

1 Introduction

As is well known (Casali 1997, 1998), hiatus, the juxtaposition of heterosyllabic vowels (V_1V_2), is disfavored in many languages. At the same time, creation of hiatus by the addition of vowel-initial suffixes to vowel-final stems is extremely common. As a result, many languages display strategies for resolving hiatus at stem boundary, among them truncation of V_1 or V_2 , coalescence of V_1 and V_2 , and epenthesis of a consonant between V_1 and V_2 .

In Standard Modern Greek (SMG), two distinct hiatus-resolution strategies, truncation of V_1 and epenthesis of *ð*, compete with each other in the inflection of non-neuter nouns.¹ These two strategies are illustrated in (1) and (2), respectively, where the suffixes *-s* and *-es* realize N Sg m and N/A Pl m/f for the relevant declension classes (unless otherwise indicated, lexical information is from the online version of the Triantafyllidis Dictionary, Institute of Modern Greek Studies (1998) (below, DSMG)).²

- (1) a. *nikití-s* ‘victor’
 b. *nikit-és* ‘id. (pl.)’
- (2) a. *ganomatí-s* ‘tinker’
 b. *ganomatí-ð-es* ‘id. (pl.)’

In this paper, I propose that, of these two hiatus resolution strategies, *ð*-epenthesis constitutes the default option, in particular for masculine nouns. On that proposal, while *ð*-epenthesis will be subject to no lexical restriction, truncation will be limited to stems marked, either individually or as the result of redundancy rules of more or less generality, to undergo it. Below, after a brief and selective introduction to SMG nominal inflection in section 2, I present in section 3 the evidence that *ð*-epenthesis is the default hiatus reduction strategy in the inflection of masculine nouns. Then, in section 4, I ask how the default status of *ð*-epenthesis can be accounted for. The proposal to be made there will depend crucially on the epenthetic consonant being introduced intermorphemically, thus belonging to the morphological word without belonging to any of its constituents.

2 Modern Greek nominal inflection: background

MG nouns can be classified into declension-types by the inflectional endings they take, by gender, by the identity of the stem-final vowel, and by position of accent. A maximally differentiated system like that of the DSMG identifies 53 declensional patterns, along with 13 additional subtypes. More typical classifications abstract away from accentual and stem vowel variation and take advantage of the fact that sets of nominal inflectional endings are for the most part gender-specific. Ralli (2000), for example, distinguishes eight main declensions; of these, four are limited to neuter nouns, two to feminines, and one to masculines. The remaining declension (below, following Ralli, “Class 1”), corresponding to the non-neuter thematic nouns of the ancient language and thus containing stems ending in *o*, consists primarily of masculines, but includes a small number of feminines as well.

The fact that, while there is no declension that includes both neuters and non-neuters, there is one that includes both masculines and feminines suggests that the most fundamental division in the nominal system is that which separates neuters, on the one hand, from masculines and feminines, on the other—alternately, inanimates from animates. Another piece of evidence supporting this conclusion is the fact that the plural ending set N/A *-es*, G *-on* is common to both the masculine stems illustrated in (1)-(2) above and the largest group of feminines (Ralli’s (2000) Classes 2 and 3,

¹ For truncation and *ð*-epenthesis before derivational suffixes, see Sotiropoulos (1972):46-48.

² I use the following abbreviations: N(ominative), G(enitive), A(ccusative), V(ocative); S(in)g(ular), Pl(ural); m(asculine), f(eminine).

respectively). In fact, the contrast between truncating and δ -epenthesizing stems, too, is observed among feminines as well as masculines. But while there are 838 epenthesizing masculines in DSMG, there are only 35 epenthesizing feminines, and evidence for the default nature of δ -epenthesis is most abundant for masculine stems. Below, then, we will for the most part confine our attention to the inflection of masculines. It is nevertheless useful, before we begin, to look briefly at the treatment of stem-boundary hiatus in neuters; in doing so, I set aside the small group of historical neuter *s*-stems (e.g. *méros* ‘part’).

The forms of neuter *o*-stems, the largest group of neuter nouns, are naturally analyzed in terms of truncation: stem-final *o* appears only in the null-suffixed N/A Sg, and is deleted before all non-null endings, specifically G Sg *-u*, N/A Pl *-a*, and G Pl *-on*. The second largest group, neuter *a*-stems (plus a small number of other nouns), on the other hand, undergo epenthesis of *t* before their non-null endings, G Sg *-os*, N/A Pl *-a*, and G Pl *-on*. Neuter *i*-stems, finally, which take the same suffixes as *o*-stems, show a third treatment of stem-boundary hiatus, one that we will have occasion to refer to below (see fn.6), namely the desyllabification of unstressed, prevocalic *i*.

We should note that while we have presented the inflectional patterns in (1) and (2) above as involving phonological processes of truncation and epenthesis, and thus as embodying alternative repair mechanisms for the disfavored configuration of hiatus at stem boundary, this is by no means a consensus view in descriptions of MG noun morphology. The truncating pattern in (1) can be described, for example, by treating what we have assumed to be a stem-final vowel as a separate morpheme (a “theme vowel”) and stipulating that that morpheme is present in singular forms, but not in plurals (Mackridge 1985:135-136). Some authors, on the other hand (see Ralli 2000:205 (fn.8), 222), take both the truncating and the epenthesizing patterns to involve listed stem allomorphy. Below, the postulation of phonological processes, particularly δ -epenthesis, will be seen to be justified by the understanding of ongoing change that it allows.

There is one final question that should be raised with regard to δ -epenthesis. Because the Class 2 nouns that undergo that rule take vowel-initial endings only in the plural, it is only in plural forms that the rule applies.³ It is clear that the environment of δ -epenthesis must refer to lexical class and to gender; it is natural to ask whether it refers to number as well, or whether, on the other hand, the rule’s restriction to plural forms is accidental. Noting for the moment only that the *t*-epenthesis rule of neuters applies before G Sg *-os* as well as before plural endings, we will set this issue aside for now, returning to it briefly at the end of section 3.

3 δ -Epenthesis as a default

There are at least two kinds of consequences we might expect if δ -epenthesis is the default strategy for the treatment of hiatus in masculine nouns. The first is that that rule should apply without exception in the inflection of masculine stems for which it is implausible that memorized lexical information exists. Such stems might include, for example, proper names, loanwords, acronyms, and onomatopoeia (Marcus et al. 1995). In the case of MG masculines, at least personal names and loanwords support an argument on this basis for the default status of δ -epenthesis.

Many MG masculine given names are indeclinable; many others, including most that end in *-os*, decline in the singular only. Those that do have plural forms, however, most of them common names ending in *-is*, are almost invariably epenthesizing (truncating *Illias*, pl. *Illies* is an exception). Two examples are given in (3)-(4); see Sotiropoulos 1972:66 (fn.26) for the first (/ɣj/ is [j]).

- (3) a. ɣjáni-s ‘John’
 b. ɣjáni-ð-es ‘id. (pl.)’

³ Correspondingly, the truncating and epenthesizing paradigms are often distinguished on the basis of whether or not singulars and plurals have the same number of syllables, with the former designated “parisyllabic”/“isosyllabic” and the latter “imparisyllabic”/“anisyllabic”.

- (4) a. *θομά-s* 'Thomas'
 b. *θομά-ð-es* 'id. (pl.)'

Family names in *-is* are epenthesizing as well (Thumb 1910/1912:51), as illustrated in (5) (Sotiropoulos 1972:66 (fn.26)).

- (5) a. *Ipsilánda-s* 'Ypsilanti'
 b. *Ipsilánda-ð-es* 'id. (pl.)'

Turning now to borrowings, masculine loanwords whose stems end in vowels other than *o* are almost invariably epenthesizing, as illustrated in (6)-(8) (an exception is *levéndis*, pl. *levéndes* 'fine young man', an apparently early loan from Turkish (Horrocks 1997:321)).

- (6) a. *ananá-s* 'pineapple' (French, originally from Tupi)
 b. *ananá-ð-es* 'id. (pl.)'
- (7) a. *valé-s* 'valet' (French)
 b. *valé-ð-es* 'id. (pl.)'
- (8) a. *manávi-s* 'grocer' (Turkish)
 b. *manávi-ð-es* 'id. (pl.)'

Regarding neologisms more generally, the stock of epenthesizing masculines is increased by productive derivation with suffixes of the form *-á-* whose outputs are typically (a) nouns of occupation or (b) augmentatives/pejoratives (see e.g. Householder et al. 1964:46). In the example (9) below (Vazou and Xydopoulos 2007:236), the derivational base, retained here in its orthographic form, is an acronym, pronounced /oik/, designating the Underwater Demolition Squad (Omáda Ypobruxión Katastrofón) of the Greek Navy.

- (9) a. *OYK-á-s* 'member of the OYK'
 b. *OYK-á-ð-es* 'id. (pl.)'

The second prediction that follows from the hypothesized default status of *ð*-epenthesis is that diachronically, we should expect to see the range of that rule expand at the expense of the range of truncation. This is because the rule feature that triggers the (minor) rule of truncation is an example of the sort of diacritic lexical information that tends over time to be lost from lexical entries (Kenstowicz and Kisseberth 1977:61, 123), resulting in regularization. That this prediction is borne out is shown most clearly in SMG by those nouns that are historically truncating, but which are now optionally epenthesizing, indicating ongoing change in favor of epenthesis:⁴

- (10) a. *patéra-s* 'father'
 b. *patér-es* 'id. (pl.)' (conservative)
 c. *paterá-ð-es* 'id. (pl.)' (innovative)
- (11) a. *pramateftí-s* 'peddler'
 b. *pramateft-és* 'id. (pl.)' (conservative)
 c. *pramateftá-ð-es* 'id. (pl.)' (innovative)⁵

⁴ Internet searches suggest that the conservative form is largely restricted to metaphorical uses ('fathers of the church/nation') in (10) and vastly less frequent than the innovative form in (11), so that the change to epenthesizing status is substantially complete in these examples.

⁵ The pattern of (11), with the agentive suffix *-tí-* alternating in epenthetic plurals with *-ta-* (obligatorily under stress and optionally otherwise), is ascribed to only five nouns in DSMG, but said to be characteristic of a considerably larger group in descriptions from the early and middle twentieth century (Thumb 1910/1912:52, Householder et al. 1964:49); as Horrocks (1997:219) notes, the epenthetic forms were by and large

A well-known case in which the introduction of epenthesis status has been accompanied by a semantic shift is the word *despótis*, which has the plurals *despótes* ‘rulers’ and *despotádes* ‘bishops’. A phenomenon broadly parallel to the shift in status seen in (10)-(11) is that a number of stems that are historically non-epenthesis have colloquial epenthesis variants. Thus *vasiléa*- ‘king’ and *kírio*- ‘lord’ have the epenthesis variants *vasiljá*- and *kíri*-, and of the conservative names of the months of the year, all non-epenthesis, eleven have epenthesis variants (e.g. *Mártio*- for *Mártio*- ‘March’).

Treating *ð*-epenthesis as a default and truncation as restricted to stems that are marked to undergo it provides a simple and natural account of the variation illustrated in (10)-(11) if we assume that diacritic information such as a rule feature is subject to “not [being] learned, remembered, or accessed fast enough” (Garrett 2008:128). When the [Truncation] feature (which I will take to be privative rather than binary) for a stem like *patéra*- is successfully retrieved from the lexicon by a speaker, that stem will undergo truncation, and when it is not, the stem will undergo epenthesis. As the frequency of successful retrieval diminishes over a number of generations, forms showing epenthesis will gradually replace forms showing truncation, until the frequency of truncating forms reaches zero and the [Truncation] feature is eliminated from the stem’s lexical entry. On an allomorphy account of the truncating and epenthesis patterns, in contrast, there will be no reason for variation to arise for a stem like *patéra*-, and no reason, once having arisen, for that variation to proceed over time in a particular direction.

We have reviewed evidence from SMG suggesting that *ð*-epenthesis, rather than truncation, is the default stem boundary hiatus resolution strategy in masculine nouns, including evidence that *ð*-epenthesis is gradually being extended at the expense of truncation. In regional dialects, however, where the pace of language change is not constrained by literacy, standardization, and prescriptivism, we find in some cases a far more dramatic expansion of the range of *ð*-epenthesis. In illustration, we will look briefly at two Asia Minor dialects of Greek, now moribund, that are discussed by Melissaropoulou (2013). The first is the dialect of Livisi in Lycia (southwest Anatolia), for which Melissaropoulou’s data comes from Andriotis (1961:23).

In order to understand the Livisi developments, it is necessary to look in more detail than we have to this point at the paradigms of the two main classes of masculine nouns, the *o*-stems with nominative plurals in *-i* < *-oi* (Ralli’s (2000) Class 1) and the stems, epenthesis and truncating, which end in other vowels and have N/A plurals in *-es* (Class 2). Table 1 shows the paradigms in SMG of epenthesis *psarás* ‘fisherman, truncating *náftis* ‘sailor’, and *o*-stem *ðrómos* ‘road’. In distinguishing the stem types, I assume first that Class 1 is unmarked with respect to Class 2, in particular with regard to its inflectional endings. Class 2 nouns are therefore marked [2] in the table, while Class 1 nouns lack a class specification. Within Class 2, truncating stems, but not epenthesis stems, are marked [T]. Finally, I assume that Class 1 stems are truncating, as we proposed in section 2 for their neuter counterparts, but that there is a redundancy rule to that effect, so that they do not have to be so marked individually. Correspondingly, I label the paradigm of Class 1 *ðrómos* with a parenthesized [T].

	[2]	[2] [T]	([T])
Sg N	psará-s	náfti-s	ðrómo-s
G	psará	náfti	ðróm-u
A	psará	náfti	ðrómo
V	psará	náfti	ðróm-e
Pl N	psará-ð-es	náft-es	ðróm-i
G	psará-ð-on	naft-ón	ðróm-on
A	psará-ð-es	náft-es	ðróm-us

Table 1 Inflection of Masculine Stems in SMG

not taken into the contemporary standard or common language, which coalesced after the end of military rule in 1974.

With respect to Class 2 nouns, the dialect of Livisi displays two striking developments that might at first appear to be at odds with each other. Table 2 below displays the paradigm of *psarás* ‘fisherman’, *náftis* ‘sailor’, and a second truncating Class 2 noun, *kritís* ‘judge’, following Melissaropoulou (2013:138) (full paradigms for Livisi Class 1 nouns are not provided). Livisi shows raising of unstressed mid vowels, so that genitive plural *-on* appears as *-un*, and it preserves accusative singular *-n*.

	[2]	[2]	[2]
Sg N	psará-s	náfti-s	krití-s
G	psará	náfti	krití
A	psará-n	náfti-n	krití-n
V	psará	náfti	krití
Pl N	psará-ð-i	náfti-ð-i	kritá-ð-i
G	psará-ð-un	náfti-ð-un	kritá-ð-un
A	psará-ð-us	náfti-ð-us	kritá-ð-us

Table 2 Inflection of Class 2 Nouns in Livisi

The first notable development apparent in Table 2 is that the plurals of all three Class 2 nouns shown display Class 1 endings; expected N/A Pl **-is* < *-es* is not observed. This change validates our decision to consider Class 1 endings unmarked with respect to those of Class 2. The second development is that *náftis* and *kritís*, truncating in SMG, have become epenthesizing in Livisi (*kritís* displays as well the alternation between *i* and *a* that we saw in (11) above). It is thus clear that the question of which set of endings is unmarked and the question of which hiatus reduction strategy is unmarked are entirely independent of each other.

Melissaropoulou (2013:137) notes about Livisi that even some *o*-stems display epenthesizing forms, although this development appears to be sporadic. In the dialect of Silli, which was spoken in south-central Anatolia near the city of Ikonion (today’s Konya), however, all (Karatsareas 2011:49) or nearly all (Dawkins 1916:47) masculines, *o*-stems included, undergo epenthesis in plural forms. With intervocalic (and initial) *ð* having become *ɾ*, typical *o*-stem examples are *ártupu-s* ‘human being’ (SMG *ánthropo-s*), pl. *ártupu-r-i* (Dawkins 1916:47), with the plural stem identical to the singular stem, and *xristjanó-s* ‘Christian’, pl. *xristjáni-r-i* (Melissaropoulou 2013:138), with the plural form built on an innovative stem that incorporates the original ending (cf. MSG *xristjan-i*). Variation between *artup-jó* and *artupu-r-jó* for the genitive plural of *ártupu-* (Dawkins 1916:47) suggests that the generalization of *r*-epenthesis has not gone to completion in that category.⁶

As in Livisi, *o*-stem (Class 1) plural endings have been generalized to all masculines in Silli. Unlike in Livisi, the Class 1 singular endings have begun to be generalized as well. Thus Dawkins (1916:47) gives the G Sg of Class 2 *kléfc̣i-* ‘thief’ (MSG *kléfti-*) as *kléfc̣-jú*, parallel to *artup-jú*. *papá-* ‘priest’, on the other hand, retains Class 2 G Sg *-∅*, showing that this development remains incomplete. Finally, the variation between *artup-jó* and *artupu-r-jó* reported above, combined with the lack of any evidence for a parallel development involving G Sg *-jú*, might suggest that the epenthesis rule is intrinsically limited to plurals in Silli. The occurrence of epenthetic G Sg forms in multiple Cappadocian dialects (Dawkins 1916:105, 107, 109, etc.), however, makes it clear that this is not in any case a general restriction.

The data we have reviewed in this section would appear to constitute fairly decisive evidence for the status of *ð*-epenthesis as the default stem boundary hiatus resolution strategy for the masculine nouns of MG. Ideally, one would like to have information concerning the degree of generality of *ð*-epenthesis, for feminines as well as masculines, in the full range of modern dialects. I will provisionally conclude on the basis of what we have seen above, however, that we can take as confirmed the hypothesis that epenthesis has the status of a default, in particular with respect to truncation.

⁶ G Pl *-jó* (similarly, G Sg *-jú*) results from resegmentation of the suffixed forms of neuter *i*-stems (Xj-Y > X-jY) and generalization of the resulting innovative suffixes (for discussion, see Karatsareas 2011:ch.5).

In the next section, I will briefly consider the question of why this should be so.

4 Toward an explanation of the default status of δ -epenthesis

Let us begin with the observation that default or regular affixes and morphophonological processes are in some cases chosen from among multiple candidates on the basis of lexical or type frequency. In the well-documented case of ongoing regularization in Korean noun inflection (see Albright 2008:167-177, de Chene 2016:71-74, and references cited there), for example, the target of regularization at each point of articulation coincides with the most frequent stem type at that point of articulation, and a crucial factor in the genesis of the innovative rule that takes stem-final *t* to *s* before a vowel-initial clitic is the majority status, among coronal-final stems, of those ending in *s*. In Greek, the generalization of Class 1 endings that we saw in the dialects of Livisi and Silla can plausibly be attributed to type frequency: among the 6284 masculine nouns listed in the DSMG, 3205, or 51%, belong to Class 1.

The default status of δ -epenthesis with respect to truncation, however, cannot be explained on the basis of type frequency. This is because in SMG, epenthesis nouns are a clear minority even within Class 2, and an even smaller minority within masculine nouns as a whole. Concretely, among the 3079 Class 2 masculines in the DSMG, there are 2274 non-epenthesis stems (74%), the vast majority demonstrably truncating, but only 803 (26%) that show epenthesis (five of them optionally). Among the full set of masculines, epenthesis nouns comprise less than 13% of the total; since, as noted above, Class 1 nouns can be analyzed in terms of truncation, this means that roughly 87% of masculine nouns are truncating. In sum, the Greek case suggests that speakers will choose epenthesis over deletion as the rule-governed, default means of hiatus resolution at stem boundary even in the face of a considerable type frequency deficit.⁷

As a way to understand this preference, I propose that epenthesis, by allowing all underlying segments of both stem and suffix to appear in the surface form, represents a less severe distortion of the input representation than does truncation. Given that both truncation and epenthesis involve an input-output divergence of precisely one segment, it might appear that they should be equivalent in their effect on the input-output relationship. Suppose we assume, however, that stem-boundary epenthetic consonants are inserted intermorphemically, thus belonging to the morphological word without belonging to any of its constituent morphs. In that case, it will be possible to see stem-boundary epenthesis as involving, at the level of the morph, a completely faithful or transparent input-output relation, one that involves zero divergence between the two representations.

The idea that speakers prefer epenthesis to truncation because it permits a transparent input-output relationship assumes, of course, that speakers value a close relation between input and output representations, in particular when postulating morphophonological rules. Perhaps the most straightforward way to formulate a condition capturing this idea would be to say that given two observationally adequate analyses of a set of forms, the analysis with the lower input-output divergence value over those forms, suitably defined, is the one that is evaluated more highly. While I will not propose a precise statement of the required principle of evaluation here, I will note that, in comparing competing analyses under such a principle, it will be necessary to ignore any lexical irregularity that may be associated with those analyses.

Remember that if epenthesis is regular in the Greek case, as we have claimed, truncating stems will have to be marked to undergo a minor rule of truncation; conversely, if truncation were regular, it would be the epenthesis stems that would carry a lexical mark of irregularity. Given that a particular stem will undergo epenthesis or truncation regardless of which process constitutes the regular case, if input-output divergence is calculated stem by stem for both regular and exceptional items, the principle of evaluation will be unable to distinguish between the two analyses. Further, the number of stems that will need to be marked as irregular under the epenthesis account far exceeds the number that would be so marked under the truncation account, showing that the number of exceptions to a particular

⁷ For another case, involving suffixation, in which a minority pattern arguably constitutes a default, see Marcus et al. (1995).

analysis cannot count against that analysis for the purpose of evaluation. Whatever the details of the principle that is adopted to explain the choice of epenthesis over truncation as the default hiatus reduction strategy in MG masculine nouns, then, that principle will need to ignore exceptions, in effect treating each account as if it were fully general.

Apart from the specifics of the Greek case, there are several conclusions of some interest that are supported by the data we have seen here. One is that there are often multiple observationally adequate analyses of the nonautomatic alternations of a language's inflectional morphology—in the present case, at least a truncation analysis and an epenthesis analysis. A second is that ongoing or completed change, understood as regularization, can serve as a way of identifying the descriptively adequate analysis, the one that has actually been adopted by speakers. Finally, while identification of the explanatory principles that determine the choice of the descriptively adequate analysis from among the observationally adequate alternatives is a far more challenging task, it is well worth pursuing. Hopefully, the case study presented above has shown the feasibility of tackling both the descriptive and the explanatory problems that are posed by the morphophonology of inflection.

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