

Greek and Phrygian Interactions in the Neo-Phrygian Inscriptions: A Pragmatic and Sociolinguistic Analysis*

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1. Introduction

Linguistic interactions between Greek and Phrygian are well known, even beyond the grammatical and lexical isoglosses showing that these two languages are closely related, having shared a common prehistory in the Balkans¹ before Phrygian populations started migrating to Central Anatolia around the 12th century BCE.

After many centuries of independent development, as evidenced by the Old Phrygian corpus² written in an epichoric alphabet (9th/8th–4th centuries BCE), the Macedonian invasion of Anatolia (334–333 BCE) intensified interactions between Greek and Phrygian to the extent that the Phrygians abandoned their own alphabet and started using the Greek alphabet to write in Phrygian, as in the Dokimeion inscription (late 4th/early 3rd century BCE; Brixhe 2004:7–26) or the Prynnessos inscription (2nd century BCE; Brixhe and Drew-Bear 2010]). During the Roman Era (1st–3rd centuries CE), after many centuries of “silence,” a new set of inscriptions exhibits the final attested phase of the language: the Neo-Phrygian corpus³ consists of 130 inscriptions written in the Greek alphabet. More

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1 The so called “Balkan-Indo-European” phase, as discussed in de Lamberterie 2013:42–50.

2 Brixhe and Lejeune 1984, supplemented by Brixhe 2002b and 2004.

3 Most of the Neo-Phrygian corpus was published by Haas (1966:113–28), followed by independent publications of subsequent finds: Brixhe 1978:5–7; Brixhe and Waelkens 1981; Laminger-Pascher 1984:35; Brixhe and Neumann 1985; Mitchell 1993:186; Brixhe and

than half are Greek-Phrygian bilinguals, less than half are Phrygian monolingual texts, and some are ambiguous (i.e., it is impossible to state whether the language is Greek or Phrygian).

The Neo-Phrygian inscriptions were found in a small area in Central Anatolia, delimited by Lake Eğirdir, Lake Beyşehir, the northwestern tip of Lake Tuz, and the ancient cities Dorylaion (Eskişehir), Kotiaion (Kütahya), and Ikonion (Konya). The task of deciphering the Neo-Phrygian texts is complicated by several factors, not least of all our limited knowledge of Phrygian itself—a fragmentary language whose attestations do not permit a coherent picture of its grammar and lexicon, as correctly stated by Matzinger (2006:190). In addition, there is the stonemasons’ confusion between the rounded letters as written in the Greek alphabet of the time, and finally the segmentation difficulties connected to sandhi phenomena, namely assimilation and elision (Brixhe 1999:293–313). Yet despite the impossibility of arriving at a complete understanding of the Neo-Phrygian inscriptions, thanks to their Greek counterparts it is possible to state that all are fragments of funerary epitaphs, and almost all contain curses against potential desecrators of the grave.

The formulaic character of the Neo-Phrygian curses, as well as the sudden “revival” of the language after the lack of attestations during the Hellenistic period,⁴ has recently led some scholars to question whether Phrygian was actually still spoken in Anatolia during the Roman Era, challenging the view supported already by Holl (1908) at the beginning of the 20th century, and more recently by Mitchell (1993:174), Brixhe (e.g., 2002a:253), Vassileva (2006:92), and Drew-Bear (2007:167). Matzinger (2006:191) compares the formulaic structure of these funerary inscriptions to the use of Latin *r(equiescat) i(n) p(ace)* in the Western world. Sowa (2016:177–8) thinks of the Phrygian formulae as a manifesto of local linguistic particularism, introduced into the inscriptions artificially. Similarly, Roller (2018) argues that the role of Phrygian language was limited to a “programmatically revival” of Phrygian culture in the Roman Era through the action of elites belonging to this ethnic group. Tzitzilis (2013), taking a more extreme position, comes to the conclusion that Neo-Phrygian, as a language, does not even exist, being in reality “an archaic Achaean dialect.”

Drew-Bear 1997; Drew-Bear, Lubotsky, and Üyümez 2008; Brixhe and Drew-Bear 2010; Avram 2015.

4 The epitaph found at Dokimeion (W-11, late 4th/early 3rd century BCE; Brixhe 2004:7–26) and the funerary curse uncovered at Prynnessos (2nd century BCE; Brixhe and Drew-Bear 2010) are only beginning to fill the gap between Old Phrygian and Neo-Phrygian inscriptions.

As correctly noted by Mitchell (1993:172), the abundance of Greek inscriptions in Anatolia provides evidence for a Greek cultural overlay that may obscure some or all of the non-Greek native cultures. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate the status of Neo-Phrygian as a living language in the Roman Era, based on sociolinguistic and pragmatic considerations. I will first contextualize the Neo-Phrygian funerary imprecations within the wider Near Eastern tradition to which they belong. Then, I will explain the speech act value of the curses in the Neo-Phrygian funerary imprecations in terms of *ritual speech* and Levinson's (1992) notion of *activity type*, in order to account for the conscious usage of Neo-Phrygian in the curse. Finally, I will review the inscriptions of the Neo-Phrygian epigraphic corpus with a view to isolating interesting phenomena that may point in the direction of Phrygian as a living language.

2. Historical data

The economic situation of Anatolia during the Hellenistic Period was miserable, as the area was troubled by many wars. The overall number of inscriptions bearing funerary imprecations regardless of the language was extremely small during the Hellenistic Period (Strubbe 1991:51), so this cannot be used as an argument that Phrygian was already a dead language at that time.

According to Waelkens (1980:3), the custom of burying the dead in a *Totenhaus*, i.e., a 'grave house', is already attested in Anatolia in the late 3rd millennium BCE for the Hatti dynasts of Alacahüyük and Gedikli. But the Phrygians were the first civilization in Anatolia to give the *Totenhaus* concept a wide distribution in terms of time and space (Waelkens 1980:4), reaching its peak in the Roman Era, when the practice gave rise to the so-called doorstone steles (Waelkens 1986), which mimic the entrance to a building. In Waelkens' monograph on this kind of stele (1986), 687 (nos. 22–709) out of 807 entries in his list come from Central Phrygia, and the others from neighboring regions. As Waelkens states (1979:105), this type of monument is attested in Asia Minor only in areas inhabited by a Phrygian population, or by a mixed population composed, among others, of Phrygian elements. One third of the bilingual Greek-Neo-Phrygian inscriptions are engraved on this type of monument.

In Strubbe's (1997) collection of 404 funerary imprecations in Greek from Asia Minor, the inscriptions coming from Central Phrygia (141) and from neighboring regions under Phrygian cultural influence constitute almost half of the total entries; among these, 50 also bear a Neo-Phrygian curse. Combining these two sets of data, it is possible to state that the area of the textual attestation

of Neo-Phrygian is very small compared to the areas of actual Phrygian cultural influence.

The area of textual attestation of the Neo-Phrygian inscriptions can be located in the core of Central Anatolia, i.e., in the isolated uplands of Lydia and western Phrygia between the Hermus and the Maeander rivers. According to Strabo (12.8.12–21), this was mostly a rural area, among the least urbanized in the 1st century CE. The two largest cities were Laodikeia on the Lykos and Apameia. Roman colonies were not numerous and those that existed were located on the periphery of the region (Germa in northern Galatia, Antioch of Pisidia in the southwest, and Laodikeia Katakekaumene in the southeast). Throughout the region, there were only small villages, very poorly connected to each other because of an inadequate road system (Mitchell 1993:124–32, 170). The local deities, invoked through numerous epicleses accompanying generic names such as Mēn, Mētēr, and Zeus, were worshipped in order to assure good health for the livestock and a good harvest (Drew-Bear and Naour 1990:1914).

Apart from rare exceptions (women: nos. 5, 10, 36, 61, 73, 98), the commissioners of the Neo-Phrygian funerary imprecations were adult men, whose social position was not particularly distinguished, but who had enough money to build a tomb for their deceased relatives: villagers with small landholdings, livestock farmers (Gnoli and Thornton 1997:159–62), a carpenter (no. 33), a military horseman (no. 12), a freedman (no. 67). Access to stones was facilitated by the presence of several quarries, particularly the pavonazzetto marble quarries at Dokimeion (Christol 1991). This fact could explain quite well the huge quantity of fine inscriptions in such rural contexts.

The relative isolation of this rural territory would have helped preserve local cultural identities throughout the Roman Era. In the appendix of the provincial list known as the *Laterculus Veronensis*,⁵ revised in 314 CE but reflecting earlier redactions, Phrygians are equated with barbarians. This would not have been possible if Phrygians had totally assimilated to Greek culture and language. Furthermore, if it is true, as reported by Socrates Scholasticus (*Hist. Eccl.* 5.23), that Selinas, an Arian bishop of Galatia with mixed Gothic and Phrygian ancestry, used to preach in both Gothic and Phrygian to allow the peasants to understand his sermons, then the presence of a Phrygian monolingual population in rural areas of Phrygia is still attested in the 5th century CE, confirming the existence of Phrygian as a living language in the Roman Era.

5 Biblioteca Capitolare di Verona, MS II (2), fol.255r–6v; 7th century CE (Riese 1878:128–9).

3. The Neo-Phrygian funerary curses in Near-Eastern tradition

The Neo-Phrygian corpus (1st–3rd centuries CE) consists almost exclusively of *funerary curses* publicly written on the gravestone by the owner(s) of the tombs (without concealing their identity), to warn any potential desecrators that evil would befall them if they should violate the grave in defiance of the prohibitions against doing so.

An examination of all the bilingual Neo-Phrygian/Greek funerary inscriptions of the 2nd and 3rd centuries CE allows us to extrapolate a “standard version,” structured in the following way. At the beginning of the inscription there is an epitaph in Greek that states clearly the names of the deceased buried under the stele, as well as the names of the people who built the tomb and their family relationship. After this comes the funerary imprecation proper, in Phrygian, whose basic formulation (leaving aside possible variations) runs as follows:

Ιος νι σεμουν κνουμανε κακουν αδδακετ **τιττετικμενος ειτου**

Whoever does any harm to this monument, **let him be cursed.**

Neo-Phrygian curse formulae against potential desecrators of the tombs are built with “indeterminate” relative clauses (cf. Yates 2014), where the relative pronoun refers to an entity that is indefinite:

Whoever X does something bad to [inscribed object], [divinity] shall do something bad to X.

In the Semitic Near East and in Anatolia, there was a long tradition of protecting tombs with funerary imprecations of this kind, for example in Ancient Egypt beginning in the Old Kingdom, i.e., 2686–2181 BCE (Colledge 2015); in Phoenicia from the late 11th century BCE (cf., e.g., the sarcophagus of the Phoenician King Aḥīrōm, Gibson 1982:12–6); in Lycia from the 6th to the 4th centuries BCE (Schweyer 2002); and then in Lydia in the 4th century BCE, under Persian domination (Gusmani 1964).

Although the Greeks protected material objects and immaterial property (treaties, contracts, etc.) from potential wrongdoers by means of imprecations, like the curse on Tataie’s aryballos (Cumae, 675–650 BCE; *IG* 14.865 = *DGE* 786 = Buck 1955:192, no. 10), or the Amphictyonic oath concerning the plain of Cirrha (Aeschin., *Or.* 3.111), the specific protection of graves seems to be

alien to the Greeks of the Greek homeland,⁶ because of their specific beliefs concerning the afterworld. Unlike the Semites and the Anatolians, the Greeks paid little attention to the material aspects of the afterlife. The corpse itself was considered insensate, free from feelings and bodily needs, and was perceived as contaminated and impure. While ideas concerning the afterlife were numerous and diverse, they were in general not related to a specific funeral practice. The Greeks placed emphasis on the performance of the funerary rite itself, rather than on the ideological justification for that rite. To be sure, the origin of written funerary curses meant to protect tombs from wrongdoers is usually connected to inhumation, as was the case, e.g., in ancient Egypt. However, this is not true for the Greek world, which went through cycles of centuries when cremation alternated with inhumation as the dominant funerary rite, and when cremation and inhumation were practiced simultaneously (Rebay-Salisbury 2012:19), without resulting in the introduction of customary funerary curses. Funerary imprecations in Greek began to appear in Anatolia only around the end of Persian domination (4th century BCE). The oldest one is attested in a bilingual Greek-Lycian inscription found at Kyaneai, in Lycia, dated on stylistic grounds to 380 BCE. As noted by Strubbe (1997:251), the Greek imprecation is generally thought to be inspired by contemporary Lycian examples, though it is not a word-for-word translation of the Lycian text.

Even this brief overview of the Semitic and Anatolian funerary imprecations makes clear that the Phrygian curse formulae should not be considered a product of the imitation of Greek customs, as suggested by Haas (1966:22).

4. Pragmatics of the Neo-Phrygian funerary curses

Usually, the meaning of utterances is connected to a specific cultural frame, or, using Levinson's concept (1992:69), to a specific *activity type*, i.e., a culturally recognized activity. Understanding the meaning of utterances involves knowing the activity in which those utterances play a role. As for the activity type involved in Anatolian funerary imprecations, it is necessary to take into account the following points:

- i. A general belief in the existence of divinities/metaphysical agents, who were regularly asked to avenge the deceased in case of violation of the grave

6 According to Strubbe (1991:38), the twenty-some cases of funerary imprecations attested on the Greek mainland date to the Hellenistic Era and later.

(Chaniotis 2004:2), and who might choose (if this is not specified by the curse) the nature and the degree of the punishment to be inflicted on the wrongdoer. A failure to believe in metaphysical agents would cause a decline in the tradition of curses.

- ii. A general belief in the efficacy of the word, especially when this is a direct manifestation of the will of people of higher status, such as kings, priests, parents, and the dead (Speyer 1969:1165–7).
- iii. The Anatolian conception of death and the afterlife. Unlike the Greeks, the Anatolians believed that dead bodies still had feelings and desires, so they needed a *Totenhaus*, a ‘grave house’ (Waelkens 1980, Strubbe 1991:40) in which to rest, undisturbed, forever.
- iv. The Near-Eastern conception of the tomb as a material object, and therefore as *personal property* to be protected from violation (Parrot 1939:9).

With all this in mind, it is easy to understand that curses, in traditional societies—and more specifically here, in ancient Anatolia—had an additional function compared to present-day curses. Present-day curses serve to express ill wishes of misfortune upon a target, but the illocutionary point is to vent frustration and/or anger rather than seriously desiring the fulfillment of the specified misfortune.⁷ By contrast, funerary imprecations against grave desecrators in Anatolia were understood as *declarations*, according to Searle’s model,⁸ and more precisely as *supernatural declarations*, i.e., performative words that bring about the predicted harm through supernatural/divine power. The supernatural dimension has (almost entirely) disappeared in speech act definitions of modern curses, whereas in ancient Anatolia harm-causing curses were considered fully performative.

The main goal of funerary imprecations in Anatolia and in the Ancient Near East was to protect the tomb from potential wrongdoers, thus replacing a *legal process*. Curses were meant to establish an automatic link between crime and punishment independently of socio-political institutions in the case of violations, taking over where laws were bound to fail or when crimes remained undetected (Assmann 1992:53–4). Thus, curses that were merely spoken were not considered

7 On the magic power of words in modern societies, see Fehlmann 2011.

8 “Declarations bring about some alteration in the status or condition of the referred to object or objects solely in virtue of the fact that the declaration has been successfully performed” (Searle 1969:17).

sufficient for fulfilling this task: they had to be written, and more specifically, they had to be inscribed directly on the stone (monument or stele) in order to be effective. As soon as the prohibition against grave desecration was transgressed (ιος νι σεμουν κνουμανε κακουν αδδακετ, “whoever does any harm to this monument”), the punishment stated by the curse would occur automatically (τιττετικμενος ειτου, “let him be cursed”) by the intercession of the divinity, and it would be irrevocable.

Funerary imprecations in Ancient Anatolia pertained to *ritual speech*, and thus were governed by strict formulation and/or sequencing rules (Bax 2010:484–5, Strubbe 1997:xv). What is particularly interesting about the Neo-Phrygian funerary imprecations is the predominance in the corpus (with a few exceptions) of a bilingual structure, in which the epitaph is in Greek and the curse proper is in Neo-Phrygian. It is possible to explain this peculiarity in these terms. The epitaph, i.e., the more prosaic part of the inscription containing the biographical information about the deceased, is in Greek, an “unmarked” language. By contrast, the choice to use Neo-Phrygian formulae in the actual imprecations was intentional, as this would be considered a device to increase the power of the curse itself. Fidelity to the ancestral language would have been perceived as the only way to invoke the ancestral gods effectively in order to protect the tombs of the deceased from desecrators. This specific type of bilingualism—where prayers, hymns, or invocations are written in the sacred language, while other para-textual elements are written in another, non-sacred, one—is common in ancient religious texts. It is possible to find several parallels in the Ancient Near Eastern world:

- i. The Hittite-Luwian bilingual magic texts, in which the descriptive parts of the rituals are written in Hittite, but the spells are in Cuneiform Luwian, introduced by *nu lūwili kiššan hukzi/hukkiškizzi* “then, he conjures in Luwian as follows,” or by *nu lūwili kiššan memāi* “then, he says in Luwian the following” (Starke 1985).
- ii. The Hurrian-Ugaritic bilingual liturgical texts of Ras Shamra, e.g., RS 24.643, where the description of the rite is in Ugaritic but the hymn itself is in Hurrian (Pardee 1996:67).
- iii. The Hittite-Hattic bilingual texts, such as KUB XXIX 1–3, where the religious formulae are in Hattic and Hittite, but the description of the rite of Zili-puri’s priest is in Hittite only (Masson 1996:30–1).

- iv. The bilingual Greek-Egyptian magical spells included in PGM III and IV, where the contextualization of the spell is in Greek, but the spell itself is in Old Coptic Egyptian (Love 2016).

This implies that those who commissioned the engraving of a curse formula written in Neo-Phrygian on the gravestone of a deceased relative knew exactly what they were doing, and must have had some knowledge of the Phrygian language itself. At the same time, this knowledge needed to be shared by the target of the curses, i.e., the potential tomb violators, so that they would know what they were risking in case of transgression. All this makes sense only if Phrygian was a living language.

5. The epigraphic evidence

The general conditions for studying the Neo-Phrygian corpus are very poor, first of all because of the impossibility of verifying all of the inscriptions directly on the stones, as most of them have been lost. Less than half of the documents are actually preserved; for the others there are only reproductions, namely drawings from 19th-century archaeologists and travelers, or in some cases more recent photos. Nevertheless, some observations can be made.

Monolingual inscriptions, in which both the epitaph and the curse are written in Neo-Phrygian, are attested (e.g., nos. 15, 18, 30, 31, 69; Brixhe and Neumann 1985), as well as bilingual inscriptions, with the epitaph written in Neo-Phrygian (e.g., nos. 9, 49, 88). The writing of non-formulaic utterances in Neo-Phrygian (in addition to formulaic utterances) seems to me an important piece of evidence supporting the conclusion that Phrygian was actually spoken, at least by part of the population, in Central Anatolia.

In the case of Greek/Neo-Phrygian bilinguals, catalogs of formulae to be copied by the stonecutters surely existed, and one must also keep in mind the variety of possible circumstances in which the stone was prepared (Adams and Swain 2002:7): e.g., a pre-existing Phrygian inscription may have been supplemented with a later Greek translation, as may be the case with nos. 5 and 103, where it looks as if a pre-existing Neo-Phrygian formula is literally surrounded by a Greek epitaph and a Greek curse formula.

Nevertheless, as stated by Brixhe (2002a:252), in all verifiable cases of bilingual inscriptions, the Greek and Neo-Phrygian portions are engraved by the same

hand.⁹ Writing more than one version of the same text in different languages suggests a desire to reach different audiences, as well as the coexistence of potential monolingual readers who would not be able to understand both versions of the text, in this case both Greek and Neo-Phrygian. A very good example can be found in inscription no. 48, unfortunately not preserved (Haas 1966:97–8; *MAMA* V, list I: 182, no. 89; Lubotsky 1997; de Hoz 2017:152), from Dorylaeum.¹⁰

1	(N-Ph.) ε[(-)-]γ/τεντουμενος	... May he become ...
2	νιοισιος ναδροτος	
3	ειτου Μιτραφατα	... Mithraphatas
4	κε Μας Τερμογε-	and Men Temrogeios (= of the Tembris)
5	ιος κε Πουντας	and Pountas (= from Pontus)
6	Βας κε ενσταρνα	Bas ...
7	[vac.] δουμ(ε) κε οι ου(ε)-	And to (the care of) the religious community
8	βαν αδδακετ ορου-	the ‘father’ has put his monument. ¹¹
9	αν (GR.) παρεθέμην τὸ	
10	μνημεῖον τοῖς προ-	This monument under
11	γεγραμμένοις θε-	the protection of the above-mentioned
12	οῖς κὲ τῆ κόμη	gods and of the community
13	ταυθ’ ὁ πατήρ	the ‘father’ Asklepios has placed.
14	Ἀσκληπιός	

According to Lubotsky (1997:121–8), the Phrygian part consists of three sentences. The first (lines 1–3) represents the protasis of a curse, the apodosis of which has broken off. The second sentence (lines 3–6) contains three names of deities who are to guarantee the fulfillment of the curse, i.e., *Μιτραφατα* (possibly, according to de Hoz 2017:152, a deceased person elevated to heroic status), *Μας Τερμογειος* (the divinity corresponding to Greek *Mēn*; Lubotsky 1997:122), and *Πουντας Βας* (the indigenous Phrygian god Bas; Obrador-Cursach 2017). The third sentence (lines 7–9), according to Neumann’s interpretation (1999),

9 The only exceptions are the recently published Neo-Phrygian inscriptions on an altar from Nacolea (Avram 2015:200), which were engraved one generation after the Greek inscriptions on the same monument.

10 Text and translation after Lubotsky 1997. The translation of the Phrygian portion is partial, given uncertainties about the interpretation of some words.

11 Lubotsky (1997:127) takes Neo-Phryg. *ορουαν* (nom. sg. of an *n*-stem) to be the subject of the sentence, corresponding syntactically to *ὁ πατήρ* in the Greek portion of the inscription. In Asia Minor, the title ‘father’ was commonly used in religious contexts to designate the high official of a cult.

states that the monument has been placed under the protection of the religious community (δοῦμ(ε)). The summary Greek text (lines 9–14), informing the reader that the “father” Asklepios has placed the monument under the protection of the gods and the community, is a paraphrase of the Neo-Phrygian text directly above it, with the expression τοῖς προγεγραμμένοις θεοῖς referring to the gods mentioned in lines 3–6 in the Neo-Phrygian portion.

A particularly interesting inscription for our purposes is no. 96 (Haas 1966:127, *MAMA* VI no. 382, Waelkens 1986 no. 493, Brixhe and Vottéro 2004: 14): uniquely in the Neo-Phrygian corpus, it testifies to the existence of at least one bilingual Greek/Neo-Phrygian speaker. This inscription is chronologically assignable to the beginning of the reign of Antoninus Pius (around 160 CE) and it was found south of the city of Afyon, in Western Phrygia. The inscription is engraved on a doorstone, a specifically Phrygian type of stele that reproduces a double-door entrance to a building. The text is divided into three lines, two on the top of the architrave and the last on the lintel of the door. The informative part containing the names of the builder(s) and the deceased must have been engraved on a slab above the door, but this has unfortunately been lost (Waelkens 1979: 125–6, 1986:199).

This inscription prominently features *code-switching*, a notable manifestation of bilingualism in which a bilingual speaker introduces a completely unassimilated word or phrase from another language into his speech. According to Poplack (1980:586), code-switching tends to occur at points in the discourse where the juxtaposition of L₁ and L₂ elements does not violate a syntactic rule of either language (a pattern especially prominent with grammatically similar languages, as specified by Romaine 1986:36). In this inscription, it is possible to see a case of *inter-sentential switching* (Myers-Scotton 1993:3), whereby the protasis (the “indefinite” relative clause) is in Greek, while the apodosis is in Neo-Phrygian:

- ¹ (GR.) Ὅς ἂν τούτῳ τῷ μνημείῳ κακῶς προσποιήσῃ ἢ τοῖς
- ² προγεγραμμένοις ὑπεναντίον τι πράξῃ, (N-Ph.) **με δεῶς κε**
- ³ **ζεμελῶς κε τιτετικμενος ειτου.**

- ¹ (GR.) Whoever damages this monument
- ² or does anything against previous orders,
- ³ (N-Ph.) **will be cursed among gods and men.**

According to Myers-Scotton (1993:71), *inter-sentential switching*, like that between Greek and Neo-Phrygian in the text in question, requires a very high degree of proficiency in both languages. This is because it implies the skilled construction of actual sentences in both languages, rather than the insertion of

unassimilated words from one language into another. Thus the code-switching in inscription no. 96 would provide positive evidence for the existence of bilingual Greek/Neo-Phrygian speakers in Central Anatolia in the 2nd century CE, thereby confirming that Phrygian was still a living language at that time. Unfortunately, the formulaic nature of the Phrygian part of the text may weaken the strength of this inference: it is possible that the stonecutter simply knew the general meaning of this portion of the Phrygian formula, which would allow him to tack it onto the preceding Greek material.

In light of what was said above about ritual speech, however, it is worth noting that the code-switching in inscription no. 96 does not occur at a random point in the funerary imprecation, but rather in the *apodosis* of the curse, i.e., the part where the ancestral gods are invoked in order to punish the potential violator of the tomb. This accords with the hypothesis of a conscious choice of language on the part of the stonecutter (or composer) and therefore with the idea that he knew the symbolic functions of both Greek (the unmarked language) and Phrygian (the marked language) within the framework of “*code-switching* with the gods” (Love 2016).

6. Conclusions

“Normalized” Greek in Anatolia had an urban dimension: civic epigraphy displays the regular language of high culture, reflecting the sophistication of the Hellenized urban aristocracy (Brixhe 1984:25–6, Mitchell 1993:174). Only one generation after the Macedonian conquest, the Phrygian-speaking population became assimilated to its new socio-political superiors through mixed marriages and through the adoption of their alphabet and language.

Of course, the Greek language was widely, if unevenly, adopted in rural Anatolia as well (Brixhe 1984:23). There, the inhabitants of the countryside learned Greek through haphazard and spontaneous processes of appropriation that led to a “Popular/Demotic” form of Greek (Brixhe 1984:22), characterized by assimilation of cases and tenses to one another, and by phonetic adaptations. More specifically, the deviations from the norm displayed by rural Greek inscriptions in Phrygia (Brixhe 1984:110–6) correlate with features attributable to Phrygian, thereby demonstrating phenomena of linguistic interference from one language to another. In particular, the common confusion between κ/χ, π/φ, τ/θ observed in rural Greek inscriptions is compatible with the most characteristic phonological trait of Phrygian compared to Greek, i.e., the lack of aspirated consonants (PIE **b^hreh₂ter-* > Neo-Phrygian dat. sing. βρατερε, ‘brother’, cf. Greek φράτηρ). The native Phrygian speakers who learned Greek must have considered the two

grapheme types (i.e., aspirated and unaspirated) interchangeable, because they were unable to differentiate them in their pronunciation. Furthermore, the aphaeresis of unstressed vowels (τῶ δελφῶ vs. standard τῶ ἀδελφῶ) demonstrates that the stonecutters were unable to recognize some word boundaries in the context of sandhi phenomena. Segmenting a foreign language requires a high level of proficiency, as word boundaries are not marked acoustically in fluent speech (Lehiste 1960). Finally, the reduction of the consonant clusters /st/ and /stʰ/ to /t/ (ἀνέτησα vs. standard ἀνέστησα) as well as the vocalic prothesis before initial /s/ + obstruent (τοῦ Ἀστεφάνου, ἰσπουδασάτων) show that this type of consonant cluster was perceptually difficult; and furthermore, according to my survey of the Phrygian corpus, initial clusters of this kind were avoided in Phrygian.

Since only a high density of Phrygian speakers could have made such an impact on the acquisition of Greek, these features, taken collectively, suggest that Phrygian was a living language (Brixhe 2002a:249). Consequently, it is reasonable to assume: 1) that the monolingual Greek-speaking community was a minority, restricted to Hellenized urban centers; and 2) that there was a separate, also minority, non-Greek-speaking community, plausibly composed of women and self-sufficient farmers, for whom Greek conferred little benefit for their everyday rural Phrygian lives. The Phrygian of these monolingual speakers could then have reshaped the Greek of the bilingual majority, who controlled both Greek and Phrygian at least to some degree in their linguistic repertoire.

In conclusion, all of the material examined in this paper confirms the status of Phrygian as a living language during the Roman Era. Epigraphic and historical data attest that the Phrygian-speaking minority was concentrated in an isolated rural area. Neo-Phrygian funerary imprecations belonged to a well-established Near-Eastern tradition, independent of the later adoption of this practice by Greeks. Moreover, the pragmatic function of the Neo-Phrygian curses in terms of *ritual speech* and *activity type* implies a conscious usage of Phrygian, which would have been possible only in the case of a living language. Finally, interesting phenomena in the Neo-Phrygian inscriptions related to bilingualism, such as *inter-sentential code-switching*, necessarily imply proficiency in both Greek and Phrygian.

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