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ON THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE LOSS OF *A IN TSAKONIAN (LATE LACONIAN)

*The Tsakonian dialect is commonly treated as a modern descendant of the Laconian idiom. The most characteristic feature of Tsakonian is the loss of the liquid *λ not only initially, but also in intervocalic position. It is suggested that the process in question is attested in the lexicon of Hesychius (5th c. AD), e.g. [1] κοῖα · τὰ κοῖλα (the lemma derives from Anc. Gk. κοῖλα); [2] ἀχανά (recte ἄχανα) · κλήματα (as if from Anc. Gk. λάχανα).*

Key words: Greek phonology; Laconian; Tsakonian; Hesychius of Alexandria

Tsakonian is an aberrant Modern Greek dialect, spoken in some villages of the eastern Peloponnese located in Kynouria, a mountainous region of Paron, cf. Newton (1972: pp. 13–14); Kontosopoulos (2001: p. 3). It is commonly treated as a straightforward descendant of the Laconian (Doric) dialect of the Ancient Greek language (Deville, 1866: pp. 129ff.; Deffner, 1880: pp. 1–52; Hatzidakis, 1927; Pernot, 1934: p. 38; Browning, 1969: p. 123; Newton, 1972: pp. 13f.; Charalampopoulos, 1980: pp. 1f.; Andriotis, 1992: p. 107; Morani, 1999: p. 250; Kontosopoulos, 2001: p. 4; Liosis, 2014: p. 446). In fact, Tsakonian preserves a number of features typical of Late Laconian, cf. Pernot (1934); Browning (1969: pp. 123f.); Pisani (1973: pp. 239f.). The most characteristic features can be summarized as follows:

[1] The original phoneme *θ is represented by Laconian σ and Tsakonian σ [s] (Buck, 1955: p. 59; Colvin, 2007: p. 46; Kaczyńska, 2014: pp. 37ff.), e.g. Tsak. σάτη [sati] ‘daughter’, dimin. σατέρι [satézi] ‘small girl’ (Andriotis, 1974: p. 278) < Lac. συγάτηρ f. ‘daughter’ < Anc. Gk. θυγάτηρ f., dimin. θυγάτριον n. ‘daughter’ (Thumb, & Kieckers, 1932: p. 93; Pisani, 1973: p. 240).

[2] The intervocalic spirant *-σ- changes to *-h- and finally to -Ø- (zero) in Laconian and Tsakonian (Buck 1955: p. 55; Colvin 2007: p. 46), e.g. Lac.

μῶά f. ‘song’ (Thumb, & Kieckers, 1932: pp. 84f.; Pisani, 1973: p. 103) < Gk. Dor. *μῶσα, cf. Att. Gk. μουσα f. ‘music, song; goddess of song, music, poetry and dancing’; Tsak. [alıú] ‘I will say’ < Lac. Gk. *λαλήω < Anc. Gk. λαλήσω (Morani, 1999: p. 250).

[3] Rhotacism of word-final *-ς (> -ρ) in a late phase of Laconian and Tsakonian, e.g. Tsak. [kaúr] ‘well’ (Thumb, & Kieckers, 1932: p. 93; Buck, 1955: p. 57; Kaczyńska, 2014: p. 38) < Lak. *καλωρ, cf. Att. Gk. καλῶς adv. ‘well, rightly, happily’ (Andriotis, 1992: pp. 107f.).

[4] Retention of Anc. Gk. *ā (which develops into Attic and Ionic η [æ:]) as Laconian ā [a:] and Tsakonian α [a], e.g. Tsak. [máti] ‘mother’ (Thumb, & Kieckers, 1932: p. 93; Pisani, 1973: p. 239) < Lac. *μᾶτηρ, cf. Ionic, Attic Gk. μήτηρ f. ‘mother’, Mod. Gk. μητέρα f. ‘id.’.

[5] Traces of the original digamma *Ϝ in Laconian (β) and Tsakonian (β [v]) (Buck, 1955: p. 47), e.g. Lac. βάννεια · τὰ ἄρνεια (Hsch.), Tsak. βάννε [vάνne] m. ‘lamb’ (Thumb, & Kieckers, 1932: p. 93) < Lac. *φάρνος, cf. Cret. Gk. φρήν m. ‘lamb’, Att. ἄρην, gen. sg. ἄρνός ‘id.’, Aeolic ὄρεσι dat. pl. ‘to sheep’ (Danka, & Witczak, 2009: pp. 11ff.).

[6] The phoneme *ζ is attested as Lac. δδ and Tsak. ντ [nd], e.g. Tsak. [seríndu] ‘to mow, reap, cut’ < Lac. *σερίδδω, cf. Att. Gk. θερίζω ‘to do summer-work, to mow, reap’ (Thumb, & Kieckers, 1932: p. 94; Pisani, 1973: p. 240).

[7] The sigma before consonants creates a geminate in Laconian and a new aspirate stop in Tsakonian (cf. Anc. Gk. *σκ > Lac. κκ > Tsak. κ‘ [kʰ]), e.g. Tsak. ακ‘ό [akʰó] ‘leathern-bag, wine-skin’ < Lac. ἄκκόρ · ἄσκός, Λάκωνες (Hsch.) < Anc. Gk. ἄσκός m. ‘id.’ (Thumb, & Kieckers, 1932: pp. 93–94; Pisani, 1973: p. 102).

[8] The core vocabulary of Tsakonian represents a heritage of Doric (Laconian) origin, e.g. Tsak. δαβελέ m. ‘light’ < Lac. *δαφελός (cf. the Hesychian gloss δαβελός · δαλός, Λάκωνες), Dor. Gk. (Sophron) δαελός m. ‘firebrand’, Attic δᾶλός m. ‘firebrand, piece of blazing wood’ (Thumb, & Kieckers, 1932: p. 93; Pisani, 1973: p. 102; Andriotis, 1974: p. 200; Beekes, 2010: p. 198).

Tsakonian is divided by modern scholars into two basic subdialects: Northern Tsakonian and Southern Tsakonian. A third subdialect, called Propontic Tsakonian and spoken from the 18th to the 20th century in Asia Minor (near Gönen, Turkey), is probably extinct (Kostakis, 1969).

In my paper I would like to review the fate of the intervocalic and initial phoneme *λ in Tsakonian and discuss a possible chronology of the liquid phoneme’s gradual decay.

Andriotis (1992: p. 108) classifies the loss of *λ in intervocalic position as one of the basic Tsakonian “innovations” (Gk. νεωτερισμοί). The pho-

neme in question is also lost in initial position in Southern (and Propontic) Tsakonian, whereas Northern Tsakonian preserves it. Andriotis suggests no exact date of the process. The term “innovation” does not indicate precisely how old this phenomenon may be and when it was productive. If the Tsakonians appeared in Propontis by the end of the 18th century AD., as claimed by Kontosopoulos (2001: p. 4), then the change of *λ (both initially and intervocalically) must have been completed earlier. In fact, the change in question is attested in Propontic Tsakonian; e.g. the phrase ἔουα νὰ μὲ οὐσ’ [éva na me ús’] ‘έλα να με λούσης / come to wash me!’ (Kontosopoulos, 2001: p. 6) contains two examples of the process in question.

The disappearance of the phoneme *λ in the Tsakonian dialect seems much older than the 18th century AD. Most researchers agree that the ethnic name Τσάκωνες m. pl. ‘Tsakonians’ derives from Anc. Gk. Λάκωνες, e.g. Deffner (1875: p. 18); Thumb (1894); Lekos (1920: p. 87); Amantos (1921: pp. 130ff.); Hatzidakis (1927: pp. 321ff.); Babiniotis (2011: p. 1465)¹. The name of the Tsakonians was registered in the form Τζέκωνες as early as in the middle of the tenth century AD by the Byzantine emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (died 959) in his work entitled *De caerimoniis* (vol. II, cap. 49) (Ahrweiler, 1963: pp. 243f.; Browning, 1969: p. 127; Кисилиер, 2014a: p. 286). Thus the earliest attestation (ca. 950) demonstrates no trace of *λ. The anonymous Greek version of the *Chronicle of the Morea* (written in the 14th cent. AD) describes numerous events of the years 1204–1292 and mentions a region called Τσακωνία (as if from Lac. Gk. *Ἐτιά-Λακωνία ‘true Laconia’) in the South-Eastern Peloponnese (Кисилиер, 2014a: pp. 287f.). In other words, the historical evidence for the ethnic name Τσάκωνες proves clearly that the liquid phoneme *λ in Tsakonian was absent in the middle of the 10th century AD. It seems more probable that the observed loss of *λ in Tsakonian should be treated as an old process than a modern “innovation”.

¹ Cf. Кисилиер (2014a: pp. 295f.). The origin of the initial element Τσ- (in the ethnic name Τσάκωνες) is disputable. In my opinion, it derives from Lac. Gk. ἐτιό- ‘true’ (< Anc. Gk. ἐτεός adj. ‘true, real, genuine’) by means of aphaeresis (a frequent phenomenon). In other words, the Tsakonians (Τσάκωνες) were called ‘true Laconians’ (Anc. Gk. Ἐτεοί Λάκωνες or Ἐτεολάκωνες). Babiniotis (2011: p. 1465) explains the origin of the initial phoneme τσ- in the ethnic name Τσάκωνες differently (originally ἔξω Λάκωνες). The same position was earlier expressed by Amantos (1921: pp. 130ff.) and Hatzidakis (1927: pp. 321ff.). This development is possible in South Tsakonian, but not in North Tsakonian. Кисилиер (2014a: p. 296, fn. 39) correctly emphasizes that the development of *ξ to τσ [ts^h] is attested only in South Tsakonian (North Tsakonian preserves ξ [ks]), e.g. S.Tsak. τσερπέ [ts^heré] adj. ‘dry, arid’, N.Tsak. ξερπέ ‘id.’, cf. Mod. Gk. ξερός (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 60); S.Tsak. τσάδερο m. ‘cousin’, NTsak. ξάδερο m. ‘id.’ (Kostakis, 1986: p. 315; Кисилиер, 2014b: p. 324).

If the liquid phoneme *λ [l] in Tsakonian was lost before the time of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (who reigned from 913 to 959), then we are again faced with the question of how old the phonological process of disappearing *λ may be and when it was productive. Before treating the basic problem, I would like to review the Tsakonian lexical evidence.

1. The Southern Tsakonian evidence for the loss of *λ in initial position.

[1.1] S.Tsak. ἄϊ [ái] n. ‘olive oil’, pl. ἄζα [áza] (Lekos, 1920: p. 66; Pernot, 1934: p. 311; Charalampopoulos, 1980: pp. 31, 45, 83), cf. Mod. Gk. λάδι n. ‘oil, olive oil’, pl. λάδια. Northern Tsakonian preserves the liquid *λ [l] in initial position: [láí] ‘oil’, pl. [ládia].

[1.2] S.Tsak. [ámbu] vb. ‘to shine, glance, brighten up / λάμπω’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 66) < Anc. Gk. λάμπω ‘to give light, shine, beam, to be bright’.

[1.3] S.Tsak. ἀοῦ [aú] vb. ‘to say, speak, talk / λαλῶ, λέγω’, imp. [áli] ‘say! / λέγε’ (Lekos, 1920: p. 67; Pernot, 1934: p. 284; Andriotis, 1992: p. 108; Blažek, 2010: p. 29), cf. Mod. Gk. λαλώ ‘to speak, talk, pipe up, become vocal’ (< Anc. Gk. λαλέω ‘to talk, say; to chat, prattle, babble; to speak’).

[1.4] S.Tsak. ἀπασε m. ‘sorrel / λάπαθο’ (Katsanis, 1989: p. 43) < Gk. Lac. λάπαθος m. ‘sorrel, *Rumex acetosa* L.’.

[1.5] S.Tsak. ἄρνακα m. ‘pool of water’ (Andriotis, 1974: p. 350; Shipp, 1979: p. 358) < Anc. Gk. ἀρναξ f. ‘coffer, box, chest; a cinerary urn; ark’.

[1.6] S.Tsak. [áxana] n. pl. ‘greens, herbs, potherbs / λάχανα’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 50), cf. Anc. Gk. λάχανα n. pl. ‘garden herbs, potherbs, vegetables, greens’.

[1.7] S.Tsak. [όγο], N.Tsak. [lόγο] m. ‘speech / λόγος’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 85) < Anc. Gk. λόγος m. ‘id.’.

[1.8] Tsak. Τσάκωνα m. ‘a man from Tsakonia’, pl. Τσακόννοι ‘Tsakonians’ (Lekos, 1920: p. 87) < Anc. Gk. Λάκων (with the initial element τσ- representing Lac. ἔτιο- ‘true’), cf. Mod. Gk. Λάκωνας m. ‘Laconian’.

[1.9] S.Tsak. [ú^hu], N.Tsak. [lú^hu] vb. ‘to shampoo, wash a head and hair / λούζω’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 83) < Gk. Lac. *λώσκω (< *λορέσκω), cf. Gk. Hom. λοέω, Att. λούω ‘to wash’.

[1.10] S.Tsak. ἀφρία [afřia], [afřía], N.Tsak. λαφρία [lafřía] f. ‘laurel-tree / δάφνη’ (Shipp, 1979: p. 359; Charalampopoulos, 1980: pp. 84, 117) < Late Lac. *λαφρία < Gk. Dor. δάφνᾱ, Att.-Ion. δάφνη f. ‘id.’ (Shipp, 1979:

pp. 359f.; Katsanis, 1989: p. 43)² or perhaps a borrowing from Lat. *laurus* f. ‘laurel-tree’. It should be emphasized, however, that the initial λ- (representing an earlier dental stop *δ-) appeared also in the Pamphylian dialect of Perga, cf. λάφνη · δάφνη. Περγαῖοι (Latte, 1966: p. 576, λ-433).

It should also be stressed that the initial liquid *λ- is preserved before front vowels in Tsakonian (both in the Southern and Northern areas), e.g.

[1.11] Tsak. λεκό [lekó] adj. ‘white’ (Andriotis, 1974: p. 353; Shipp, 1979: p. 361; Blažek, 2010: p. 32) < Anc. Gk. λευκός adj. ‘light, bright, brilliant; white, pale’.

[1.12] Tsak. [lemó] ‘neck, throat’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 45) < Anc. Gk. λαιμός m. ‘id.’.

[1.13] Tsak. λιοῦκο [lýko] ‘wolf’ (Andriotis, 1992: p. 107; Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 141) < Anc. Gk. λύκος ‘id.’.

2. The Tsakonian evidence for the loss of intervocalic *λ.

There are many instances of the loss of the velar (non-palatalized) *λ in intervocalic position, e.g.

[2.1] Tsak. [áoyo], also [áyo] n. ‘horse / ἄλογο’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 121), cf. Mod. Gk. ἄλογο n. ‘id.’.

[2.2] Tsak. ἄτσι [átsʰi] n. ‘salt’ (Lekos, 1920: p. 70; Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 56), cf. Mod. Gk. ἀλάτι n. ‘id.’.

[2.3] Tsak. γᾶ [γá] ‘milk / γάλα’ (Pernot, 1934: p. 337; Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 52) < Anc. Gk. γάλα ‘id.’.

[2.4] Tsak. [γάza] ‘γαλάρια’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 37) < Gk. γαλάρια ‘id.’.

[2.5] Tsak. [jeú] vb. ‘to laugh / γελῶ’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 51) < Anc. Gk. γελάω ‘to laugh’.

[2.6] Tsak. [éate] ‘fir-tree / ἔλατο’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 49).

[2.7] Tsak. [éa] ‘come! / ἔλα’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 84; Blažek, 2010: p. 22).

[2.8] Tsak. θάσσα [θása] f. ‘sea / θάλασσα’, [θasiné] adj. ‘maritime / θαλασσινός’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: pp. 31, 60; Andriotis, 1992: p. 108).

² It is worth emphasizing that the Tsakonian dialect demonstrates the change of [n] to [r] after consonants, cf. Tsak. [ipre] m. ‘sleep’ < ὕπνος; Tsak. [téxra] f. ‘craft, trade, art’ < τέχνη; Tsak. [kripa] f. ‘gnat, midge’ < σκνίπα (Pernot, 1934: p. 19; Shipp, 1979: p. 360; Katsanis, 1989: p. 43).

[2.9] Tsak. [ká] adj. f. ‘good / καλή’, but the masculine form of the same adjective [kale] m. ‘good / καλός’ demonstrates the preserved [I] before a front vowel (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 52; Blažek, 2010: p. 24).

[2.10] Tsak. [kaú] vb. ‘to call, ask, invite / καλῶ’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: pp. 49, 122).

[2.11] Tsak. καοῦρ [kaúr] adv. ‘well’ before vowels, καοῦ [kaú] before consonants < Late Lac. *καλῶρ < Anc. Gk. καλῶς ‘well, rightly, happily’ (Andriotis, 1992: pp. 107f.).

[2.12] Tsak. κυ [kí] ‘hollow, concave / κοῖλος’ (Pernot, 1934: p. 348) < Anc. Gk. κοῖλος adj. ‘hollow, spacious, deep’, Mod. Gk. κοίλος ‘hollow, concave’, Arm. *soyl* ‘cavity’, Alb. *thellë* adj. ‘deep; dark (of colour)’ (Orel, 1998: p. 474; Beekes, 2010: p. 730; Babiniotis, 2011: p. 691).

[2.13] Tsak. κ’ώακα [kʰóaka] m. ‘worm’ (Andriotis, 1974: p. 502; Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 122) < Gk. Lac. σκόλαξ m. ‘worm’, cf. Mod. Gk. σκολήκι n. ‘id.’.

[2.14] Tsak. [máma] n. ‘gold / μάλαμα’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 40).

[2.15] Tsak. [móxa] f. ‘marsh-mallow / μολόχα’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 85).

[2.16] Tsak. [ɲiróji] n. ‘dirge, lamentation, bewailing, funeral song / μοιρολόι’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 51).

[2.17] Tsak. νιοῦ [ɲú] vb. ‘to talk, speak, tell, mention / μιλῶ’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 41; Blažek, 2010: p. 29).

[2.18] S.Tsak. [óa] adj. n. pl. ‘all / ὅλα’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 84). The masculine form of the same adjective [óle] m. sg. ‘all / ὅλος’ shows the preserved [I] before a front vowel (Blažek, 2010: p. 20).

[2.19] Tsak. [páma] f. ‘palm (of the hand), hand / παλάμη’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 27) < Gk. Lac. παλάμᾱ f. ‘palm’.

[2.20] Tsak. παρακαοῦ [parakaú] vb. ‘to ask, beg, request / παρακαλῶ’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 96; Andriotis, 1992: p. 108).

[2.21] Tsak. [péayɔ] m. ‘sea / πέλαγος’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: pp. 27, 122).

[2.22] Tsak. [psená] adj. f. ‘tall, high, lofty / ψηλή’, but [pséli] ‘height / ὕψος’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: pp. 83, 122).

[2.23] Tsak. [psia] f. ‘smooth breathing / ψιλή’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 83).

[2.24] Tsak. [pú] vb. ‘to sell, handle, stock / πουλῶ’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 26).

[2.25] Tsak. τσέα [tséa] f. ‘house / σπίτι’ (Lekos, 1920: p. 88; Charalampopoulos, 1980: pp. 51, 122), cf. Mod. Gk. κέλ(λ)α ‘house’ < Lat. *cella* f. ‘granary, storehouse; chamber, room, hut; chapel’ (Babiniotis, 2011: p.

667). The phoneme [l] in the same noun is regularly preserved before front vowels, cf. gen. sg. [ta tselí] ‘of house / του σπιτιού’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 45).

[2.26] S.Tsak. [tsufá], takže [ts^hufá] f. ‘head / κεφαλή’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: pp. 42, 57), but N.Tsak. τζουφάλα f. ‘head’ (Blažek, 2010: p. 25).

[2.27] Tsak. θιάα, θιά [θiá] f. ‘bottle, flask; gourd / φιάλη; νεροκολόκυθο’ (Lekos, 1920: p. 74; Deffner, 1923: p. 149; Pernot, 1934: p. 347; Andriotis, 1974: p. 581; Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 83; Kostakis, 1987: p. 304) < Gk. Lac. φιάλā f. ‘a broad, flat vessel, bowl’.

[2.28] Tsak. [xázi] n. ‘hail / χαλάζι’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 38).

[2.29] Tsak. [xaú] vb. ‘to spoil, ruin, waste, damage / χαλώ’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: pp. 49, 122).

[2.30] Tsak. [çeúna] f. ‘tortoise, turtle / χελώνα’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 51) < Gk. Lac. χελώνā f. ‘tortoise’.

It is worth emphasizing that the intervocalic liquid *-l- is preserved before front vowels in Tsakonian (both in the Southern and Northern area), e.g.

[2.31] Tsak. [θilía] f. ‘friendship / φιλία’ (Deffner, 1923: p. 149; Charalampopoulos, 1980: pp. 42, 83).

[2.32] Tsak. κάλε [kále] n. ‘wood’ (Lekos, 1920: p. 76), also [káli] ‘id.’ (dimin. καλί [kalí] n. ‘twig, piece of wood’) < Lac. Gk. κᾶλον n. ‘wood’, dimin. *κᾶλιον n. ‘small piece of wood’ Andriotis, 1974: p. 292; Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 45; Liosis, 2014: p. 446).

[2.33] Tsak. μάλι [máli] n. ‘apple’ < Dor. Gk. μᾶλον n. ‘id.’, cf. Mod. Gk. μήλο n. ‘apple’ (Liosis, 2014: p. 446).

[2.34] Tsak. μέλι [méli] n. ‘honey’ (Pernot, 1934: p. 361).

[2.35] Tsak. σηλυκό [silikó] n. ‘woman’ (Katsanis, 1989: p. 42), cf. Mod. Gk. θηλυκό n. ‘woman, female’, θηλυκό adj. ‘female, feminine’.

3. The loss of *λ in some consonant clusters.

The liquid λ was also lost in Tsakonian as the second (or the first) member of some clusters, especially after certain stop consonants (β, π, φ, χ), e.g.

[3.1] Tsak. [váxo] m. ‘roving shepherd / βλάχος’ (Deffner, 1923: p. 72; Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 85).

[3.2] Tsak. [súɣa] f. ‘roasting-jack, spit, skewer / σούβλα’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 50).

[3.3] Tsak. [témba] n. pl. ‘icon screens / τέμπλα’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 66).

[3.4] Tsak. [páka] f. ‘joke / πλάκα’, [rátse] ‘jokes / πλάκες’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: pp. 68; 59, 66).

[3.5] Tsak. [dípa] ‘beside, near, close by / δίπλα’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 27).

[3.6] Tsak. [cifa] f. ‘blindness / τύφλα’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 50).

[3.7] Tsak. [fozía] n. pl. ‘florins / φλωριά’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 37).

[3.8] Tsak. [xora] n. pl. ‘tender shoots / χλωρά’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 85).

[3.9] Tsak. [múxa] f. ‘mould, mildew / μούχλα’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: pp. 50, 85).

[3.10] Tsak. aθí [aθí], also aθír [aθír], aρθír [arθír] m. ‘brother / ἀδελφός’ (Hatzidakis, 1929: p. 44; Pernot, 1934: p. 311) < Late Lac. ἀδελφιήρ m. ‘brother’ (cf. the Hesychian gloss ἀδελφιήρ · ἀδελφός, Λάκωνες) < Anc. Gk. ἀδελφεός ‘id.’.

4. The Hesychian evidence.

In my opinion, the Tsakonian loss of the liquid phoneme *λ [l] in initial and medial positions should be treated as a Late Laconian archaism, and not a modern “innovation”. The same phonological process, which is attested in Tsakonian, seems to be registered as early as in the ancient times. Hesychius of Alexandria, the well known Greek grammarian who created the richest lexicon of rare and unusual words by the end of the 5th century AD (Berkowitz, & Squitier, 1990: p. 199), gives two examples of the liquid *λ disappearing both initially and medially.

[4.1] The Hesychian gloss κοῖα · τὰ κοῖλα (Latte, 1966: p. 497) undoubtedly demonstrates the loss of the liquid phoneme */ (Gk. λ) in intervocalic position³. The phenomenon should be treated as Late Laconian. The same process is attested in the Tsakonian dialect, which is a modern descendant of Late Laconian, cf. [2.12] Tsak. κυ [ki] adj. ‘hollow; concave / κοῖλος’ (Pernot 1934: 348) < Late Lac. *κοῖος < Anc. Gk. κοῖλος adj. ‘hollow, spacious, deep’, cf. also Mod. Gk. κοῖλος adj. ‘hollow, concave’.

[4.2] The loss of the initial liquid *λ is perfectly attested in the Hesychian gloss ἀχανά · κλήματα, literally ‘vine-twigs, vine-branches’ (Schmidt, 1858: p. 342; Latte, 1953: p. 298; Adrados, 1991: p. 652; Liddell, & Scott,

³ Schmidt (1860: p. 502) gives a different reading of the lemma: κοῖ · τὰ κοῖλα. This alternative reading also matches Tsak. κυ [ki] adj. ‘hollow; concave / κοῖλος’ very well.

1996: p. 295). The editors have introduced the oxytone stress into the lemma⁴, but the proparoxytone accent (*ἄχανα*) seems to be better founded, as the same term appears in the Modern Greek vocabulary as the South Tsakonian appellative *ἄχανα* [áxana] n. pl. ‘greens, herbs, potherbs / *λάχανα*’ (Charalampopoulos, 1980: p. 50), cf. above [1.6]. Both the Hesychian form and the Tsakonian noun derive evidently from Anc. Gk. *λάχανα* n. pl. ‘garden herbs, potherbs, vegetables, greens’.

The lexicon of Hesychius contains two evident examples which demonstrate the loss of the liquid phoneme *λ both initially and medially. As the same phonological process is only attested in the Tsakonian dialect of Modern Greek, which is commonly regarded as a descendant of the Laconian dialect of Ancient Greek, we should conclude that the two Hesychian glosses in question represent Late Laconian (proto-Tsakonian) terms.

Conclusions.

The final results can thus be summed up as follows:

[1] According to Andriotis (1992: p. 108), the regular loss of *λ in intervocalic position belongs to the basic Tsakonian “innovations”.

[2] The disappearance of the initial phoneme *λ [l] is a specific feature of South Tsakonian and Propontic Tsakonian, but North Tsakonian preserves it.

[3] The chronology of the disappearance of the liquid [l] in Tsakonian is unknown, but the name of the Tsakonians, attested in historical sources as early as the 10th century AD (Const. Porph., *De caer.* II 49: Τζέκωνες), seems to demonstrate an early decay of *λ, if the modern ethnic name Τσάκωνες really derives from the ancient tribal name of the Laconians (Anc. Gk. Λάκωνες).

[4] Two examples of an early disappearance of *λ are registered in the Ancient Greek lexicon compiled by Hesychius of Alexandria (5th century AD).

[5] The Hesychian gloss κοῖα · τὰ κοῖλα shows the loss of the liquid phoneme *λ in intervocalic position. The lemma κοῖα should be compared with Tsak. κυ [ki] adj. ‘hollow; concave’, whereas the explaining word (κοῖλα) refers evidently to Mod. Gk. κοίλος ‘id.’.

⁴ The accentual evidence in the manuscripts of Hesychius is notoriously unreliable, as Kurt Latte himself makes clear in his introduction (Latte, 1953: pp. XXVII f.). In some cases it is better to introduce the stress attested in the literary koiné, as well as in the Modern Greek dialects (including Tsakonian).

[6] The other gloss, ἀχανά (recte ἄχανα) · κλήματα, appears to be the ancestor of the South Tsakonian appellative ἄχανα [áxana] n. pl. ‘greens, herbs, potherbs’ (< Anc. Gk. λάχανα ‘id.’). In my opinion, the tendency to drop the initial phoneme *λ must have arisen in the Late Laconian dialect before the 5th century AD.

[7] The above-mentioned lexical data, taken from the glossary by Hesychius of Alexandria, demonstrate clearly that the Tsakonian “innovation” appeared as early as in ancient (pre-Byzantine) times. The decay of *λ had to be productive in the Late Laconian dialect in the 5th century AD or even earlier.

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