The deletion of final /s/ in Mani and Corsica
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- Corsica: Greeks from Mani settled in 1676 (Cargèse since 1775); last native Greek speaker died 1976. Minimal contact with Greece in the interim.
- Linguistic work by Gerhard Blanken (1930s fieldwork, 1947 PhD published in 1951), and Dikeos Vayacacos (unpublished fieldwork in 1964–5).
- Maniot little studied until fairly recently, outside André Mirambel’s PhD (1929 text collection) and 1929 grammar. Covers Inner Mani, whereas Corsica settled by Outer Mani.

Corsican Greek deletes final /s/:
- Το βράδυ ένα αέρα της θάλασσα
  ‘at night there is a wind from the sea’

At first sight, this looks like Romance influence, reminiscent of final /s/ deletion in Italiot Greek. Richard Dawkins rushed to that judgement in 1926.

But final /s/ deletion characteristic of Mani, and many other Greek dialects. (Universal in Tsakonian.) In 1929 Dawkins recants.

So is Corsican Greek /s/ deletion the same as Maniot /s/ deletion, or does it show added Romance influence, as Blanken surmised?

1. Maniot

/s/ deletion first attested in Crete and Mani 17th century.

Mainstream account of /s/ deletion in Greek (Hatzidakis) is dissimilation: the prototypical domain for deletion is the context o aðerfο(s) mas. Most Cretan dialects have o aðerfο mas but o aðerfοs μu.

Some analogical extension to other contexts: Agia Varvara, Crete has o aðerfο μu; δος μu > δο μu; occasional instances like tis panayias > ts panaja in Karditsa recorded by Triantafyllides.

1920s account of deletion concentrates on phonological conditioning: acc. to Mirambel, deleted frequently before fricatives, almost always before stops, at phrase ends, before pauses—and was preserved only before vowels.


But not so: dissimilatory /s/ deletion (o aðerfο tus) more frequent than phrase-final deletion (o aðerfοs tu) in Mani.
Evidence:
- Dissimilatory loss the only kind mentioned in Kassis’ 1982 sketch grammar: 
  \((o\ jani\ mu)_{NP}\) vs. \((o\ janis)_{NP}\ (mu)_{NP}\) pe ‘John told me’.
- Kassis also reports /s/ deletion in determiners—proclitic, so not phrase-final.
- Text counts.

/s/ deletion undone by standard Greek influence. In Kyriakos Kassis’ publication of 
*tsattires* from Mani, /s/ inserted by collector though it disrupts rhyme, and even though 
facsimiles of manuscripts are without /s/. But Mirambel’s songs (often reproduced by 
Kassis) best evidence we have:

Excluding patriotic songs (more liable to standardising influence):

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>End of NP (noun)</td>
<td>86%</td>
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<tr>
<td>N POSS-(s)</td>
<td>79%</td>
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<td>Overall phrase-final</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proclitic-(s) V</td>
<td>42%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Det-(s) N’</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>N-(s) POSS</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall phrase-medial</td>
<td>64%</td>
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2. Southern Italy

The Greek of Southern Italy, long exposed to Romance, patterns differently. Best 
described by Gerhard Rohlfs for Calabria:

- No phrase-final /s/; either deleted, or epenthetic /e/: \(o\ ximona,\ o\ ximonase\)
- Phrase-medial /s/ retained, but assimilated to consonant: \(olos\ o\ kosmos > ullos\ o\ kosmo,\ o\ filos\ mas > o\ filomma,\ posus\ lykus > possu\ lliku,\ tes nyxtes > te\ nniste.\) (Exceptionally, /s#t/ is retained: \(o\ kyris\ tu > o\ t\fjiristu)\)
- Similar rules for final /n/: \(me\ enan\ allon > me\ nan\ ad\dline.\)

So Italiot has phonotactic imperative to avoid phrase-final closed syllables, motivated 
by Italian. But no trace of dissimilatory loss. As result, /s/ is retained on proclitics: 
\(tis,\ tes,\ tus,\ mas,\ sas,\ tris/tres,\ is\)—again like Italian, which allows closed syllables 
on proclitics.

A diagnostic test: Dissimilatory loss: Greek. Phrase-final loss: Italian. Maniot has 
both kinds, but dissimilatory is stronger.

3. Corsica

So which occurs in Corsica?

Early records show occasional deletion, mostly in proper names; the few exceptions 
to this are dissimilatory loss, patterning with Greek—as we would expect (although 
regressive not anticipatory):
Funeral registry §78, 1721–04–15, καὶ έθάπτη εἰς τὴ Κοιμήσεως τῆ Θεοτόκου τὴν ἄλλῃ μέρα.

Of later texts, 1860 Prodigal Son text by native speaker is corrected: /s/ deleted only when writer would not have realised etymological /s/ (ipe tu(s) dulone ‘he told the slaves’). /s/ deletion optional in dialect.

Blanken’s description:
• deletion usual phrase-finally
• /s/ retained before pause
• /s/ retained phrase-medially before possessives
• /s/ never deleted in proclitics, except for mas > ma
Thus: i dulia tis manas mu o filos mu o filo

Blanken is claiming no dissimilatory loss.

Blanken texts brief and poor sample: he himself notes the speakers are inserting /s/ they would otherwise be dropping in their careful speech. Control against Vayacacos’ collection of phrases in glossary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mirambel</th>
<th>Blanken</th>
<th>Vayacacos</th>
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<tr>
<td>End of NP (noun)</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>80%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>17%</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall phrase-final</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proclitic-(s) V</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Det-(s) N’</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N-(s) POSS</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall phrase-medial</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>78%</td>
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(Blanken: discount orthographic deletion before su. o γίος su > o φίο(s) su.)

What is going on?
• /s/ deletion relatively much likelier phrase-finally than medially in Blanken. compared to Mirambel.
• Dissimilatory loss pretty much absent in Blanken—proclitics as well as before possessives.
• Blanken’s record favours final over medial deletion—moves closer to Italiot than Maniot model.
• Though deletion started like Maniot (registry data), increasingly matching Italian phonotactics.

But what is going on with Vayacacos’ data?
• Deletion levels comparable to Mirambel: presumably more spontaneous discourse.
But Vayacacos has obligatory dissimilatory loss: *o afedi mu* ‘my father, *tis kira mu* ‘my grandmother’s’. Contradicts Blanken’s “regulièrement”, which even extended /s/ analogically before possessives: > *to spiti tu barbas mu*.

Very suspicious, and Blanken did stay much longer in Corsica, when dialect was healthier. Novel tendency to dissimilatory loss in final generation unlikely: Vayacacos also has strong deletion in proclitics, which should also be subject to dissimilatory loss. Again, his records pattern with Maniot instead of Italiot. As a Maniot himself, Vayacacos may have been Manioticising Greco-Corsican.

On the other hand, Vayacacos records /s/ deletion before vowels.

Sporadic in earlier records:

- Funeral registry §143, 1724–10–06, Χιλίους ἐφτασόσιος ἱσσόσερος Ὀκτωβρίου στὶ<ς> ἔξι
- Funeral registry §2297, 1927–01–20: Roman Catholic priest Xanto Mattei officiated, ὁ Ἀρχιµανδρίτη ἀρρωστός (Written by Mattei, who learned Greek in Cargèse)

- Assuredly not a feature of Maniot, and hiatus generally avoided in Greek; so Vayacacos cannot be emending his text towards Maniot.
- Yet near obligatory in Vayacacos’ texts:

> ἐκ̑ε̑ρῶσανε τόσε ἐλιές, ἦτανε οὔλε ἀγριαί, εἴχανου τόσα σπίτα

81% of /s/ before vowel phrase-medially deleted; 77% of /s/ before consonants and ‘pauses’ (phrase boundaries). i.e. In final generation of Cargèse, vowels no longer privileged as environment preserving /s/.

So generalisation of earlier prevocalic loss, resulting in rule simplification:

- Maniot, Early Greco-Corsican: privilege CV syllables. Avoid V#V and s#C: 
  \[ s > \emptyset / _\#C \]
- Late Greco-Corsican:
  \[ s > \emptyset / _\# \]

/s/ deletion no longer phonologically conditioned, only syntactically (liker at phrase-boundary than phrase-medially).

So /s/ deleted from all appearances of words. Suggests adaption to open word-final syllables under Romance influence.

Even late Greco-Corsican looks remarkably well-preserved. This suggests it underlingly wasn’t.