Understanding the present through the past
Processes of koineisation in Cyprus

Marina Terkourafi
University of Cambridge

Studies of Greek as spoken today in Cyprus draw attention to a generalised variety of Cypriot Greek, free from local variation within the island, yet diverging in several ways from the standard spoken on the mainland. In this article, I attempt first to classify this variety, examining whether it exhibits structural and sociohistorical characteristics of koinés. Having established today’s generalised Cypriot variety as a koiné, I then trace its evolution, arguing that an early koiné already came into existence in the late 14th c., playing an important role in the formation of both the modern Cypriot dialect and today’s koiné.

Keywords: Koineisation, standardisation, Cypriot dialect, Frankish/Lusignan kingdom of Cyprus, mixing, levelling, simplification

1. Aims and scope of the study

The existence of a generalised Cypriot Greek variety (hereafter gCG), free from local variation within Cyprus, yet diverging in a number of ways from the standard language spoken on the mainland (and, in particular, in Athens, Standard

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Modern Greek, hereafter SMG) constitutes a recurring theme among studies of the language spoken in Cyprus today. This article serves a twofold purpose. Drawing on the theory of koineisation as developed by Paul Kerswill & Ann Williams, Jeff Siegel, Peter Trudgill, and Donald Tuten, it seeks to establish whether this generalised Cypriot Greek variety, commonly referred to as a koiné, actually meets the classificatory criteria proposed for koinés at the structural level, that is, mixing, levelling, simplification, and reallocation. It is not always possible to distinguish situations of language contact, however, by looking just at their structural outcomes (Thomason 1997; Siegel 2001: 193). Thus this discussion naturally includes processes of koineisation, examining whether sociohistorical conditions shown by previous research to be crucial to koineisation also underlie the Cypriot case.

After establishing generalised Cypriot Greek as a koiné, this article goes on to trace its evolution. Sociohistorical criteria motivate the hypothesis that an early koiné came into existence at the end of the 14th c., and initial support for this hypothesis comes from textual evidence. Furthermore, it is argued that this early koiné played an important part in the formation of the modern Cypriot dialect in general, and of today’s koiné in particular.

Theoretical insights allow us to shed light on a hitherto understudied period of Greek as spoken in Cyprus, helping in turn to set the study of contemporary Cypriot Greek on a proper footing. At the same time, the addition of Cypriot Greek to the 39 cases of koineisation cited by Hinskens (2001: 213) enriches the current stock of known koiné varieties, enhancing possibilities for assessing and further refining proposed models of koineisation.

2. Contemporary urban Cypriot Greek speech

What is generalised Cypriot Greek, and how does it differ from the standard language spoken on the mainland? This section summarises its main features on all levels of analysis (segmental and suprasegmental phonology, morphol-

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ology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and the lexicon) and contrasts them with the corresponding SMG features.2

**Segmental and Suprasegmental Phonology**

1. *Velar consonants /k/, /x/, /γ/ ‘softened’ to [tʃ], [ʃ], [ʒ] before a front vowel or glide
   
es.g.: SMG ce “and” : gCG tʃe

2. *Long consonants retained
   
es.g.: SMG poles “many-feminine-plural” : gCG poles

3. Aspirated voiceless stops [pʰ], [tʰ], [kʰ]
   
   (Newton 1972b: 89–93; Arvaniti 1999: 173–4)4
   
es.g.: SMG yopa “whitebait-sing-nom” : gCG yopʰa

4. *Final /n/ retained . . .
   
es.g.: SMG yopa “whitebait-sing-acc” : gCG yopʰan

5. . . . and its use expanded
   
   
a) reinterpreted as a marker of neuter gender
   
es.g.: SMG yala “milk” : gCG yalan
   
b) added to verb forms (mainly in the 3sg.)

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2. Asterisked features indicate phenomena common to all Southeastern Greek varieties, that is, in addition to Cypriot, the varieties of Chios and of the Dodecanese (Newton 1972a:15ff.). The formation of the Southeastern group of Greek dialects has been traced to the early 7th c. c.e., when the Arab conquests of Palestine and Syria initiated a period of diminished influence from the Byzantine capital, Constantinople. The joint influence of the (closely related) ancient dialects spoken in these areas (Arcado-Cypriot and Doric of the southern islands) and of the Hellenistic koiné subsequently led to the emergence of a common dialectal substratum, sometimes referred to as an ‘eastern koiné’ (Tsapanakis 1970–71:136, 181; cf. 1983[1948]:17–88); on some traits of this koiné, see Aerts 1986:381ff.

3. Examples are drawn from a corpus of spontaneous recorded urban speech data; for details of data collection, see Terkourafi 2001:30–33.

4. Like long consonants, these also involve tenser articulation; on their phonological status, see Newton 1972a:32–35; Charalambopoulos 1982.
e.g.: SMG idē, “see-IND-PAST-3SG” : gCG iden

c) rapid coarticulation of article+common noun led to word boundary redistribution

e.g.: SMG ton oron “the-ACC whey-ACC” : gCG a noros “the-NOM whey-NOM”

6. * Voiced fricatives /v/, /ð/, /γ/ deleted intervocalically

   e.g.: SMG tianisis “fry-DEPENDENT-2SG.” : gCG tianisis

7. /b/, /d/, /g/ devoiced word-initially and intervocalically


   e.g.: SMG ade (exhortative particle) : gCG ate

8. * /γ/ epenthesis in verbs in -έω

   e.g.: SMG zilevo “be-jealous-IND-1SG” : Southeastern Greek zilevγο

9. Manner dissimilation of obstruent+obstruent into fricative+stop

   e.g.: Southeastern Greek zilevγο “be-jealous-IND-1SG.” : gCG zilefko

10. /γ/ following /v/, /ð/, /θ/, /p/, or /f/ yields [c]


   e.g.: SMG zilevi “be-jealous-IND-3SG.” : gCG zilefci

11. /i/ prothesis on certain verbs when immediately preceded in the same intonation group by the pronouns ton, tin, tis, tes, the negative particles en, men, or the conjunction an “if”


   e.g.: SMG na mi zilevi “to not be-jealous-IND-3SG.” : gCG na men izilefci

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5. In other Southeastern Greek varieties devoicing occurs only word-initially (Newton 1972b: 122).

6. /i/ prothesis relates to /n/ retention (4 above); /e/ prothesis is reported for other Southeastern Greek varieties (Menardos 1969: 142ff.).

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12. Dynamic stress further than the third syllable from the end of an intonation group

- SMG *tis ta 'ekana* “I did them for her” : gCG *'ekama tis ta*

13. Non-standard accentuation of individual items

- SMG *'tora* “now” : gCG *'tora*

**Morphology**


- SMG *tis solines* “the-PL-ACC pipes-PL-ACC” : gCG *tes solines*

15. Genitive plural rendered by the accusative

- Beaudouin 1884:66, 98; Menardos 1969:32–34, 53

- SMG *o arithmos ton solinon* “the number the pipes-PL-GEN” : gCG *o arithmos tes soline* 

16. Diminutive suffixes *-uðin, -uða, -in* (Menardos 1969:5–6, 47, 126)

- SMG *ceraci* “little hand” : gCG *feruin*

17. Interrogative pronoun *inda* vs. SMG *ti* “what”


18. *Ancient 3PL verb endings -usi(n), -asi(n) retained* (Contossopoulos 1969:93)

- SMG *stravonun* “bend-IND-3PL” : gCG *stravonusi*


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7. According to Malikouti-Drachman (2000:298), this possibility is receding in youth language.

8. According to Babiniotis 1998 (s.v. *σωλήνας*), the feminine *i solina* is a colloquial variant of the more widespread masculine form *o solinas* “the tube”. Thus, contrary to the obsolescence of the genitive plural noted in older textbooks solely for masculine nouns and adjectives (Beaudouin 1884:66, 98; Menardos 1969:32–34, 53), the noun concerned here is feminine, potentially indicating the generalised retreat of the genitive plural and its replacement by the accusative across genders.
e.g.: SMG *katalava* “understand-IND-PAST-1SG” : gCG *ekatalava*

20. Verbs in -isko (Beaudouin 1884: 94–95; Menardos 1969: 22 fn. 1, 87, 103)

   e.g.: SMG *meno* “stay-IND-1SG” : gCG *minisko*
   SMG *mene* “stay-IMP-IMPERF-2SG” : gCG ‘minisce’
   SMG *vuta* “dive/soak-IMP-IMPERF-2SG” : gCG *vute* *ine*
   SMG *vutikse* “dive/soak-IMP-PERF-2SG” : gCG *vute* *a*

21. 3sg. present indicative *eni* of the verb *ime* “to be” vs. SMG *ine* (Menardos 1969: 67–68)

22. 2sg. perfective imperative *de* “look” and *pe* “tell” vs. SMG *des* and *pes* respectively (Menardos 1969: 75; Newton 1972a: 80–81)

23. Sigmatic aorist forms in free variation with aorist forms in /k/ of the verbs *afin:o* “leave” and *ðino* “give” (Newton 1972a: 86; Panayotou 1996a: 125)

   e.g.: SMG *afisa* “leave-IND-PAST-1SG” : gCG *efika es* *isa*
   SMG *ðo* *s* “give-IND-PAST-1SG” : gCG *ðokai o* *s* *osa*
   SMG *n’afiso* “leave-DEPENDENT-1SG” : gCG *na’fiko / na’fiso*
   SMG *n’* *ðoso* “give-DEPENDENT-1SG” : gCG *na doko/ na doso*

24. Negative particles *men, endze* vs. SMG *min, ðen* (Menardos 1969: 150)

25. Future particle *en:a* vs. SMG *ða* “will/would” (Menardos 1969: 75–76; Newton 1972a: 67; Aerts 1983)

   e.g.: SMG *de* *ða, na min* “will not” : gCG *end’en*a, *en*a *men*


   e.g.: SMG *poli* “very” : gCG *polka*
   SMG *telios* “completely” : gCG *’te* *la*
   SMG *eto* “here” : gCG *dame*
   SMG *eci* “there” : gCG *fame*


   e.g.: SMG *pano* *sto* “on the” : gCG *pa* *sto*
   SMG *apo kato* *apo* “underneath” : gCG *pu* *ka* *sto*
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Syntax

28. Clitic pronoun postposition (Menardos 1969: 71–72; Terzi 1999a, b)\(^9\)

   e.g.: SMG \textit{tis ta ekana} “I did them for her” : gCG ekama \textit{tis ta}

29. Extensive (inherited and novel) use of genitive complements (Menardos 1969: 34ff.)

   e.g.: SMG \textit{rota ton iosef} “ask the-\textit{acc} Joseph” : gCG arota \textit{tu iosef} “ask the-\textit{gen} Joseph”

Semantics

30. Expansion of the senses expressed by the simple past tense to include, in addition to definite past time (Quirk et al. 1972: 86), the senses expressed in SMG by the perfect (completely) and by the pluperfect (to a large extent) (Menardos 1969: 76–77; Karyolemou 1995)

   e.g.: SMG \textit{eçis fai}? “have you eaten?” : gCG \textit{efaes}? “did you eat?”

31. Divergences in the meaning of individual items

   e.g.: SMG \textit{lalo} “I crow” vs. gCG \textit{lalo} “I say”
   SMG \textit{piano} “I touch” vs. gCG \textit{piaro} “I buy, take, pass”
   SMG \textit{opozòpote} “certainly” vs. gCG \textit{opozòpote} “anyway”

Pragmatics

32. Fully productive verbal paradigm of V forms (Terkourafi 2005)\(^11\)

   e.g.: SMG \textit{den ponusate de stamatusate} : gCG ‘en eponusete’en estamatusete
   “you-were-not-in-pain-V you didn’t-stop-V” (at the dentist’s)

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9. From deictic pronoun \textit{tuton}; Menardos (1969: 63) comments on use of the SMG deictic pronoun \textit{aftos} as an imitation of standard speech (“\textit{ελληνικόρα}”).

10. Terzi (1999a, b) relates this to the licensing requirements of Cypriot clitics.

11. Creative manipulation of V forms (non-literal 2pl. forms addressed to a single addressee), that is, the expansion of V forms to all moods and tenses and their inflection according to Cypriot morphophonology, is a feature of generalised Cypriot Greek. It contrasts with V usage traditionally realised in Cyprus as a codeswitch into the standard, where it is restricted to a lexically specific set of verbs formulaically reproduced in prescribed situations and according to the morphophonological rules of SMG.
33. Expanded range of functions of diminution to include hedging (Terkourafi 1999)

   e.g.: SMG after erçete olo kato ... loksuli eðo ce eðo pefti :
gCG after erçete olon kato ... loksudin ðame ðe ðame pefti
"this comes straight down ... sort of diagonal here and here it falls" (at
the hairdresser’s)

Lexicon
34. Lexemes deriving from:
   a) the ancient Arcado-Cypriot dialect, e.g. eyoni “me”, esuni “you” (SMG
      eyo, esi)
   b) poetic words, rare in Attic prose, e.g. vuro “run” (SMG trexo)
   c) archaic words, scarce in other modern dialects, e.g. kæmi “it’s enough”
      (SMG fïani)
   d) rare words of the Hellenistic koinê, e.g. ilandron “old tree” (no SMG
      equivalent)
   e) Byzantine words scarce in other modern dialects e.g. kapira “toast”
      (SMG friyania)
   f) Provençal, Italian, Arabic and Turkish loanwords, e.g. xal:umin, Cypriot
      cheese (no SMG equivalent)
   g) typically Cypriot compounds, e.g. pokoerkume “to come by often”
      (SMG erxome sixna/polï), sovaromilo “to speak seriously” (SMG milo
      sovara)12


35. Lexical relationship of Cypriot to standard Greek: translation of a glot-
thochronological list in Athenian and Cypriot Greek showed non-cognate
 correspondences in 16% of cases, the exact proportion varying according
to semantic field (e.g., nil for numerals, high for animal terms). “[I]n spite

12. Noting the wealth of adverbial + verb composites in SMG, one reviewer questions
whether this last point can be considered particularly characteristic of Cypriot. It is telling,
I believe, in this respect, that the compounds cited concern forms which are rendered pe-
riphrastically in SMG. Also, both references to this feature which I found in the literature
are from authors who are themselves speakers of the standard (Panayotou 1996a:125; Sakel-
larios 1891: πβ’), hence potentially more sensitive to divergences from it. At least on an im-
pressionistic level, this would seem to indicate the increased ease with which Cypriots form
compounds, compared to standard speakers, although, so long as a contrastive study on the
matter is not available, any conclusions will necessarily be tentative.
of such striking differences in superficial forms, it is possible that the partitioning of semantic space varies but little from village Cypriot to Athenian” (Newton 1972a: 110–111).

The generalised variety described above dominates interaction at home and at work in the towns, where it is used by Cypriots of all socioeconomic backgrounds in their daily transactions with each other. Its use by the media is generally restricted, though not negligible: this is the language of the ‘Cypriot sketch’ and of a limited range of advertisements (Pavlou 1996), as well as of a small number of local TV productions depicting contemporary urban life. It is occasionally heard on the radio from callers to popular talk shows, and it is used in short pieces of non-serious prose in the daily press.

With respect to codification, authors with a particular interest in the spoken language, as well as laymen occasionally using it for informal purposes, have recourse to a variety of orthographic conventions in an effort to render the phonological features of Cypriot speech. Thus, σι- is used to render the postalveolar fricative [ʃ] (e.g. /famíli/, a type of local sweet, is written σιάμισι, and /mífél/, the male forename, Μισιέλ), doubling of consonant graphemes represents aspiration (e.g. /píaloužéz/, SMG mustalevria “grape-jelly”, is written ππαλουζέζ), and devoiced stops are represented as such (e.g. video club is written BITEO ΚΑΛΠ, and basmati (rice) ΠΑΣΜΑΤΙ). However, these representations are not systematised and do not cover the full range of phonological processes encountered in spoken discourse (Contossopoulos 1972: 94–95; Panayotou 1996b).

The intelligibility of this variety to standard speakers is considerably higher than that of localised patois speech. Nevertheless, a number of features on all levels of analysis affecting high frequency words and constructions (conjunctions, prepositions, adverbs, commonly used verbs such as ‘see’, ‘say’, ‘ask’, ‘give’, ‘take’), not least of which a range of sounds exotic to the Mainland Greek ear,15

13. A stable feature of radio and television programmes over the last few decades, the Cypriot sketch consists of dialectal prose recounting funny or unusual incidents.

14. Following established usage, this term denotes regional varieties that are not written (Haugen 1972[1966]: 99).

15. These are the sounds resulting from ‘softening’, as well as the geminates (including aspirates) of Cypriot speech, previously encountered also in other Southeastern Greek dialects (Newton 1972b: 15ff., 89–93; 1972a: 32–35; Charalambopoulos 1982; Arvaniti 1999: 173–174).
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are areally restricted to Cyprus. As a result, generalised Cypriot Greek retains a distinctive flavour, which renders intelligibility of allegro enunciated speech to standard speakers partly a matter of personal motivation and familiarisation with the speech of individual speakers (Hudson 1996[1980]:35–36). The following excerpt reveals Cypriot Greeks’ linguistic self-awareness, as expressed by two middle-class informants, S1 (male, aged 18–30) and S2 (female, aged 31–50), recorded at work in a music school in the town of Pafos.

(1)  

S1: opos t’ eyo stin arçin eksecinisa na su milo pjo? pjo kaθara el:inika to’ra itan kaθara usiastika en’ kalamaristika ðioti, ola kaθara ine nomizo  

S2: ‘encen’ o- ((laughs))  

MT: ‘encen’  

S1: e’ dici mu apopsi. iparxun para pol:es leksis tes opies kovume, (.)’en tes  

MT: ‘en tes lalumen (.) ules ((laughs))  

S2: imasten praktici a’ðropi  

( (several turns) )  

S1: ena ðiastima eðocimasa to, jati elea mu t’ emena, t’ekama to t’ ekatala:venan pliros. t’ ekamna to: ’milun ka- opos milumen kanonika as pumen cipriaka ... t’arescen tus. usiastika en (.) e’ labos mas pu milumen pu al:asumen ti: tin omilia mas. ðilaði arescen tus pu se akuan na milas ti:n ta cipriaka as pume  

S2: ne afu katalavenun etsi t’α.ços. jati i roðites exun pol:i ðiaforan [pu tus cipreus?  

S1: [oçi  

S2: a:ka’ e mbori na tus milisís te.αa kaθara cipriaka mes tin el:aða. kseris kapu ða tus σiçsis ((laughs))

16. Newton (1983:56) notes that “careful enunciation results in phonetic realisations which may well occur normally in other typically more prestigious dialectal levels”.

17. Transcription conventions: comma = flat intonation; full stop = falling intonation; question-mark = rising intonation; the prime sign = accentuation (especially when this is non-standard); colons = elongated sounds (including long consonants); ellipses = talk omitted from the data segment; square brackets between lines = the beginning ( ( ) and end ( ) ) of overlapping talk; hyphen = incomplete utterance of a word; equal signs = talk “latched onto” the earlier talk without hesitation; dot enclosed in parenthesis = brief pause; empty parentheses = talk not audible or interpretable at all; double parentheses = transcriber comments.
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S1: *ama milas arya katalavenun ta endaksi*
S2: *ma, tfe, ena lepto tfe na prosiïðunen pale opu mbume, ap’ tin cipro iste- oli to idion etsi*
S1: “Same as me at the beginning I started talking to you more? more clearly in Greek now whether it was clearly in essence it’s ‘kalamaristika’((=SMG)) because, they’re all clear I think.”
S2: “There’re not a- ((laughs)) all clear,”
MT: “They’re not all clear eh?”
S1: “That’s my opinion. There are many words that we cut (. ) we don’t”
MT: “We don’t say them (. ) whole.” ((laughs))
S1: “We’re practical people.”
((several turns))
S1: “I tried it for a while, because they said that to me too, and I did it and they understood fully. And I did it I spoke nor-, as we speak normally ‘cipriaka’ ((=Cypriot)) so to speak … and they liked it. In fact it’s (. ) it’s wrong that we speak that we change our, our speech. That is, they liked listening to you speak the, ‘cipriaka’ say”
S2: “Yes since they understand anyway. Why, are Rhodians much different [from Cypriots]?”
S1: [“No”]
S2: “But you can’t speak to them in proper ‘cipriaka’ in Greece. You know that you’ll confuse them.” ((laughs))
S1: “When you speak slowly they understand alright.”
S2: “But, wait a moment, even if we pretend, wherever we enter, are you from Cyprus? It’s always the same.”

This excerpt illustrates that Cypriot Greeks identify different ‘groups’ of speakers, witness the existence of distinct names for the concomitant linguistic varieties. What urbanites speak is referred to as *cipriaka*, a variant distinct from *kalamaristika*18 (=SMG), and also from localised patois speech commonly referred to as *xorkatika* “village speech”. Given that circumscribing different lin-

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18. From the verb *kalamarizo* “to speak like a Mainland Greek”, which in turns derives from *kalamaras* “man from mainland Greece” (on the naming of linguistic systems after the groups who use them, see Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985:235). *Kalamari* was originally the name for the case containing the ink and quills of professional scribes, who typically came from Mainland Greece.
guistic groups is a prerequisite to reproducing their behavioural patterns in linguistic acts of identity (cf. the first condition in Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985: 182), awareness and use of this generalised variety emerge as central to modern Cypriot Greeks’ linguistic identity.

3. Classificatory criteria for koinés

The first question posed by this article is whether generalised Cypriot Greek, as described in the previous section, should properly be considered a koiné. In other words, does generalised Cypriot Greek exhibit those structural and sociohistorical features which previous research has associated with koinés? To help answer this question, this section presents an overview of these features.

The term koiné (Greek κοινή) has come some way since its inception at the second half of the 4th c. B.C.E. as a simplified variety based on classical Attic, spoken and occasionally written across large areas of Southeastern Europe, Northeastern Africa, and Asia, as a result of the eastward spread of Alexander’s empire. Originally denoting a particular – ‘vulgarising’, according to contemporaneous grammarians – variety of Greek, it was introduced into the modern linguist’s toolkit by Meillet (1913, reported in Tuten 2003: 13), and has subsequently been used as a technical term to refer to the outcomes of contact between mutually intelligible varieties in many parts of the world. According to a recent definition by Siegel (2001: 175):

[a] koiné is a stabilized contact variety which results from the mixing and subsequent levelling of features of varieties which are similar enough to be mutually intelligible, such as regional or social dialects. This occurs in the context of increased interaction or integration among speakers of these varieties.

19. Le Page & Tabouret-Keller (1985: 182) identify four conditions to carrying out linguistic acts of identity: “We can only behave according to the behavioural patterns of groups we find it desirable to identify with to the extent that:
   i) we can identify the groups
   ii) we have both adequate access to the groups and ability to analyse their behavioural patterns
   iii) the motivation to join the groups is sufficiently powerful, and is either reinforced or reversed by feedback from the groups
   iv) we have the ability to modify our behaviour.”
As this definition makes clear, both structural (mixing, levelling) and socio-historical (speaker integration) dimensions enter into classifying a particular variety as a koiné.

Structurally, koinés are characterised by mixing, levelling, simplification and reallocation (Siegel 1985, 2001:176–178; Trudgill 1986:98–126; Tuten 2003:41–47). Mixing refers to the coexistence in the koiné of variants originating in different varieties. It occurs mainly at the early stages of contact, and, in this sense, constitutes a precondition for the remaining three processes, which in turn concern the selection of those variants out of the original mixture that will survive, or fulfil specific functions, in the emerging koiné. Levelling and simplification refer to different aspects of the subsequent variant reduction process, operating on a quantitative and qualitative basis, respectively. Levelling concerns loss or attrition of infrequent variants, while simplification covers the reorganisation of grammatical categories toward greater economy and symmetry, through, e.g., loss of inflections and increased transparency in phonological and lexical derivation. Finally, reallocation concerns not actual loss of variants, but the redistribution of variant functions, such that in the resulting koiné variants originating in different varieties become specialised to different functions, finding themselves in a relationship of complementary distribution according to register, social class, or area.

Nevertheless, these structural features do not in and of themselves distinguish koinés from other types of contact languages including pidgins and creoles (Siegel 2001:184ff.). Mixing, levelling, simplification and reallocation also occur in the latter, something which Siegel attributes to linguistic factors such as perceptual salience and the ‘one form: one meaning’ principle apparently operating across the board in contact situations, determining the outcome of language contact in general (2001:20–22). The fact that similar structural processes may occur in different types of contact situations producing comparable structural outcomes reinforces Thomason’s point that “a typology of contact languages is best constructed within an overall framework that is based on aspects of the histories of the various contact languages” (1997:72). For this

20. Absolute variant frequency in the original mixture ultimately depends on the demographic composition of the koinéising population. In this respect, levelling makes explicit the link between historical process and structural consequence.

21. Alternatively, levelling may be viewed as reduction of variation between dialects, while simplification as reduction of variation within a single dialect (Hinskens 2001:201).
reason, the sociohistorical context of koineisation processes is of paramount importance.

Research on the historical circumstances surrounding koineisation has pointed out five conditions crucial for producing a koineising outcome. Following Tuten (2003:22ff.), these may be summarised as follows: (i) isolation and small size of the koineising community, (ii) weak network ties between community members, (iii) the formation of a common identity, (iv) low norm enforcement, and (v) young speakers/learners receiving a rich and variable input.

Isolation and small size of the koineising community promote numerous weak ties between community members, by making such ties, on the one hand, necessary (isolation dictates local satisfaction of market and cultural needs) and, on the other hand, possible (small size facilitates travel). Small size also promotes heightened speaker interaction favouring the formation of a common identity, while isolation translates into decreased contact with authoritative centres of influence, from which norm enforcement in the form of institutionalised corrective processes may emanate (non-institutionalised processes are the other facet of norm enforcement relevant to koineisation, see also below). Isolation and small size, then, remain important throughout the process of koineisation.

By contrast, weak network ties serve primarily to set off the koineisation process, with innovators typically being peripheral group members who also have ties outside the group (Milroy & Milroy 1985:367). Weak network ties result from geographical and social mobility, as concomitants of immigration and urbanisation (Tuten 2003:45, 52, 82). Weak ties are common among members of the middle rather than the lowest/highest social strata, the latter tending to gravitate inward due to either necessity or preference (Milroy & Milroy 1985:363, 380; Kerswill & Williams 2005, but see also Kerswill & Williams 1999:53). Along with geographical and social mobility, then, large numbers of speakers populating the ranks of the middle class are another prominent feature of koineising situations.

In the context of koineisation, accommodation between speakers of mutually intelligible varieties – hence not strictly speaking necessary to fulfil communicative needs – leads to the formation of a common identity (Tuten 2003:29). This comes with the gradual creation of more close-knit networks from initially weak ties, and is realised through speakers not only avoiding features that mark them as different, but also learning new features, which helps explain the development of new social and linguistic norms (2003:53–54).
Accommodation can either be one-sided, with members of one group one-sidedly conforming to the speech of another, or reciprocal, with members of both groups mutually departing from their original varieties to converge on a new one. The former possibility results in the "elevation of a dialect to a position of primus inter pares" (Jones 1998: 289), while the latter yields cases of koinéisation 'proper', where "the proliferated variety is . . . a non-geographically locatable amalgam in which the regional dialects have been reduced to a common core" (1998: 290) exhibiting all the structural consequences of contact discussed earlier. Nevertheless, the two possibilities are not mutually exclusive: a koiné may be primarily based on one variety, while being levelled and simplified with respect to it, much like the original Koiné was primarily based on Attic Greek, but was levelled and simplified in comparison (Siegel 1985: 358). This is indeed what we will observe in the Cypriot case as well.

Enhanced interaction and mutual intelligibility among speakers of the contributing varieties promote the formation of a common identity and constitute major differences between koinéisation and other contact situations such as pidginisation. Further differences lie in that koinéisation does not involve a 'target variety', or a substrate/superstrate distinction. Neither is there a single lexifier (Siegel 2001: 182–183). Absence of an existing 'target' variety with which conformity is sought directly impacts on the notion of norm enforcement.

In a koinéising context, norms are understood as "social conditions that limit speaker actions as well as the end-products of collective speaker activity on the macro-level" (Tuten 2003: 49). They are associated with institutionalised processes such as formal education and schooling (Kerswill & Williams 2000: 75), but also with non-institutionalised ones such as correction and stigmatisation typical of closer-knit networks, which thus emerge as powerful mechanisms of norm enforcement (Tuten 2003: 50, 56). However, such processes can only enforce existing norms, channelling linguistic behaviour toward established varieties, whether overtly or covertly prestigious, much like atticising grammarians such as Moiris tried to do for the original Koiné. When speakers’ linguistic behaviour is not emulating a specific target variety, norm enforcement becomes impossible to implement in principle. The effects of another process, representation in writing – or rather, lack of it – provide evidence of this. Lack of representation in writing, either due to limited technological access, or because the contributing varieties are not normally written, nullifies whatever enforcement of norms could have been forthcoming from visual feedback. What has previously gone unacknowledged in this respect is that,
even in highly literate societies, processes of orality will prevail and ultimately shape the outcome of koineisation when the particular varieties in contact are not systematically written, a point of particular relevance to the Cypriot case.

Latest research on koineisation, and in particular Kerswill & Williams’s observation of ongoing koineisation in Milton Keynes, claims a paramount role for younger speakers in this process (Kerswill & Williams 2000, 2005). A high percentage of older children in the koineising community, receiving rich and variable input, would seem to be essential for the consolidation and nativisation of the emerging koiné. In this respect, Siegel (1985:369) observes that it is in fact not merely increased interaction among speakers of different varieties, but outright bilingualism that has provided fertile grounds for koineisation across the world. A demographic balance in favour of younger speakers in a bi- or multilingual setting appears to constitute the stable backdrop to koineisation.

The role of younger speakers in koineisation is closely linked to another issue, that of the timescale of koineisation. Contrary to previous researchers, who have viewed koineisation as a gradual process, contrasting it in this respect with pidginisation and the speed at which this happens (Siegel 1985:372; cf. Hinskens 2001:209, 214, fn. 14), Kerswill & Williams (2000:101) claim that koineisation is a rapid and abrupt process, spanning roughly two generations. To the extent that koineisation presupposes a loose network structure, their claim is supported by Milroy & Milroy’s (1985:375) association of faster language change with loose networks, and of slower language change with tighter networks. Nevertheless, the situation is hardly straightforward, since both weak and tight network ties successively come into play in koineisation, the former setting it off and the latter stabilising it (Tuten 2003:53).

In addition to network structure, the question of the timescale of koineisation is linked to the degree of structural proximity among contributing varieties. Researchers agree that the greater the distance between them, the slower they will converge to a new koiné, if at all (Kerswill & Williams 2000:75; Siegel 2001:193). In this respect, one may surmise that the speed characterising koineisation in Milton Keynes as observed by Kerswill & Williams results more from the relative proximity of the contributing varieties than the nature of koineisation itself. If so, it remains to be seen whether Siegel’s proposal (2001:189) with respect to creoles is applicable, with suitable adjustments, to koineisation as well, namely that:

Substantial contact-induced restructuring occurs before the social conditions are right for the emergence of a new stable contact variety. When the
conditions are right, these already modified forms of the superstrate language become part of the mixture of variants which are used for communication. When a new community begins to form, then there is levelling of these variants to form the new contact variety.

Clearly, further studies of koineising communities in real time are needed before the question of the timescale of koineisation can be confidently addressed.

4. Is contemporary urban Cypriot Greek a koiné?

4.1 Koineising varieties

In this section, the structural and sociohistorical features of koineisation surveyed above are drawn upon to help determine whether the generalised Cypriot Greek variety described earlier actually constitutes a koiné, as often stated in the literature (Contossopoulos 1969: 93; Newton 1972a: 21; Kolitsis 1988: 214; Moschonas 2002: 917). To date, this characterisation seems to be due more to the absence in generalised Cypriot Greek of phonetic and lexical renditions localised to particular parts of the island, rather than to have stemmed from a principled examination of the features of this generalised variety per se. Such localised renditions delimit no less than eighteen Cypriot Greek patois varieties (Contossopoulos 1969: 97ff., see Appendix), kept apart "by a series of independent phonological, morphological and lexical isoglosses" (Newton 1972a: 19). These local patois varieties constitute a dialectal continuum with the generalised variety described above. Given its use in the cities and rudimentary codification, but above all its increased intelligibility to standard speakers, the latter ought to be placed at the acrolectal end of this continuum, with local patois varieties occupying the basilectal end. Speakers’ competence along this
continuum may vary in parallel with an urban/rural distinction, although as this distinction is being obliterated (Attalides 1980: 190–192), most commonly it is the styles that shift from basilectal/informal to acrolectal/formal. Nevertheless, even this description is more accurate diachronically than synchronically, since the patois varieties falling at the basilectal end of the continuum are now in retreat (Contossopoulos 1969: 93). Today, regional variation across the island is mainly observed in segmental and suprasegmental phonology, with native speakers commenting on how inhabitants of other areas sirnun ti foni “draw their voices”;25 or pronounce some words differently.26

The first question to be settled when exploring the possibility of koineisation in Cypriot Greek is what the koineising varieties are. An answer to this question is only implied in previous literature, where it is linked with comments about the retreat of local patois varieties. Contact with SMG is often cited as a reason for this retreat (Contossopoulos 1969: 92–93; Kolitis 1988: 215), while in recent years the relocation of refugees from northern parts of the island to the south, following the invasion of Turkish troops in July 1974, has also been cited (Anaxagorou 1987: 129; Panayotou 1996a: 122). These two views actually imply different varieties in contact in each case. In the former case, contact would have taken place between SMG and local Cypriot patois varieties, while in the latter it would have taken place among the local patois varieties alone. A combination of the two views is advanced by Goutsos & Karyolemou (2004: 5–8). While all three views capture aspects of reality, two points ought to be kept in mind.

First, koineisation requires substantial interaction between speakers of the varieties in contact. And, while educational and commercial exchanges between Greece and Cyprus have always been pervasive, demographically, the presence of standard speakers on the island has never reached those levels that variety, from which the varieties actually heard in various areas of the island may be generated. That is, to be faithful to the facts, one must acknowledge that the Cypriot dialect does not exist as a single, homogeneous variety but only as a continuum of regional/social varieties which at the same time share some features setting them apart from other modern dialects of Greek.

25. This is said by inhabitants of Pafos of inhabitants of Lefkosia, and by the latter of inhabitants of Lemesos.

26. In an article originally written in 1894, Menardos reports a very similar situation (1969:26).
would allow extensive direct contact to take place. Of course, the increased prestige of SMG may well have counteracted any demographic handicap. Nevertheless, ratification of distinctly Cypriot renditions of standard speech as canonical (Davy, Ioannou, & Panayotou 1996: 130; Arvaniti 2002) provides proof that, whatever contact there has been between SMG and local patois varieties, this has been mainly indirect, through the repatriation of Cypriots educated in Greece, and passive, through access to the Greek media. Therefore, while SMG should, in all probability, be counted amongst the varieties in contact, it is not SMG as spoken on the mainland, but SMG as received by Cypriot Greeks that was part of the pool of linguistic variants from which the urban koiné emerged.

The second point to be kept in mind concerns the historical background of the urban koiné. In particular, along with SMG as received by Cypriot Greeks and local patois varieties, the pool of linguistic variants from which this koiné emerged also seems to have contained traces of an earlier koiné, formed in the towns during the period of Frankish domination (13th–15th c.). Providing support for the existence of this early urban koiné constitutes the topic of §5.

4.2 Structural features

Generalised Cypriot Greek is primarily based on the variety of Mesaoria (variety 1 in the Appendix), the island’s central plain, as can be concluded by comparing phonological and lexical features of the latter (as illustrated in, e.g., Konomis 1962) with those of the former, as listed in §2 above. Nevertheless, the variety of Mesaoria has itself undergone changes in passing from local to supralocal, generalised variety. For instance, in a typical case of simplification-cum-levelling, one of the distinctive phonological features of the dialect of Mesaoria, [tt] in items such as pettera “mother-in-law” (Menardos 1969: 99fn. 3; Newton 1972a: 20, 98–99), has been replaced by the [θθ] of western and southern areas. [pettera] is more marked phonologically, being derived from underlying /peθθera/ (Newton 1983: 62); it would have also been a minority form, with [peθθera] used on the rest of the island, and [peθera] in SMG. This development may be explained with reference to Principle 2 of Kerswill & Williams (2000: 85–89), “Marked regional forms are disfavoured.”

27. Even in times of increased immigration from Greek-speaking areas (19th and early 20th centuries), immigrants originated primarily in the Ionian isles and Asia Minor respectively, areas with distinct varieties of their own, departing from the Athenian norm.
Levelling also occurred in the lexicon. Here, a verb *sirko* “to be averse to” used in Mesaoria, according to Farmakides (1983 [1912–1925]: 225), was supplanted by *anakatfo*, which he reports being used on the rest of the island, confirming Principle 1 of Kerswill & Williams (2000:85), “Majority forms found in the mix, rather than minority forms, win out”.

Further to cases of levelling and simplification played out between forms of different regional varieties, generalised Cypriot Greek is also innovative with respect to the contributing varieties. One such innovation at the level of phonology concerns forms such as *omorfca* “beauty”, *xartca* “papers”, and *m:atca* “eyes”, where the inherited dialectal forms would have been *omorca*, *xarca*, and *m:adka*. Analysing these forms, Malikouti-Drachman (2000:295–296) suggests that the innovations arise under the influence of SMG (the corresponding SMG forms are *omorfja*, *xartja*, and *matja*), but also have the effect of making transparent to the speaker the underlying phonological forms from which the dialectal forms are derived. By gaining in derivational transparency, generalised Cypriot Greek is becoming simplified with respect to the original dialectal varieties. Other morphophonological innovations leading to increased derivational transparency between underlying and surface forms, i.e. to simplification, concern a change in patterns of proper name diminutive formation (2000:298–300).

Further innovations in generalised Cypriot Greek reported by researchers concern ongoing simplification toward greater symmetry. One such innovation on the suprasegmental level concerns stress characteristics of Cypriot Greek clitics and of the dialectal verbal extension suffix -*te* in the lexicon (Malikouti-Drachman 2000:299). Whereas originally these would have been marked as exceptions to the trisyllabic stress pattern of Greek, allowing dynamic stress on the fourth syllable from the end of an intonation group (e.g. Cypriot *'apesen tin* “he loved her”, *tafo:cin:ton tu* “his car”; see feature 12 and fn. 7 above), clitics are now coming within the remit of this stress pattern, inducing (a second) stress within the last three syllables of an intonation group (yielding gCG *'apesen tin* “he loved her”, *tafo:cin:ton tu* “his car”), while the verbal suffix -*te* is becoming obsolete. In this way, the stress system of generalised Cypriot Greek gains in symmetry, with clitics, on the one hand, not participating in the metric structure of the verb, yet not being neutral (hence being subject to the trisyllabic rule), and all verbal suffixes, on the other hand, participating in this structure (hence also being subject to the trisyllabic rule). Simplification is also observed on the level of morphosyntax, where the genitive plural of nouns and adjectives is now becoming obsolete and replaced by the accusative irrespec-
tive of gender, a development previously applying to the masculine inflectional paradigm alone (see feature 14 and fn. 8 above).

The use of morphophonologically Cypriot derivational diminutives to signal hedging (Terkourafi 1997, 1999) constitutes a further innovation of generalised Cypriot Greek, this time on the pragmatic level. Originally, morphophonologically Cypriot and standard derivational diminutives (using suffixes -uðin -uða and -aki respectively) were specialised to different functions: Cypriot diminutives primarily signalled endearment, while standard diminutives signalled hedging, often triggering instances of hypercorrection (Terkourafi 1997: 32–33). Nowadays, however, the range of functions of morphophonologically Cypriot derivational diminutives has expanded, and these can equally signal hedging (feature 33 above). The result is a case of contact-induced simplification, with the paradigm of pragmatic senses of Cypriot Greek derivational diminutives gaining in symmetry, such that all the senses expressed by standard derivational diminutives can now be expressed by the corresponding Cypriot Greek forms.

The evolution of V forms (feature 32 above) has followed a similar path. Originally, standard 2pl. forms would have been used to fulfil politeness functions, morphophonologically Cypriot 2pl. forms being confined to literal plurality (Terkourafi 2005). The latter, however, are now used to fulfil politeness functions across a range of situations at work, testifying to a development toward greater symmetry, such that morphophonologically Cypriot 2pl. forms now express all the senses potentially associated with (literal or figurative) plurality crosslinguistically.

Finally, extensive mixing is found in Cypriot youth language (Moschonas 2002: 913–915; Tsiplakou 2004: 8), which is replete with neologisms, either calqued on SMG models (e.g. eðocen mu tin “I went berserk”, evapsamen tin “we’re in trouble”), or drawn from local patois varieties, as reported in the following excerpt (from Tsiplakou 2004: 9):

(2) ne, en xorkatika pu lulan kori mu. ercete sto komotirion epes mia korua, dekapende xrono, den iksero akrivos, ce lali mu ejoni. akuis stavrul a mu? ejoni. kori mu lalo tis, esi ise lefkosiatisa kori mu. esi ise xoraitisa. inda tropos en tous na lalis ejon? ufu! lali mu ti fēfci

“Yes love, it’s village speech they use. Yesterday, a girl came into the salon, fifteen-years old perhaps, and she said ‘ejoni’ ((=me in ‘village’ Cypriot)). You hear, Stavroula’ ‘ejoni’. Love, I told her, you’re from Lefkosia, love. You are a city girl. What’s this saying ‘ejoni’? Ouf! she said and left.”
The innovation, in this case, lies in the mix: its sources are found among the varieties already spoken on the island (SMG and patois varieties), yet the latter are not slavishly replicated, but creatively manipulated to serve as markers of a distinctly Cypriot youth identity. The mix of forms created in the process is not in itself traceable to any single source but rather delimits a new koineising variety.

4.3 Sociohistorical background

The discussion of mixing, levelling, and simplification in generalised Cypriot Greek in the previous section shows that this variety meets criteria of koineisation on the structural level. A survey of the circumstances under which it emerged supports this claim from a sociohistorical perspective. Let us begin by considering the first of the five conditions introduced earlier, isolation and small size of the koineising community (Tuten 2003: 82–83). Cyprus’s small size and geographical isolation are clear in light of its island status. Geographical isolation has moreover led to political consequences in recent years: shortly after the 1974 invasion by Turkish troops, geographical distance from the mainland was cited as a reason why help could not be sent by the newly reestablished democratic regime in Athens. The recent rise of an ideology of Cypriotism (Stamatakis 1991; Perisianis 1994) cannot be seen separately from these developments.

Weak network ties in modern Cypriot society are intimately connected with various processes of demographic growth, urbanisation and industrialisation, whose first beginnings are placed in the period between the two world wars. Demographic growth between the two censuses of 1881 and 1921 shows a steady population increase in urban as well as in rural areas. After 1921, overpopulation combined with a drop in agricultural prices prompted large sections of the population to emigrate to the towns (Attalides 1980: 52, 65–66; Apostolides 1987: 621). These processes accelerated after World War II, with the years 1939–1960 marking the fastest rate of urban migration (Attalides 1980: 58) St. John-Jones (1983: 39) writes:

> the effects of the war were substantial . . . most important of all, jobs became available, and country people, some previously unemployed and many underemployed, commuted to new jobs in the towns and on army bases, initiating what has been a notable feature of Cypriot life ever since: the daily migration of large numbers of people out of the rural areas . . . Thousands of Cypriots joined the forces . . . Consequently, a significant proportion of the younger male population – not to speak of a few women . . . – eventually returned
home, not only with ready cash to their names, but, more important, with new ideas from the world overseas.

Socially, new mobility and production patterns introduced “a new stratification system, with a much higher degree of differentiation, many more gradations, and more positions in the higher level of the occupational structure” (Attalides 1980:75). The focal point of these developments was Lefkosia, the capital, though their effect has been felt across the island. Thus, rather than strengthening the urban/rural divide, daily commuting to the towns as a result of an improved road network (Katsiaounis 1995:225), lack of negative perception of the town (Attalides 1980:60), similarities in patterns of socialising between rural and urban populations (1980:178), and the fluid boundaries of the town itself (1980:109) combined to obliterate the rural/urban distinction. Today, “the evidence is for increasing differentiation of life-chances according to class, and ethnicity” (1980:192) rather than place of residence, and the occupational distribution of the population is described as follows (Christodoulou 1994:614):

By 1989 the agricultural population had fallen to some 20 per cent of total. Of all the gainfully employed in Cyprus 68 per cent were in the employment of others. Manufacturing rose to 19 per cent of the gainfully employed, but miners practically disappeared. The professionals rose to 10 per cent of the gainfully employed. In fact Cyprus has become a predominantly service economy and its society a strikingly middle-class one.

Increased geographical and social mobility, and the preponderance of middle-class populations have produced a network structure favourable for koineisation. Moreover, a common Cypriot identity appears to be forming. More comprehensively and inclusively than in politically coloured ideology (dealt with by Stamatakis 1991), this identity is demonstrated in a newly found self-confidence, which should in all probability be seen in conjunction with the island’s recent financial prosperity.28 Linguistically, such self-confidence is seen in the vitality of youth language discussed above, in Cypriots’ resistance to linguistic correction by Mainland Greeks (Arvaniti 2002), and in their metalinguistic comments on the varieties they use: in comparison with earlier findings (Papapavlou 1998), SMG and generalised Cypriot Greek are now judged

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28. In 1988 Cyprus passed the threshold of per capita gross national income reckoned as the boundary between middle-income and high-income economies (Christodoulou 1992:xvii).
equally positively, young people claiming to be equally proficient in both, while using local patois can be 'cool' (cf. examples (22) and (33) in Tsiplakou 2004).

The question of norm enforcement in modern Cypriot society is more complicated. Until recently, generalised Cypriot Greek had no acknowledged part in institutionalised or official discourse, which was dominated by SMG and English. SMG was overwhelmingly the language of state-funded education and the media, while English remained pervasive in the administrative sector (Ioannou 1991: 36; Panayotou 1996b), the legal and medical professions, as well as all English-speaking schooling at all levels (Ioannou 1991: 25–27; Karoulla-Vrikkis 1991: 51–54). As a result, normalisation and correction have targeted these extraneous varieties, leaving generalised Cypriot Greek well alone. This situation is however changing, with the media and education leading the way. Generalised Cypriot Greek is slowly gaining more public exposure by being used, for instance, in political discourse. The effects of this exposure on processes of norm enforcement remain to be seen.

Demographically, the face of Cypriot society has changed repeatedly in the course of the 20th c. Today, the island’s population comprises 751,000 Greek Cypriots, 88,000 Turkish Cypriots, and 8,000 Maronites, Armenians and Levantines (2001 census of the Cyprus Statistical Service, reported in Malkides 2003: 357–359). While in the last three decades until recently interaction between Greek and Turkish Cypriots has been minimal, the same cannot be said of the interaction between Greeks and other ethnicities living on the island, not least of which the Cypriot diaspora. Bi- or multilingualism has thus never been uncommon. In addition, the founding of numerous private colleges and a university has contributed to keeping Cypriot youth at home, so that one may hypothesise that the presence of young speakers/learners receiving a rich and variable input, as a condition of koineisation, is also satisfied. For the moment, this remains a hypothesis, which, in the absence of detailed studies correlating phonological (where koineisation should be most immediately visible) and other variables with demographic characteristics of the population, must await future research.

29. Statistical reports and agricultural instructions were normally compiled in English, while the policies of semi-governmental organisations often reflect the corresponding British ones (including the use of imperial measures).

30. The founding of the first university on the island just over a decade ago helped keep on the island a number of young people who would have otherwise left to study in Greece, the U.K., or the U.S., some of whom later took jobs in high-school education.
4.4 The primacy of the variety of Mesaoria

The preceding investigation of structural and sociohistorical features of generalised Cypriot Greek confirms its status as a koiné. Moreover, the evidence suggests the primacy of the variety of Mesaoria in this process. Direct and indirect testimonies by Cypriot scholars support the privileged relationship of this variety with the modern koiné. According to Hadjiioannou (1990: 246):

[B]y modern Cypriot dialect, we mean the dialect spoken by the inhabitants of the towns and of the villages in the plain area of Cyprus as the inhabitants of mountainous areas . . . have preserved a more archaic linguistic variety closer to the medieval dialect.

The variety of Mesaoria already enjoyed increased prestige at the end of the 19th c., when Menardos commented, referring to some phonetic features of the Pafos dialect:31 “most of these . . . are idiomatic, frequently ridiculed by other Cypriots” (Menardos 1969: 13, my translation).32 If certain regional features provoked laughter, this was not due to their inherent ridiculousness, but rather because of their departure from some accredited variety (Chambers 1995: 232).

The selection of the variety of Mesaoria, which is also the variety spoken in the capital Lefkosia, as the basis for the emerging urban koiné confirms the prediction that such selection “is frequently influenced by factors such as political centralisation, with the language of the power-base often gaining in importance” (Jones 1998: 261). Favoured by geographical position and historical circumstances alike,33 the Lefkosia district has dominated the urban sys-

31. This belongs to Hadjiioannou’s group of ‘archaic’ varieties.
33. Its geographical position in the middle of island, which ensured its protection from Arab raids during Byzantine times, as well as the abundance of water and fertile soil (Maratheftis 1984: 141) contributed to making Lefkosia the administrative centre of the island at least since the time of the Lusignans, when it was selected as the seat of the Latin archbishop. Lefkosia served from the first as the basis of the incoming nobility from Palestine, who remained there throughout the period of Lusignan rule (1192–1496). Subsequently, it became the centre of Venetian administration, and its financial prosperity under Venetian rule attracted settlers from other parts of the island and from foreign countries, as well as refugees after the Ottoman invasion (Arbel 1984: 197–198). As an indication of its association with the higher social strata, one may note that on the eve of the Ottoman attack (1560–1561), the nobility only organised the defence of Lefkosia, leaving other cities un-
tem of the island throughout the years, already accounting for approximately 30% of the total Cypriot population at the first census of 1881 (Constantinou 1994:222). This trend has retained momentum in recent years, with Lefkosia showing the greatest growth rate of all Cypriot towns: between 1992 and 2000, the population of the city increased by 23,000 inhabitants, with Limassol following at 16,400 (2001 census of the Cyprus Statistical Service, reported in Malkides 2003:358). This is largely due to the fact that Lefkosia centralises a number of economic, government, and educational functions to a very high degree: a fifth of the working population of Cyprus are government employees, while forty percent of all secondary school pupils on the island go to school in Lefkosia (Attalides 1980:104–105). The historical evidence, then, concurs with the structural indications summarised in §4.2 above that the variety of Mesaoria provided the basis for the modern koiné.

4.5 Dialect retreat, standardisation, dialect levelling, or koineisation?

One remaining question with respect to the modern urban koiné is whether its appearance should be understood more as a retreat of the Cypriot dialect (Malikouti-Drachman 1996, 2000), as a revitalisation of it in the guise of a local standard (Davy, Ioannou, & Panayotou 1996:130–131; Arvaniti 2002), or, finally, as a case of dialect levelling. Both of the first two viewpoints have been advanced, and both are probably right in some respects, the former prioritising ways in which the modern koiné approximates SMG, while the latter ways in which it departs from it. Nonetheless, structurally the current situation is best described as an instance of koineisation, though sociohistorically, it is the outcome of processes approximating dialect levelling.

The current linguistic situation in Cyprus cannot be a case of dialect retreat, because generalised Cypriot Greek contains several innovations with respect to the contributing varieties. Simplification and mixing often yield novel protected (Kyrris 1984:66). At the beginning and again by the end of the 19th c. the city’s population was evenly split between Greeks and Turks, while around the middle of the century Turkish populations prevailed (Maratheftis 1984:136) although a small elite of Greek merchants and government officials continued to live there (Attalides 1980:100; Maratheftis 1984:137). This predominantly Turkish character ensured its continued selection as the seat of the government under the Ottoman regime (Maratheftis 1984:141), at the expense of the much more attractive and Europeanised, but predominantly Greek, Larnaka (Maratheftis 1984:139).
forms on the level of intonation (\texttt{taftocin}i\texttt{on tu} “his car” vs. inherited Cypriot \texttt{tafto}c\texttt{initon tu} and SMG \texttt{tafto}c\texttt{initon tu}), phonology (\texttt{omorf}ca “beauty” vs. inherited Cypriot \texttt{omor}ca and SMG \texttt{omorf}fa), morphology (\texttt{je}f\texttt{k}os “Parascevas-dim.” vs. inherited Cypriot \texttt{je}f\texttt{k}as), syntax (\texttt{o arithmos tes solines} “the number of pipes” vs. inherited Cypriot/SMG \texttt{o arithmos ton solinon}), pragmatics (expanded range of functions of morphophonologically Cypriot diminutives and V forms), and the lexicon (youth language expressions). Such a wealth of new productive mechanisms and novel constructions is not what one expects of a retreating variety, and attests to the overall vitality of the Cypriot Greek dialectal continuum, though of course different elements may be falling out of use, as new ones emerge.

The current linguistic situation in Cyprus is, however, not one of standardisation, either, at least not in the sense of the emergence of a new underlying system of rules, separate from those of both older Cypriot varieties and SMG. Mixing, simplification and levelling in generalised Cypriot Greek increase derivational transparency, and enhance symmetry in intonational, morphological, and pragmatic paradigms. However, they do not introduce new rules. Rather, they expand on inherited Cypriot or SMG models as outlined above. This is typical of koineisation where, according to Siegel (2001:183):

restructuring . . . consists mainly of reduction in the number of grammatical distinctions and forms and some regularisation of existing rules. It rarely involves significant innovations or the development of new rules . . . . In koines, there is mostly mixing of forms from different varieties in contact, not mixing of different rules.

A further reason why the emergence of generalised Cypriot Greek cannot be put down to standardisation lies in the absence, so far, of concerted efforts to codify and elaborate this variety. Codification and elaboration constitute sine qua non stages of standardisation as opposed to koineisation (Tuten 2003:84). And while the lack of efforts to promote local norms is easily interpretable considering that the official language of the island as used by state officials and in education to date has gravitated toward the Athenian norm, the absence of such efforts constitutes an additional difference between generalised Cypriot Greek and standard varieties, though both are characterised by minimal variation in form.

Deciding whether the current linguistic situation in Cyprus is one of dialect levelling is, however, harder. No clear dividing line can be drawn between dialect levelling and koineisation, the former considered a weaker form,
and often a concomitant, of the latter (Tuten 2003: 80). Nevertheless, a distinction is proposed by Kerswill & Williams (1999), and further elaborated by Tuten (2003). According to these authors, a low degree of generational overlap (e.g., in large population movements to colonies and new towns) causing discontinuity in direct linguistic transmission across generations, and the resulting abrupt changes between generations are hallmarks of koinisation on the sociohistorical level, while simplification and the formation of a clearly distinct new variety characterise it structurally. Dialect levelling, on the other hand, is a more gradual process, characterised by crossgenerational continuity in transmission, the lack of simplification, and absence of a clearly distinct new variety.

This distinction fits the Cypriot data awkwardly. Sociohistorically, increased social and geographical mobility following recent economic and political changes has clearly caused a weakening of network ties (see 4.3 above), yet even when large-scale population movements occurred, as with the flight of refugees from northern areas after 1974, family units, and sometimes entire smaller communities, relocated together, making it hard to argue for a disruption in linguistic transmission across generations. In addition, the small size of the island facilitates maintaining contact with extended family networks, further enhancing crossgenerational linguistic continuity. Structurally, however, several features of generalised Cypriot Greek are the products of simplification on the segmental phonological, suprasegmental, morphological, and pragmatic levels as outlined in 4.2 above, and as such they contribute to keeping generalised Cypriot Greek apart from the original contributing varieties. While targeted quantitative analyses of variation by demographic characteristics of the population (e.g., use of simplified forms by age groups) may well shed some light on the ongoing linguistic changes, the crossmatching of sociohistorical and structural features of generalised Cypriot Greek with features of both dialect levelling and koinisation respectively highlights the difficulties of distinguishing between the two situations. Paraphrasing Tuten (2003: 89), we may conclude that dialect levelling as much as “koineization must be understood as a prototype of change, and that we should not expect to find ‘pure’ examples of [dialect levelling or] koineization in real cases of linguistic change”.

With this last proviso in mind, the current linguistic situation in Cyprus may be best classified as a case of koinisation. The koinising varieties are local Cypriot patois varieties, an older Cypriot koiné (dealt with immediately
below), and SMG as received by Cypriot Greeks. Through mixing, levelling and simplification among these varieties, a new koiné is emerging. Individual speakers’ performance in this koiné may well exhibit variation along the lines of access to these varieties, age, style, etc. (cf. LePage & Tabouret-Keller 1985:182, fn. 19 above). Therefore, rather than classifying speakers’ more or less successful efforts at approximating an already ‘shady’ target (SMG as received by them) as separate ‘varieties’, it is probably best to understand these borderline forms as elements of the formal register of an emerging koiné. Clearly, koinéisation is an ongoing process in Cyprus, and the final words on this issue have hardly been said.

34. Though not dealt with in this article, English may also have contributed to the pool of linguistic variants. Briefly, one may note that, although extensive at the lexical level, the influence of English on Cypriot speech remains structurally marginal. As far as lexical borrowing is concerned, (a) English words are rendered using sounds already existing in the Cypriot Greek phonological inventory, while phonological rules such as devoicing are also applied, (b) they are typically rendered in Greek as neuter gender, (c) plural number is sometimes indicated using the suffix -s, and (d) they are typically used instead of the SMG equivalents to render technical or otherwise non-traditional terms. This last feature would appear to account for their preponderance in work settings (as opposed to at home). In addition to individual lexical items, whole expressions are borrowed and incorporated into Cypriot speech either (partly) translated, or untranslated. In contrast to individual loanwords, these expressions are not subject to the application of Cypriot phonological rules, and they appear to constitute the exclusive domain of middle-class speakers, since a good command of English is required to use them correctly. With regard to register, English loanwords mainly co-occur with features of generalised Cypriot Greek, though this is by no means absolute. They therefore appear to belong to a more informal register, since their use is largely avoided in the presence of Mainland Greeks and on radio/TV.

35. This suggestion builds on Thomason’s treatment of borderline cases of creolisation as lying “on a continuum between the clear noncreoles and the clear creoles” which is preferable to “putting them in classes for which precise characterisations and definite classificatory criteria are lacking” (1997:85).

36. If one were to classify the modern Cypriot koiné according to Siegel’s stage-based model (prekoiné > stabilised koiné > expanded koiné > nativised koiné, 1985:372–376), one might place it somewhere between a prekoiné and a stabilised koiné. This is clearly not the only variety used in Cyprus today, as some functions are still fulfilled by SMG (as received by Cypriots), hence it has not yet reached the stage of an expanded koiné. Moreover, the mixing evident in V usage and youth language, along with variable attitudes toward these (example 2 above, and Terkourafi 2005) suggests that the emerging urban koiné has not yet become fully stabilised.
5. The medieval Cypriot koiné

In contrast with today’s urban koiné, which can be observed in its formative stages, an earlier Cypriot koiné constitutes very much a working hypothesis which I will attempt to substantiate in what follows drawing mainly on socio-historical evidence, also noting its structural features to the extent that this is allowed by the available textual sources. Evidence for the existence of an urban koiné on the island prior to the recent social changes, as well as Trudgill’s (1983) ‘pyramid model’, which makes specific predictions about the interrelationship of regional and social varieties, are what prompted scrutiny of the historical record in search of evidence of sociohistorical circumstances that would have favoured the emergence of this koiné. Nevertheless, the search for traces of mixing, levelling, simplification and reallocation in language, i.e. those structural features typical of koinés, is seriously hampered, at least for the moment, by the lack of direct evidence in the form of diplomatic editions of manuscripts. Most available editions have been ‘filtered’ by editors, who have, for instance, standardised and normalised spelling and punctuation, parsing longer, spaceless strings into wordsized chunks (Nicolaou-Konnari 1996: 56; Nikolopoulos 2000: 21). In this way, an important window into the mental processes of transcription of the surrounding discourse by contemporaries has been lost. One recent exception is the diplomatic edition of the three known manuscripts of the Chronicle of Leontios Makhairas by Pieris & Nicolaou-Konnari (2003). Hopefully, more such editions will follow, helping us gain insights into the language spoken by their authors through a principled in-depth analysis.

5.1 Forming the research hypothesis

Research by Newton (1972a), Christodoulou (1973), and Vayacacos (1977–1979) speaks of a koiné in Cyprus well before the last three decades. Newton’s study, based on material collected in 1963, analyses a language said to form the basis of a “local koiné, heard commonly, especially on the lips of younger speakers, in villages whose indigenous dialect may differ in various respects from it” (1972a: 21, emphasis added). Placing the terminus ante quem for this koiné even earlier, Newton (1972a) considers it to have provided the basis for the language of Cypriot communities in Britain and South Africa – migration to the latter having largely occurred in the first decades of the 20th c. (St. John-Jones 1983: 99–100).
Similarly attesting to the existence of a koiné before the recent social changes, already in the early 1970's Christodoulou (1973: 310) laments the decline of the “Lefkosia koiné” in favour of local varieties in the schoolyards of the capital over the preceding twenty five years. Based on Christodoulou’s observations, Vayacacos (1977–1979: 72–75) summarises the main features of this koiné, and notes its points of divergence from SMG. Furthermore, he proposes successive stages of a koiné spoken on Cyprus. Specifically, he suggests that a Cypriot koiné first emerged in the cities during the years “of the Greek enlightenment” (late 18th c.), followed by a second wave of koinisation processes, this time due to the expansion of universal education on Cyprus in the early 20th c. The third period of the Cypriot koiné he identifies with modern times (late 20th c.).

These comments focus on the importance of urban speech in this development. They are consistent with references to τήν ημετέραν ιδιοτικήν την των Κυπρέων γλόττα “our own private Cypriot language” (Vaticanus Graecus 1171, cited in Nikolopoulos 2000: 9), which are found in literary works aimed at educated strata and reveal an early linguistic awareness of Cypriot speech in its totality as distinct from Greek spoken on the Mainland, from as early as the 16th c. We may, then, seek in the speech of these strata a degree of focussing of linguistic variants over and above purely localised patois speech.

To investigate the interrelation of social and regional varieties, one may turn to Trudgill’s (1983: 186ff.) ‘pyramid model’, according to which regional differentiation is greatest among lower-working-class speakers, and smallest at the top of the pyramid, i.e. amongst speakers from the upper middle class (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Dialect variation in the UK (after Trudgill 1983: 188)
A similar proposal is put forward for Greek by Horrocks, who wrote about the original Koiné (1997:37):

It is essential, then, to see the Koine not only as the standard written and spoken language of the upper classes . . . but also more abstractly as a superordinate variety standing at the pinnacle of a pyramid comprising an array of lower-register varieties, spoken and occasionally written.

What is interesting about this second proposal is that the variety at the top of the pyramid is explicitly identified as a koiné. That is, while in Trudgill’s original proposal one regional variety may rise to the top of the social pyramid intact, the language of the higher social strata being identical in all respects with a particular regional variety (as one may claim has been the case for Southern British English in the past), the language Horrocks is concerned with is already a koiné, a variety abstracting away from particular regional features. This allows the variety at the top of the social pyramid to both incorporate features from different regional varieties and to be innovative with respect to them, i.e. to instantiate features not previously found in any of them.

Several types of evidence suggest that the above model may be fruitfully applied to explain the evolution of today’s Cypriot koiné. The hypothesis put forward is as follows: to the extent that social stratification characterises human societies in general, it seems reasonable to assume that there will at all times exist a linguistic variety enjoying more prestige than others. In the late 14th c., for the first time since the modern dialect began to be formed, the language of the higher social strata – comprising, on the one hand, the Frankish aristocracy, by then largely Hellenised, and, on the other hand, several new members from the indigenous population, whose native language was some form of the dialect – was Greek. The seat of the aristocracy traditionally being Lefkosia, the capital, its speech was naturally favoured in this respect, providing the basis for the newly emerging koiné (see 4.4 and fn. 33 above). This koiné became the generalised way of speaking in the towns, where several different regional varieties crossed and ties between people were looser. An urban koiné has been constantly evolving since then, coming also into contact with

37. The Franks were a Low German tribe who invaded Gaul in the 5th c. c.e., establishing a Frankish kingdom that gradually spread from the North and Northeast to most of metropolitan France (Bennett 1996:7). While ‘Frankish’ has been liberally used in the eastern Mediterranean as a synonym of ‘westerner’, in the current context it is restricted to individuals from the broader area of this Frankish kingdom, where Frankish predominated as the language of the aristocracy, if not always of the people (Pope 1952:13).
varieties spoken by large or powerful groups of the population. Most recently, this urban koiné contributed to the pool of linguistic variants from which the modern koiné emerged. Today, the modern koiné is in turn being generalised across the island, and noticed as it is slowly displacing local patois with which it has coexisted for centuries, hence creating the false impression that a Cypriot koiné only recently came into existence (cf. Tuten 2003: 71).  

5.2 Koineisation in medieval Cyprus

The following sections outline the sociohistorical conditions in Cyprus at the end of the 14th c., illustrating why these favoured koineisation. Given such fertile grounds, it is well likely that a koiné emerged rather quickly as the language of the higher social strata around that time, and has been constantly developing since then. The appropriateness of the sociohistorical context, structural features of the new variety, as well as its rapid emergence and constant development – both considered hallmarks of koineisation (Tuten 2003: 84, 12) – all serve to consolidate the characterisation of this variety as a koiné.

5.2.1 Isolation and small size of the koineising community

Small size of the region undergoing koineisation is especially important in premodern societies, where it facilitates contact and weak ties (Tuten 2003: 82–83). To what was said in §4.3 about Cyprus’s small size and geographical isolation, we may now add Cyprus’s history of administrative isolation. Early on, like other parts of the southeastern frontier of the Byzantine empire, Cyprus found itself isolated from Constantinople, as a result of the Arab conquests of Palestine and Syria in the first half of the 7th c. A peculiar regime of neutrality and joint Arab-Byzantine sovereignty ensued, under which “the island was demilitarised but accessible to traders and others from both sides who came in peace” (Browning 1977–1979: 105, cf. Papadopoulls 1993: 16). This regime lasted until 965 c.e., when, as a result of the campaigns of Nikephóros Phokas, the island was brought back under Byzantine control (Horrocks 1997: 284; Browning 1977–1979). Byzantine administration of the island was disrupted again just over two centuries later, and the three-century-long rule of the Lusignan dynasty was established. As the last refuge of western nobility in the Levant after the crusaders’ expulsion from the Holy Lands by the Arabs (de Collenberg

38. A similar scenario has been put forward for Italian by Cortelazzo (1993).
1982: 72–73), the Lusignan kingdom (1192–1489) also found itself becoming increasingly isolated from metropolitan France and from western customs (Richard 1962: 11). In 1489, the island became officially a Venetian colony, but when, almost a century later, Famagusta was under siege by the Ottomans, it was once more the island’s isolation that eventually meant the Ottoman conquest of 1571 could not be averted. The island’s isolation from the centres of political decision-making continued under Ottoman rule, its population and resources regarded upon solely as sources of taxation for the High Gate (Georgallides 1984: 16). When, in 1878, the island came under British administration, a new era of modernisation began; yet, isolation of the islanders once more influenced how they were perceived by the newly-arrived Brits, who largely represented them as preserving a more primitive way of life at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886 (Herzfeld 1987: 73–74). Political developments on the island since the formation of the modern state in 1960 to this day have not been unconnected to its geographical isolation (Tzermias 2004).

5.2.2 Weak network ties

Having established the continued isolation, to various degrees, of Cypriot society, let us turn to the second condition of koineisation, weak network ties. In historical terms, weak network ties are the result of urbanisation and/or a massive influx of immigrants (Tuten 2003: 45, 52, 82). Urban establishments as such are not found on Cyprus prior to the Lusignan period (1192–1489), a fact which has been associated with the failure of the Arab invasions of the previous centuries to change the predominantly Greek and Christian character of the island: “the Islamic establishment is essentially urban, the city being a necessary condition of Islamic religious and cultural achievement. No traces of such urban establishments have been found in Cyprus” (Papadopoullos 1993: 16). Rather, “the formation of an urban bourgeoisie and development of the urban centres of the island ... have been one of the most important achievements of the Lusignan regime on Cyprus” (Papadopoullos 1995: 765).

The Lusignan regime was founded by noble families of Frankish origin who had stayed on in Syria and Palestine after the crusades and until the 13th c., when the Arab conquest of the Holy Lands forced them to seek a new home. They found in Cyprus, which was handed over to Guy de Lusignan by Richard Lionheart in 1192 (Papadopoullos 1995: 788ff.). The institutional organisation of the Frankish kingdom of Cyprus was greatly influenced by that of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. As in Jerusalem, here too the nobility, as well as the non-noble Frankish burgesses, generally lived in the towns
alongside the non-Frankish indigenous population (de Collenberg 1982: 73–74; Arbel 1986: 203; Papadopoulos 1995: 792). Initially distrustful of the locals and closed unto itself (Papadopoulos 1995: 790), the newly arrived aristocracy needed to consolidate its rule and communicate with the labouring classes. From the first, Guy de Lusignan granted privileges known as ‘bourgeoisies’ to inhabitants of the cities, merchants and artisans (Papadopoulos 1995: 765), a policy also followed by his successors, most notably Pierre 1er de Lusignan (Nicolaou-Konnari 1998: 64). The emerging urban bourgeoisie was instrumental in bringing about the material prosperity of the kingdom (Papadopoulos 1993: 20). From the 14th c. onwards, it also participated in political decision-making through town assemblies convened separately in Cypriot towns (Arbel 1986: 204). By promoting the formation of this urban class, the Lusignans managed to interpose between the Frankish ruling classes and the indigenous labouring ones an intermediate class acting as a buffer zone and ensuring the social and political stability of the kingdom (which indeed had a longer life than the other crusader states, cf. Arbel 1986: 204).

At the same time, Guy de Lusignan sought to mitigate the demographic superiority of the indigenous population by attracting foreign settlers from Syria and Palestine, to whom he granted land, liberties and other privileges (Papadopoulos 1993: 19). These settlers formed the class known as ‘τουρκοπούλοι’ also acting as an intermediary between the nobility and the indigenous population (Papadopoulos 1995: 765). In the course of the 13th c., to these foreign settlers were added successive waves of refugees from the Holy Lands, culminating in the massive influx of 1291 after the fall of St. John of Acre, which caused financial and political disruption on the island (de Collenberg 1982: 73; Richard 1962: 16). New immigrants continued to arrive under Venetian rule. During the first half of the 15th c., economic decline after the Genoese capture of Famagusta (de Collenberg 1982: 80), recurrent outbreaks of the plague, and the Mamluk invasions (Papadopoulos 1995: 815; Arbel 1984: 184) prompted a deliberate policy of repopulating the newly acquired colony. Subjects of the Serenissima from Italy, the Balkans and Greece, in particular the Peloponnese and Corfu, as well as Christians from Syria, were encouraged to relocate to the island (Arbel 1984: 186–187).

The natural meeting place of the various foreign settlers and the newly formed local urban strata were the towns. Though no Frankish proletariat existed (de Collenberg 1982: 74), the gradual enfranchisement of a substantial servile population also populating the towns in the early Frankish period, and of a number of rural land labourers in the Venetian period (Arbel
1984: 208), yielded an association of personal freedom with permanent town-dwelling (1984: 204). Thus, alongside the old dichotomy between feudal Western and Byzantine Eastern, drawn on ethnic criteria and enforced by the policies of the Latin church (though not always those of the royal family itself, Kyrris 1993: 188), under Lusignan rule a new dichotomy emerged, this time between (Arbel 1986: 204):

the town, with its permanent and free inhabitants, enjoying particular privileges and participating ... in the political life of the realm; and on the other hand, rural society, comprising serfs and free tenants, who were all unable to enjoy urban privileges and were barred from taking any part whatsoever in the public life of the kingdom.

While this new dichotomy persisted under future regimes (Arbel 1984: 196), by the time of Venetian rule the old dichotomy between feudal Western and Byzantine Eastern had clearly been superseded by the social stratification of the upper classes according to social and economical rather than ethnic criteria. Both the consolidation of the town as a unit of social and administrative organisation, and the emergence of social stratification therein (Papadopoulos 1995: 792), then, constitute distinct innovations of the Lusignan period (Papadopoulos 1995: 772–773).

Under Venetian rule, urban populations, who were “ethnically rather kaleidoscopic” (Arbel 1984: 203), increased in size (1984: 189), and continued to play an important role in Cypriot public affairs and to be exempt from various forms of direct taxation borne by the peasants (Arbel 1986: 196, 206). By the time of the Ottoman conquest of 1570–1571, the rift between rural and urban populations was so wide that wholesale war broke out between them, the former receiving the Ottomans as liberators from the previous feudal regime, while the latter were persecuted (Kyrris 1988: 255–256, 1984: 65).

In an effort to retain their ancestral lands, members of the higher social strata collaborated with the new rulers, but when the Catholic faith was officially banned from the island and the Orthodox one reinstated, non-indigenous members of the higher social strata were faced with a choice: they could either be Hellenised and join the new secular Greek elite – which, hav-

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39. According to Papadopoulos (1993: 18), these policies included: (a) confiscating and appropriating the property of the local church, (b) reducing the number of the episcopal sees from fourteen to four, geographically dispersed in mountainous areas (cf. Kyrris 1984: 68) and administratively dependent on the respective Latin dioceses, (c) interfering in the ritual of worship and the doctrine of the local church.
ing risen to this status under the Lusignans, was now the only one recognised by the Ottomans – or be Islamised. Despite openly following one of these two paths, as Greek or Turkish adaptations of Latin family names attest (Kyrris 1988: 264), many continued to secretly preserve their Western faith, which united them in their quest for outside intervention for the liberation of Cyprus from the Ottomans (1988: 261–262, 1984: 69–70). By introducing the Muslim-Greek dichotomy, the Ottoman regime brought about a novel weakening of network ties within the urban establishment, which had been strengthened under Lusignan rule from the formation of a common Cypriot identity (see 5.2.3 below).

At the same time as network ties among urban strata weakened, the old dichotomy between rural and urban populations persisted. The Turks’ almost exclusive involvement with administration meant that urban populations became predominantly Turkish, while Greeks were mainly concentrated in the countryside (Georgallides 1984: 17). Under the Turks, “the most populous group”, the predominantly Greek peasantry, were again “the most disadvantaged”, being subject to disproportionate taxation (Kyrris 1988: 262). However, some wealth continued to be concentrated in Greek hands, as the Greek elite who succeeded the prior aristocracy consolidated its position through commerce and manufacture (Georgallides 1984: 17). The founding of municipalities in the towns in the mid-19th c. further strengthened the urban establishment, as well as Greek representation therein (Maratheftis 1984: 150).

The dichotomy between rural and urban populations, and the concomitant distrust (Katsiaounis 1995: 249) persisted under British rule. Subject to increased taxation, the smallholding peasants emerged as “the worst losers in the process of bourgeoification [sic], as they were] unable to cope with the spread of monetary relations, which were also backed by the sanctity of contract” (1995: 230). In contrast, the Greek elite developed into local urban elites in the coastal towns, which in turn further benefited from better road and communications networks (1995: 225; Maratheftis 1984: 137ff.). With changes in the Turkish community being much less pronounced and the absence of a rising bourgeoisie therein (Katsiaounis 1995: 241; Attalides 1980: 113–114), network ties in the urban establishment weakened again (Katsiaounis 1995: 242). This weakening was accentuated during the period after World War I, as a wave of expropriations drove large numbers of the rural population to migrate either to the cities, where a working class emerged for the first time, or abroad (1995: 246). Once again, traditional networks broke down, and new network
ties, primarily based on class and ethnic conscience, were formed, leading to the emergence of the modern koiné discussed earlier.

This brief overview of social history on Cyprus since the 13th c. shows the establishment and continued existence of distinct urban populations from the period of the Lusignan kingdom onwards. Social mobility in the cities being prototypically associated with weak network ties, the existence of urban populations – ties between whom correspondingly strengthened as old dichotomies faded out, or weakened as new dichotomies emerged frequently under pressure from successive waves of new settlers – provides the necessary background for processes of koineisation to occur.

5.2.3 The formation of a common identity

Common identity formation in medieval Cyprus in the form of the Hellenisation of the higher social strata occurred already in the middle period of the Lusignan kingdom (1291–1374), and concerned all levels of private and public life, prompting scholars to speak of a cultural ‘osmosis’ between the indigenous Greek and Frankish populations (Collenberg 1982:78; Nicolaou-Konnari 1993a: 34, 43; Papadopoullos 1995:808). The emerging Cypriot identity, most fully articulated in the 15th c. Chronicle of the Sweet Land of Cyprus by Leontios Machairas (ca. 1360–1432), was not identical in all respects to either of the two contributing ones (Papadopoullos 1983:218). As Kyrris concludes (1993:268; cf. Galatariotou 1993:411):

In the long process of his narrative Machairas immersed himself more and more into the mixed ‘Club’ ideology and viewed the concept of free [sic] Cyprus as a notion emanating from, expressing and consolidating that ideology, that is to say as a Christian kingdom ruled by acclimatised and considerably assimilated foreigners that should be maintained unmolested by further invasions, attacks and military dangers both from other Christians (e.g. the hated Genoese) and from Moslems.

Use of the names ‘Franks’ or ‘Latins’ for westerners in general, and of ‘Cypriots’ for the Franks of Cyprus is characteristic of this ‘mixed club’ ideology (Nicolaou-Konnari 1998:76).

The two cultural elements merged in the common Cypriot identity of the later Lusignan kingdom were the Greek Byzantine and the Franco-Levantine. The Byzantine aristocracy of the island had already been driven to decline prior to the arrival of the Latin settlers, by Isaac Komnenos who assumed power in 1184–1185 (Papadopoullos 1995:766). Nevertheless, even after the Frankish conquest, “[c]ulturally, psychologically and ecclesiastically [Cyprus] continued
to be attached to the Byzantine world” (Kyrris 1993: 177; cf. Papadopoullos 1967: 58–59; Galatariotou 1993: 403) since the majority of the population, in particular those living in rural areas (still 80–85% under Venetian rule, Arbel 1984), continued to be Orthodox and Greek-speaking. The language spoken by these indigenous Greeks would have been some form of the Cypriot dialect.40

On the other hand, the Frankish element prevailed among the incoming Latin settlers: information about the representation of various ethnicities in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem combined with early lists of arriving families’ surnames has led to estimates of 50% French or Flemish, 25% Provençal, 10% Norman, and 15% Italian (Papadopoullos 1995: 792). Despite preserving forms of metropolitan France in its outward (especially religious) manifestations, this newly arrived aristocracy had also taken up the ways of the Levant in several respects, including customs and the language (Richard 1962: 75, 130; de Collenberg 1982: 74). Already by the mid-14th c., the French of Cyprus, a direct descendent of the French of Terra Santa, was replete with local particularities, including Italianisms and Greek loanwords (Richard 1983: xxix, 1962: 15). In addition to this local variety of French, the newly arrived nobility spoke Italian and other languages of the Middle East (Arabic, Syrian, Armenian, cf. Papadopoullos 1995: 799; de Collenberg 1982: 74), as well as Greek, as attested by several Greek codices, most likely brought by the newcomers from the Holy Lands (Schreiner 1986: 79), and further favoured by the necessity of communication with the indigenous population. Chroniclers of the period report that Queen Isabelle († 1324) and her daughters could swear in French, Arabic and Greek (Nicolaou-Konnari 1993a: 39). Given the multilingualism of the incoming settlers as well as the heterogeneity of the languages spoken by them (cf. Tuten 2003: 93), it is not surprising that by 1423 the majority of the population spoke a ‘French’ language unintelligible to a Frenchman from the Mainland (Richard 1962: 15, fn. 4). During this early period, Latin was the language of diplomacy, while Greek (in the guise of a Byzantine koiné with dialectal ele-

ments, but still free from French loanwords) was used in diplomatic correspondence with Turkish rulers in Asia Minor, establishing the existence of Greeks in the Lusignan administration from the start (Nicolau-Konnari 1993a: 32–33, 1998: 63, fn.17).

From 1350 onwards, several factors conspired to bringing about a steady decline in the number of original Frankish families, while new ones no longer replaced them. Higher mortality rates of males from diseases and wars led to the numerical supremacy of women reflected in legal arrangements for inheritance and remarriage (Papadopoulos 1995: 797; de Collenberg 1982: 79). In addition, disease outbreaks in the cities where the aristocracy lived (de Collenberg 1982: 79), as well as low birth rates and an increase in the number of clerics (Papadopoulos 1995: 805–806) compelled the aristocracy to intermarry extensively within its ranks, initially (1192–1291) down to the 3rd degree of family relation (1995: 798), and later (1291–1374) even between cousins (1995: 806). Before long, however, the Frankish aristocracy was compelled to open its ranks to the indigenous Greeks (Papadopoulos 1995: 769), initiating a process of Hellenisation which eventually led to its total assimilation by the indigenous element, while the latter was in turn also transformed by this cultural rapprochement.

Knowledge of Greek by the aristocracy, the presence of Greek scholars in the Frankish court, as well as an abundance of Greek manuscripts brought from the Holy Lands and copied locally, are reported already in 1345 (Nicolau-Konnari 1993a: 39; Schreiner 1986: 79). In 1367, rich Greek aristocrats are attested (Richard 1962: 67), while by the end of the 14th c. local families were bearing noble titles (Papadopoulos 1995: 810), having risen to nobility through successive officialdom for two generations (1995: 823). Soon, the majority of the nobility consisted of this local Greek element (1995: 812), with a smaller Catalan element also attested (de Collenberg 1982: 78). Marriages between the old Frankish aristocracy and locals, as well as with Catalans, are reported already before 1400 (Papadopoulos 1995: 797, 816; de Collenberg 1982: 77, 82). As a result of these marriages, but also of a large number of births out of wedlock (Papadopoulos 1995: 817), by the 15th c. a new class of Greek-speaking nobles arose (1995: 801; de Collenberg 1982: 72). This class soon expressed an interest in letters, sciences and the arts (Siapkaras-Pitsillidés 1975: 12), and by the 16th c., indigenous bilingual Cypriots were studying in Padua (Papadopoulos 1995: 812; Contsantinides & Browning 1993: 17).

Greek was spoken even at the highest echelons of this aristocracy. Queen Karlotta (1468–1475), daughter of Helena Palaiologina, spoke Greek as her
mother tongue, and used it unfailingly during her visit to Rome, including her address to Pope Pius II. Tellingly, his impression of her was that she not only spoke in Greek, but also in the manner of the Greeks, i.e. without pausing for breath (Richard 1962: 15; de Collenberg 1982: 77; Papadopoulos 1995: 818). Karlotta has thus gone down in history as the ‘Greek queen of Cyprus’, while the nobles who followed her to Rome were collectively referred to as ‘the Greeks’ (de Collenberg 1982: 76–77). At the same time as Greek as an L1 spread throughout the aristocracy (Richard 1962: 16, fn. 1, Constantinides & Browning 1993: 20–21) and was being adopted also in written acts (Richard 1983: xxix), necessitating the hiring of indigenous Greeks as notaires or scribarii in the papal court (Collenberg 1982: 81), spoken French in higher circles was declining (Nicolaou-Konnari 1993a: 40). A handwritten letter by Karlotta to her French in-laws contains poor French rendered in phonetic orthography and full of Greek expressions (1993a: 46). Around the same time, the designation una donna di altra mare referred to a Western, rather than an Eastern, lady (de Collenberg 1982: 78), and the arrival of new nobility from the west was opposed (Papadopoulos 1995: 802).

This process of Hellenisation – not orchestrated by Helena Palaiologina, as alleged by the Count of Jaffa (Richard 1962: 130; de Collenberg 1982: 79), but arising naturally as a cultural osmosis between the two populations – had far-reaching effects, prompting the Hellenisation of the until then largely heterogeneous urban classes. The presence of Greek bourgeois landowners in Limassol (Richard 1962: 67) and of indigenous Greeks acting as scribarii in the papal court attests to the existence of a Greek-speaking bourgeoisie. By the early 16th c., a Greek middle class of judges and priests had also risen in rural areas (Richard 1983: xxviii), where French linguistic influence is now found also among the previously exclusively Greek-speaking rural population (Nicolaou-Konnari 1993a: 40–41).

Crucial to understanding this process, which peaks between 1291 and 1374, is the old aristocracy’s conscious choice to allow in its ranks indigenous Greeks, but not the Genoese or Venetians (Papadopoulos 1995: 790). The latters’ support of competing European courts fed into strong mutual distrust, duly reciprocated by the Venetians when they assumed power on the island in 1489: their complete exclusion of Frankish families from participation in the administration brought about a rift with the Venetian community (1995: 827; de Collenberg 1982: 78), which allowed the Lefkosia-based aristocracy to remain Orthodox and Greek-speaking (Papadopoulos 1995: 835, 839). The fact that newly arrived Italian families became Greek-speaking too (1995: 836) suggests
that Greek continued to prevail in everyday life in the towns at the expense of French, which does not even feature among the five languages spoken on the island in the mid-16th c. according to Martin Crusius (Greek, Chaldaian, Armenian, Albanian and Italian, Sakellarios 1891: iθ’).

The resulting mixed language was often derided by contemporary writers. In a much quoted passage, Leontios Machairas expresses his view of the language of his time (Chronicle §158, translated by Kyrris 1993: 172–173):

> And because there are two natural rulers in the world, the one lay and the other spiritual, so there were on this little island; the emperor of Constantinople and the patriarch of Antioch the Great, until the Latins took the land. For this reason we were obliged to know good Greek, for sending letters to the emperor, and to be perfect in the Syrian language (for the patriarch) and thus men used to teach their sons, and thus the chancery was carried on in the Syrian language and in Greek, until the Lusignans took the land. ... And (when the Latin period began) men began to learn French, and their Greek became barbarous, just as it is today, when we write both French and Greek, in such a way that no one can say what our language is.

A disfavourable view of the Greek language spoken on Cyprus (“Greek spoken on Cyprus is detestable”) is also voiced by Estienne de Lusignan shortly before the Ottoman conquest of 1571. Himself a descendant of the old aristocracy born on the island and, like the earlier count Jaffa (Richard 1962: 130), adverse to the Hellenisation of the ruling classes, de Lusignan nevertheless admits that “Greek is the language used today in Cyprus” (Zink 1972: 298) confirming its penetration into the ruling classes.

In addition to language (dealt with in 5.3 below), syncretism is also observed in the religious, legal and artistic spheres. Latin and Orthodox rites performed successively in the same church by the same priest occur early on (Papadopouloss 1995: 770; Richard 1962: 74) leading to a religious osmosis initiated by city women, mainly from the upper classes (Richard 1962: 75; de Collenberg 1982: 82; Papadopouloss 1995: 808). At the same time as the Latin Church became gradually emancipated from papal control, and knowledge of the Latin language and Latin rites subsided (de Collenberg 1982: 78), a Westernised Orthodox church was unsuccessfully seeking readmission to Orthodoxy (Kyrris 1993: 181–2). In the realm of law, the code of laws inherited from the Kingdom of Jerusalem and employed by the Lusignan kings, the Assises of the Haute Cour and the Assises of the Bourgeoisie, represent a synthesis of Western feudal law with the Byzantine tradition (Papadopouloss 1995: 775). In architecture, the Cypriot arch is the product of a similar synthesis between
Gothic and Byzantine features (Papadopoullos 1995:779), while in material culture the famous Lefkara lace was perfected in imitation of Venetian originals. New norms emerged also in writing styles, in the form of the ‘chypriote boucleé’, a local Cypriot style incorporating Latin influences (Canart 1986; Richard 1962: 11–12; Constantinides & Browning 1993: 13). In literary production a convergence between the Greek and French traditions is noted in both content (historiography) and form (prose, Nicolaou-Konnari 2001:14). Last but not least, a change in physical appearance occurred among the upper social strata, with darker skin, black hair, medium height, and the Greek beard becoming stable features (de Collenberg 1982: 82). The historical evidence thus supports the formation of a common Cypriot identity among the higher social strata during the middle to late period of the medieval Lusignan kingdom. Brought about by historical circumstances and the insular nature of their society, this identity was forged within the walls of the cities, which, after the capture of Famagusta by the Genoese in 1373 C.E., included Lefkosia, Lemesos and Pafos (de Collenberg 1982:74).

Arguing for the presence of a Cypriot koiné in the cities since the late 14th c. is not to deny novel influences on it since then. The predominance of Turkish populations in the cities under the ensuing period of Ottoman rule (1571–1878) produced a greater impact on urban rather than rural speech; such an impact on the phonetic level is specifically argued for by Papadopoullos (1967:66). Nevertheless, a common identity between the Turkish city-dwellers and the Greek elite who consolidated their position therein (see 5.2.2 above) was not formed, distrust marking their relationships throughout Ottoman rule instead (Maratheftis 1984:150). Reports of Greek spoken by Turks as early as 1764–1766, and throughout the 19th c. to the years after World War II, suggest that the dominant element of the population remained Greek-speaking even when Islamised (Papadopoullos 1967:71; Georgallides 1984:19; Kyrris 1984:78). Whatever assimilation in the direction of one or the other language took place therefore, it does not justify speaking of koineisation.

41. Papadopoullos (1967:69ff.) attributes knowledge of Greek reported for the majority of Turks in the mid-19th c. to the large incidence of crypto-Christians who preserved their Greek mother tongue (cf. Kyrris 1984:73).

42. Assimilation in the direction of Greek models is seen in the 1934 composition by a Turkish peasant of the ‘Satirical poem on laziness’ in Greek metre (15-syllable verse), in the Cypriot vernacular (Papadopoullos 1967:58–59, 66–67), and on themes often taken from Greek mythology, as well as in the adoption of surnames by the Islamised aristocracy.
Conditions favoured koineisation again in the 20th century. By the advent of British administration on the island in 1878, the Greek elite had received the influence of the Constantinople-bred Phanariots (Katsiaounis 1995: 224). The resurgence of Greek education that followed (1995: 234; Maratheftis 1984: 150) led to increased ethnic awareness in both the Greek and the Turkish communities (Kyrri 1984: 82). Meanwhile, as a result of their disillusionment with the slow pace of progress under British rule and continued heavy taxation (Georgallides 1984: 24–26), the lower social strata living in the towns had also acquired a fairly well developed Greek national consciousness and political awareness (Katsiaounis 1995: 224–225). Immigration to the cities and the formation of a working class after World War I resulted in closer network ties among city dwellers, bringing about a common class and ethnic identity. These developments sowed the roots of the modern koiné, as argued earlier.

5.2.4 Low norm enforcement
Low norm enforcement in medieval Cyprus affected the acquisition of Greek and French alike, and was externalised in three ways. First, the mediocre quality of Greek educational establishments under Lusignan rule (Kyrri 1993: 169) prompted Greeks to also attend Latin schools (Schreiner 1986: 78), sometimes converting to Catholicism (Papadopoulos 1995: 778), or to even leave the island, as in the case of Gregory, the future Patriarch, who, unable to secure proper Latin tuition on the island, eventually left for Constantinople (Schreiner 1986: 78). In the mid-13th c., mixed Latin and Greek schools functioned under the auspices of the church, while schools attached to Orthodox religious establishments are not attested before the 16th c. (Nicolaou-Konnari 1993b: 316). This lack of formal Greek education may have been what prompted the translator of the Fior de Vertù to use Italian loanwords for abstract notions, and inherited Cypriot words for everyday ones (Kakoulidi-Panou & Pidonia 1994: 54), suggesting that this situation continued throughout the 16th c.

Second, widespread bilingualism of the scribes (Richard 1983: xxix; Nicolaou-Konnari 1993a: 45, 1996) is seen in many departures from established usage in manuscripts, in Greek as well as in French. Phonetic rendition and Islamised indigenous Greeks (including the author of this poem) well before surnames appeared in Mainland Turkey (Kyrri 1988: 261). Linguistic assimilation in the direction of Turkish models, on the other hand, is seen mainly at the lexical level, while the basic features of the Cypriot dialect at other levels of analysis appear to have changed little since they assumed their original form in the medieval period.
of Greek as spoken in the high circles of Lusignan Cyprus in the second half of the 15th c., and complete absence of accent markings in a copy of the Assises, have been associated with the bilingualism of the scribe in Greek and in French (Constantinides & Browning 1993: 239–240). A note in the margin of another manuscript of the Assises comments on the text as being full of grammatical and orthographic mistakes and written “in dialecto barbara” (Constantinides & Browning 1993: 262). With respect to the language of the two Chronicles, Sakellarios attributes alterations to the pronunciation and accentuation of words therein to bilingual scribes rendering the speech of foreigners living in the cities (1891: Λα´). Kyrris also considers Machairas’s language to be corrupt through simplification, grammatical and syntactical errors, and confusions of types and phrases (1993: 175). Moreover, Greek and Latin alphabets are often mixed. K becomes generalised for Latin C by the time of Queen Karlotta (de Collenberg 1982: 77). Greek text is rendered with Latin characters in the notes of Huguet Boussat in the Vaticanus 4789 (Richard 1962: 16, 123; Papadopoullos 1995: 786). Similarly, in the Parisinus 164, the Latin alphabet is used in Gothic script and accompanied by a Greek transliteration of accent; the Parisinus 275 features Greek text rendered in Latin characters and an Armenian note; the Parisinus 758 saves a Greek text of a Latin Sanctus; while manuscripts from Leipzig preserve historical notes in Latin and Greek (Schreiner 1986: 81).

Finally, low norm enforcement resulted from lack of codification of the emerging koiné. Contrary to works written in the medieval Greek koiné, or the Cretan dialect, Cypriot literary production during the Lusignan period but also later, under Ottoman rule, remained unpublished, circulating uniquely in the form of manuscripts (Kakoulidi-Panou & Pidonia 1994: 34). Lack of representation in the printed word is exactly the type of low norm enforcement that can lead to developments such as absent or inconsistent accentuation and fusion of words found in several manuscripts (e.g., Ravenna manuscript of Machairas’s Chronicle, Nicolaou-Konnari 1996: 58; Livre des Remembrances, Papadopoulos 1983: 221; Love Poems, Siapkaras-Pitsillidés 1975: 9, 73, fn. 2). For instance, in the Chronicle one reads τοισυντροφοίστου (= τους συντρόφως του) “his comrades”, ναπαναρεστόσουν (= να πα να ρεστάσουν) “to go rest”, ορισενάσουν (= όρισε να ποιήσουν) “he ordered them to do”, while in the Livre de Remembrances, ναμδεντοδοσέτε (= να μηδεν το δώσετε) “you shouldn’t give it”, μηδενουτζέτσι (= μηδεν του ζητήσει) “ask him nothing”, νατοκουτετισί (= να τον κοντεντιάσης) “to please him”. While these features characterise medieval manuscript production in general, the appalled comments of scholars cited in the previous paragraph are only justified assuming that their incidence
in Cypriot manuscripts is unusually high. Therefore, despite boasting a notable literary production as well as a flourishing copying tradition (Constantinides & Browning 1993:9ff., Nicolaou-Konnari 2001:10–11; Schreiner 1986:80), in what concerns the spoken language of its time, medieval Cypriot society exhibits features of a largely preliterate society, where processes of orality prevail. Such processes may well lie at the roots of idiosyncratic accentuation of lexical items, extensive sandhi phenomena, and liberal compounding practised by Cypriots even today (features 13, 27, and 34(g) in §2).

The poor quality of formal Greek education on the island, widespread bilingualism of the scribes and the resulting mixing of languages and alphabets, as well as lack of codification testify to the minimal level of enforcement of linguistic norms in Lusignan Cyprus, which paved the way for koinéisation. In the late 19th c., this situation may have been rectified, yet infrequent contact with the Mainland and the scarcity of Greek newspapers on the island (Beaudouin 1884:16) meant that the spoken language remained largely unaffected by the purist tendencies which rid Modern Greek of many words of foreign provenance in the spirit of the debate between ‘katharévousa’ and ‘dhêmotikê’ unfolding on the Mainland (Horrocks 1997:344ff.). In this way, koinéisation could once more proceed in a climate of relatively low norm enforcement, as outlined earlier for the modern koinê.

5.2.5 Young speakers/learners receiving a rich and variable input
In addition to errors and traces of language transfer in manuscripts, the multilingualism of medieval Cypriots is confirmed by many sources, chiefly testimonies of foreign visitors to the island. In the mid-14th c., Ludolph von Suchen wrote that “the tongues of every nation under heaven are heard and read and talked” (Anaxagorou 1998:6), while Athanasius Lependrenus confirmed that many Cypriots were trilingual and some were well able to translate Greek into Syrian and Italian (1998). This situation persisted throughout the period of Western domination, with Martin Crusius citing a conversation with Stamatius Donatus in 1579 in ‘greacobarbaro’ alongside Latin, Italian and the use of gestures (Siapkaras-Pitsillidés 1975:24), and Estienne de Lusignan reporting a (perhaps exaggerated) eleven languages spoken in Lusignan Cyprus (Nicolaou-Konnari 1995:368). Multilingualism was typical of urban environments (1995), where children growing up in the higher social strata would have been exposed to various forms of Greek, spoken as an L1 by indigenous populations, or bilinguals, or as an L2 (de Collenberg 1982:72; Nicolaou-Konnari 1993a:41–42; Constantinides & Browning 1993:16–17). At the same time, one
may suggest – though, in the absence of detailed demographic analysis, with extreme caution – that high male mortality among the Frankish nobility combined with the high out-of-wedlock birth rate (see 5.2.2 above) ensured a high proportion of children vs. adults, which promotes koineisation. Thus, all five conditions for koineisation were instantiated in Cypriot urban environments at the end of the 14th c., favouring the emergence of an urban koiné and its continuous development ever since.

### 5.3 Evidence of koineisation in texts

The rise of Greek-speaking higher and middle social strata in the middle period of the Lusignan kingdom (1291–1374) was naturally accompanied by the appearance of administrative and literary texts written in a mixed variety approximating the spoken language of the time. The Greek translation of the code of laws employed by the Lusignan kings, the *Assises of the Haute Cour* and the *Assises of the Bourgeoisie*, was the first text to document this distinctly Cypriot variety in the 13th c., followed in the 15th c. by another administrative text, the *Livre des Remembrances de la Secrète du Royaume de Chypre* (1468–1469).

Subsequently, in a development typical of koineisation past its initial stage (Siegel 1985:376), this variety expanded its functions into literature. Thus, in the course of the 15th c., it was cultivated in original works (the *Chronicle of Leontios Machairas*, and its sequel, the *Chronicle of Georgios Boustronios*), and from the 16th c. onwards also in translations of foreign works (the *Fior de Vertu*, and the *Love Poems*, both based on Italian originals), and of older Greek texts (the *Apostles’ Deeds*, and a *Speech by John Damascenus*).

The language of these texts is not static. In the *Assises*, the language is Greek as spoken in the Lusignan court (Constantinides & Browning 1993:17), which helps explain the preponderance of loanwords from the *langue d’oc*, given the strong representation in court of the Provençal element (Nicolaou-Konnari 1993a:30). By contrast, the language of the chronicles seems to be that of a wider mixed class of Franks and Greeks, who in their majority knew only the spoken Cypriot of their time, since all words foreign to it, including puristic Greek, are translated (Nicolaou-Konnari 1993a:51; Kyrris 1993:191, 205). Similarities in phonology, morphology, syntax and the lexicon in the

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language of the Assises, the Chronicles of Machairas and Boustronios, and the Cypriot Fior de Vertù (Kakoulidi-Panou & Pidonia 1994:63) provide prima facie evidence for suggestions that the unified literary language attested therein reflects a unified urban variety spoken by cultured Cypriots of that period (Siapkaras-Pitsillidès 1975:20, 76, fn. 2; Constantinides & Browning 1993:239; cf. Nicolaou-Konnari 1998:65–66, 97–98; Anaxagorou 1998:142). Functionally, once formed, this variety served as a lingua franca among speakers of different ethnic origins (Anaxagorou 1998:5–7; Nicolaou-Konnari 2001:9). Structurally, it shows evidence of an urban koiné which emerged in those circles based on the Cypriot L1 of the socially mobile local bourgeoisie and the Cypriot L2 of the old Frankish aristocracy. Participation of learner interlanguage in this process is reminiscent of other koineising situations, such as the emergence of modern Israeli Hebrew from various spoken second language versions of Hebrew by speakers of Eastern European languages and from literary Hebrew (Siegel 2001:184–185).

5.3.1 Mixing
The very high incidence of loanwords in medieval Cypriot texts can be interpreted as an instance of mixing, particularly when these are cited as explanations of Greek words. Two such examples from the Chronicle of Machairas are οἱ φρέριδεϚ (from French frère, §537, 528) cited alongside οἱ αδελφοί “the brothers”, and σιρέντζιν (from French surgie, §495, 482) cited alongside εγιατρεύσαν “they cured”. The Chronicle’s title itself in the Venetian manuscript (Marc. Gr. VII, 16, 1080) ΕξήγησιϚ τηϚγλυκείαϚχώραϚΚύπρου,ηποιαλέγεται Κρόνικα τουτέστιν Χρονικ(όν) juxtaposes a French loanword, Κρόνικα (from French chronique), with its Greek equivalent, Χρονικόν. In general, synonym citation is widely used as a means of ensuring comprehension, as demonstrated by the piling up of synonyms in ο αβοκάτοϚ τουτέστιν ο εµπροπέτηϚ ο λεγόµενοϚφαρπαλιέροϚ, conjoining three borrowed terms for “lawyer” by τουτέστιν “that is” and ο λεγόµενοϚ “the so-called”. Adjectives also often appear in pairs of synonyms, with the French adapted to the Greek inflectional paradigm, as in πολλά τιµηµένην και πολλά τεβόνταν “very honourable” (Anaxagorou 1996:27).

However, loanwords were not always adapted to the Greek inflectional paradigm, and may appear uninflected, as in the pair of synonyms βαλέντε (from French valoir), αντρειωµένοϚ “brave, worthy”. In the Assises (§205, 21), we find αµέριµνοϚ ήγουν κιτεϚ “innocent or acquitted” (from French quites,
incorporated as is). Uninflected rendition of loanwords affects a few tenths of nouns and adjectives, as well as proper names (Stanitsas 1984:95, 120).

Incorporation of function words, such as the French particles ou “or”, and de “of”, untranslated into the text further demonstrates the extent of penetration of French into Greek (and hence of speakers’ bilingualism, cf. Hudson 1996:59). For example, in the Assises, one reads ο πατήρ ου η μήτηρ εκείνου “his father or his mother” using the French particle, but seven words later διά τήν ζωήν του ή διά τον διδάσκαλον του “for his life or for his teacher” using the Greek particle (Nicolaou-Konnari 1995b:318). In Machairas, the title de of French names is attached to the ensuing family name and variably rendered as τε (τενορεϚ), ντε (ντέ νόρεϚ), ττε (ττενορεϚ) “de Nores” or δε (δε µονφορτε) “de Monfort” (Nicolaou-Konnari 1996:60–61). Interchangeability between Greek and French variants demonstrates the extent of such mixing of forms.

Semantic calques represent another mechanism for mixing (Stanitsas 1984:110–118). Expressions calqued on French in the Assises include αλλά ναι! (< mais si!), and in Machairas γιοφύρια ερίκταν (< ils lançaient/jettaient des ponts). Moreover, the expression γλυκεία χώραΚύπροϚ “sweet land Cyprus” in the title of the Chronicle is calqued on the French ‘la douce France’ found in the Chanson de Roland and elsewhere. In terms of referential content, French loanwords and calques prevail in administration, justice, and the military domain, while fewer are encountered in the private domain, and hardly any in religious and rural life (Nicolaou-Konnari 1995:360, 378). Romance influence on Greek is also seen in the adoption of western chronology instead of the Byzantine one starting at the creation of the world (5508 B.C.E., Stanitsas 1984:119), and in the French and Italian provenance of many Cypriot placenames (Papadopoullos 1995:781, fn. 72) and family names (Nicolaou-Konnari 1993a:54).

A further instance of mixing, on the phonological level this time, is made visible through its representation in writing. This concerns the omission of final -n from Greek words by analogy to the lack of separate pronunciation of written final -n in French and spreading of nasality to the previous vowel instead (Papadopoullos 1983:222; Nicolaou-Konnari 1996:59). This produces a situation in which final -n is pronounced but not written in Greek, while written but not pronounced in French. However, even this is not consistently enforced, as seen in το πατέραν του (= τον πατέραν του) “his father” (from the Assises, Sathas 1877:438), where final -n is dropped from the end of the article but not the noun.

Finally, mixing occurs in the representation of particular sounds in writing and of entire writing systems. The representation of French /b, d, g/ was
highly variable ranging from closer to the phonetic perception of these sounds by Cypriots as π, τ, κ, through educated μπ, ντ, γκ, to the more scholarly β, δ, γ (Stanitsas 1984:91–92). Moreover, Greek text would be rendered by Latin characters, testifying to the lack of literacy in Greek, which compelled educated Cypriots to enlist any and all means available to them in order to write the language they felt most comfortable speaking. Thus, in the notes of Huguet Boussat (late 15th c.) one reads Touta en tis haria tis macarismenou tou conti de Jafé “these are the grounds of the late Count of Jaffa”, while an enumeration of the grounds in the same vein follows. Clearly, such occurrences of mixing are on a different level from the processes taking place in spoken discourse. Nevertheless they highlight the ease with which items from different sources are mixed as needed, underlining the possibility of similar processes taking place orally.

5.3.2 Levelling
Evidence of levelling in medieval Cypriot is most obvious in the fate of Latin and puristic Greek. Latin retreated even in such traditional bastions as state acts and religion (Nicolaou-Konnari 1993a:36–37, 1993b:320–322), while forms of puristic Greek were levelled out by contemporary Cypriot forms. Thus, Machairas renders the famous church expression ματαιότης ματαιοτήτων τα πάντα ματαιώσεως “vanitas vanitatum omnia vanitas” as ψέματα των ψεύματων ὅλα είναι ψέματα ”lies of lies everything is lies”; and the phrase οὐδέν ωφελεί ἀλλὰ μάλλον θόρυβοῖς γίνεται “is no good but rather produces upheaval” as οὐδέν ωφελούν ἀλλὰ μάλλον μάλλωσαν γινόμενα (Kyrris 1993:172). Similarly, the translator of John Damascenus’s Speech analyses the adjective θεάρεστα as αρεστά του θεού ”liked by God”, and the participle ευαρεστησάντων as ὅποι Σου αρέσαν “that you liked” (Nikolopoulos 2000:21). The decline of puristic Greek even among educated Greeks, clergymen and state officials like Machairas – who was well educated, though not in Greek, and widely travelled (Kyrris 1993:169, 197) – parallels the difficulties faced by Franks using French (Nicolaou-Konnari 1993a:50), testifying to their mutual alienation from inherited forms of their respective L1.

5.3.3 Simplification
The orthography of medieval Cypriot manuscripts is dramatically simplified, with phonetic rendition of French loanwords in the Assises, the Chronicles, and the Livre des Remembrances (Nicolaou-Konnari 1993a:35; Papadopoulos 1983:222) being paralleled by phonetic rendition of Italian loanwords in the Love Poems (Siapkaras-Pitsillidés 1975:9). Spelling simplifications concern
Greek and foreign languages alike, with [i], [o], and [e] sounds transliterated phonetically throughout, and are equally applied by more and less conservative scribes, as evidenced by the absence of subscript iota from the Greek text of John Damascenus’s *Speech*, despite the scribe’s overall conservatism (Nikolopoulos 2000: 13). Visual reproduction of Italian models is seen in the transliteration of <gn> and <gl> as <γν> and <γλ> respectively, much like aural reproduction of French models is seen in the transliteration of /b, d, g/ by π, τ, κ (see 5.3.1). Such wholesale simplified renditions of families of related sounds may well constitute the written traces of primary oral processes, whereby borrowed sounds were rendered by the closest ones already existing in the Cypriot phonological system, resulting in simplification compared to the original sources.

In morphology, simplification can be seen in the adaptation of French verbs to the Greek verbal paradigm by means of suffixation with the suffix -ιάζω. Menardos (1969: 165) suggests that this suffix was forged on the basis of the French 2pl. verb ending, in those days pronounced as [-ez]. A form such as French *presentez* would then give rise to a Greek verb πρεζεντιάζω, overtly the final syllables -ιάζω yielding a fully productive derivational morpheme.

A further innovation leading to restructuring of the Cypriot nominal paradigm is attributed by Papadopoulos (1983: 226) to the Greek rendition of French originals. Specifically, he hypothesises that use of the accusative plural instead of the genitive for masculine adjectives and nouns (feature 14 in §2) is due to the rendition in Greek of French expressions such as *s’ils sont parèques des autres* “if they are others’ slaves”, rendered as ανε παρικι αλούσ (= αν εν’πάροικοι άλλων) in the Livre de Remembrances. In French, the genitive (in this example: *des autres*) is not morphologically distinct from the accusative, leaving no overt trace of the difference between the two to guide the scribe’s choice of case in Greek. According to this explanation, another feature of today’s Cypriot speech, the retreat of the genitive plural of masculine, and now feminine, nouns, has its beginnings in morphological simplification first occurring in medieval times. In the light of the sociohistorical evidence presented earlier, these traces of mixing, levelling and simplification in medieval manuscripts support the emergence of an early urban koiné in Cyprus.
6. The subsequent course of the medieval koiné

The testimony of 19th c. scholars suggests two paths for the subsequent course of the medieval koiné. The first was to spread to the countryside, reaching areas all over the island and uniformly affecting their speech. Historically, this possibility gains support from the persecution of the Catholic faith under Ottoman rule (see 5.2.2), which caused several members of the previous Hellenised aristocracy to relocate to the countryside (as Frankish names among the Cypriot peasantry attest, Kyrris 1988:255–268). Linguistically, the prevalence in the countryside of French loanwords which, judging by their rendition in Greek, entered the language during medieval times, with more recent loanwords found in the cities, supports this possibility (Menardos 1969:152–153, originally published in 1900). Interestingly, the referential content of the older loanwords bears traces of their descent from an urban/noble context. For instance, Menardos comments: “in the villages, for a house to be called τούμπρα [from French chambre, MT] it must have something exceptional” (1969:154, my translation). Clearly, such an association could not have occurred in the first place if the loanwords had not been introduced into the language at the top of the social pyramid. In a similar vein, use of the first name ΝτζορζήϚ, descending from western originals which Machairas differentiates from inherited ΓεώργιοϚ “George”, is found in the 19th c. among peasants, but not among townspeople (1969:167–168). Moreover, the survival of some words of Frankish origin only in the variety of Mesaoria, at least as spoken in the 19th c. (e.g. αλατουρέ “continuous or repeated frequently” from French à la durée encountered as an uninflected loanword in the Assises, Menardos 1969:165–166), allows us to deduce the closer association of the medieval koiné with this regional variety. Subsequently, the medieval koiné contributed to the development of new regional subdialects – the local patois varieties constituting the modern dialectal continuum, shown in the Appendix – as can happen once a koiné has been nativised (Mesthrie 1994, quoted by Tuten 2003:21). This would explain the presence across the whole spectrum of the Cypriot dialectal continuum, including the modern koiné, of features earlier accounted for as outcomes of koinisation, such as replacement of the genitive plural of masculine nouns and adjectives by the accusative, idiosyncratic accentuation, exten-
sive sandhi phenomena, and liberal compounding yielding characteristically Cypriot forms.44

At the same time, the medieval koiné retained a stronger association with urban speech. Historically, this may be attributed to the continued presence in Lefkosia, during the period of Ottoman rule, of a small Greek elite comprising merchants and important Christian families connected with the church or the Ottoman administration, who lived south of the river around the Archbishop’s palace (Attalides 1980:99). Linguistically, this possibility is supported by the differentiation in referential content or phonological form of lexical variants encountered in the cities and in the countryside. A look through the early 20th c. Compilations of words by Xenophon Farmakides reveals many instances when a generalised variant used in the cities (εν ταῖς πόλεσιν) is different from the one used in the countryside (εν τη υπαίθρω), or downright nonexistent therein. On such occasions, the generalised city variant is either (a) closer to the underlying phonological form, having undergone fewer phonological processes, hence closer to the standard (e.g. in the cities: η κρυάδα, in the countryside: η κρυότη, in the cities: αγνωρίζω, in the countryside: αγνωρίζω, αγνωρίζω, αγρωνίζω, “to recognise”; in the cities: στάθου, in the countryside: στάκου “wait, hold on”); or (b) a French or Italian loanword. In turn, these loans have either (i) been rendered differently in the countryside (e.g. in the cities: πινόλια, in the northern Lemessos province: πελόνια “pine-seeds” < Italian pinoli; in the cities: σούππα λουµά < French soupe, in the countryside: ως ήρτεν βρεµένοϛ φυτίλλιν “soaked, drenched”) or (ii) refer to an object not known therein (e.g. in the cities: καούκκοϛ “caramelised almond sweet of French origin”). The first possibility supports the proximity of medieval educated Cypriot speech to standard Greek (Siapkaras-Pitsillidés 1975:20), while the second, the higher proportion of foreign loanwords in the cities in medieval times. Thus, these two possibilities jointly support the hypothesis of an early urban supra-local variety incorporating foreign elements. Elements of this variety were attested in urban speech in the early 20th c., as shown by Farmakides’s survey, and have also survived in the modern koiné. In this way, the medieval koiné played a direct part in the formation of the modern koiné, contributing to the pool of linguistic variants from which the latter emerged.

44 The continuity of this last feature in particular is deduced from a comment by Sakellarios (1891: πβ’), who was impressed by multiple compounds using prepositions, such as αντιπηθάρκοψεϚ “the evening of the day after the day after tomorrow”.

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7. Conclusion

Recent years have witnessed a surge in interest in a generalised variety of Cypriot Greek spoken primarily in the cities, but also in rural areas. In this article, I have presented sociohistorical and structural evidence supporting the characterisation of this generalised variety as a koiné. Furthermore, based on the sociohistorical circumstances prevailing on the island at the end of the 14th c. during the period of Lusignan rule, I hypothesised the emergence of an early urban koiné, structural traces of which are found in manuscripts of medieval administrative and literary texts. Subsequently, the medieval koiné spread across the island and participated in the development of new regional subdialects, retaining at the same time its connection with urban speech. In this way, it influenced the development of both the Cypriot dialect in general, and the modern koiné in particular.

One particular feature of koineisation processes in Cyprus is that they occurred in the margin of the accredited varieties spoken in mainland Greece, resulting in the stigmatisation of the emerging varieties (see 5.2.3 on the attitudes expressed by Machairas and Estienne de Lusignan toward the medieval koiné, and Sciriha 1995, 1996; Pavlou 1997, as well as (1) in Section 2 above on those of contemporary Cypriots). This is because, contrary to koineisation, standardisation necessarily includes the stages of codification and elaboration (Tuten 2003:84), which in mainland Greece promoted another regional koiné, the Peloponnesian variety, to the status of standard, but were not carried through in Cyprus. As soon as a standard was established on the mainland, the distance separating this from the Cypriot koiné meant that the latter was immediately dubbed ‘peripheral’. Thus, at the same time as “universal education, access to the mass media, the flight of the young to the cities, and the advent of easy mobility” (Horrocks 1997:301) brought about the retreat of regional varieties on the mainland, Cypriot (including the modern koiné placed at the acrolect of the dialectal continuum) emerged as “the only living Modern Greek dialect” (Contossopoulos 1969:92). As a result, the Cypriot koiné has primarily received attention for the ways in which it diverges from SMG and its relation with it, rather than being studied in its own right and against its own historical context. Hopefully, future investigations of the surviving data and of their interlinking with historical evidence in the light of current sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic theories will begin to do justice to the history of the language spoken in Cyprus, which, as shown by this first attempt, is more complex and less straightforward than what it may seem at first.
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Marina Terkourafi


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Marina Terkourafi


Résumé

Plusieurs études sur le parler Chypriote contemporain notent l’existence d’une variété généralisée à travers l’île et qui pourtant diverge en de nombreux points de la norme parlée en Grèce métropolitaine. Cet article vise avant tout à classifier cette variété, en précisant dans quelle mesure elle est caractérisée par les traits structurels et socio-historiques des koinés. Ayant identifié cette variété en tant que koiné, je trace son évolution historique. En particulier, je soutiens qu’une koiné précoce émergea dans un contexte urbain dès la fin du 14ème siècle. Par la suite, cette koiné joua un rôle important dans la formation du dialecte Chypriote moderne ainsi que de la koiné contemporaine.

Zusammenfassung


Author’s address:

Marina Terkourafi
Computer Laboratory
University of Cambridge
William Gates Building
15 JJ Thomson Avenue
CAMBRIDGE CB3 0FD, UK
E-mail: mt217@cam.ac.uk
Appendix. Local varieties of the Cypriot dialect (after Contossopoulos 1969: 105)