

## Case syncretism in the personal pronouns of Medieval Greek: the loss of the genitive plural

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### 1 Introduction

This paper deals with the syncretism of the genitive and accusative plural in the personal pronouns of Medieval Greek. This is a bizarre phenomenon for two reasons: i) it is the unique<sup>1</sup> genitive-accusative syncretism in the case system of Greek which distinguishes the genitive from the accusative in almost every paradigm<sup>2</sup> and ii) even though it has been established since the 10<sup>th</sup> c., when it was attested for the first time, it has been restricted to the personal pronouns and has not been extended to other paradigms in the vast majority of Greek varieties.

Table 1. Case syncretism in the personal pronouns of Modern Greek

SINGULAR	STRONG FORMS		WEAK FORMS				
	1 <sup>st</sup> prs	2 <sup>nd</sup> prs	1 <sup>st</sup> prs	2 <sup>nd</sup> prs	3 <sup>rd</sup> prs M	F	N
genitive	εμένα	εσένα	μου	σου	του	της	του
accusative	εμένα	εσένα	με	σε	τον	την	το
<b>PLURAL</b>							
genitive	εμάς	εσάς	μας	σας		τους	
accusative	εμάς	εσάς	μας	σας	τους	τις	τα

Despite the lack of previous detailed research, all authors that have dealt with the matter presuppose the following course for its development (Jannaris 1897, Dieterich 1898, Hatzidakis 1931, Dressler 1966, Browning 1969 and Horrocks 1997):

Table 2. The course of the syncretism proposed by previous work

		1 <sup>st</sup> stage	2 <sup>nd</sup> stage	3 <sup>rd</sup> stage
gen.	1 <sup>st</sup> prs	ήμῶν	?έμῶν/ *μῶν	έμᾶς/ μας
	2 <sup>nd</sup> prs	ὐμῶν	*έσῶν/ *σῶν	έσᾶς/ σας
acc.	1 <sup>st</sup> prs	ήμᾶς	έμᾶς/ μας	έμᾶς/ μας
	2 <sup>nd</sup> prs	ὐμᾶς	έσᾶς/ σας	έσᾶς/ σας

<sup>1</sup> Regarding the paradigm of masculine nouns ending in -ης and -ας, the homonymy between genitives and accusatives singular such as (του) ναύτη/ (τον) ναύτη is the result of the loss of final ν and does not constitute an actual morpho-syntactic syncretism. The only true morpho-syntactic syncretism other than in the personal pronouns can be found in the masculine genitive and accusative plural of Cypriot Greek (e.g. το σπίτι τους βοσκούς “the house of the shepherds”).

<sup>2</sup> Moreover, even in paradigms with genitive gaps (e.g. the neuter diminutives in -άκι) the accusative can never function as a genitive.

As will be shown later, this analysis is not satisfactory, since it fails to answer some important questions on the issue. Therefore, this paper aims: i) to describe the course of the syncretism and ii) to explain the factors that triggered its development.

## 2 The data in the diachrony of Greek

### 2.1 Hellenistic Koine (323 BC - 330 AD)

The phonological changes that took place during this period resulted in a strong phonetic similarity between the forms of the first and the second person:

Table 3. Phonological changes in the personal pronouns during Hellenistic Greek

	Classical/ Early Hellenistic Greek (5 <sup>th</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> c. BC)		Late Hellenistic Greek (3 <sup>rd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> c. AD)	
	1 <sup>st</sup> prs	2 <sup>nd</sup> prs	1 <sup>st</sup> prs	2 <sup>nd</sup> prs
nom.	ἡμεῖς (/hɛ:mê:s/)	ὕμεῖς (/hy:mê:s/)	ἡμεῖς (/i̯mis/)	ὕμεῖς (/y̯mis/)
gen.	ἡμῶν (/hɛ:mô:n/)	ὕμῶν (/hy:mô:n/)	ἡμῶν (/i' mon/)	ὕμῶν (/y' mon/)
dat.	ἡμῖν (/hɛ:mî:n/)	ὕμῖν (/hy:mî:n/)	ἡμῖν (/i' min/)	ὕμῖν (/y' min/)
acc.	ἡμᾶς (/hɛ:mâ:s/)	ὕμᾶς (/hy:mâ:s/)	ἡμᾶς (/i' mas/)	ὕμᾶς (/y' mas/)

Possible clitics of the first person genitive plural are attested for the first time in papyri of the late Hellenistic Koine period. Such forms most likely reflect scribal errors (cf. Gignac 1981: 163), since the existence of plural clitics in that period would result in homonymy between the first and the second person:

- (1) τῆν γράσῃν μῶν [leg. τῆν γράστιν ἡμῶν]  
 the:ACC.sg.f turf: ACC.sg 1pl:GEN  
 “Our turf”  
 P.Hamb. I 39, 13 (179 AD; Gignac 1981)

- (2) τῶν κυρίων μῶν  
 the:GEN.pl lord:GEN.pl 1pl:GEN  
 “Of our lords”  
 P.Cair.Isid 101, 17 (300 AD; Gignac 1981)

### 2.2 Medieval Greek (330-1453)

Possible genitive plural clitics are also attested, even though they seem to have been caused either by scribal errors or aphaeresis:

- (3) κύριε μων [leg. ἡμῶν]  
 lord:VOC 1pl:GEN  
 “Our lord”  
 P.Abinn. 27, 18 (Arsinoite 342-351 AD)

- (4) *φιλανθρώπου μων δεσπό(του)*  
 philanthropist:GEN.sg 1pl:GEN despot:GEN.sg  
 “Of our philanthropist despot”  
 SB I 5269, 4 (618 AD; Gignac 1981)

Besides these ambiguous clitics, there are also first person genitives which seem to have been formed by the stem ἐμ- of the singular reflecting the modern forms. It must be noted that these forms should be treated with a lot of caution, because the initial ἐ- could be the result of the ancient η being pronounced closer to [ε] than [i]<sup>3</sup> in the variety of the text:

- (5) *ὦ θεὸς ὑπὲρ ἐμῶν, τίς ὦ καθ’ ἡμῶν;*<sup>4</sup>  
 the:NOM.sg.m god in.favor 1pl:GEN who the:NOM.sg.m against 1pl:GEN  
 “God is with us, who is against us?”  
 IGLSyr IV 1442, 1 (Greater Syria, unknown date)

- (6) *μεθ’ ἐμῶν*  
 “With us”  
 IGLSyr IV 1454, 1 (unknown date)

The new accusative is attested more often: ἐμᾶς (TAM IV 256, 4; Asia Minor, 4<sup>th</sup> c.), ἐμᾶς (Guard EG IV Grecia Centrale 2, 12; Megara, 5<sup>th</sup> c. AD?), εἰς ἡμᾶς {εμας} (PSI VII 742, 2; 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> c. AD).

In the second person, a full paradigm of contaminated forms was based on the η- of the first person plural ἡμεῖς and the σ- of the second person singular in the variety of the papyrus P.Ross.Georg. III 10, 16 (& 23, 25, 26) in which the genitive, dative and accusative ἡσῶν, ἡσῖν, ἡσᾶς are attested (4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> c. AD):

- (8) *τὴν ἐλευθέραν ἡσῶν*  
 the:ACC.sg.f free:ACC.sg.f 2pl:GEN  
 P.Ross.Georg. III 10, 16

Regarding the modern second person plural forms, the earliest attestation comes from Georgios Monachos’ *Chronicum Breve* (9<sup>th</sup> c. AD):

- (9) *Ἡμεῖς ἤμεθα καλλιώτεροι ἀπ’ ἐσᾶς*  
 1pl:NOM be:1pl.PST better:NOM.pl.m from 2pl:ACC.str  
 “We were better than you”  
 Bible A’, 110, 1249, 46

<sup>3</sup> Cf. PSI VII 839 (6<sup>th</sup> c.), where ἐμῶν is attested, but η and ε are constantly confused all over the text and not just in the first person plural.

<sup>4</sup> In this paradigm both forms belong to the first person which implies the simultaneous use of the ancient ἡμῶν and the innovative ἐμῶν in the same utterance.

The first attestation of a second person accusative plural being used as a genitive dates back to the 10<sup>th</sup> c. In Constantinus Porphyrogennitus' *De ceremoniis byzantinae aulae* this structure is used sixteen times:

- (10) *αἱ ἀρεταί σας* (2, 185, 4)  
 the:NOM.pl.f virtue:NOM.pl 2pl:ACC.wk  
 “Your virtues”

The first person accusative plural functioning as a genitive is attested a little later in a document from southern Italy: *τῶν γονέων μᾶς* “of our parents”, 1034 AD (Minas 1994: 103).

In the following centuries, the vernacular literature exhibits clearly that the modern accusatives had been established as the only means of marking possession and all oblique case functions:

- (11) *ἐσᾶς τῶν Μοραΐτων*  
 2pl:ACC.str the:GEN.pl Morean:GEN.pl  
 “of you the Moreans”  
 Chronicle of Morea, l. 2252 (recensio II, ed. Schmitt; 14<sup>th</sup> c.)

In the third person, the possessive use of the accusative plural takes place at a later point, while the old genitive continues to be used regularly:

- (12) *τὸν νοῦν τοὺς* vs. *τοὺς ἵππους τῶν*  
 the:ACC.sg mind 3pl:ACC.wk the:ACC.pl horse 3pl:GEN.wk  
 “Their mind” “Their horses”  
 Digenis Akritas, ed. Escorial, l. 76 ed. Grottaferrata, l. 226 (12<sup>th</sup> c.)

An alternative form of the third person genitive plural is the contaminated *τως* with analogical *-ς* to *μας* and *σας*:

- (13) *ἀπὸ τὰ πεζικά τως*  
 from the:pl.n infantry:pl 3pl:GEN.wk  
 Chronicle of Morea, l. 1686 (recensio II, ed. Schmitt; 14<sup>th</sup> c.)

### 2.3 Modern Greek dialects

All Modern Greek varieties share this phenomenon, since the first and second person genitive plural has been replaced everywhere by the accusative. The only exception is Pontic Greek which has maintained the genitives *εμούν*, *μούν(α)*, *μούν(ε)* in the first person and *εσούν*, *σούν(α)*, *σούν(ε)* in the second person (Papadopoulou 1955, Oeconomides 1958).

In contrast, the third person genitive plural is preserved in many modern dialects. The forms *τῶνε* and *τως* are still used in Crete, the Cyclades and the Dodecanese (Dieterich 1908, Pangalos 1955) among others. Even in some

northern varieties which are somewhat problematic in forming the genitive plural (Papadopoulos 1926), the third person genitive plural has been preserved, e.g. *douv* in Lesbos (Anagnostou 1996).

## 2.4 The course of the syncretism

The main factor that triggered the creation of new plural forms was most likely the developing homonymy between the first and the second person plural due to the shift of /y/ to /i/ or to aphaeresis caused by hiatus and the inability to create clitic forms like in the singular. Consequently, these new forms were created by the stem of the singular, which was in accordance with the rest of the pronominal system where the singular and the plural are derived from the same stem. Furthermore, the new forms acquired clitics in complete analogy to the singular. In the following stage, the new analogical to the singular forms started to prevail, until they completely replaced the ancient ones. At this point, it must be reminded that the use of the ancient forms would not be problematic during early Medieval Greek, since the ancient *υ* remained /y/ in a few Greek varieties until the 10<sup>th</sup> c. (Horrocks 1997) and homonymy would not take place until then.

In summary, the course of the syncretism can be presented as follows:

Table 4. The diachronic data on the syncretism in the first and second person

	FIRST PERSON		SECOND PERSON	
Late Hellenistic Koine	gen. ἡμῶν dat. ἡμῖν acc. ἡμᾶς		gen. ὑμῶν dat. ὑμῖν acc. ὑμᾶς	
Early Medieval I (330-5 <sup>th</sup> c.)	gen. ἡμῶν/ (?ἐμῶν) <sup>5</sup> [dat. ἡμῖν/ (?*ἐμῖν)] acc. ἡμᾶς/ (?ἐμᾶς)		gen. ὑμῶν/ ἡσῶν <sup>6</sup> [dat. ὑμῖν/ ἡσῖν] acc. ὑμᾶς/ ἡσᾶς	
Early Medieval II (6 <sup>th</sup> c.-9 <sup>th</sup> c.)	<b>STRONG</b> gen. ἡμῶν/ ?ἐμῶν acc. ἡμᾶς/ ἐμᾶς	<b>WEAK</b> ?*μῶν <sup>7</sup> μας	<b>STRONG</b> gen. ὑμῶν/ ?*ἔσῶν acc. ὑμᾶς/ ἔσᾶς	<b>WEAK</b> ?*σῶν σας
10 <sup>th</sup> c. -	gen./acc. ἐμᾶς	μας	gen./acc. ἐσᾶς	σας

<sup>5</sup> These forms are in brackets, because their attestation is ambiguous. As has been noted, ε might reflect that the ancient η was pronounced closer to [ɛ] or [e] in that particular variety and not that it is based on the stem of the singular.

<sup>6</sup> The ἡσ- forms are included in the table as alternatives of the second person plural restricted in certain varieties, in particular those of Egypt and possibly Pontus.

<sup>7</sup> I shall treat the form μῶν here as unattested, since its occurrences in papyri and inscriptions seem to reflect scribal errors rather than actual clitics of the genitive plural. As has been mentioned, a significant factor blocking the formation of plural clitics during such an early stage would be the homonymy between the first and second person.

Table 5. The course of the syncretism in the third person plural clitics

	M	F	N
Early Medieval	gen. τους	των	τα
Late Medieval - Early Modern	gen. τους	των/τως/τους	τα
Common Modern	gen. τους	τους	τα

### 3 Previous proposals

#### 3.1 Hatzidakis (1931)

Hatzidakis claims that the source of the syncretism lies in the high functionality of the accusative as a topic. More specifically, the strong accusatives singular *εμένα* and *εσένα* began to be used as topicalized genitives in object reduplication structures, due to their high frequency:

- (14) *εμένα*      *με*                      *βλέπει* → *εμένα*      *μου*                      *δίνει*  
 1sg:ACC.str 1sg:ACC.wk    see:3sg      1sg:ACC.str 1sg:GEN.wk give:3sg  
 “He/she sees me”                                      “He/she gives it to me”

After the extension of this pattern to the plural, in structures like *ἀπὸ ἡμῶς* the aphaeresis of *ἡ* resulted in the reanalysis of the weak form *μας* both as a genitive and an accusative, similarly to the strong accusative *ἐμένα*.

As can be seen, Hatzidakis’ proposal bears a number of disadvantages. First, in the prepositional phrase *ἀπὸ ἡμῶς* the reanalysis of *ἡμῶς* as a clitic would be impossible, since the pronoun would have to be strong after the preposition. Second, the role of the topicalized use of the accusative is overestimated. If that was the case, we would expect a similar pattern in the third person as well:

- (15) *αυτού/ \*αυτόν(α)*                      *του*                      *έδωσα*  
 3sg:GEN.str.m/ 3sg:ACC.str.m    3sg:GEN.wk.m    give:3sg.PST.PFV  
 “I gave him (lit. to him I gave)”

Third, it must be noted that the plural - being the more marked number - would be a more likely source of the syncretism rather than the singular (cf. Dressler 1966: 61). The strong genitives singular *ἐμοῦ*, (*ἐ*)*σοῦ* were completely analogical to the clitics *μου*, *σου* and the rest of the inflectional system which means that the singular does not seem to be a probable starting point of the syncretism.

### 3.2 Horrocks (1997)

According to Horrocks, the syncretism is the result of homonymy between the genitives ?ἐμῶν/ \*μῶν, \*ἐσῶν/ \*σῶν and the nominative/ accusative singular of the neuter possessive adjective ἐμόν, (ἐ)σόν.

This proposal should be rejected for two main reasons. First, the role of homonymy is excessively highlighted by Horrocks, since actual confusion must have been extremely rare. Structures such as \*τὸ παιδὶν (ἐ)σόν (“thy child”) where the possessive adjective antecedes the noun are not allowed in Greek and they could not be mistaken for \*τὸ παιδὶν (ἐ)σῶν (“your child”). Second, the fact that homonymy could not be the only factor for the syncretism is best demonstrated in Pontic Greek which managed to preserve both the genitives εμούν/ εσούν and the possessive adjective ἐμόν/ εσόν, even though they used to be homonymous.

## 4 Proposed analysis

### 4.1 First and second person

As was mentioned earlier, all previous studies on the issue presuppose the following course for the syncretism: i) gen. ἡμῶν/ ὑμῶν, acc. ἡμᾶς/ ὑμᾶς → ii) gen. ?ἐμῶν-\*μῶν/ \*ἐσῶν-\*σῶν, acc. ἐμᾶς-μας/ ἐσᾶς-σας → iii) gen./acc. ἐμᾶς-μας/ ἐσᾶς-σας.

However, there are two questions that cannot be answered by this analysis: i) why is there absolutely no attestation of the hypothetical second person genitives \*ἐσῶν/ \*σῶν in the Medieval Greek literature, inscriptions and papyri and ii) if these genitives really existed at some point, why is it so difficult to determine what triggered their replacement, since the proposals made so far by Jannaris (1897)<sup>8</sup>, Hatzidakis (1931) and Horrocks (1997) have failed to solve the mystery. Therefore, it is necessary to attempt a different approach on the matter.

#### 4.1.1 The hypothetical forms \*ἐσῶν/ \*σῶν: did they really exist?

Even though they are not attested in that exact form, the existence of these genitives could be supported by the papyric ἡσῶν and the Pontic Greek (ε)σούν. However, if looked carefully, even these forms do not constitute enough evidence. On the one hand, the genitive ἡσῶν was formed on the pattern of ἡμῶν unlike the ambiguous ?ἐμῶν/ \*ἐσῶν which would be formed by the stem of the singular. Moreover, it is attested in a papyrus of an early period (4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> c. AD), when the functional and morphological status of the genitive was still robust. Thus, it is not obligatory to link ἡσῶν directly or indirectly to the hypothetical \*ἐσῶν.

On the other hand, the form (ε)σούν is only found in Pontic Greek and no other Medieval or Modern Greek dialect and it could be easily considered as another unique feature of this dialect which always belonged to the periphery of the Greek speaking world. Not only that, but given the common treatment of the ancient η as

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<sup>8</sup> His proposal regarding the role of the loss of final ν has already been rejected by Dressler (1966: 60).

/e/ in this dialect it can be proposed that the Pontic Greek genitives (ε)μούν/ (ε)σοούν stem directly from the older genitives ἡμῶν/ ἡσῶν.

If this consideration is accurate, it can be said that the Egyptian(?) Greek ἡσῶν and the Pontic Greek εσοούν have the same origin. Consequently, it is quite possible that the formation of these second person genitives based on the η- of the first person plural and the -σ- of the second person singular occurred in the periphery of the Greek varieties, while the existence of the genitives \*ἔσῶν/ \*σῶν in the core of the Medieval Greek speaking world remains highly ambiguous.

Had these genitives existed, they must have been used for a very short period. Since the accusative σας is attested to be used with possessive function for the first time already in the 10<sup>th</sup> c., the chronological span of this process can be placed between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> c. Interestingly, the ancient ἡμῶν seems to be used regularly even during the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> c., as can be shown in the Proto-Bulgarian inscriptions which reflect the vernacular of their period and the fact that it is never replaced by an accusative in Porphyrogennitus' quotes of the colloquial language, unlike the second person plural genitive:

- (16) *ἔκ[α]ψ[εν τὰ] χωρηὰ ἡμῶν*  
 burn:3sg.PST.PFV the:pl.n village:pl 1pl:GEN  
 “He burnt our villages”

Proto-Bulgarian inscription (813 AD; Horrocks 1997)

- (17) *τὴν πίστιν ἡμῶν vs. τὴν ἁγίαν βασιλείαν σᾶς*  
 the.ACC.sg faith 1pl:GEN the:ACC.sg holy kingship 2pl:ACC  
 “our faith” “your holy kingship”

*De ceremoniis aulae byzantinae* 651, 7 & 651, 9

Consequently, if existed at all, the forms \*ἔσῶν/ \*σῶν could have been attested in such contexts during a period when the ancient plural forms were still used side by side with the new ones.

#### 4.1.2 The source of the syncretism

Given the high ambiguity caused by the lack of attestation and inability to explain why these genitives would be lost almost right after their formation, it can be proposed that there was a direct replacement of the ancient genitives ἡμῶν/ ὑμῶν by the newly formed accusatives ἐμᾶς/ μας, ἐσᾶς/ σας. More specifically, when the new plural forms were created by the stem of the singular either to prevent homonymy or by analogy with the rest of the pronominal system, this development was restricted to the nominative and the accusative<sup>9</sup>:

<sup>9</sup> The inability to form the genitive plural can be related to defective paradigms that date back to the same period, e.g. βοσκοπούλα “shepherdess”/ \*βοσκοπουλών.

Table 6. First stage of the syncretism

	FIRST PERSON		SECOND PERSON	
	STRONG	WEAK	STRONG	WEAK
nom.	ἡμεῖς/ ἐμεῖς	-	ὕμεῖς/ ἐσεῖς	-
gen.	ἡμῶν/ - <sup>10</sup>	-	ὕμῶν/ -	-
acc.	ἡμᾶς/ ἐμᾶς	μας	ὕμᾶς/ ἐσᾶς	σας

At this point, the replacement of the genitive by the accusative could be realized through reanalysis. The accusatives ἐμᾶς/ μας, ἐσᾶς/ σας could function as indirect objects in most of the early Medieval Greek varieties, since the means of marking the indirect object had not been determined by that time (Horrocks 1997, Manolessou & Lentari 2003). Thus, a reanalysis of these accusatives could easily take place in structures where they would function as benefactives or experiencers with an underlying possessive notion. For example:

- (18) a. τὰ σπίτια σᾶς ἐκάησαν  
the:pl.n house:pl 2pl:ACC.wk burn:3pl.PASS.PST.PFV  
“(lit.) The houses were burnt to you”  
→ b. ἐκάησαν τὰ σπίτια σας  
burn:3pl.PASS.PST.PFV the:pl.n house:pl 2pl:ACC.wk  
“Your houses were burnt”

Such a development should not surprise, since the use of a form with dative case functions as a possessive is very common (Blake 1994: 150). Moreover, it must not be neglected that the same pattern has taken place in other Balkan languages where the genitive and the dative have merged and morphological datives mark possession<sup>11</sup>.

Consequently, given the fact that the genitive gap in the new plural forms had to be filled, the accusatives started to be used as possessives and to compete with the ancient genitives for this function:

Table 7. Second stage of the syncretism

	FIRST PERSON		SECOND PERSON	
	STRONG	WEAK	STRONG	WEAK
nom.	ἐμεῖς/ (ἡμεῖς)	-	ἐσεῖς/ (ὕμεῖς)	-
gen.	ἐμᾶς/ (ἡμῶν)	μας	ἐσᾶς/ (ὕμῶν)	σας
acc.	ἐμᾶς/ (ἡμᾶς)	μας	ἐσᾶς/ (ὕμᾶς)	σας

<sup>10</sup> I exclude the ambiguous ἐμῶν from the table, although it is possible that it was formed in some Medieval Greek varieties despite its weak attestation.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Slavic Macedonian *žena mi* “my wife”, where possession is expressed by the dative (Pancheva 2004).

Finally, the ancient forms were completely abandoned and the new system was established as follows:

Table 8. Final stage of the syncretism

	FIRST PERSON		SECOND PERSON	
	STRONG	WEAK	STRONG	WEAK
nom.	ἐμεῖς	-	ἐσεῖς	-
gen.-acc.	ἐμᾶς	μας	ἐσᾶς	σας

## 4.2 Third person

The replacement of the genitive τῶν by the accusative τοὺς clearly took place under the influence of the first and second person. This means that the homonymy with the masculine accusative singular τὸν proposed by Horrocks (1997) is irrelevant to this development, since it still exists, e.g. τοὺς ἔδωσε (“he gave to them”) vs. τοὺς ἔδωσε [“he gave them (to someone)”]. Given the fact that the third person follows the paradigm of the rest of the pronominal and nominal inflection, it managed to preserve the genitive a lot longer, which is best proved by its survival in a number of Modern Greek dialects.

The use of the masculine form τοὺς for all genders can be interpreted by the fact that when it coexisted with τῶν it was used exactly like the latter as the single form of the genitive plural for the masculine, feminine and neuter gender. The unmarkedness of the masculine gender in Greek played a role in this development as well:

Table 9. The loss of the genitive plural in the third person weak forms

	Stage I	Stage II	Stage III
gen.	τῶν	→ τῶν/ τοὺς	→ τοὺς
acc.	τοὺς-τες-τα	τοὺς-τες-τα	τοὺς-τες/τις-τα

## 5 Conclusion

The single genitive-accusative plural syncretism in Greek can be attributed to the lack of formation of a genitive in the new analogical to the singular plural forms which were created during early Medieval Greek. This gap and more importantly the use of the new accusative forms as indirect objects when the genitive and the accusative were still competing for the ancient dative functions resulted in their reanalysis as possessives.

The existence of the genitives ?ἐμῶν/ \*μῶν, \*ἐσῶν/ \*σῶν should not be excluded completely. It is possible that these forms were created in some varieties; however it is quite clear that they were not formed at all in the very core of the Medieval Greek speaking world, since they have left no traces in written sources and the modern dialects apart from Pontic, a sui generis dialect.

The main reason why this unique syncretism remained isolated and did not extend to other paradigms despite its early development can be related to the

peculiar nature of the personal pronouns which demonstrate separate morphology and syntax from the rest of the pronominal and nominal system in most languages (Iggesen 2005).

Finally, it should be mentioned here that the lack of previous detailed research on the issue and the absence of enough data from the early Medieval Greek period, when the syncretism took place, increases the need for further study in order to cover even more aspects of the matter.

## Abbreviations

1	first person	2	second person	3	third person	ACC	accusative
GEN	genitive	DAT	dative	f	feminine	m	masculine
n	neuter	NOM	nominative	PASS	passive	PFV	perfective
pl	plural	prs	person	PST	past	sg	singular
str	strong	VOC	vocative	wk	weak		

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