

## Dialect preservation: A dictionary of Arcadian Greek

The present study is a response to language/dialect preservation and describes the design and compilation of a dictionary of Arcadian Greek, an unstudied variety of Modern Greek spoken in Arcadia, Peloponnese, Greece. This presentation intends to focus on the innovative aspects of this project as well as the challenges faced by the lexicographer in the making process.

Arcadian Greek has undergone extensive levelling at all linguistic levels for well over a century but it is still preserved in the speech of people over 70 who have lived in Arcadia their entire lives and almost all of whom are bidialectal in Arcadian Greek and Standard Modern Greek (SMG).

The innovative method used for the compilation of the dictionary is that the latter was exclusively based on primary sources of information, i.e. native speakers of the dialect aged between 80 and 97 (the ages refer to the last stage of a twelve-year project). A smaller number of entries collected from local newspapers, websites etc. were also checked by the above team of the native speakers for authenticity.

The dictionary currently contains around 4050 entries and over 5130 of meanings and idiomatic phrases. Each entry contains, apart from semantic information, pronunciation information (IPA transcription), morphological, syntactic, and stylistic information. It also contains a plethora of synonyms, antonyms, word derivations, idioms and idiomatic phrases, proverbs, sayings and verses from local folk poetry. All its examples in use (collocations and phrases) are authentic.

This dictionary aspires to bring the Peloponnesian varieties to the fore as it is crucial that they are studied so that their true role in the formation of SMG is determined. Until recently they were deemed too similar to SMG and therefore unworthy of being studied (see Newton 1972: 14). Additionally, as over one third of its entries are also found in the *Dictionary of Medieval Greek Demotic Literature 1100–1669* by Kriaras with the same or different meaning and/or phonological, morphological or syntactic features, it would be interesting to study a potential direct connection to medieval Greek. This information is also provided for the benefit of the user.

The challenges faced by the lexicographer were several. A major one was precisely the distinction between dialectal and exodialectal elements, something that was facilitated by the fact that the lexicographer has a solid passive knowledge of the dialect. However, we were careful not to leave out basic entries of the dialect which are also shared with SMG or those with dialectal forms other than the citation one. In those cases, we violated the criterion that our entries should not be featuring in mainstream dictionaries of Standard Modern Greek unless their meaning, syntax, morphology and/or phonology differed non predictably from an equivalent standard Greek entry.

### References

- Kriaras, Emmaouel. 1969–2016. *Dictionary of Medieval Greek Demotic Literature 1100–1669*, 20 vols. Thessaloniki.
- Newton, Brian. 1972. *The generative interpretation of dialect: A study of Modern Greek phonology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.