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REVIEW ARTICLE

Aspects of Pontic grammar

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This paper is a review article of Drettas (1997), the first non-Greek grammar of Pontic. It discusses the theoretical framework of the grammar and the main features of Pontic. Special attention is given to those features which set Pontic apart from the rest of the Greek dialects. Finally, the question is raised as to whether Pontic is indeed a Greek dialect or rather a separate language.

Keywords: Areal linguistics, Greek dialectology, Pontic

1. Introduction

The publication of Georges Drettas' *Aspects pontiques* (1997) marks the beginning of a new era in Greek dialectology.¹ Not only is it the first comprehensive grammar of Pontic not written in Greek,² but it is also the first self-contained grammar of any Greek "dialect" written, in the words of Bloomfield (1939:2), "in terms of its own structure".

This paper is conceived as a review article. Before going into details, I can state at the outset that Drettas has produced a monumental and in many respects exemplary grammar, full of examples carefully glossed, translated, and discussed in their linguistic and extra-linguistic context. Although couched in a particular theoretical framework (to be discussed below in Section 4), the grammar is full of discussions of relevant terms and concepts, and the author shows an awareness of a wide variety of different linguistic traditions, which is unfortunately becoming more and more of a rarity in present-day linguistics.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 briefly discusses the present state of Greek dialectology. Section 3 provides some general information about Pontic and its speakers. Section 4 presents an outline of the grammar. Section 5 discusses the theoretical framework. Section 6 assesses the transcription and

presentation of the data. Section 7 highlights some of the most salient features of Pontic grammar. Section 8 summarizes the main conclusions of this paper.

2. The present state of Greek dialectology

As the author correctly argues, the history of Greek dialectology is largely determined by ideological considerations. The standard language or δημοτική /*ḍimoti'ki*/ “demonic” is considered “unique et homogène” (1997:xix), whence it is often qualified by the adjective κοινή /*ki'ni*/ “common”.³ This is what the author calls “la vulgate de l’unité grécophone” (1997:xx). It has resulted in a rather monolithic view of the Greek dialects, which are considered “très peu différenciés” (*ibid.*). As a matter of fact, some would go so far as to maintain that Greek does not have “dialects” at all, but only ιδιώματα /*iḍi'omata*/ “idioms”.⁴ As a consequence of this attitude, most if not all work in Greek dialectology is contrastive, the κοινή δημοτική /*ki'ni ḍimoti'ki*/ “common demonic” serving as the bench-mark for comparison.

Drettas’ grammar, on the other hand, is essentially self-contained and synchronic, even though it does contain many useful references to the standard language, other Greek dialects and the history of the Greek language. More importantly, the author is prepared to consider Pontic a separate language, together with other Greek “dialects” such as Cappadocian, Cypriot, Grecanico or Grico, and Tsakonian (1997:19), the criterion being “l’intercompréhension”: “on perçoit tout de suite le caractère grec ..., mais il n’y a pas compréhension du message” (1997:xxii).⁵ His position is at once provocative and illuminating, and I will have occasion to return to the matter below.

3. Pontic and its speakers

The Pontians originate from the Pontus region of northern Asia Minor including the south coast of the Black Sea between Paphlagonia and Colchis and extending southward to Cappadocia. Already in Antiquity, Pontus was inhabited by Greeks, for instance Sinope (Sinop) and Trapezus (Trabzon), Milesian colonies traditionally founded before 756 BC, destroyed by the Cimmerians, and refounded before 600 according to Xenophon (*Anabasis* 4.8.22, 6.1.15) and Strabo (*Geographia* 12.545), the latter a native Pontian.⁶

The Pontians had been living in Pontus until the population exchange between Greece and Turkey in the 1920s following the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 (cf. Clogg 1992: 100ff.). The basis of the exchange being religion rather than language, the Pontic Moslems were exempted from the exchange and remained in Pontus. In the Turkish census of 1965, the last one to record figures for speakers of minority languages in Turkey, 4,535 persons declared *rumca* “Greek” as their mother tongue in Trabzon prefecture (Mackridge 1987: 115¹). According to the Greek census of 1928, the number of Pontic refugees in Greece totalled 162,879 persons (Drettas 1997: 18). Since, as Drettas (1997: 36) correctly observes, the “société d’accueil” was “fort peu accueillante”, it is not surprising that some Pontic intellectuals thought their language was endangered and destined to die before long.⁷

Fortunately, however, the Pontians have maintained a strong sense of “identité pontique” (Drettas 1997: 36). The number of Pontic speakers with an active command of the language is currently estimated at more than 300,000 (Drettas 1999: 15). The prospects for its survival are thus particularly good, especially since Pontic has a literary tradition (Drettas 1997: 36f.), not only in Greece but in the former Soviet Union as well, where Pontic even acquired the status of *nacional’nost’* “national language” between 1925 and 1936 (Drettas 1999: 16). Pontic texts have been recorded in the *Ἀρχεῖον Πόντου* “Pontic Archive” since 1928. Probably the most telling evidence for its vitality is the recent publication of a Pontic version of Asterix, viz. *Ἀστερίκος* /*aste’rikos*/.⁸

Pontic has always been in contact with other languages, particularly Laz and Georgian (Kartvelian), Armenian and Kurdish (Indo-European), and Turkish (Altaic). The prolonged symbiosis with Laz in particular has caused the Pontians to refer to their language as /*lazi’ka*/, literally “Laz” (Drettas 1997: 19, 620; 1999: 16).⁹ The term /*pontia’ka*/, originally a *mot savant*, was picked up by the refugees in Greece to reinforce their “identité pontique” (Drettas 1997: 19). All of the aforementioned languages have had a profound influence on the grammar and the vocabulary of Pontic, as can be gathered from the title of the final chapter of *Aspects pontiques* entitled “Le système pontique: un phénomène aréal” (1997: 509ff.). Section 7 provides a number of examples of interference from these languages, particularly the local (Black Sea) variety of Turkish (cf. Brendemoen 1999).¹⁰

As Drettas (1997: 21) remarks, “la dialectologie du pontique reste à faire”. He proposes a main division between the coastal dialects in the north of Pontus and the mountain dialects in the south (1997: 20; 1999: 16). It has to be emphasized that there may be considerable differences between local dialects belonging to

either of these groups. The dialect of Of (Ophis) and Çaykara (Katochor) districts, for instance, not only differs markedly from the other coastal dialects, but can be subdivided into various local *ιδιώματα* /*iði'omata*/ “idioms” (Section 2), which vary from village to village (cf. Mackridge 1987; 1999).

The variety of Pontic described by Drettas is the Chaldia dialect, “le groupe montagnard le plus important” (1997:20; cf. Mackridge 1987:120), as spoken by refugees from Gümüşhane county, the southern part of Trabzon prefecture, who settled in the village of Chrysa in Pella prefecture, northeast of Thessaloniki (1997:22ff.). According to Drettas, the Chaldia dialect presents “un diasystème sans failles” (p. 21) and “une forte homogénéité” (p. 28). The emerging Greek-Pontic Koine is essentially based on the Chaldia dialect (Drettas 1997:21; 1999:16f.; cf. Mackridge 1987:120), as are the grammars of Papadopoulos (1955; 1958–1961) and Ikonomidis (1958), both natives of Gümüşhane (Argyropolis).

4. Outline of the grammar

Aspects pontiques is an extremely well organized book. The front matter consists of an foreword (p. xv–xxviii) and an introduction (p. 1–39). The actual grammar takes up the greater part of the book (p. 41–513) and is followed by seven Pontic texts (p. 515–696). The book is rounded off by an extensive bibliography (p. 697–714), an index (p. 715–772) and a detailed table of contents (p. 773–789).

In his foreword the author briefly sketches the history of the Greek language (p. xix–xii), before touching upon the question whether Pontic is a *language* rather than a *dialect* (p. xxi–xxiii). The question is not explicitly settled, although Drettas compares the status of Pontic and its closest relative, Cappadocian, with the status of the Romance languages: “la parenté génétique est perçue, mais la *différence linguistique réelle* s'impose de façon absolue” (p. xxii). The question is again briefly touched upon in the introduction, where the author quotes with approval the “opinion fort sensée” (p. 19) of Širokov (1972:317), who explicitly refers to “dialects” such as Pontic as separate *languages*.

As in earlier publications, Drettas refers to Pontic as either “pontique” (1981; 1982) or “gréco-pontique” (1990; 1994), the latter term emphasizing its status as a separate language. It has to be said, however, that his position is not always consistent. For instance, “l'originalité du *gréco-pontique*” is relativized just 4 lines below in the following terms: “il n'est rien dans le système *pontique*

qu'on ne puisse retrouver *dans les autres dialectes grecs*" (§881—my italics, MJ). In fact, the terms "langue" and "dialecte" often occur side by side, sometimes even in one paragraph (e.g., §113, 183, 274, 741). It would have been preferable to be consistent about such terminological matters, given the author's explicit comparison of Greek "dialects" with Romance "languages" (p. xxii).¹¹

The introduction basically deals with what Drettas calls "le fait pontique" (p. 3ff.), defined as an "ensemble complexe de discours et d'attitudes" (p. 3) and roughly equivalent with "l'identité pontique" (p. 36f.). The author discusses the history and geography of Pontus (p. 5ff.), the numerical evaluation of the Pontic population, both before and after the population exchange (p. 14ff.), and the history and genealogy of his informants, the Pontians from the village of Chrysa (p. 22ff.). The introduction is illustrated with various maps (p. 10ff., 23) and rounded off with a "résumé chronologique" (p. 38f.), ranging from Xenophon's *Anabasis* (c. 400 BC) to the Treaty of Lausanne (1923).

The grammar proper is divided into two main parts of uneven length, viz. "Phonologie" (p. 43ff.) and "Morpho-syntaxe" (p. 107ff.). The title of the latter is misleading in that it has much more to offer than it suggests. It is subdivided into seven chapters: I. "Le groupe nominal" (p. 109ff.), II. "Le syntagme verbal" (p. 203ff.), III. "Les structures élémentaires de l'énoncé pontique" (p. 265ff.), IV. "Du système aspectuel" (p. 291ff.), V. "De la subordination" (p. 343ff.), VI. "De la modification" (p. 387ff.), VII. "Déixis spatiale et marqueurs de localisation" (p. 449ff.).

The author maintains a terminological distinction between "groupe" and "syntagme" in the case of "groupe nominal" (Noun Phrase or NP) and "syntagme verbal" (Verb Phrase or VP). The chapter on the NP does in fact include more than just the morphosyntax of the noun, as it also discusses the structure of the NP as a whole. The chapter on the VP, on the other hand, discusses only the morphosyntax of the VP in a narrow sense, including the "suffixes personnels" (§344ff.) and "particules préverbaux" (§352f.), i.e. affixes and clitics respectively: "le mot phonologique est, le plus souvent, soit un verbe simple soit un syntagme verbal (*cimenté, au plan phonique, par l'accent*)" (§7—my italics, MJ). The structure of the VP in a broader sense is discussed in chapter III, particularly in the section entitled "L'énoncé actif et le domaine actanciel" (§380ff.).

Chapter IV offers an in-depth discussion of the aspectual system of Pontic, with numerous fine-grained analyses of the semantics and pragmatics of the various moods such as the four optatives (§458ff.). Chapter V deals with "subordination", a term which the author uses with great caution (§526f., 572). Among other things it comprises a thorough analysis of the highly complicated

system of relative clauses (§528ff.). Chapter VI, “De la modification”, discusses the numerous pragmatic particles of Pontic and is a splendid illustration of what a discourse grammar should look like. Chapter VII, the final chapter, presents a semantically sophisticated description of the complicated system of “localisateurs” (§769) defining the Pontic sphere of spatial deixis.

There are no separate chapters on word-formation or on the integration of loanwords from other languages, which is a pity since Pontic has a lot to offer in these respects.¹² However, the examples are not only translated but glossed as well, and the glosses often take the form of linguistic and philological comments. As a result, much information on aspects not treated separately in the grammar can be gleaned from studying the accompanying glosses.

For easy reference the grammar is subdivided into 889 paragraphs (which I will refer to accordingly). The subdivisions add to the logic of the grammar, although there appear to be some misplacements, as in some cases a new paragraph starts with the translation of a preceding example (e.g., §627f., 777, 787ff., 809f., 850ff.).

Aspects pontiques is not just a grammar, but contains about 100 pages of Pontic texts, both narrative and poetic, both oral and written. The texts are all carefully translated and glossed. Each text is followed by ethnolinguistic and sociohistorical notes and comments, thus providing the reader at once with continuous Pontic data and fascinating and at times moving oral history.

The impressive bibliography is subdivided into a non-Greek (p. 699ff.) and a Greek section (p. 711ff.), and contains linguistic, philological, sociohistorical as well as ethnological publications.¹³

The index of Pontic words (p. 715ff.) is extremely useful, but it would have been even more helpful if it had taken the form of a glossary. “Pour des raisons d’économie” (p. 716), forms included in tables are not mentioned in the index, which is reasonable enough, but it would have been helpful if at least the quotation form had been mentioned. The usefulness of the index is slightly hampered by the fact that no distinction is made between references to textual quotations and references to discussions of the items. The entry /-pa/, for instance, has some 135 references, 33 out of which actually refer to the paragraphs where /-pa/ is discussed at length (§711ff.).¹⁴

The lack of a keyword index is partly compensated for by a very detailed table of contents (p. 773ff.), which rounds off the volume.

5. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework is very briefly discussed in the foreword under the heading “Le modèle descriptif” (p. xxiv-xxv). Not surprisingly, Drettas is to a certain extent tributary to the French school of functional grammar developed by André Martinet (cf. Martinet 1994). This is particularly evident in the use of such terms as “monème” vs. “synthème” (§382, 388, 660, 750¹, 832, 872), “synthématique” (§746, 803, 823) and “synthématisation” (§382, 769), “prédicat” vs. “prédicatoïde” (§412, 529), “expansion” (§495) and “autonomie” (§750¹, 877) which are peculiar to Martinet’s model and unknown to other functionalist schools such as Dik’s (cf. Dik 1994) or Givón’s (cf. Givón 2001). Fortunately, the author is well aware of such terminological and conceptual idiosyncrasies, and terms as well as concepts are explained as they are introduced.

The descriptive model used by Drettas is not, however, Martinet’s but rather the one developed by another French functionalist, Claude Hagège, which owes more to Prague School functionalism than Martinet’s. Like Dik (1994: 1318), Hagège (1982: 27ff.) distinguishes three different perspectives on sentence structure labelled “morpho-syntaxique” (1982: 32ff.), “sémantico-référentiel” (1982: 46ff.), and “énonciatif-hiérarchique” (1982: 52ff.), the latter term being roughly equivalent to “pragmatique” (Hagège 1985: 221; cf. Drettas 1997: 286, 288). As Drettas (p. xxv) rightly observes, the pragmatic perspective is particularly relevant in the case of Pontic, which has particles or “marques spécifiques” (p. xxv) to formally mark functions such as focus and theme or topic (Section 7.3).

Hagège’s name figures prominently throughout the grammar, for instance when introducing terms such as “nominant” (§113) and “verbant” (§274), both referring to inflectional and derivational affixes and clitics modifying nominal and verbal stems respectively (Hagège 1982: 75ff., 80ff.). Other important terms in the Hagègean framework are “actance”, “actants” and “circonstants” (§380ff., 750; cf. Hagège 1982: 38), taken from valency grammar as developed by another French linguist, Lucien Tesnière (cf. Allerton 1994: 4879), and the Prague School concepts “thème” (topic) vs. “rhème” (comment) (§411, 416; cf. Hagège 1982: 52ff.; Hajičová 1994: 3286, 3288ff.).¹⁵

Another French functionalist frequently mentioned is Antoine Culioli, who also endorses the pragmatic perspective (cf. Culioli 1991), and whose theory is probably even lesser-known outside of France than Hagège’s (but see now Culioli 1995). Idiosyncratic Culiolian terms and/or concepts include “valuation” (§468, 471), “fléchage” (§567), the dialectic relation between “quantification”

(Qnt) and “qualification” (Qlt) (§576, 815), “dicible” vs. “acceptable” (§827¹) and “situation” (§871). Here again the author carefully explains every single term upon introduction.

The French linguistic tradition is not only apparent from the use of idiosyncratic terminology (from the Anglo-Saxon point of view, that is), but also from the at times verbose style of *Aspects pontiques* which is bound to leave the non-francophone reader at loss every now and then. A random, but typical example is the following (from the introduction to the chapter “De la modification”, §615):

“Le champ qu’étiquette un label aux connotations multiples, est peu homogène. Le terme même de *modification* pourrait avoir l’air d’évoquer le havresac d’un aventurier de la théorie ou encore le gîte encombré d’un caravansérail traditionnel.”

It is worthy of note, however, that apart from the French functionalist tradition, Drettas is conversant with linguistic theories from all over the world, as is evident from the in-depth discussions accompanying the introduction of theoretical concepts or descriptive issues. Compare, for instance, the sections “Le ‘mot’ pontique” (§2), “Considérations sur le domaine aspecto-modal” (§514ff.) and “Les mille et un usage de la relative”, or the introductions to the chapters “Les structures élémentaires de l’énoncé pontique” (§368ff.), “Du système aspectuel” (§419ff.) and “De la modification” (§615ff.). The discussions are always relevant and more often than not critical vis-à-vis traditional or commonly accepted terms and/or concepts such as, for instance, “énoncé” (§368ff.), “actif” (§380) or “subordination” (§526f.).

6. Transcription and presentation of the data

The Pontic data are presented in broad or phonemic transcription based on the IPA, unlike the practice in Greek grammars of Pontic, where a modified version of the Greek alphabet is used (cf. Lampsidis 1961). So, for instance, /læʃæ/ (§29) instead of λάῃῃα or λάῃῃä (plural) < Turkish *leṣ* “carcass”, or /tʃarʃafæ/ (§72) instead of τῃαρτῃάφῃα or τῃαρτῃάφῃä (plural) < Turkish *çarşaf*, Black Sea Turkish *çarçaf* “(dress with) veil” (on the status of /æ/ see Section 7.1). Needless to say, the use of an IPA-based phonemic transcription increases the potential reading public of *Aspects pontiques* and is congenial with its conception as a self-contained, synchronic grammar (cf. Section 1).

In a few cases, the author seems to have inadvertently used a phonetic instead of a phonemic transcription, particularly in the sections on consonant clusters (§43ff.): /spon'gizo/ (§44) instead of /spon'kizo/ (§44, 295, 318) “wipe”, /ru'sand/ (§47) instead of /ru'sant/ (§22) “Russians”, /ksi'lan/ (§47) instead of /ksi'lank/ (§26) “churn”, /ef'xi/ and /ef'çi/ (§49) instead of /ef'ji/ (§37, 141) “prayer, benediction”, /kymy'xa'na/ (§49) instead of /kimi'xa'na/ (p. 529f., 588, 746) “Gümüşhane”, /tʃav'dar/ (§49) instead of /tʃa'ftar/ (p. 768) < Turkish *çavdar* “rye”, /er'çinesen/ (§49) instead of /er'xinesen/ (§37, 49, 758) “began (aor. 3sg)”, /av'dʒis/ (§50) instead of /a'ftʃis/ (p. 717) < Turkish *avci* “hunter”, /an'dʒia/ (§50) instead of /an'tsia/ (§53) “legs”, /an'dʒax/ (§50) instead of /an'tjax/ (§54) < Turkish *ancak* “hardly, barely”, /an'glia/ (§50) instead of /an'klia/ (p. 528, 719) “England”, /e'sponksa/ (§50) instead of /e'sponksa/ (§295, 318) “wiped (aor. 1sg)”. The corresponding tables (§47, 48, 50) should be corrected accordingly. Another, rather isolated, instance is /tʃyn'ky/ instead of /tʃin'ki/ < Turkish *çünkü* “because” (§694; cf. §612).

These are just minor errors which are easily corrected. More serious, however, is the position of the accent in the phonemic transcription. The author seems to adopt some version of nonlinear phonology (cf. Clements 1994) in which the syllable is represented by a tree: the syllable node (σ) dominates the onset (O) and the rhyme (R), which in turn dominates the nucleus (N) and the coda (C) (§2; cf. Durand 1994:4438ff.). As Drettas correctly observes, “la rime porte l’accent” (§6²) and “la langue contient des syllabes ouvertes et des syllabes fermées, ces dernières étant fort nombreuses” (§10). As a matter of fact, Pontic allows any consonant in word-final position (§12), as appears from the following examples (§147): /u'rað/ “tail”, /ka'raf/ “boat”, /san'tux/ < Turkish *sandık* “chest, coffer”, /to'lap/ < Turkish *dolap* “cupboard, wardrobe”.

Looking at the phonemic transcriptions, however, one gets the impression that Pontic does not have any closed syllables at all, as in the following examples (§49): /a'xpano/ instead of /ax'pano/ “catch (pres. 1sg)”, /a'xmax/ instead of /ax'max/ < Turkish *ahmak* “fool, idiot”, /ya'jdir/ instead of /yax'jdir/ “donkey”, /ka'jmak/ instead of /kax'jmak/ < Turkish *kaymak* “cream”, /po'jlus/ instead of /pox'jlus/ “great”, /a'rpazne/ instead of /ar'pazne/ “take, seize (pres. 3pl)”, /tu'rlu-tu'rlu/ instead of /tur'lu-tur'lu/ < Turkish *türlü-türlü* “hotchpotch”, /xa'lvan/ instead of /xal'van/ < Turkish *halva* “sweatmeat, halva”, /xa'lkon/ instead of /xal'kon/ “copper”, etc.

It is generally assumed that polysyllables should be analyzed in terms of sequences of possible monosyllables, a principle often referred to as “maximizing

onsets” (Durand 1994: 4431f.). Applying this principle to clusters consisting of three consonants, then the maximum onset in Pontic is *lstr*l, other onsets being impossible as in the following examples (§50): /mu'mtʃis/ instead of /mum'tʃis/ < Turkish *mumcu* “tallow-chandler”, /pa'ntʃar/ instead of /pan'tʃar/ < Turkish *pancar* “beet(root)”, /pe'jkant/ instead of /pej'kant/ < Turkish *bey* “bey, commander”, /tæmi'rtʃis/ instead of /tæmir'tʃis/ < Turkish *demirci* “blacksmith”, etc. Curiously enough, the syllabification is correct in the case of /an'drizo/ (§50) “marry (pres. 1sg)”.

As already remarked (Section 1), the Pontic examples are carefully glossed and translated. The glosses are not just the usual, purely linguistic, glosses, but often include extra information. In fact, the examples are often accompanied by extensive contextual, pragmatic and/or sociolinguistic information, for instance in the discussion of the peculiar phonetics of Pontic referred to as /ta-ʃki'ra ta-pontia'ka/ “le pontique dur”, which represents a “prononciation *rurale*” to some natives of Gümüşhane (§40) or in the discussion of the interrogative particles (§664ff.).

The number of typos is relatively low and most of them are easily corrected.¹⁶ Some are more tricky, however, e.g. /na-'mi-ðisato/ instead of /na-'fmi-ðisato/ (§3; cf. §352), /ti-ya'rim/ “*de ma femme*” instead of “*ma femme*” (§13), /ta-'tʃopəs/ instead of /ta-'tʃopas/ (§54), /ti-jito'naðas/ instead of /ti-jito'naðes/ (§128), /o-pa'jas/ “*le frère aîné*” instead of “*le frère*” (§129; cf. §35), “*lexème à finale consonantique /-s/*” instead of /-n/ (§161), /o-'ðeskalonatun/ instead of /o-'ðeskalonatun/ (§169), /ton-xo'retenat/ instead of (or next to) /ton-xo'retnat/ (§170; cf. §166), /ton-xo'retenatun/ next to /ton-xo'retnatun/ (§170; cf. §166), /o-ar'mentsis/ instead of /o-a'rmenis/ (§171), /ta-ya'riðasim/, /ta-ya'riðesat/ and /ta-ya'riðasemun/ next to /i-ya'riðesim/, /i-ya'riðesat/ and /i-ya'riðesemun/ (§172), /i-'kaltsešim/, /i-'kaltsesemun/, etc. next to /ta-'kaltsešim/, /ta-'kaltsasemun/, etc. (§173), /o-fti'reas/ “*le pouilleux*” instead of “*le morveux*” (§200; cf. §129), /e'lepom(en)/, etc. instead of /e'lepomen/, etc. (§281, 324ff.; cf. §280, 340ff.), *supra* §7 instead of §6 (§288), /ana'spalo/ add “*oublier*” (§298), the 2nd and 3rd person singular imperfect of /aya'po/ “*I love*” is /e'yapanaes/, /e'yapane(n)/ instead of /e'yapana/ (*bis*) (§300), the 2nd and 3rd person singular aorist of the same verb is /e'yapeses/, /e'yapese(n)/ instead of /e'yapesa/ (*bis*) (§300), /ara'evo/ “*je cherche*” instead of “*je nourris*” (§306), /a'ni(y)ume “*je m'ouvre*” (§306), /vu'ti(y)umel/ “*se plonger, être plongé*” instead of “*être plonger*” (§330), /as-'mi-leyo/, /na-'mi-leyo/, /an-'mi-leyo/ instead of /as-mi-'leyo/, /na-mi-'leyo/, /an-mi-'leyo/ (§352; cf. §3), 1–1985–11–2001 instead of 8–1994 (§385¹), /'ðis-m-aten/ V “*dire*” 2p. sing. prés. instead of 1p.

(§397.25), /'erθen/ V “venir” 3p. sing. aor. instead of 2p. (§409.38), /na-/ *subordonnant* instead of *coord.* (§409.39), /ta-'mavra ta-'xronæ/ instead of /ta-'mavra 'xronæ/ (§410.40), Drettas 1981 instead of 1988 (§421), /θa-/ *part. fut.* instead of *part.* (§452.15), /pa'θan/ V “subir, supporter, souffrir qqch.” 3p. sing. pres. (§538.1), /onton-'esne me-'ɣamon/ = 7–8–9 instead of 7–6–7 (§549.12), *que les coutumes grammaticales étiquettent ...?* (§578), *avec son concurrent* /pos/ instead of *avec son concurrent* (§583), /θa-θisi'ajs/ = 1, /'inan/ = 2 /'arθopon/ = 3 /so-'je'fir/ = 4 /jana-'sti'riete/ = 5–6 (§614.81), *çip* instead of *cip* (§644¹), /na-eftán o-kapnón/ = 15–16 instead of 13–14 (§736).

7. Grammatical features

What follows is a selection of some of the most salient features of Pontic grammar. It is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather illustrative and in any case appetizing. For full discussion of the features touched upon the reader is of course referred to *Aspects pontiques*.

7.1 Phonology

The sound system of Pontic consists of twenty-five phonemes, viz. nineteen consonants (§59) and six vowels (§78). Pontic has a voiceless palato-alveolar fricative /ʃ/, which has a double origin: palatalization of /s/ in the context /s/ + /k/ + /e i/ (§29), e.g. /'kloʃkete/ “he turns (pres. 2pl)” vs. /'kloskume/ “I turn (pres. 1sg)”, or palatalization of /x/ in the context /x/ + /æ e i/ (§34ff.), e.g. χείρ > /'jer/ “hand” (§34, 80, 143, 501), χήρα > /'jera/ “widow” (§29, 34, 69, 198). The voiceless affricates /ts/ and /tʃ/ are treated as single phonemes (§51f.), mainly on the basis of phonotactic considerations (§43ff.).¹⁷ The phonemic status of /ʃ/ and /tʃ/ is of course strengthened by the fact that both have phonemic status in the neighbouring languages as well, e.g. /ja'jevo/ (§29) < Turkish *şaşmak* “be surprised, bewildered”, /tʃuru'evo/ (§77, 83) < Turkish *çürümek* “rot, decay”.

Both the voiceless affricates /ts tʃ/ and the voiceless plosives /p t k/ are usually articulated with distinct aspiration (§14, 22, 31, 53f.).¹⁸ Aspiration is phonetically transcribed as [h] and [ʔ], e.g. [i-p'a't^hoza] (§16) = /i-pa'toza/ < French *batteuse* “combine”, [to-p'u'k^heto] (§16) = /to-pu'keto/ < French *bouquet* “bouquet”. [h] is defined as “aspiration forte” (§14), but [ʔ] is left unexplained until §60, where it is called “une légère aspiration”. However, the

aspiration is distinctive in the case of the negative particle /k^hi/, as appears from the following minimal pair (§31):

- (1) a. k-e'ɣnortses-aton
and-recognize.AOR.2SG.3SG
“and you recognized him”
b. k^h-e'ɣnortses-aton
NEG-recognize.AOR.2SG.3SG
“and you did not recognize him”

Drettas (§31) notes that the opposition [k^h] vs. [k] is a “cas limite” which has a “caractère unique”, on which grounds [k^h] is denied phonemic status. The existence of [k^h] with semi-phonemic status is, however, interesting on diachronic grounds. The negative particle /k^hi-/ derives from Ancient Greek οὐχί /u^hk^hi/, and it would seem that Pontic has retained the aspiration of the original phoneme χ /k^h/. In fact, the original pronunciation is retained in other words as well, particularly in the context σ /s/ + χ /k^h/ > /ʃ/ + /k/ (§45), e.g. σχίζω > /'ʃkizo/ = [ʃk^hizo] “tear”, ἄσχημος > /'aʃkemos/ = [ʃk^hemos] “ugly, bad”.

The last word cited illustrates a well-known Pontic archaism, viz. the retention of Ancient Greek η /ɛ:/ (§100), e.g. ἠγάπησα > /e'ɣapesa/ “I loved (aor. 1sg)” (§300, 321), ἐκοιμήθητε > /eki'meθete/ “you slept (aor. 2pl)” (§100), αὐτή > /a'te/ “she” (§178, 193, 238f., etc.). Mackridge (1987: 121) notes that it is difficult to formulate a rule, but Drettas (§100) maintains that “dans la plupart des cas” η > /e/ in unstressed syllables. Counterexamples include ἀγάπη > /a'ɣapi/ “love” (§100) vs. ἤκουσα > /'eksa/ “I heard (aor. 1sg)” (§298, 320, 550, 589), ἤρπα > /'evra/ “I found (aor. 1sg)” (§298, 320, 856), ἤνεγκα > /'enka/ “I brought (aor. 1sg)”, etc.

Another peculiarity is the development of a front unrounded vowel /æ/ which the author calls “une innovation du pontique” (§71; cf. Mackridge 1987: 121).¹⁹ It derives from /ja/ or /j'a/ (§71f.), e.g. διάβολος > /ðævolos/ “devil” (§75), διακόσια > /ðæ'koʃæ/ (§215, 217). It is especially frequent as the nominative-accusative plural ending of neuters (§72), e.g. ὀμμάτιον > /o'mat/, plural /o'matæ/ “eyes”, ὀψάριον > /o'psar/, plural /o'psaræ/ “fishes”. In the case of /ia/ both vowels are retained (§72f.), e.g. ἡλιάζω > /i'liæzo/ “I bake in the sun (pres. 1sg)” vs. ἡλίασα > /i'liasa/ “I baked in the sun (aor. 1sg)”. The same holds for the nominative-accusative plural ending of neuters in /in/ (§73), e.g. παιδίον > /pe'din/, plural /pe'dia/ “children”, σκυλίον > /ʃki'lin/, plural /ʃki'lia/ “dogs”.

It is sometimes assumed that Pontic has three additional vowels, viz. /œ/, /y/ and /u/ (Thumb 1910: 6; Dawkins 1916: 153¹). Mackridge (1987: 121) grants

/œ/ phonemic status, but notes that /y/ and /u/ only occur in Turkish loan-words. Drettas is of the opinion that the three sounds are in fact allophones: [œ] < /e/ (§67), [y] < /i/ (§64) and [u] < /u/ (§77), e.g. /ke'jæ/ (§138) = [kœ'je] < Turkish *köşe* “corner (shop)”, /tʃin'ki/ = [tʃyn'ky] (§612) < Turkish *çünkü* “because”, /la'zum/ = [la'zum] (§77) < Turkish *lazım* “necessary”.

As the author notes, “les réalisations phonétiques évoquées sont *optionnelles* du point de vue du système” (§79—my italics, MJ). On the other hand, one cannot fail to notice that the phonetic realizations of the examples just quoted obey the rules of Turkish vowel harmony (Lewis 2000: 31f.; Kornfilt 1997: 498ff.). Drettas acknowledges the fact, but maintains that it is in fact “un phénomène d’harmonisation *phonétique*” (§80—my italics, MJ). Phonetic vowel harmony is responsible for the variation between such forms as /eks'a'pes/ < /'eks/ “outside” + /a'pes/ “inside” vs. /okso'pis/ < /'eks/ “outside” + /o'pis/ “behind” (§824).

I conclude this section with a brief discussion of the Pontic accent, “un des éléments les plus originaux de la langue au sein de l’ensemble grec” (§8). The originality has to do with the fact that the Greek rule of limitation is no longer operational in Pontic. Drettas (§8¹) correctly connects this phenomenon with “son caractère agglutinant”. This is best illustrated on the basis of the so-called “suffixes personnels” (§344ff.).²⁰

The Ancient Greek enclitic pronouns have become pronominal suffixes in Pontic. “Du point de vue morphologique, ces suffixes sont des véritables *indices personnels*” (§344). As such they are glued to the verb without affecting the position of the accent. As Drettas remarks: “L’accentuation pontique est un des éléments essentiels qui rendent le dialecte incompréhensible aux autres gréco-phones” (§8). For instance, in the following examples the accent is on the seventh-last syllable:

- (2) eka'lat(ēvan·emasene (§6)
talk.AOR.3PL·1PL
“they talked to us”
- (3) 'estilan·emasene (§346)
send.AOR.3PL·1PL
“they sent us”

As a result, “l’accent a une place fixe dans le mot” (§7), a phenomenon which I have referred to elsewhere as “paradigm trimming” (Janse 1998b: 534). Compare, for instance, the two variants of the 1st person plural of /'kloʃkume/ “I turn (pres. 1sg)” (§334):

- (4) a. 'klo/kumes
turn.PRES.1PL
b. 'klo/kumestine
turn.PRES.1PL
“we turn”

7.2 Morphology

According to Drettas (§148), Pontic morphology is characterized by “une grande *régularité des marques*”, but at the same time complicated by two factors. Firstly, it is often impossible to deduce the inflectional type of a given word. Compare, for instance, the plurals of the following words (§148): /i-ya'ri/ < Turkish *kari* “woman”, plural /ta-ya'riðas/ “the women” vs. /i-aðel'fi/, plural /t-aðel'faðas/ “the sisters”, /i-'nifæ/, plural /ta-ni'faðas/ “the daughters-in-law” vs. /i-'tjopæ/, plural /ta-'tjopæs/ “the pockets”. Secondly, some masculine or feminine words referring to non-humans have a neuter plural (§148), e.g. /o-'ðromon/, plural /ta-'ðromæ/ “the streets”, /i-'pfi/, plural /ta-'pfia/ “the souls” (also “the breasts”, §480.40).

The existence of forms like /ta-ya'riðas/ “the women”, /t-aðel'faðas/ “the sisters”, /ta-ni'faðas/ “the daughters-in-law” and /ta-'tjopæs/ “the pockets” is a peculiar feature of Pontic morphology (Mackridge 1987: 128). These forms are used for the nominative and accusative case alike, i.e. both as subjects and as objects. Formally, the article is nominative-accusative plural neuter, whereas the noun is accusative plural feminine (or masculine). In the case of nouns referring to human beings, feminine forms are used as well, e.g. /i-ya'riðes/ “the women” and /i-mi'teres/ “the mothers” (§137):

	<i>nominative</i>	<i>accusative</i>	<i>genitive</i>
(5) sg	i-ya'ri	tin-ya'rin	ti-ya'ris
pl	i-ya'riðes	ti-ya'riðas	ti-ya'ri'ðion
	ta-ya'riðas	ta-ya'riðas	
(6) sg	i-mi'tera	ti-mi'teran	ti-mi'teras
pl	i-mi'teres	ti-mi'teras	ti-mi'te'rion
	ta-mi'teras	ta-mi'teras	

It should be noted that the neighbouring languages are without exception case languages without separate categories for gender (§157). This is one way of explaining the variation in the plural. Drettas (§212ff.) hints at another possible explanation: the opposition between singular feminine and plural

neuter corresponds to an opposition between “spécifique” and “générique” (§212). It is tempting to connect this generic value with the “sens collectif” (§150) of plurals such as /ta-peθer'ka/ “the in-laws”, collective plural of /o-peθe'ron/ “the father-in-law” and /i-peθe'ra/ “the mother-in-law”, and /t-a'ðelfæ/ “the brothers and sisters”, collective plural of /o-aðel'fon/ “the brother” and /i-aðel'fi/ “the sister”.

Unfortunately, this is not the end of the story. Pontic morphology is complicated even further by the existence of other doublets. Take, for instance, the masculine inflectional type I, comprising nouns in /-as/, viz. /o-po'pas/ “the priest”, /o-pa'teras/ “the father”, /o-kseni'teas/ “the expatriate” and /o-'jionas/ “the neighbour” (§128):

	<i>nominative</i>	<i>accusative</i>	<i>genitive</i>
(7) sg	o-po'pas	ton-po'pan	ti-po'pa
pl	i-po'paðes	ti-po'paðas	ti-popa'ðion
(8) sg	o-pa'teras	ton-pa'teran	ti-pa'tera
pl	i-pate'raðes	ti-pate'raðas	ti-pate'raðon
		ti-pa'teras	ti-pate'run
(9) sg	o-kseni'teas	ton-kseni'tean	ti-kesni'tea
pl	i-kseni'tænt	ti-kseni'tænts	ti-kseni'tænt
(10) sg	o-'jionas	ton-'jionan	ti-'ji'ton
pl	i-jito'naðes	ti-jito'naðas	ti-jito'nion
	i-'ji'ton	ti-'ji'tonts	ti-'ji'ton

Pontic morphology is still further complicated by the “agglutination” (Janse 1998b:530ff.) of personal suffixes which often involves “fusion” (§158ff.), as in the following examples, which include only the pronominal suffixes of the 1st /(i)m/, 2nd /(i)s/ and 3rd /(a)t/ person singular (§168):

	<i>nominative</i>	<i>accusative</i>	<i>genitive</i>
(11) sg	1sg o-po'pasim		
	o-po'pam	ton-po'pam	ti-po'pam
2sg	o-po'pasis		
	o-po'pas	ton-po'pas	ti-po'pas
3sg	o-po'pasat	ton-po'panat	ti-po'pat
pl	1sg i-po'paðesim	ti-po'paðasim	ti-popa'ðionim
			ti-popa'ðiom
2sg	i-po'paðesis	ti-po'paðasis	ti-popa'ðionis
	i-po'paðes	ti-po'paðas	
3sg	i-po'paðesat	ti-po'paðasat	ti-popa'ðionat

Even a quick glance at the examples just quoted reveals not only the complexity of Pontic morphology, but its potential ambiguity as well. A form such as /o-po'pas/, for instance, can be interpreted as “the priest” or “your priest”. The genitive singular has four different forms which are very much alike: /ti-po'pa/ “of the priest”, /ti-po'pam/ “of my priest”, /ti-po'pas/ “of your priest”, and /ti-po'pat/ “of his priest”.

Things are even more complicated in the masculine inflectional type II, comprising nouns in /-on/ (§130ff.), as in /o-peθe'ron/ “the father-in-law” and /o-aðel'fon/ quoted above. As Drettas notes, “le nominatif singulier de ce type a la particularité d’être marqué par la désinence /-os/ lorsque le nominal n’est pas déterminé” (§132; cf. Mackridge 1987: 124), as in the following examples (§132):

- (12) o-'turkon 'panta 'turkos -en
the-Turk always Turk be.PRES.3SG
“A Turk will always be a Turk”
- (13) o-pala'lon 'ipen pala'los k^h-'ime
the-fool say.AOR.3SG fool not-be.PRES.1SG
“The fool said: I am not a fool”

In other words, the *definite nominative* of the masculine inflectional type II has the same ending as the *accusative*. This implies, incidentally, that forms such as /o-^lðeskalosim/, /o-^lðeskalosis/, /o-^lðeskalosat/, etc. (§169) should be corrected: /^lðeskalosim/, /^lðeskalosis/, /^lðeskalosat/, etc. are the forms of the indefinite nominative, whereas /o-^lðeskalom/, /o-^lðeskalos/, /o-^lðeskalonat/, etc. are the forms of the definite nominative.

All this reminds one of a similar phenomenon in Cappadocian and Farasiot, where the *indefinite accusative* has the same ending as the *nominative* (Dawkins 1916: 94ff.), as in the following example from Farasa (Dawkins 1916: 550):

- (14) 'ivrane 'len ba'bas
find.AOR.3PL another.ACC priest.ACC.INDEF
“They found another priest”
- (15) 'pirane 'dʒe 'dʒino ton-ba'ba
take.AOR.3PL also that the-priest.ACC.DEF
“They took that priest as well”

Dawkins emphasizes the antiquity of the Pontic phenomenon, “a stage which for the nominative had been reached in Pontic *before the period of Turkish influence*” (1916: 94 — my italics, MJ).²¹ The Cappadocian phenomenon, on the other hand, is without any doubt due to Turkish interference, as Turkish uses

the so-called “absolute form” for both nominatives and indefinite accusatives (Lewis 2000: 33f.; Kornfilt 1997: 219).

The complexity and ambiguity of Pontic morphology is thus even more marked in the case of inflectional type II than in the case of inflectional type I. The following utterance, for instance, is ambiguous (§160):

- (16) a. 'ðeskalos 'etone
 teacher.NOM.INDEF be.IMP.3SG
 “He was a teacher”
 b. 'ðeskalos 'etone
 teacher.NOM.DEF.2SG be.IMP.3SG
 “He was your teacher”

Other forms are very much alike, e.g. /'ðeskalos/ “teacher (nom. indef.)”, “your teacher (nom.)” or “your teacher (acc.)”, /'ðeskalus/ “your teacher (gen.)”, /ðes'kalis/ “your teachers (nom. pl.)”, /'ðeskalom/ “my teacher (nom.)” or “my teacher” (acc.), /'ðeskalum/ “my teacher (gen.)”, etc.

The most striking features of Pontic verb morphology have already been exemplified in the previous section: the fixed position of the accent (4) and the “agglutination” of personal suffixes (2–3). As already remarked (Section 4), the Pontic VP in the narrow sense is a “*mot phonologique*” (§7) comprising, theoretically, both personal suffixes and modal and/or negative particles, the latter being proclitic from a prosodic point of view (§2). In the following examples two personal suffixes are combined (the first example is taken from Drettas 1999: 19):

- (18) k^{hi}-'ðiyne·m·ata
 not-give.PRES.3PL·1SG·3PL
 “they don’t give me them”
 (19) e'ðekane·m·aton (§705)
 give.AOR.3PL·1SG·3SG
 “they gave me to him”

When modal and negative particles co-occur, the accent is regularly shifted onto the second particle, particularly in the combination /k^{hi}-θa-/:²²

- (20) k^{hi}-'θa-leyo (§352, 475)
 NEG-FUT-say.PRES.1SG
 “I won’t say”

- (21) $k^h i - ' \theta a - erte$ (§401.32)
 NEG-FUT-COME.AOR.3SG
 “he won’t come”
- (22) $k^h i - ' \theta a - kofts \cdot ata$ (§401.32)
 NEG-FUT-CUT.PRES.2SG-3PL
 “you must not cut them”

As already remarked (Section 4), there is no separate chapter on word-formation, although the sections on the various inflectional types (§128ff.) do contain references to some productive formations. Probably one of the most productive formations, apart from the derivation of feminines (§137ff.), are diminutives in /-’opon/, e.g. /t-an’tropon/ < /o-an’tas/ “the man”, /to-’p’opon/ < /i-’p’ji/ “the soul”, /to-’je’ropon/ < /to-’jer/ “the hand” (§143). For obvious reasons, these diminutives are frequently used hypocoristically, especially in the vocative case (with accent shift, §6), e.g. /’arnopom/ “my little goat” (§404.36) < /ar’nin/ “goat”, /’pulopom/ “my little bird” (§489.53, 701.85, 872.144) < /pu’lin/ “bird”, /’kortsopom/ “my little girl” (§6, 104, 341) < /’kori/ “girl”, /’yariðopom/ “my little woman” (§30) < /ya’ri/ “woman”, the latter instead of /’yarim/ “my wife” (§32, 57), which is in direct competition with /’jarim/ “my love” (§32, 57) < Turkish *yâr* “friend, lover”.²³

There is no separate section on the treatment of loanwords either. However, the glosses frequently contain references to the original sources of such loans, e.g. /ja’ni/ (§681) < Turkish *yani* “that is to say”, /za’ti/ (§686.70) < Turkish *zati* “in any case, besides, of course”, /tæ’mæk/ (§39, 687) < Turkish *demek*, Black Sea Turkish *temek* “that is to say”, /’joksam/ (§692.76) < Turkish *yoksa* “if not”, /tunjakize’li/ (§690.74) = Cappadocian /dun’ja gyzeli/ (Dawkins 1916: 352) < Turkish *dünya güzeli* “fair one of the world”.

The morphological integration of loanwords is unproblematical because Pontic has no restrictions on the occurrence of word-final consonants (§12, 151; cf. Section 6). Drettas has devoted a short section to the problem of gender assignment (§153). Loanwords referring to non-humans and ending in a consonant are integrated as neuters, e.g. /to-sa’lep/ (§12) < Turkish *salep* “salep (hot drink made with the powder of the purple orchid)”, /to-la’va/ (§29, 35, 622) < Turkish *lavaş* “flat bread”, /to-t’i’t’jek/ (§39) < Turkish *çiçek* “flower”.

Masculine loanwords are derived by adding /-on/ or /-kon/ (§153), e.g. /o-’turkon/ (§123, 131f., 143, etc.) < Turkish *Türk* “Turk”, but also by adding /-(i)s/ (cf. Mackridge 1987: 127), e.g. /o-pa’fas/ (§129) < Turkish *paşa* “pasha > eldest brother”, /o-’tefs/ (§853.120) < Turkish *dev* “dev, giant”, /o-xa’t’fis/ (p. 558.144)

< Turkish *hacı* “hadji, pilgrim”. Feminine loanwords ending in /-a -e -i/ are integrated as such (§153), e.g. /i-pa'tʃi/ (§138) < Turkish *baci* “eldest sister”, /a'na/ (p. 556.134) < Turkish *ana* “mother”.

Verbs are as easily borrowed as other words. Pontic uses the productive suffix /-'evo/ instead of /-'izo/, which is found in other dialects (Mackridge 1987:127; Janse 2001:477ff.), e.g. /ara'evo/ §85, 306, 325, 601) < Turkish *aramak* “seek”, /topla'evo/ (p. 576.213) < Turkish *toplamak* “collect, assemble”, /puɣa'levo/ (p. 581.232, 664.7) < Turkish *boğulmak*, Black Sea Turkish *puğalmak* “be choked > be fed up”, or /ʃa'levo/ and /tʃuru'evo/ quoted above (Section 7.1).

7.3 Syntax

Although Pontic has many interesting syntactic features, I will have to restrict myself to the ones that are either unique in comparison with other Greek dialects or the ones that are not treated separately.

One of the most problematic aspects of Pontic and indeed Greek syntax is the order of words. As in Greek, word order in Pontic is relatively free, although “free” is not to be equated with “arbitrary”. As Drettas observes: “l'ordre canonique dominant du pontique étant D[éterminant]-D[éterminé], nous avons ce qu'on appelle parfois, en anglais, un *left branching language*” (§186; cf. §136). The same principle was formulated for Cappadocian by Dawkins (1916:200f.): “the qualifying word always precedes the qualified”. This is, in fact, the word order to be found in the neighbouring languages such as Laz and Turkish (Lewis 2000:237f.; Kornfilt 1997:108f.).

The order of words within the NP obeys the principle just evoked. Genitive NPs, for instance, obligatorily precede the head noun (§186):

- (23) ʃkil i'e
 dog.GEN SON.VOC
 “Son of a dog!”
- (24) ti-'manasim t-aðel'fu ti-peθe'ras
 the-mother.GEN.ISG the-brother.GEN the-mother-in-law.GEN
 o-'ksaelfon
 the-cousin.NOM.DEF
 “the cousin of the mother-in-law of the brother of my mother”

In some cases, the genitive NP is in the nominative case on the model of the Turkish *izafet*-construction (Lewis 2000:40ff.), a construction also found in

Cappadocian (Dawkins 1916:201). Drettas (§187) seems to be unaware of the *izafet*-connection and explains this construction in Pontic on the basis of the polysemy of certain genitive forms, e.g.:

- (25) a. e'mis xo'ret k^h-imes
 we.NOM farmer.NOM.PL not-be.PRES.1PL
 b. xo'ret 'fil -imes
 farmer.GEN.SG friend.NOM.PL be.PRES.1PL
 “We are not farmers, we are friends of farmers”

In example (25a–b), /xo'ret/ is formally genitive singular as well as nominative plural. This type of ambiguity cannot be invoked to explain the following example, however, which the author takes to be a sign of the gradual disappearance of the genitive (§187):

- (26) a'kuj 'provata la'lias
 hear.PRES.3SG sheep.NOM/ACC.PL sound.ACC.PL
 “He hears the sounds of sheep”

If the NP contains an adjective, the adjective necessarily precedes the head noun and if the latter has the article, then the adjective has to have an article as well (§206):

- (27) to-tra'non t-o'psaron 'troj to-mi'kro
 the-big the-fish eat.PRES.3SG the-little
 “The big fish eats the little one”

If the NP contains a possessive, there are two options. If the possessive adjective is used, it precedes the noun (and the adjective, if any):

- (28) t-e'meteron to-ka'lon to-pe'ðin
 the-ours the-good the-child
 “our good child”

If, on the other hand, a personal suffix is used, it can be attached to the head noun, to the adjective, or to both (§208):

- (29) a. to-ka'lon to-pe'ði-m
 the-good the-child-1SG
 b. to-ka'lo-m to-pe'ðin
 the-good-1SG the-child
 c. to-ka'lo-m to-pe'ði-m
 the-good-1SG the-child-1SG
 “my good child”

Other modifiers precede the head noun (and the adjectives, if any) as well, on the model of the Turkish NP (§166; cf. Kornfilt 1997:108f.). The following example includes a numeral (§209):

- (30) ta-'ðio ta-'emorfa ta-ko'ritʃæ
 the-two the-beautiful the-girl.PL
 “the two beautiful girls”

Relative clauses do not obey the word order principle just illustrated, but obligatorily follow the head noun (§575), in contrast to the Cappadocian relative clause, which always precedes the head noun (Dawkins 1916:201f.; Janse 1999:456ff.).

The examples quoted so far all included neuters. A peculiar feature of Pontic is the agreement between feminine nouns and adjectives. Generally speaking, the adjective agrees with its head noun (§210):

- (31) o-ka'lon o-po'pas
 the-good the-priest
 “the good priest”
- (32) i-ka'lesa i-'mana
 the-good the-mother
 “the good mother”
- (33) to-ka'lon to-pe'ðin
 the-good the-child
 “the good child”

If the noun is feminine, however, the adjective may agree with it, or take the neuter form instead (§210ff.), as in the following minimal pair (§212):

- (34) a. i-ka'lesa i-ya'ri
 the-good.FEM the-woman
 “the good woman”
- b. to-ka'lon i-ya'ri
 the-good.NEUT the-woman
 “the good woman”

As already remarked (Section 7.2), feminine nouns have neuter plurals or, if they refer to human beings, they can have both feminine and neuter plurals. In example (35b), the article /ta-/ is formally nominative/accusative neuter plural, whereas the noun /ya'riðas/ is formally accusative plural:

- (35) a. i-ka'leses i-ya'riðes
 the-good.NOM.FEM.PL the-woman.NOM.PL
 b. ta-ka'lesas ta-ya'riðas
 the-good.ACC.FEM.PL the-woman.ACC.FEM.PL

What we have here, is probably another instance of the definite nominative discussed above (Section 7.2), but the agreement (or rather the lack thereof) in (34b) and (35b) is remarkable. Dawkins (1916:115) reports the same phenomenon for Cappadocian and attributes it to Turkish interference, since the Turkish adjective is invariable (cf. Kornfilt 1997:414).

Drettas (§157) introduces the term “accusativité clivée” or “split accusativity” to account for this phenomenon. The use of the accusative for the definite nominative as in (12) and (13) is another instance of this split accusativity, as is the use of the accusative (neuter) in (34b) and (35b). It is important to repeat, however, that none of the neighbouring languages distinguish gender, so at least part of the explanation of the use of neuter instead of feminine (and masculine) plurals may be sought in interference, Turkish being a good candidate.

As already noted (Section 7.2), Drettas (§212) speculates that the difference between (34a) and (34b) on the one hand, and between (35a) and (35b) on the other, has to do with the opposition between “spécifique” vs. “générique”, which is perfectly reasonable. But it is worth mentioning that the use of the accusative is not restricted to cases like the ones just discussed. Drettas (§154) correctly concludes that Pontic is typologically an accusative language, but notes at the same time: “la classe des N neutres ne marque pas explicitement les rôles actanciels” (*ibid.*). Put differently, whether a neuter functions as subject or as object, it is not formally marked as such, in contrast to masculines and feminines.

I conclude this section with some more remarks on word order. As Drettas observes, in Pontic, as in Greek, “le thème est toujours placé à gauche du noyau rhématique” (§710; cf. Holton-Mackridge-Philippaki-Warburton 1997:430). The following example is a case of “double thématization” (§347):²⁴

- (36) e'yo a'vut to-ko'rits aya'po-ato
 I that the-girl love.PRES.1SG·3SG
 “Moi, cette fille, je l’aime”

However, not every utterance has a theme, as Drettas (§709) correctly argues, so the problem is how to identify a theme, if there is one. Intonation helps identifying themes (§710; cf. Holton-Mackridge-Philippaki-Warburton 1997:430), but

does not always provide “hard” evidence by itself, unless the theme is separated from the rest of the utterance (the “rheme”) by a pause (§710).

Pontic is unique among the Greek dialects in that it has pragmatic particles to mark the “theme” of the utterance as well as its “focus”. The former is referred to by Drettas as “la particule de thématization forte /-pa/” (§712) to distinguish it from the “thématisation faible” (§711) with the aid of intonation only. This “thématisateur” (§714) is enclitic (§3) and etymologically connected to Ancient Greek *πάλιν* /palin/ “again” by Papadopoulos (1958–1961: 3.130), an hypothesis which can be corroborated by the use of /-pal/ in Cappadocian (Dawkins 1916: 631 s.v. *πάλιν*). The following example illustrates the use of /-pa/ (§715.94—the three dots ... represent a pause):

- (37) i-θaya'ter·at e'kine-pa ... e'kine ...
 the-daughter-3SG she-theme she
 'kja 'enton kalo'yrea
 prt become.AOR.3SG nun
 e'kine-pa ... k^h-e'seven so-mana'stir
 she-theme not-enter.AOR.3SG in.the-convent
 “His daughter, she..., she..., she became a nun, she..., she didn't go to
 the convent, though”

A very similar example from Cappadocian is the following (Dawkins 1916: 424, 426):

- (38) k-e'to-pali ... eku'tjis-to 'piken
 and-this-theme ox-driver-3SG do.AOR.3SG
 “*And this ... it was the ox-driver who did it*”

In this particular example, /e'to/ is the theme (and as such marked by /-pali/, whereas /eku'tjis/ is the focus of the utterance, whence it has attracted the enclitic /to/ into preverbal position (Janse 1998a: 263).

Pontic has a pragmatic particle to mark the focus of an utterance. The “focalisateur” (§662) in question is /-ki/, like /-pa/ an enclitic particle (§3). Drettas (§779) connects it to Georgian *k'i*, a postpositive particle with a similar function. An example including “thématisation faible” and “focalisation” is the following (§814.83):

- (38) a'tos ... e'perane-ki ti-ma'rian
 he take.AOR.3PL-FOC the-Maria
 “*He ... they took Maria*”

Needless to say, the very existence of thematic and focal particles is extremely interesting, both from a descriptive and a theoretical point of view, in that it helps us to better understand the underlying mechanisms and the role played by markers of “thématisation faible” such as intonation.

8. Conclusion

What was originally intended as a review (and, indeed, as such solicited) has turned into a rather long review article. The reasons are, I hope, obvious. Firstly, the publication of *Aspects pontiques* marks the beginning of a new era in Greek dialectology in that it provides a self-contained, synchronic description of a particular dialect. Secondly, *Aspects pontiques* is an important work from the viewpoint of linguistic theory in that it tackles a wide array of theoretical problems, concepts and terms while at the same time providing a wealth of descriptive data placed in their proper context.²⁵ Thirdly, it is unfortunately becoming more and more rare for linguists from the Anglo-Saxon world to read publications written in languages other than English, especially if such publications are couched in a theoretical framework which is non-Anglo-Saxon as well. It is the hope of the present writer that this article will direct linguists interested in areal, contact and typological linguistics as well as linguists interested in Greek linguistics and dialectology to this important work.

In this paper, I have often referred to the position of Pontic in relation to the other Greek dialects. The “caractère grec” and “parenté génétique” (Drettas 1997: xxii) of Pontic will be clear, but at the same time it has to be admitted that from a typological point of view Pontic has changed to the point that it may no longer be useful to call it a Greek “dialect”. The grammatical features outlined above are by itself perhaps sufficient to make the point.

Notes

1. Following Holton-Mackridge-Philippaki-Warburton (1997: xiii), I use the term ‘Greek’ to refer to the contemporary language.
2. For Greek grammars of Pontic cf. Papadopoulos (1955), Ikonomidis (1958), Athanasiadis (1977), Tombaïdis (1988).
3. Cf., e.g., Tzartazanos (1946–1953), Babiniotis-Kontos (1967), Andriotis (1983). Drettas is right in arguing that “l’unité du grec moderne est préfigurée par l’unité de la koïnè” ...

“alexandrine, puis romaine, conçue comme une langue unique” (1997:xix). Recent works on the unity and diversity of the Hellenistic Koine include Bubeník (1989), Brixhe (1993) and Horrocks (1997:32ff., esp. 60ff.).

4. This was, in fact, the reaction of one Greek linguist when the 1st International Conference on Modern Greek Dialects and Linguistic Theory in Patras was announced at the 4th International Conference on Greek Linguistics in Nicosia!

5. Mackridge (1987:120) seems to hold a similar position with respect to the linguistic status of Pontic.

6. A detailed overview of the history of Pontus can be found in Drettas (1997:5ff., 38f.).

7. Cf. Papadopoulos (1953:83ff.) and Drettas (1997:20, 36). Pontic’s closest relative, Cappadocian, is now extinct (Janse 2002).

8. *To ζιζάνιον* /to-zí'zanion/ (Αθήνα: ΜΑΜΟΥΘ COMIX ΕΠΕ, 2000), translated from *La zizanie* (Paris: Hachette, 1970).

9. The Caucasian connection may be a very old one, witness the Prometheus myth and the saga of the Argonauts. It should be noted, however, that in Byzantine times the ethnonym “Laz” was used to refer *any* people living East of Istanbul, including, of course, the Laz themselves (Brendemoen 1990:55). The adoption of a foreign ethnonym/glottonym is of course not at all unprecedented, as can be gathered from the fact that instead of /lazi'ka/ “Laz” the Pontians also use /ro'mejka/, literally “Roman”, to refer to their language (Drettas 1997:19, 620; 1999:16; cf. Mackridge 1999:26).

10. Compare Brendemoen (1990; 1996) for Kartvelian influence on Black Sea Turkish.

11. The distinction between “languages” and “dialects” is of course notoriously difficult (cf. Chambers-Trudgill 1998:3ff.).

12. It should be noted, however, that the sections dealing with “La flexion nominale” (§128ff.) do contain information on word-formation, e.g. the derivation of feminines (§140), diminutives (§143) and verbal nouns (§146).

13. I have noted just a few minor errors (p. 702, Dietrich: *Geschichte der griechischen Sprache* instead of *des*; p. 704, Hagège: *The Language Builder* instead of *Builders*; p. 713, Παπαδοπούλου: chronological order of publications reversed).

14. In some cases, the alphabetical order is disrupted, probably because of the presence or absence of an initial accent, e.g. p. 737 (from /evalato/ onwards), p. 757 (from /pa'θan/ onwards), p. 765 (all the entries beginning with /f-/ are preceded by all the entries beginning with /f-/).

15. Note, however, that Drettas (§714) distinguishes between “topique” and “thème”.

16. E.g. *une fois* instead of *un fois* (p. 19), *qui finiront par* instead of *pas* (p. 26), /'ðe-θa-pi'raksis/ instead of /, /'ðen-θa-pi'raksis /, ψυχή instead of ψυχή (§34), χιών instead of χιόν (§36), /to-pe'yað/ instead of /to-'pe'yað/ (§147), *hors de tout contexte* instead of *tous* (§156), Jíří instead of Juří (§223), *entraînent* instead of *entraîne* (§269), *se forme* instead of *se formes* (§310), “être aimé” instead of “être aimer” (§331), *le tableau* instead of *la* (§335¹), *composant* instead of *composants* (§343), /k^{hi}-xo'revo/ instead of /khi-xo'revo/ (§352), *nous avons considéré* instead of *considérer* (§363), /o-'ðeskalon/ instead of /o-ðeskalon/ (§375), *les*

énoncés construits instead of *construis* (§379), *un énoncé élémentaire* instead of *énoncé* (§406), *Z. Guentchéva* instead of *S.* (§421²), *qui étaient* instead of *était* (§426¹), *par deux* instead of *pas* (§467), *la condition étant, ici* instead of *la condition étant ici étant, ici* (§467), *plus d'un terme* instead of *termes* (§477), *l'exemple suivant* instead of *les exemples suivants* (§500), *ont renvoyé* instead of *renvoyé* (§524), *exemple* instead of *exemple* (§533), “*On lui donne*” instead of “*On lui*” (§553.16), “*ce qu'on a déjà donné*” instead of “*ce on a déjà donné*” (§556.26), *qui ont toutes en commun* instead of *qui toutes en commun* (§579), *son rôle* instead of *sont* (§580), *ne soit pas superflue* instead of *ne pas superflue* (§599), *La temporelle* instead of *Le* (§601), *I. Mel'čuk* instead of *J.* (615¹), *tu ne dois rien* instead of *du* (§645.32), “*de ceux-là (ils ne te donneront rien)*” instead of “*de (ils ne te donneront rien) ceux-là*” (§645.32), *certaines inventaires* instead of *inventaire* (§655), “*Elle a aussi*” instead of “*Elle aussi*” (§659.46), *d'un* instead of *de un* (§659), *le marquage* instead of *la* (§663), “*il finit par*” instead of “*pas*” (§664.49), etc.

17. Joseph and Philippaki-Warburton (1987:231f.) argue in favour of a single-phoneme interpretation of Greek /ts/ and /dz/, whereas Mackridge (1985:22) and Holton-Mackridge-Philippaki-Warburton (1997:6) seem to hesitate. Thumb (1910:23f.) refers to the Greek affricates as “zusammengesetzte Konsonanten”.

18. It is surely no coincidence that the native of Ferteke (Ferteki) who had moved to Samsun (Amisos) interviewed by Thumb (1910:297) articulated his voiceless plosives with distinct aspiration. Dawkins (1916:70) maintains he has no record of aspirated voiceless plosives at Ferteke, but aspiration is reported for Anaku by Costakis (1964:15).

19. Farasiot has /æ/ as well (Dawkins 1916:153; Andriotis 1948:17).

20. For a discussion of similar phenomena in Cappadocian see Janse (1998:530ff.).

21. The phenomenon is already found in the Asia Minor Koine (Thumb 1906:258).

22. It should be noted, however, that the accent is not consistently marked, particularly in the case of /na-mi(n)-/, e.g. /khi-^hθa-ðisato/, /na-^hmi-ðisato/ (§3), /as-mi-leyo/, /na-mi-leyo/, /an-mi-leyo/ (§352), /na-mi-^hpate/ (§402), /na-min-ertane/ (§410), /na-mi-^hkoftne/ (§481), /na-mi-^hperts/ (§484) but /k^hi-^hθa-^hperts/ (§645.32), /an-k^hi-^hðimaten/ (§500.63), /k^hi-^hθa-e-ðinasas/ (§504.67), /na-min-tira'niete/ (§538.1), /na-mi-ðiyō/ (§639), /na-mi-^hpayne/ (§805), /k^hi-^hθa-sko'tonosen/ (§866.133), etc.

23. The gloss on /ya'riðes/ (§729) reads as follows: “N “crevettes” fém. plur. acc., *en dhimotiki*; en pontique /ya'riðes/ (N fém. plur. nomin./voc.) signifie “femmes, épouses” et c'est ce que comprennent les passants (pontiques) au grand dam du pêcheur”. /ya'ri/ is in fact a Turkish loan (Papadopoulos 1958–1961:1.408 s.v. *kaprı*).

24. For comparable examples from Cappadocian see Janse (1998b:538).

25. These are the reasons for establishing an international forum for “Modern Greek Dialects and Linguistic Theory” (Ralli-Joseph-Janse 2001).

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