Azov Greek in a typological perspective

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Abstract

Greek settlers came to the Azov Sea region from the Crimea in the late 18th century. They founded the city of Mariupol and numerous villages around it. In the Crimea, urban Greeks spoke Greek-Tatar (so-called Urum), a dialect of Crimean Tatar, while Greeks from the villages could speak both Urum and their native Greek dialect *Ruméjka*. There were Urum and *Ruméjka* speakers among the migrants to the Azov Sea region. It seems that they never lived together in the Crimea, and they kept this tradition after they moved to the Azov Sea as well.

Greek dialect of the Azov Sea region (*Ruméjka* or Azov Greek) gathered much attention both from Russian/Soviet and European (mostly German and Greek) scholars. Perhaps, the most discussed problem was the origin of *Ruméjka*. There are two well-known hypotheses that usually migrate from paper to paper when *Ruméjka* is mentioned: this dialect is considered either a Pontic or a Northern Greek one.

The main goal of this paper is to demonstrate that *Ruméjka* should be described from a typological point of view and may be easily compared with other Modern Greek dialects. There is no doubt that Azov Greek will provide valuable information for linguistic cartography and classification of Modern Greek dialects. This paper is based on field research data which were collected in various Greek-speaking villages around the city of Mariupol (Ukraine) in 2003–2005.

Keywords: Modern Greek dialects, Azov Greek, *Ruméjka*, dialect enclaves, dialect classifications

1. Preliminary remarks

Modern Greek dialectology is a relatively new domain. It appeared in the 19th century mostly as an attempt to find Ancient Greek features in Modern Greek dialects[1] and analysis of these features seems to be relevant even today (Tzitzilis 2013). However, the most important task of the Modern Greek dialectology is typological and comparative study of the dialects. Although this task was thoroughly discussed and multiple approaches were proposed especially during the last 50 years (cf. Newton 1972; Kontosopoulos 2001; Trudgill 2003; Ralli 2006), and even new digital technologies were successfully implemented (Ralli 2015), we still lack reliable data on many dialects and believe some old ideas (false or not) that are constantly repeated from paper to paper without any serious attempt to reassess them. This is true both for certain dialects inside Greece like Tsakonian, for example, which is traditionally described as a totally unique dialect, and for some Modern Greek dialects outside Greece.

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[1] According to a witty remark by Evangelinus Sophocles (1860: 299), "Now whenever a classical scholar goes to Greece to find Dorians and Ionians, it is ten to one but that he succeeds in finding Dorians and Ionians. <…> He lays much stress upon coincidences, but disregards differences".

In this article I intend to describe several features in Azov Greek by means of the criteria that are generally used to classify Modern Greek dialects. Besides, I am going to provide general information on Azov Greek and its subdialectal varieties. This paper is based on the fieldwork data from the expeditions of 2003–2005 organized by Saint-Petersburg University (for most important results of this research cf. Kisilier (ed.) 2009).

2. General information

2.1 Speakers of Azov Greek

Azov Greek is one of the dialectal varieties of Modern Greek spoken in several villages (probably 17) around Mariupol (Donetsk region, Ukraine). Before the 1780s, the speakers of the dialect lived in the Crimea. We do not have any safe information about their origin. Probably, some of the Crimean Greeks could be descendants of the first Ancient Greek settlers, but there must have been several waves of immigration during the Middle Ages, so it is impossible to find out now which regions they came from. Evidently, still in the Crimea, appeared the ethnonym *Rúmej*(*s*). It originates from Ῥωμαῖος 'citizen of the Byzantine empire', and as a result the dialect was called *Ruméjka* (= Rum.)[2]. The both exist until today.

Due to the Tartar influence, some Crimean Greeks changed their language to Crimean Tatar and this Greek Tatar-speaking minority adopted terms *Rúmej*(*s*) and *Ruméjka* according to a Turkic pattern. Thus, emerged the ethnonym *Urum*, and subsequently Tatar Greek (the dialect of Crimean Tatar) was called *Urum* (*dili*). Urum speakers mostly lived in towns (that is why they were also known as *bazariot*, i. e. 'town dweller', cf. Rum. *bazár* 'town'). Despite the language change, Tatar-speaking Urums remained orthodox. It seems that in the Crimea, Rumeic and Urum minorities never lived together in the same villages. One could suppose that Urums in general were more cultured and educated than the Greek-speaking population of the Crimea.

Since 1774, the Crimea became Russian protectorate, and in 1783, it was added to Russia. According to the official version, Greek orthodox community of the Crimea wrote a letter to the empress Catherine the Great (1729–1796) and asked her to let them move to the area between the Dnieper and its tributaries the Samara and the Oril. Russian government was also interested in this migration, because it wanted to populate the Azov steppe and to deprive Tatars of the space for their attacks. This project was so important that from the Russian side it was controlled by the lieutenant-general Alexander Suvorov (1730–1800) who is considered the best Russian military leader. Most migrants were the youngest sons with their families who could not hope to inherit any property in the Crimea. They were both from Rumeic and Urum minorities. As in the Crimea, Greek-speaking and Tatar-speaking Greeks would not live together after they moved to the Azov Sea region. Both communities brought some Crimean toponyms with them: Yalta, Urzuf and Eski Qırım (= Staryi Krym), etc.

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[2] This kind of ethnonym and language designation are typical for Greek-speaking communities. For example, speakers of Pontic in the USSR frequently called their dialect *Roméjka*, while the Greek-speaking minority of Uzungöl near Trabzon (Turkey) uses the term *Rumca* for their Pontic dialect.

Until 2014, Azov Greek was spoken in 17 villages around Mariupol. In some of them (Maloyanisol) it was widely used and one could really hope that a younger generation would speak it someday (cf. Gromova 2009). In more touristic ones (Yalta), most respondents could recall just a few separate words. The current situation in the region is unknown because of the military conflict in Donbass.

2.2 Dialect

The Greek dialect of Azov Greeks does not have a single (generally accepted) name: along with *Azov Greek* it is also known as *Greek dialect of Mariupol*, *Mariupol Greek*, *Meotian Greek*, *Crimean Greek* and *Tauro-Roumeic*.[3] In this paper, I am going to use terms *Ruméjka* as it is widely spread within the community and *Azov Greek*.

Not much is really known about the history of *Ruméjka*. The problem of its dialectal attribution will be discussed later (section 3.1), but we may be almost sure that already in the Crimea existed a kind of a Tatar-Greek bilingualism. Crimean Tatar was more prestigious, that is why Urums were always monolingual, while most Greek-speaking Greeks were bilingual because Urum (Crimean Tatar) became the language of the state, trade and communication between different local ethnic groups. After the migration to the region of Mariupol, the situation did not radically change probably for about a century, and it resulted in multiple lexical borrowings from Urum (Crimean Tatar), for example:

(1)   *ajrán* 'ayran, doogh'
       burán/bran 'storm'
       vaxt 'happiness'
       ɣaríp 'poor'
       dugúʃ 'war'
       jardím 'help'
       kuvát/xuvát/xvat 'strength'
       xizmét 'destiny, happiness'
       d͡ʒanavár 'wolf'

Urum influence is not found in phonetics, morphology or syntax at least in modern *Ruméjka*. It could have disappeared with the increase of the impact of Russian in the 1850s. Still, Turkic phonetic, morphological or syntactic features cannot be traced in folklore texts as well. Since the mid-1860s, there were no more classes in Greek and all schools became Russian (Animitsa & Kisilier 2009: 33). The influence of Russian appeared to be much stronger than the Urum one, although in 2004, I happened to find several old women in the village of Maloyanisol whose L1 was definitely *Ruméjka* but not Russian. One of them could not even speak Russian and hardly understood it. Recently, their appeared a new pattern to adopt Russian verbs in *Ruméjka*: verb *kámu* 'to do' with a Russian infinitive:

(2)   *kámu ʒáritʲ* 'I roast' (from Russian /ʒáritʲ/'to roast')
       kámu t͡ʃìtátʲ 'I read' (from Russian /t͡ʃìtátʲ/ 'to read')

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[3] Sometimes in Russian it is also named *élʲinskij jazík* 'the Hellenic language'.

This pattern has become very popular because it helps to speak *Ruméjka* with less Azov Greek vocabulary. However, local poets and cultured people try to avoid it in their speech.

2.2.1 Phonetics

It is not possible to provide here even a brief overview of Azov Greek phonetics, so I am going to describe only some peculiarities that are important for this paper.[4]
Probably the most typical feature of Azov Greek vowels is a high vowel loss, i. e.

    (i)   unstressed /i/ is deleted: *spitʲ* ʻhouse' *vs.* M[odern]G[reek] σπίτι /spít**i**/;
    (ii)   unstressed /u/ disappears: *pli* 'bird' *vs.* MG πουλί /po**u**lí/;
    (iii)   unstressed /e/ is raised to /i/: *piðíts* 'child, guy' *vs.* MG παιδί /p**i**ðí/;
    (iv)   unstressed /o/ is raised to /u/: *kur͡tsíts* 'girl' *vs.* MG κορίτσι /k**o**rítsi/

The loss of unstressed /u/ and the transformation of unstressed /o/ into /u/ does not happen in all subdialects (cf. 2.2.4).
Another important feature of *Ruméjka* vocalism is that unlike in Standard Modern Greek, there is no glide formation, i. e. /ía/ does not turn into /já/:

   (3)   *pulía* 'birds' *vs.* MG πουλιά /pul**ʲá**/
          piðía 'children, guys' *vs.* MG παιδιά /peð**ʲá**/

This phenomenon is found in all local varieties of Azov Greek. Consonants also demonstrate some peculiarities, but here it will be important to note just one of them — the palatalization:

   (4)   *maʃér* 'knife' *vs.* MG μαχαίρι /ma**x**éri/
          ʃumkéʃu 'winter' (adjective) *vs.* MG χειμωνιάτικος /**x**imonʲátikos/

2.2.2 Morphology

Azov Greek morphology demonstrates simplification in comparison with the Standard Modern Greek. For example, the article in plural hardly reflects the gender of the noun: ***ta balájða*** 'children' (neuter), ***ta fíʃnis*** 'cherries' (feminine), and generally there is no genitive:

	Masculine	**Feminine**
NOM	*t áθerpus* 'man'	*t arníθ* 'hen'
ACC	*tun áθerpu*	*t arníθ*

Table 1: Declension in singular

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[4] For detailed analysis of Azov Greek phonetics with a relevant bibliography cf. (Nikolaenkova 2009).

Probably, it is even possible to regard the cases in *Ruméjka* not as nominative and accusative, but as direct and indirect cases (cf. Viktorova 2009: 198f). However, there are several ways to express attributive meaning if two nouns are involved, for example, by means of a preposition (5a) or adjunction (5b):[5]

(5) a. *faí*   *an*   *du*   *kréjas*
         soup   with   DEF   meat
         'meat soup'

     b. *t͡sibérka*   *niró*
         bucket   water
         'bucket of water'

There also exists a special attributive form:

(6) a. *áθerp-**u***   *laxardí*   (*áθerpus* 'man')
         man-ATTR   speech
         'human speech'

     b. *níxta-**s***   *pli*   (*níxta* 'night')
         night-ATTR   bird
         'night bird'

The attributive forms definitely make use of genitive flexions: *-u* in masculine (6a) and *-s* or *-as* in feminine (6b),[6] cf. Modern Greek genitives *ανθρώπου* /anθrópu/ 'man' and *νύχτας* /níxtas/ 'night'. It seems that only some nouns in *Ruméjka* have attributive forms.

In verb morphology, there are neither perfect nor pluperfect.[7]

2.2.3 Syntax

Azov Greek syntax in general is deeply influenced by the Russian language. Thus, the most frequent word order is SVO. Table 2 provides some quantitative data from the interviews taken in Maloyanisol in 2003.[8]

SVO	SOV	OVS	OSV	VOS	VSO	SV	VS	VO	OV
41	13	2	5	3	3	86	21	127	38

Table 2: Azov Greek word order (Kisilier 2009: 375)

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[5] Examples (5) and (6) are from (Viktorova 2009: 204–205).

[6] From the point of view of the historical dialectology, it would be more correct, perhaps, to write *níxt-as*. There are other attributive flexions in *Ruméjka* as well; for a more detailed analysis cf. (Mertyris & Kisilier 2017).

[7] Current state of Azov Greek verb morphology is thoroughly described in (Kuznetsova 2009).

[8] Several interviews were published in (Kisilier (ed) 2009: 406–411).

In folklore and literary texts (created after the Soviet revolution of 1917), the situation may be completely different, but the grammar and word order of these texts were not based on contemporary Azov Greek morphological and syntactic patterns. The oldest songs belonged the tradition that already existed in the Crimea and probably was brought there from elsewhere, while the "newborn" literature in *Ruméjka* either had Demotic Greek as a sample or followed the model of the Russian literature (cf. Kisilier 2017).

Like in Russian, Pro-Drop in *Ruméjka* is not obligatory and the use of pronominal subject is nor emphasized:[9]

(7) *γo kamía=pa*   *t͡ʃì=ðájna   s-u   skólʲa*
     I   never=EMPH   NEG=went   in-DEF   school
     'I have never gone to school'[10]

However, there is some difference between *Ruméjka* and Russian. In some Azov Greek examples, verb flexions do not provide enough information on the subject:

(8) *mis   ayórasam   miskárʲ   ki   na=tu=páγu-**m**   as   spitʲ*
     We   bought   calf   and FUT=it=go-1PL.ACT   in   house

     *na=tu=páγa-**mit͡s**   as   spitʲ*
     FUT=it=go-1PL.PASS   in   house
     'We bought a calf, and we shall take it home. We shall take it home'

In (8), the same verb is repeated twice in the same meaning, though morphologically the first time it is active (*páγu-**m***) and the second time it is passive (*páγa-**mit͡s***). However, the form *páγu-**m*** is treated as active plural only because of the pronominal subject mis (and verb *ayórasam*). Otherwise, one could understand it as singular passive (1 person). Thus, Pro-Drop in *Ruméjka* is possible only if any element in the phrase indicates the subject along with the verb flexion, like *mas* 'us' in (9):

(9) *íðam   tun   aplóγu=**mas***
     we.saw DEF.SG.ACC   RECP=us
     'we saw **our**selves'

Unlike Russian, *Ruméjka* has resumptive pronouns. However, they are not used the same way as in Standard Modern Greek. Analysis of their usage may be found in (Borisova 2009), but here I would like to mention just one peculiarity. In Standard Modern Greek, a clitic pronoun may refer to a stressed pronoun and it provides extra emphasis to a non-clitic pronominal object:

(10) *εσένα   δεν σου άξιζε αγάπη*
     eséna   ðen=**su**=áksize   aγápi

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[9] Analysis of the same interviews of 2003 demonstrates that pronominal subject is used 189 times and omitted only in 40 examples (Kisilier 2009: 378).

[10] The particle *pa* is not described here. Some information on its semantics and usage is available in (Kisilier 2009: 385–388).

you.NNOM NEG=you.GEN=deserved love
'you did not deserve love'

In *R>Ruméjka*, two clitic pronouns may be used instead:

(11)   ***mas=lúzni=mas***
        us=they.bathe=us
        'they are bathing us'

I believe that examples like (11) show that

(i)   semantic and morphological difference between strong and clitic pronouns
        is disappearing;
(ii)   pronominal resumption in *Ruméjka* has nothing to do with emphasis.

Another special feature of *Ruméjka* also deals with pronominal syntax. Clitic pronouns
mostly follow the verb and even finite forms:[11]

(12)   *éklepsʲis=**mi***
        you.stole=me
        'you have stolen **me**'

However, *Ruméjka* tends to create clitic clusters, i. e. if there is any modal particle in
front of the verb, it always attracts a clitic pronoun to an adjacent position:

(13)   **na=mi=ta**=xánu
        SBJV=NEG=it.PL=lose
        '…so that I would not lose them'

2.2.4 Subdialectal variation

First serious linguistic descriptions of *Ruméjka* (Sokolov 1930: 63–64; Spiridonov
1930: 176) distinguish five local varieties on the basis of their difference from Demotic
Greek. These subdialects differ in vocabulary, phonetics and morphology, for example:

(i)   lexical: negator *ðen* (cf. MG *δεν* /ðen/) is used in Urzuf, Yalta and Sartana,
        while *t͡ʃi* (< A[ncient]G[reek] *οὐκ* /uk/) in Maloyanisol; *ðu* 'see' (cf. MG
        δω /ðo/) in Sartana *vs.* *ðranú* in Maloyanisol; *iraníðʲ* 'crane' in Sartana *vs.*
        xaz in Cherdakli
(ii)   loss of unstressed /u/: *ʃumukéʃu* 'winter' (adjective) in Sartana *vs.* *ʃumkéʃu*
        in Maloyanisol
(iii)   morphological: verb flexions *lustún* 'they bathe' in Sartana *vs.* *lúʃkni* in
        Maloyanisol

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[11] According to the quantitative data from the interviews of 2003, clitic pronoun precedes the verb
23 times, but follows 50 (Kisilier 2009: 375).

A more detailed analysis shows that some local variants can be discovered within one subdialect. Thus, the subdialect of Malayanisol (or *Xaraxlótku* in *Ruméjka*[12]) is spoken in the villages Maloyanisol and Cherdakli, but some phonetic features in the both villages are not the same: ***tk**an* 'shop' in Maloyanisol *vs.* **t͡ʃ**an in Cherdakli (with palatalization). Unfortunately, these varieties are not described well enough, so it is difficult to decide whether the current classification of Azov Greek subdialects should be reassessed.

3. Azov Greek and Modern Greek dialectology

3.1 Theories about the origin of Azov Greek

In his famous description of the dialect of Lesbos, Paul Kretschmer (1905: 18) suddenly mentioned Azov Greek. He supposed that Azov Greek was either one of Pontic or one of Northern dialects. Both hypotheses may have their pros and cons.

3.1.1 Azov Greek and Pontic

Kretschmer believed that *Ruméjka* could be a Pontic dialect because the both have palatalization:

(14)   Pontic *ʃer* 'hand'[13] *vs.* MG *χέρι /xéri/*, cf. (4)

One could add other Pontic phonetic peculiarities that are relevant for Azov Greek:

(i)   absence of glide formation in /ía/ (≯ /já/): *karðía* 'heart', cf. (3)
(ii)   loss of unstressed /u/ and /i/: *γráftne* 'they write' (Eloeva 2004: 82) *vs.* MG γράφ**ου**ν /γráf**u**n/ and *ʃer vs.* MG χέρ**ι** /xér**i**/ cf. 2.2.1

Pontic origin of Azov Greek was also discussed in (Symeonidis & Tompaidis 1999: 133–139). This paper provides the whole list of common features between Pontic and Ruméjka, like verb flexions, negations, particles, prepositions, vocabulary and even multiple expressions. Although this hypothesis seems very attractive, it has several counterpoints. For example:

(i)   Pontic has /e:/ that derives from AG /e:/ (η): *éton* 'he was' *vs.* *ítun* in *Ruméjka*
(ii)   Pontic preserves AG /-n/: *ðéndro**n*** 'tree' *vs.* *ðéndro* in *Ruméjka*
(iii)   in Pontic 'what' is *ndo*, while in *Ruméjka* 'what' is *ti*, cf. 3.2

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[12] In *Ruméjka*, village Maloyanisol is called *Xaráxla*.
[13] Pontic examples without bibliographical references are taken from the archive of the Hellenic institute in St. Petersburg (http://hellenicinstitute.ru). These data were collected in 1989–1995 by Fatima Eloeva in Georgia and in Pontic community in Leningrad/St. Petersburg, in 2014 by Vladimir Panov in Adygea (Russia), and in 2016 by Maxim Kisilier in Athens.

(iv)   in Pontic objective clitic pronoun can only follow the verb: *a=traɣuðó=se*
<FUT=I.sing=you.ACC> 'I shall sing **you**', while in *Ruméjka* in some
certain prosodic environment it may precede the verb, cf. |(13)

It seems that *Ruméjka* could be in contact with Pontic, because in 1826, Greeks from
Asia Minor came to the region and settled in the village Anadol (Animitsa & Kisilier
2009: 31).

3.1.2 Azov Greek and Northern Greek dialects[14]

The main reason to regard *Ruméjka* as a Northern Greek dialect is a high vowel loss
which is generally considered the most famous peculiarity of Northern Greek dialects,
cf. 2.2.1:

(15)   a.   *kti* 'box' *vs.* MG κουτί /k**u**tí/
      b.   *pθar* 'jug' *vs.* MG πιθάρι /p**i**θár**i**/
      c.   *féniti* 'it seems' *vs.* MG φαίνεται /fén**e**t**e**/
      d.   *kutóplu* 'hen' *vs.* MG κοτόπουλο /k**o**tóp**u**l**o**/

Besides, both in *Ruméjka* (16a) and Northern Greek (16b), genitive is not used for
indirect object:

(16)   a.   *ɣo   ípa=**tun***
          I   told=he.ACC
          'I told **him**'
      b.   *ána   **tin**=ípi   **tin**   **mitér-a**=tis*
          Ann   she.ACC=told   DEF.ACC.SG   mother-NGEN.SG=her
          'Ann told her **mother**'

However, it seems that Northern Greek makes much wider use of genitive than
Ruméjka, cf. (6):

(17)   *piðí   ðéka   **xrun-ón***
      child   ten   year-GEN.PL
      '10-year-old child'

Unlike *Ruméjka*, cf. (12), clitic object pronoun in Northern Greek is placed according
the same pattern as in Standard Modern Greek, i. e. it precedes finite verb forms:

(18)   *o   pétrus   **ti**=lipáti*
      DEF.M.SG   Peter   she.ACC=feels.sorry
      'Peter feels sorry **for her**'

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[14] Examples from Northern Greek are taken from the archive of the Minor Dialect Atlas of the
Balkan languages (Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (the
Kunstkamera), Russian Academy of Sciences). The data were collected in Eratyra (Western
Macedonia, Greece) in 1998–2000 by Andrey Sobolev, Anna Borisova, Tatiana Zajkovskaya,
Vitaly Zajkovskij and Yuri Lopashov.

3.2 Azov Greek and other Modern Greek dialects

Classification of Modern Greek dialects still remains a problem despite two major attempts by Brian Newton (1972) and Peter Trudgill (2003). They took into account only phonetic and phonological dialect features and did not try to classify Modern Greek dialects outside Greece and Cyprus (and partly Asia Minor). Nikos Kontosopoulos (2001) and Angella Ralli (2006) made an important effort to expand the list of dialects involved into classification and to use morphological, morphosyntactic and syntactic parameters as well. There is still a long way to go and to implement modern technologies like interdialectal databases (Ralli 2015) and dialect corpora (Arkhangelskiy, Kisilier & Plungian 2018), but even now it is possible to sort out a range of criteria which cover phenomena from different linguistic levels in order to compare several dialects or groups of dialects. For the present study, I have chosen 14 dialectal features from phonetics, morphology/morphosyntax, syntax and vocabulary:

(i)   high vowel loss, cf. 2.2.1 and (15);
(ii)   geminate consonants: *γrámma* 'letter' (Southeastern dialects) *vs. γráma* (*Ruméjka*);
(iii)   glide formation /ía/ > /já/, cf. (3) and 3.1.1;
(iv)   preservation of Ancient Greek /e/ (< /e:/), cf. 3.1.1;
(v)   loss of intervocalic /-v-/, /-ð-/, /-γ-/: *láin* 'oil' (Southeastern dialects) *vs. laðʲ* (*Ruméjka*), *fóos* 'fear' (Southeastern dialects) *vs. fóvus* (*Ruméjka*), *máos* 'magician' *vs. máγus* (*Ruméjka*);
(vi)   final /-n/ retention, cf. 3.1.1;
(vii)   dissimilation of a fricative and a plosive: *avgón* 'egg' (Southeastern dialects) *vs. avγó* (*Ruméjka*);
(viii) epenthesis of /γ/ in verbs that end with -εύω /-évo/: *ðulévγo* 'to work' (Southeastern dialects) *vs. ðulévu* (*Ruméjka*);
(ix)   palatalization, cf. (4) and (14);
(x)   tsitakism: *t͡si* 'what' (Tsakonian) *vs. ti* (*Ruméjka*);
(xi)   interrogative pronoun 'what', cf. 3.1.1;
(xii)   use of accusative instead of genitive, cf. (16);
(xiii) clitic pronoun usually follows the verb, cf. (12), 3.1.1;
(xiv)   preposition of a clitic pronoun is caused by prosodic environment, cf. (13)

These features proved to be the most reliable, because they can be supported with relevant examples from several dialects or groups of dialects, cf. Table 3:

	Azov Greek	Peloponnes.-Ionian	Northern Greek	Old Athenian	Cretan	Southeastern	Tsakonian	Cappadocian	Griko	Pontic
High vowel loss	+	−	+	−	−	−	−	$^+/_-$	$^+/_-$	$^+/_-$
Geminate consonants	−	−	−	−	−	+	−	−	+	−
/ía/ > /já/	−	+	+	−	+	+	+	+	$^+/_-$	−
AG /e/	−	−	−	−	−	−	+	−	−	+
Loss of intervocalic /-v-/, /-ð-/, /-γ-/	−	−	−	−	−	+	−	?	?	−
Final /-n/	−	−	−	−	−	+	−	+	$^+/_-$	+
/vγ/ > /vg/	−	−	−	−	−?	+	−	?	?	−
Epenthesis of /γ/ in /évo/	−	−	$^-/_+$	$^-/_+$	+	+	−	$^+/_-$	−	+
Palatalization	−	$^+/_-$	+	+	+	+	−?	+	+	+
Tsitakism	−	−	$^-/_+$	+	+	+	+	−	+	$^+/_-$
'what' is *ti*	+	+	+	+	−	−	+	+?	+	−
Accusative instead of genitive	+	−	+	$^-/_+$	−	−	$^+/_-$	+	−	+
Clitic pronoun usually follows the verb	+	−	−	−	+?	+	−	+	−	+
Preposition of a clitic pronoun is caused by prosody	+	−	−	−	+?	+	−	+	−	−

Table 3: Azov Greek and Modern Greek dialects

Table 3 shows that *Ruméjka* has multiple common features not only with Northern Greek and Pontic, but with other Modern Greek dialects as well. Syntactically and prosodically, it is very close to Cappadocian. There are also enough similarities with Cretan. According to Tatiana Chernysheva (1958: 3), Greeks in the village Yalta used to say:

(19)   *lej*   *kritiká*
       he.speaks   Cretan

when they meant that someone was speaking *Ruméjka*, but certainly this fact should be treated as a serious indication of the Cretan origin of Azov Greek.

4. Concluding Remarks

There is no doubt that Azov Greek is one of the Modern Greek dialects. Although for several centuries it existed as an enclave language in contact at first with Crimean Tatar and then with Russian, the impact of these languages is not so strong as one could have expected. Unfortunately, the present state of historical Greek dialectology does not make it possible to find out the origin of *Rum_éjka*. So, we have just to content with several hypotheses, and neither of them cannot by fully accepted. However, for a typological study in the frame of a synchronic approach the origin of Azov Greek does not seem so important. The comparison of *Rum_éjka* with other Modern Greek dialects demonstrates that (almost?) all Azov Greek particularities have parallels elsewhere in Greek-speaking world. Moreover, it becomes evident that modern *Rum_éjka* should not be included in any of currently known groups of Modern Greek dialects. On the basis of my research, I am inclined to support the opinion of the Soviet linguists (Sergievskij 1934: 585; Beletskij 1969: 13) who suggested that *Rum_éjka* should be treated as special unit among other Modern Greek dialects. I think we may consider it a mixed-type dialect. However, it requires a more thorough and more detailed comparative analysis.

Acknowledgements

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