determiner and the noun, cf. τ' αγγά τως [GEN.PL] όρνιτε [NOM/ACC.PL] "the eggs of the hens" (Salento, Southern Italy; Italia & Lambroyorgu, 2001: 30) vs. Cypriot το σπίτιν τους [ACC.PL] γειτόνους [ACC.PL] "the house of the neighbours".

## 2 The dialectal range of the phenomenon

Even though the Cypriot syncretism has received a lot of attention by previous researchers, it is by no means the only instance in dialectal Modern Greek. The phenomenon seems to be established in the village Voúrbiani (Anagnostopoulos, 1928-9), the dialect of Epirot and Thessalian Sarakatsans (Høeg, 1925), in Samos (Zafiriou, 1914), the Sporades (Sampson, 1972) and northern Euboea (Settas, 1960) in the Aegean, the dialect of Corsican Maniots (Blanken, 1951) and the peninsula of Kýzikos in north-western Asia Minor (Sgouridis, 1968).



Map 1. The dialectal range of accusative-genitive syncretism in the Greek-speaking world

## 2.1 Cyprus

As shown in example (1), Cypriot exhibits loss of the genitive plural of masculine nouns and the masculine form of the definite article, a development also found with masculine adjectives and pronouns, e.g.: gen/acc.pl κακούς “bad”, gen/acc.pl άλλους “others” (Newton, 1972). As noted earlier, feminine and neuter nouns have maintained morphologically distinct genitive plural forms. It is actually remarkable that Cypriot feminines and neuters have genitive forms that are defective in Common Modern Greek and other dialects, e.g. των πατάτων (πατάτα “potato”) or του κοπελλουκιού (κοπελλούιν “little boy”). What is more, Cypriot has maintained a great number of the ancient functions of the genitive that are not found in most modern dialects, e.g. αγγονίστηκεν των πανάνων “he acquired the bananas” (Menardos, 1896: 447).

## 2.2 Epirus and Thessaly

The region of Epirus exhibits some very interesting phenomena of accusative-genitive syncretism. First, the semi-northern dialect (+/-deletion of /i, u/, -raising of /e, o/) of the village Vourbiani has syncretic masculine accusatives (Anagnostopoulos, 1928-9: 453):

- (2) ετουτνούς  
 this:ACC.PL.M  
 “of these”

The syncretism has also affected feminine and neuter nouns, as the accusative plural of the definite article τς has replaced the genitive \*των and is used with all genders. This resulted in the formation of innovative feminine and neuter genitive plurals that later began to be used as accusatives following the pattern in the plural of masculines:

	MASCULINES	FEMININES
<b>NEUTERS</b>		
nom.pl	οι κληρονόμ’	οι γυναίκες
gen.pl	τς κληρονόμ’ς	τς γυναικιούς
acc.pl	τς κληρονόμ’ς “inheritors”	τς γυναίκες/ τς γυναικιούς “women”
		τα χωριά / τς χωριούς
		τα χωριά/ τς χωριούς
		“villages”

Table 1. The plural of the nominal inflection in the dialect of Vourbiani

Second, Høeg (1925: 231) mentions in his grammatical description of the proper northern dialect (+deletion, +raising) of the Sarakatsans of Pápingo that the syncretism can be found with both masculine and feminine accusatives:

- (3) a. οι                    φουλιές        τς                    αϊτούς                    / αϊτοί  
           the:NOM.PL.F nest:N/A.PL.F the:ACC.PL.M eagle:ACC.PL.M        / eagle:N/A.PL.M  
           “the nests of the eagles”
- b. τα                    φσάνια        τς                    γναίικς  
           the:N/A.PL.N        dress:N/A.PL.N the:ACC.PL.F woman:N/A.PL.F  
           “the dresses of the women”

The syncretism can also be found in the dialect of Thessalian Sarakatsans (Høeg 1925: 288):

- (4) τα                    σκλια        τς                    τςουμπαναραίοι  
           the:N/A.PL.N dog:N/A.PL.N the:ACC.PL.M shepherd:N/A.PL.M  
           “the dogs of the shepherds”

Even though most studies of Thessalian dialects do not refer to syncretic phenomena, Tzárztanos’ (1909: 233) study on the varieties of Lárisa and Tírnavos provides the following example:

- (5) η                    γιουρτή                    τς                    γουναράικς  
           the:NOM.SG.F festivity:N/A.SG.F        the:ACC.PL.M furrier:N/A.PL.M  
           “the festival of the furriers”

### 2.3 Aegean islands

The insular dialects of Samos, the Sporades and Northern Euboea will be examined together due to their northern vocalism (+deletion, +raising) and the possible common origin of their syncretism, since the Sporades and Northern Euboea are neighbouring areas, while it is possible that the Samian dialect originated from Euboean settlers after the island was depopulated during the 15th c. (Promponás, 1998: 378). Furthermore, they exhibit the same syncretic phenomena: i) the syncretism can be found with both masculine and feminine nouns, ii) the accusative plural τς of the definite article has replaced the original genitive \*των obsolete with all genders and iii) neuter nouns have distinct genitive plural forms that end in the innovative suffix -ουικς, e.g. τς παιδίουικς<sup>1</sup> “of the children”. The following examples depict this situation:

- (6) a. ήτανι                    ιπουχή                    τσι                    κράμπικς  
           be:3SG.PST season:N/A.SG.F        the:ACC.PL.F cabbage:N/A.PL.F  
           “it was the harvest time of cabbage (lit. of the cabbages)”  
           Samos (Dimitriou 1993: 275)

<sup>1</sup> <\*παιδι-ών → \*παιδι-ώνε (addition of -ε to avoid the closed syllable) → \*πιδι-ώνι (+northern vocalism) → \*πιδι-ούικς (shift of -ων to -ουικς by analogy to the genitive singular -ου and the definite article τουικς) → παιδι-ούικς (addition of -ικς by analogy to the syncretic accusative-genitive τς of the definite article, cf. Kretschmer 1905: 402).

b. τα μάτια τς ανθρώπ’  
 the:N/A.PL.N eye:N/A.PL.N the:ACC.PL.M human:N/A.PL.M  
 “the eyes of the people”  
 Skiathos, Sporades (Rigas 1962: 149)

c. είναι τς δυο ανθρώπ’  
 be:3 the:ACC.PL.M two human:N/A.PL.M  
 “They belong to these two men (lit. they are of the two men)”  
 Agia Anna, Northern Euboea (Settas 1960: 119)

In these dialects, the masculine and feminine forms of non-personal pronouns have maintained distinct genitive plurals which are formed with the unusual ending -ούνις (Zafiriou, 1914: 49), e.g. gen.pl αφνούνις “of these” vs. acc.pl αφνούς “these” (M)/ nom./acc.pl αφνές “these” (F).

## 2.4 Kýzikos

According to the description of the nominal inflection of the variety that used to be spoken before 1922 in the village Péramos in the peninsula of Kýzikos in north-western Asia Minor, syncretic accusatives are used interchangeably with the original genitives of masculine and feminine nouns<sup>2</sup>.

	MASCULINES	FEMININES
nom.pl	οι δασκάλοι	οι μουριές
gen.pl	των δασκάλων/ τς δασκάλοι	των μουριών/ τς μουριές
acc.pl	τς δασκάλοι “teachers”	τς μουριές “mulberry trees”

Table 2. The plural of masculine and feminine paradigms in Kýzikos

Data from the variety of the village Artaki verify the above description (ILNE 767: 27 & 44):

(7) a. το σουρί ετούτο τς ανθρώπ’  
 the:N/A.SG.N pack N/A.SG.N this: N/A.SG.N the:ACC.PL.M human:ACC.PL.M  
 “this pack of people”

b. το χάσιμο τσι πεντακόσιες λίρες  
 the:N/A.SG.N loss:N/A.SG.N the:ACC.PL.F 500:N/A.PL.F pound:N/A.PL.F  
 “the loss of 500 pounds”

<sup>2</sup> Neuter nouns have maintained distinct genitive plural forms, but similarly to the previous cases they are used with the masculine/ feminine accusative τς of the definite article, e.g. τς χωριούς “of the villages” vs. Common Modern Greek των χωριών.

## 2.5 Corsican Maniot

The phenomenon can also be found with Corsican Maniot, a dialect that used to be spoken since the establishment of settlers from Mani in the region of Cargèse in Corsica during the 17th c. until the first half of the 20th c. The syncretism only affected masculine nouns similarly to Cyprus and Voúrbiani (Blanken, 1951: 95):

(8) το                    μεγάλο                    μερντικό                    τους                    ανθρώπους  
 the:N/A.SG.N    big:N/A.SG.N    share:N/A.SG.N                    the:ACC.PL.M    human:ACC.PL.M  
 “the big share of the people”

Due to the gradual loss of this Greek dialect in Corsica, it can be argued that language shift was a crucial factor for the simplification of the case system. Moreover, Blanken (1951) mentions that the syncretism could be attributed to a possible overlap of the genitive plural τουν<sup>3</sup> and the accusative plural τους of the masculine definite article:

gen.pl    τουν φίλωνε    →    του φίλωνε                    [deletion of final /n/ before fricatives]  
 acc.pl    τους φίλους    →    του φίλους                    [deletion of final /s/ before  
 consonants<sup>4</sup>]  
 → τους ανθρώπους → τους ανθρώπων                    [extension of τους to genitives]  
 → τους ανθρώπους [GEN/ACC.PL.M]

## 2.6 Syncretic accusatives in the dialects of Central Asia Minor?

Dawkins (1916: 169) claims that the genitive plural was extremely rare in the dialect of Fáraša and “the accusative is generally used in its place”. His view is based on the following two structures that are found in his collection of narratives (Dawkins, 1916: 516 & 520).

(9) έφαγε                    τα                    περτσέματα                    του                    Τζερκέζοι  
 eat:3SG.PST.PFV                    the:N/A.PL.N    remainder:N/A.PL.N                    the:GEN    Circassian:N/A.PL.M  
 “he ate the leavings of the Circassians”

(10) j’                    όψες                    αντά ντο                    γεμέκι  
 NEG    roast:2SG.PST.PFV                    here    the:N/A.SG.N                    food:N/A.SG.N  
       τις                    μισαφούροι  
       the:ACC.PL.M                    guest:N/A.PL.M  
 “you have not cooked food here for the guests”

Example (9) does not constitute an instance of accusative-genitive syncretism, but the indeclinable use of Τζερκέζοι with the genitive του (common for both numbers) of the definite article, which is a distinct phenomenon as noted earlier. The indeclinable use of nouns with genitives of the definite article can be found in other Farasiot texts as well, e.g. του [GEN] χωρίον [NOM/ACC.SG] τη στράτα “the road of the village” (Thumb, 1912: 310). As regards example (10), it involves the use of an accusative plural as a benefactive and not as a possessive, since Farasiot

<sup>3</sup> By analogy to the genitive singular του, cf. του στρατιώτου “of the soldiers” (Mani; Kassis 1983: 180).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. τη γυναίκας “of the woman” (Mani; Kassis 1983: 190).

belongs to the group of Modern Greek dialects that employ the accusative to mark the indirect object; this is verified by Dawkins himself who translates this accusative with the preposition “for” and not the possessive “of”.

Apart from these examples, in the Farasiot translation of the Gospels (Lagarde, 1886), the forms νοματούς “of men” and Γιοδαιούς “of Jews” are found. As Dawkins (1932) explains, even though these forms resemble accusatives, they do not reflect an instance of accusative-genitive syncretism. More precisely, these forms constitute morphologically distinct genitives, since the masculine accusative plural suffix –ους has been replaced by the nominative suffix –οι like in many Modern Greek dialects: nom./acc.pl νομάτοι # gen.pl νοματούς. Consequently, these forms exhibit the addition of –ς as an attempt to eliminate the overlap between the genitive singular and the genitive plural due to the loss of final /n/ and the shift of –ω- to –ου (also found in some of the aforementioned dialects): gen.sg νοματού = gen.pl νοματού (<\*νοματούν <\*νοματών) → gen.sg νοματού # gen.pl νοματού-ς.

A similar development can be found in the dialect of Silli (Kostakis, 1968) where the genitives αυτουνούς “of these” and κεινουνούς “of those” either reflect the addition of –ς for the formal differentiation from the genitive singular forms αυτουνού and κεινουνού respectively or constitute another instance of accusative-genitive syncretism. It seems that the syncretism could occur with modifiers and determiners more often, as the following example indicates (Kostakis, 1968: 126):

- (11) ούλοι            τους            μισαφιριώ            τα            φέρια  
 all:N/A.PL.M    3pl:ACC.PL.M    guest:GEN.PL.M    the: N/A.PL.N    hand: N/A.PL.N  
 “all the guests’ hands”

Apart from syncretic phenomena, Silliot also exhibits juxtapositional possessive structures (Kostakis 1968: 67 and 122): e.g. ούλα [NOM./ACC.PL] ρούχα [NOM./ACC.PL] του κουτσάκια “the buttons of all his clothes”, χεκέμηροι [NOM./ACC.PL] τα ιλάτζα “doctors’ medicines”; this is a clear indication that genitive plural forms were highly problematic in the dialect.

Consequently, it can be said that the syncretism did not take place in Fárasa, while its status in Silli remains uncertain, especially since Dawkins (1916) does not mention such phenomena in his grammatical description and collection of dialectal texts.

## 2.7 Summary

According to the data presented so far, a few matters can be observed. The syncretism only occurs with plural forms of nouns, adjectives or non-personal pronouns, even though Tzártanos (1909: 233) provides a very interesting example from Thessaly, the only one that involves the possessive use of an accusative singular: για τονν [ACC.SG.M] άντρα [ACC.SG.M] τς του σόι “for her husband’s kin”. However, this seems to be an isolated instance rather than an established pattern in the dialect.

Also, the syncretism does not take place with neuter nouns; the use of the common nominative/ accusative plural form of ρούχα in Silliot above does not constitute accusative-genitive syncretism, but a juxtapositional possessive structure (cf. Koptjevskaja-Tamm, 2003). As regards the degree of extension, two types of accusative-genitive syncretism can be found:

**Type I** (only with masculine nouns):

Cyprus, Corsican Maniot, Voúrbiani, (Silli?)

**Type II** (masculine and feminine nouns):

Sarakatsans, Samos, Sporades, Northern Euboea, Kýzikos

Moreover, in many of these dialects the syncretic accusative forms of o-masculines exhibit the nominative suffix *-οι*, as it has replaced *-ους*, a development found in a few regions of the Modern Greek-speaking world. The difference between their use and juxtapositions or the indeclinable use of nouns lies in the morphology of the definite article. The distinction between the various phenomena can be understood in the following way:

DETERMINER<sub>GEN</sub> + NOUN<sub>GEN</sub>: expected use (as in Common Modern Greek and most dialects)  
e.g. των ανθρώπων “of the people”

DETERMINER<sub>GEN</sub> + NOUN<sub>NOM(=ACC)</sub>: indeclinable use of the noun  
e.g. του Τσερκέζοι “of Circassians”

DETERMINER<sub>ACC</sub> + NOUN<sub>ACC</sub>: accusative-genitive syncretism  
e.g. τους ανθρώπους “of the people”

DETERMINER<sub>ACC</sub> + NOUN<sub>GEN</sub>: early stage of the accusative-genitive syncretism  
e.g. τους μισαφιριώ “of the guests”

[DETERMINER<sub>NOM(=ACC)</sub> +] NOUN<sub>NOM(=ACC)</sub>: juxtaposition  
e.g. ρούχα “of the clothes”

\*DETERMINER<sub>GEN</sub> + NOUN<sub>ACC</sub>: not attested

### 3 Previous accounts on the Cypriot syncretism

The accusative-genitive syncretism in Cypriot has received a lot of attention in previous studies, not only because it constitutes one of the major Modern Greek dialects with a quite large number of speakers, but mainly due to the fact that it is the best attested, since it can already be found in Medieval Cypriot texts. The most important extant analyses on the matter can be summarized as follows:

- i. **Menardos (1896)**: The syncretism was developed by the addition of *-ς* as a plural marker to the genitive singular: του ανθρώπου + *-ς* → τους ανθρώπους.
- ii. **Sitaridou and Terkourafi (2007)**: Contact with Old French (during the occupation of Cyprus by the Lusignan dynasty between 1192 and 1473) resulted in the development of a single oblique case in the plural of masculine nouns following the pattern of the Old French nominal system in which the plural of its masculine paradigms has a nominative vs. oblique case distinction, e.g. nom.pl *li baron* vs. obl.pl *les barons* <ber “baron”.
- iii. **Markopoulos (2010)**: Phonological overlap between the accusative and the dative during Medieval Greek resulted in the development of the syncretism, e.g. τους ανθρώπους /tus an'θropus/ ≈ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις /tys an'θropys/, while medieval inscriptions from the Middle East also exhibit similar structures with the possessive use of accusatives, e.g. IGL Syr



XXI 2: 100, l. a.1-4 (Belqa-Makhayyat, Jordan, 535-536 AD) τὸν κάματος τοὺς [ACC.PL] ἄνθρώπους [ACC.PL] “the hard work of the people”.

Even though these approaches point out some interesting matters, it will be shown that they cannot fully explain the phenomenon.

### 3.1 Agglutinative construction

Menardos' (1896) approach resembles the development seen earlier in the data from Fárasa and Silli; however, there is a significant difference between Cypriot and these dialects, as the former does not exhibit an overlap between genitive singular and genitive plural forms. Therefore, it does not explain what motivated the formation of such agglutinative genitives.

### 3.2 Language contact with Old French

Apart from the fact that the syncretism in the rest of the dialects mentioned here cannot be attributed to language contact, it is not very likely that contact with Old French was the driving force behind this morphological change in Cypriot. More precisely, the Old French case system exhibits the exact opposite situation, as its masculine nouns had a two case-distinction in the plural and feminines had a single form for all cases.

### 3.3 Overlap with the medieval dative

Despite the fact that the grammaticalization of recipients as possessors is an interesting element in Markopoulos' (2010) analysis, there are a few problems with this approach. Even though homophony between accusative and dative plural forms of feminine nouns was definitely more likely than the respective forms of masculine nouns during Medieval Greek, e.g. ταῖς ἀδελφαῖς = τὲς ἀδελφές /tes adel' fes/, syncretic feminine accusatives are not found in Cypriot Greek<sup>5</sup>.

Furthermore, given the fact that there is a quite large temporal and spatial gap between the data from inscriptions of the 6th-7th c. from Jordan and Palestine and the first attestation of the phenomenon in Medieval Cypriot texts (13<sup>th</sup> c.), the proposal that the syncretism took place in Cypriot through dialect contact is not thoroughly supported. Quite clearly, as Cyprus has been predominantly Greek-speaking since ancient times, it cannot be compared to regions where Greek was either a minority language or served as a lingua franca, especially when it is kept in mind that data from inscriptions and non-literary papyri from such areas should always be treated with caution due to the high frequency of “solecisms”, cf. εκυμιθι τον (δ)ουλον [ACC.SG] του Θ(ε)ου “The servant of God passed away” (Crimea, 1622 AD; Latyshev 1896: 66).

It is extremely unlikely that the possessive use of the Cypriot accusative is a remnant of the ancient dative which was most likely lost during the first centuries of Medieval Greek (6th-9th c.) and has not left any vestiges in any modern dialects. Therefore, Markopoulos' (2010: 107) remark that such structures as εἰς φυλακὴν τοῖς [DAT.PL.M] Ἀγαρηνοῖς [DAT.PL.M] “in a prison of the Saracens” (*Assises* A 228; 14th c./ ms. 16th c.) reflect an earlier stage of Medieval Cypriot is highly arbitrary, as they clearly constitute an unsuccessful attempt by the editor or scribe to

<sup>5</sup> Terkourafi (2005: 313) mentions the only example of such a use: ο αριθμός τις σωλήνες που ννα βάλουμε στο δρόμο “the number of the pipes that we should put on the street”. Apart from the fact that this seems to be an isolated attestation, it can be said that in this particular utterance the case of the possessor was attracted by the direct object function of the relativizer που.

archaicize a pattern of the vernacular. If the accusative-genitive syncretism had such deep roots, we would not expect to find masculine genitive plurals in the Medieval Cypriot texts, since they would have already been lost by that time, but as will be shown, this is not the case.

## 4 Proposed analysis

There are two very important elements that have not been mentioned by extant accounts on the matter. First, the Cypriot syncretism is not linked to any of the dialects mentioned here. Second, the accusative-genitive syncretism in the personal pronouns has also been neglected by previous studies, apart from Hadjioannou (1988) and Henrich (2002) who simply point out the homophony between the third person syncretic clitic *τους* and the accusative *τους* of the definite article.

Consequently, it is important at this point to examine the relationship between the syncretic syncretism in the personal pronouns and the nominal possessive accusatives, given the fact that in all dialects under discussion here *τους* has replaced *των*<sup>6</sup>.

### 4.1 The diachrony of the accusative-genitive syncretism in the personal pronouns

As shown in Mertyris (2011), the first and second person accusative plurals *εμάς/ μας*, *εσάς/ σας* have replaced the ancient genitives *ἡμῶν/ ὑμῶν* since the 10<sup>th</sup> c. in all modern dialects apart from Pontic. Regarding the diachrony of the third person syncretic accusative *τους*, its first attestation with a possessive use comes from medieval texts of the 12<sup>th</sup> c., e.g. *τὰ ροῦχα τους* (*Ptochoprodromica*, poem 2, l. 86), while it has replaced *των* in most modern dialects. The following table summarizes the diachrony of the syncretism in the pronominal inflection:

	Ancient Greek - 10 <sup>th</sup> c.		10 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> c.		12 <sup>th</sup> c. -
	GEN	ACC	GEN	ACC	ACC-GEN
1PL	ἡμῶν	ἡμᾶς	εμάς/ μας		εμάς/ μας
2PL	ὑμῶν	ὑμᾶς	εσάς/ σας		εσάς/ σας
3PL.M	(των) <sup>7</sup>	(τους)	των	τους	τους

Table 3. Accusative-genitive syncretism in the personal pronouns of Medieval Greek

In order to examine the connection of the pronominal case syncretism to the Cypriot nominal accusatives, the presence of the third person *τους* should be examined in the Medieval Cypriot texts. As the following table shows, *των* was almost entirely absent in Medieval Cypriot<sup>8</sup>, while masculine genitive plurals were still present in the language apart from the *Chronicle* of Boustronios which is the latest text:

<sup>6</sup> Farasiot has maintained the genitive-accusative distinction in the third person [gen.pl *τινε* (<\**τουνε* <\**τωνε* <\**των*) # acc.pl *τα* (for all genders)], but as was shown earlier, it does not exhibit the syncretism in the nominal inflection.

<sup>7</sup> The third person clitics of Modern Greek date back to late Hellenistic and early Medieval Greek.

<sup>8</sup> The presence of the syncretic *τους* in these texts is so frequent that a detailed statistical comparison to the presence of *των* would be unnecessary.

TEXT	masculine gen.pl	των
<i>Greek Laws</i> (13 <sup>th</sup> c./ ms. 13 <sup>th</sup> c.)	55.1%	twice
<i>Assises</i> (B) (14 <sup>th</sup> c./ ms. 15 <sup>th</sup> c.)	27.7%	once
<i>Assises</i> (A) (14 <sup>th</sup> c./ ms. 16 <sup>th</sup> c.)	23%	twice
<i>Chronicle</i> of Machairas (15 <sup>th</sup> c./ ms. 16 <sup>th</sup> c.)	13.4 %	none
<i>Chronicle</i> of Boustronios (15 <sup>th</sup> -16 <sup>th</sup> c./ ms. 16 <sup>th</sup> c.)	once	none

Table 4. The occurrence of nominal and pronominal genitives in Medieval Cypriot texts [the data on masculine genitives are taken from Markopoulos (2010)]

According to these data, it is unambiguous that the syncretism in the third person was established before the development of the syncretism in the masculine paradigms.

## 4.2 The extension of the syncretic pattern to the nominal inflection

Even though it is clear that the possessive use of the accusative τους preceded the replacement of masculine genitive by accusative plurals, it has not been explained how these two phenomena are linked with each other.

Thus, it can be proposed at this point that the development originated in structures with indirect object reduplication. It must be noted that all dialects discussed here employ the genitive to mark indirect objects, apart from Kýzikos and Silli. In such structures, the case of the noun or the determiner that would function as a recipient would be attracted by the morphologically accusative case of the syncretic pronoun:

Stage 0:	λαλώ σας/ “I talk to you”	λαλώ των → λαλώ τους “I talk to them”
Stage I:	λαλώ τους εκείνων → λαλώ τους εκείνους → λαλώ εκείνους “I talk to those”	

Quite interestingly, such structures can easily be traced in Medieval Cypriot texts, e.g. ἀρέσκει τους καὶ κείνους “It pleases those as well” (Machairas §304). This development should not surprise, as similar structures can be found in other dialects where indirect objects are marked with the genitive. The following example from Aetolia (Loukopoulos 1921: 31) demonstrates the use of an accusative where the genitive των αλλνών would be expected:

(12) πάει	χιριτήματα	τς	αλλνούς
go:3SG	greeting:N/A.PL.N	the:ACC.PL.M	other:ACC.PL.M
“he sends greetings to others”			

Even in Common Modern Greek, structures where the demonstrative pronoun is attracted by the morphologically accusative clitic are not entirely uncommon, cf. the use of an accusative instead of the expected genitive αυτών/ αυτωνών:

(13) αυτούς	τους	έχεις	δώσει	λεφτά;
this:ACC.PL.M	3PL:ACC.PL.M	have:2SG	give:INF.PFV	money:N/A.PL.N
“have you given them money?” (personal recording)				

The genitives of feminine and neuter nouns in Cypriot and other dialects remained in full use as indirect objects and consequently as possessives, since the maintenance of the two-case distinction in the third person clitics of these genders (FEMININE gen.pl τους/ acc.pl τες, NEUTER gen.pl τους/ acc.pl τα) could not trigger the syncretism in the feminine and neuter paradigms through case attraction, cf. τόσα ἔδωκεν τῶν μαυλιστριῶν [GEN.PL.F] “he gave so much to the seducers” (Machairas §239) and ἐμηνῶσαν τῶν κατέργων [GEN.PL.N] “they announced to the galleons” (Machairas §414).

After the syncretic pattern was established with indirect objects, it was extended to possessive structures with double marking where both the third pronoun and a demonstrative pronoun or noun would be used:

Stage II: το σπίτιν τους εκείνων → το σπίτιν τους εκείνους  
 “The house of those”

In dialects with accusative indirect objects, such as Kýzikos and Silli, the development most likely occurred in possessive structures with double marking or in structures where experiencers and benefactives could be reanalysed as possessives. The following examples from Bithynia and Samothraki show how this could take place:

(14) κόπηκε                    γουλουνοῦς    η                    καρδιά                    τους  
 cut:3SG.PASS.PST    all:ACC.PL.M    the:NOM.SG.F    heart:N/A.SG.F            3PL:ACC.PL.M  
 “Their hearts were hurt (lit. their heart was cut to all of them)”  
 Armutli, Bithynia (ILNE 424: 120)

(15) μπαίνει            μες    στου                    ματ                    τς                    χαμουφάδις  
 enter:3SG    inside    in.the:N/A.SG.N    eye:N/A.SG.N    the:ACC.PL.M    wastrel:N/A.PL.M  
 “He makes the wastrels jealous (lit. he gets in the eyes of/ to the wastrels)”  
 Samothraki (Heisenberg 1918: 40)

A final issue that needs to be addressed is the course of the syncretism. More precisely, it can be proposed that the syncretism in the definite article was established before the one in the nominal inflection, as can be seen in example (11) from Silli and the Cypriot τοὺς ἐγκυτάδων “his guarantors” (*Assises* B 254). Another element that constitutes solid evidence for this is the fact that some Corfiot varieties exhibit this stage of the syncretism, as the masculine accusative plural τσου (<\*τους) has replaced των, e.g. τσου ανθρώπωνε “of the people” (Salvanos 1918: 13).

### 4.3 The extension of the syncretism to feminine nouns

A very crucial matter that has not been dealt with yet is the occurrence of the accusative-genitive syncretism with feminine nouns in the dialects of Sarakatsans, Kýzikos, Samos, the Sporades and Northern Euboea. This development can be clearly understood if it is kept in mind that the deletion of unstressed /i, u/ in these dialects eliminated the distinction between the third person masculine and feminine accusative clitics and the respective forms of the definite article. This development extended the syncretism to the third person feminine clitics and the two-case distinction was maintained only in the neuter gender:

THIRD PERSON MASCULINE:	gen/acc.pl τους	→	gen/acc.pl τς
THIRD PERSON FEMININE:	gen.pl τους/ acc.pl τις	→	gen/acc.pl τς
THIRD PERSON NEUTER:	gen.pl τους/ acc.pl τα	→	gen.pl τς/ acc.pl τα

This element was decisive for the further extension of the syncretism to feminine accusative plurals, especially when it is kept in mind that the forms of the accusative plural of the definite article for the two genders became identical:

	THIRD PERSON	→	DEFINITE ARTICLE AND NOUNS <sup>9</sup>
M/F	gen/acc.pl τς		gen/acc.pl τς ανθρώπ “people”/ τς γυναίκες “women”
N	gen.pl τς/ acc.pl τα		gen.pl παιδιούνης/ acc.pl τα παιδιά “children”

Table 5. The extension of the syncretism to feminine nouns

#### 4.4 Other factors

The proposed analysis can explain the phenomena of all these dialects, given the fact that in all of them the syncretism took place in the personal pronouns before its development in the nominal inflection. It seems that the syncretism occurred independently in each dialect under the spirit of Sapir’s drift (Sapir 1921), since contact could only occur between Voúrbiani and Sarakatsans in Epirus and between the aforementioned Aegean varieties. However, there are a few matters that need to be discussed.

Quite possibly, the extension of the syncretic pattern to the nominal inflection was reinforced by dialect-specific factors in each case. Corsican Maniot is a great example, as it exhibits language shift towards French and Corsican and a possible overlap between the genitive plural του(v) and the accusative του(ς) of the definite article, as noted earlier. Regarding Silli, juxtapositional structures caused by the retreat of the case morphology and the addition of -ς to raise the homonymy between genitive singular and genitive plural forms should also be taken into consideration.

Another factor that requires special attention is paradigmatic symmetry. The paradigm of o-masculines is the only one that has maintained a three-case distinction in the plural almost everywhere in the Modern Greek-speaking world<sup>10</sup>. While some dialects treat this asymmetry by replacing the suffix -ους with -οι, as seen in a few of the dialects examined here, Cypriot, Corsican Maniot and Voúrbiani achieved a more balanced case distinction through the development of the accusative-genitive syncretism:

<sup>9</sup> The examples are taken from Samian, but the pattern applies also for the Sporades, northern Euboea, Kyzikos and Sarakatsans.

<sup>10</sup> The maintenance of the distinction between the nominative suffix -ες and the accusative -ας with α-/η-masculines and feminines is very rare, e.g. τας γυναίκες (Icaria; Hatzidakis, 1907: 438-9).

STAGE I	NOM # ACC # GEN	NOM=ACC # GEN	
	O-MASCULINES άνθρωποι	FEMININES μητέρες	NEUTERS δώρα
	ανθρώπους		
	ανθρώπων	μητέρων	δώρων
STAGE II	NOM # ACC=GEN	NOM=ACC # GEN	
	MASCULINES άνθρωποι	FEMININES μητέρες	NEUTERS δώρα
	ανθρώπους	μητέρων	δώρων

Table 6: Three-case vs. two-case distinction in the plural of the nominal inflection

Finally, it would not be impossible to find such syncretic phenomena in the nominal inflection of dialects where the distinction between the third person *των* and *τους* has been maintained. According to Ralli (personal communication), syncretic phenomena can also be found in the dialect of Lesbos where the masculine genitive *ντων* is distinct from the accusative *τς* of the third person. Even though such phenomena are not attested at all in grammatical descriptions (e.g. Kretschmer, 1905) and collections of narratives from this dialect, the following example shows the use of a genitive of the definite article with an undeclined noun:

- (16) βρουντά πα στ' δράτς' ντ' πόρτα  
 /vro'nda 'panu stu 'ðraki tin 'porta/  
 [vru'nda pa st ðrats d borta  
 knock:3SG on in.the:GEN dragon:N/A.PL.M the:ACC.SG.F door:N/A.SG.F  
 "he knocks on the door of the dragons"  
 Mantamados, Lesbos (Anagnostou 1994: 5)

Such structures could trigger the development of a full accusative-genitive syncretism that would involve the possessive use of the accusative *τς* of the definite article.

Thus, it would not be impossible to encounter syncretic phenomena in dialects where the genitive-accusative distinction has been maintained in the plural clitics of the third person, since the syncretism examined here is undoubtedly related to the reduction of case marking and the overall quite problematic nature of the genitive plural in the Modern Greek-speaking world; in any case, it is a very frequent phenomenon crosslinguistically that either creates a nominative vs. oblique case distinction or eliminates any case distinction, e.g. nom.pl *άνθρωποι* vs. gen/acc.pl *ανθρώπους* (Cyprus) or nom/acc/gen.pl *ανθρώποι* (Samos).

## 5 Conclusions

As has been shown by the analysis proposed here, the earlier establishment of the syncretism in the personal pronouns (found in every part of the Modern Greek-speaking world apart from Pontic Greek) and especially the third person clitics triggered the syncretism in the nominal inflection of these dialects.

This analysis explains why the syncretism always involves masculine nouns, but it does not occur with feminine and neuter nouns in the dialects of Type I and with neuter nouns in the

dialects of Type II, as in the former case the third person plural clitics maintained the distinction between the third person accusative  $\tau\iota\varsigma$  (F)/  $\tau\alpha$  (N) and the genitive  $\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$  (common for all genders), while in the latter the third person genitive  $\tau\varsigma$  (common for all genders) remained distinct from the neuter nominative/ accusative plural  $\tau\alpha$ .

third person plural clitics	Type I			Type II	
	Masculine acc/gen. $\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$	Feminine gen. $\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ acc. $\tau\iota\varsigma$	Neuter gen. $\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ acc. $\tau\alpha$	Masc./Fem. acc/gen. $\tau\varsigma$	Neuter gen. $\tau\varsigma$ acc. $\tau\alpha$
Nominal inflection	ACC < GEN	GEN # ACC		ACC < GEN	GEN # ACC

Table 7. The maintenance of feminine and neuter genitives in the dialects of Type I and Type II

Regarding the diachrony of these phenomena, even though diachronic data are only available for the Cypriot syncretism, it can be proposed that the developments in the rest of the dialects are more recent and most likely date back to early Modern Greek (16<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> c.), given the fact that the dialects of Kýzikos and Sarakatsans the original genitive forms are used interchangeably with syncretic accusatives.

Finally, the following table summarizes the presence of accusative-genitive syncretism in the Modern Greek-speaking world:

	1PL/ 2PL	3PL	DEF.ART	Masculines	Feminines	Neuters
AG <sup>11</sup> - 10 <sup>th</sup> c.	ἡμῶν/ ὑμῶν	αὐτῶν	τῶν	GEN	GEN	GEN
Pontic	εμουν/ εσουν	ατουν	τι/ τ'			
Group I <sup>12</sup>	μας/ σας	των	των			
Group II <sup>13</sup>	μας/ σας	τους	των			
Corfiot <sup>14</sup>	μας/ σας	τσου	τσου			
Type I <sup>15</sup>	μας/ σας	τους	τους	ACC=GEN	ACC=GEN	
Type II <sup>16</sup>	μας/ σας	τς	τς	ACC=GEN		

Table 8: The presence of accusative-genitive syncretism in the Greek-speaking world

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<sup>11</sup> Ancient Greek.

<sup>12</sup> Post 10<sup>th</sup> c. In Cappadocia, Fárasa, Mariupol, Bithynia, Lesbos/ Kydonies, Skyros, Chios, Smyrna, Icaria, Kýthera, the Cyclades, Crete, the Dodecanese and Southern Italy.

<sup>13</sup> Post 12<sup>th</sup> c. In the Peloponnese and the Ionian islands (hence Common Modern Greek), Central Greece, the northern Aegean, Thessaly, Epirus, Macedonia and Thrace.

<sup>14</sup> The varieties of Argyrades and Liapades.

<sup>15</sup> Cyprus, Voúrbiani, Corsican Maniot and possibly Silli.

<sup>16</sup> Kýzikos, Sarakatsans, Samos, the Sporades and Northern Euboea.

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