Cypriot Greek is one of the dialects of Greek that figure prominently in the research on object clitic placement, an issue that continues to be of interest to scholars (Condoravdi and Kiparsky 2001, 2004, Pappas 2001, 2004, Revithiadou 2006) and has brought to light several important proposals about the nature and processes of syntactic change, the distinction between clitics and affixes and the role of prosody in determining clitic position.

Cypriot's prominent role is due to the fact that it is the most robustly used dialect among the few extant ones that follow the pattern of Medieval Greek in which object clitic pronouns may appear either before or after the verb as seen in examples 1 and 2. Furthermore, Medieval Cypriot is one of only two dialects for which there exist medieval texts documenting the pattern of clitic placement.

In this paper I will present the results of a comparison between the pattern of Medieval Cypriot Greek and that of Modern Cypriot Greek. Both patterns have been deduced using a variationist approach. The three extant medieval documents were used to construct the database for Medieval Cypriot; the database for Modern Cypriot has been constructed from 48 sociolinguistic interviews with participants from the central and southeastern parts of Cyprus. Since most speakers of Cypriot Greek use a wide gamut of lects that range from "villager's Cypriot" (basilect) to "pen-pusher's Greek" (acrolect) (Papapavlou and Pavlou 1998) the recordings were conducted by native speakers of Cypriot in family settings, in order to capture as representative a sample of everyday speech as possible.

The results of the comparison will focus on two areas:

- It will be shown that for the most part the pattern of clitic placement has remained unchanged between Medieval and Modern Cypriot Greek. For the few areas in which there has been change (e.g. the conjunction pos 'that' has changed from being associated with a postverbal clitic to being associated with a preverbal clitic while afu 'since' has changed in the opposite direction), it will be demonstrated that the cause is not structural in nature, but, instead, involves a change in the surface relationships between words.
- Regarding the cliticization pattern of Cypriot Greek and specifically the question of whether preverbal clitics procliticize to the verb or encliticize to the preceding element, it will be shown that in Modern Cypriot the nature of stress on the preceding word (inherent or not, see Revithiadou 2006) is not always the determining factor,
and that certain lexical idiosyncrasies exist as well. The analysis of the pattern in Modern Cypriot will be used to shed light on the pattern of Medieval Cypriot as well.

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References