

Phrygian and Its Neighbours

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Introduction

Phrygian is an extinct Indo-European language of central and western Anatolia, attested from the 8th century BCE to the 3rd century CE. Genealogically speaking, the language is closely related to Greek and both must stem from a single Proto-Greco-Phrygian language, likely spoken in the Balkans during the 3rd millennium BCE (Ligorio & Lubotsky 2018: 1816ff.).

The first certain traces of Phrygians in Anatolia date from the 8th century, when they established a kingdom with Gordion (now Yassihüyük) as its capitol. According to classical historians, the Phrygians migrated from the Balkans where they used to refer to themselves as Bryges. The time of this migration is still debated and it is uncertain whether the Muški from Assyrian sources can be identified as the Phrygians. Their kingdom was sacked by the Cimmerians in 695 BCE, and the area was subsequently a part of Lydia, the Persian Empire, the Empire of Alexander, the Kingdom of Pergamon, and was finally added to the province of Asia under the Roman Republic (Ligorio & Lubotsky 2018: 1916ff.). The final mention of Phrygians dates to the 5th century CE: Selenas, Wulfila's successor as the head of the Gothic church, was reported to be Phrygian on his mother's side and was supposedly able to preach in the language of the area, though it is doubtful this refers to the Phrygian language.

Old Phrygian

Old Phrygian is written with a native alphabet and is attested from the 8th to the 4th century BCE with a corpus of about 400 inscriptions. Most of these are very short or fragmentary, commonly only a word long, though there are a number of longer texts as well (Brixhe & Lejeune 1984; Brixhe 2002a; Brixhe 2004). The Old Phrygian alphabet is an adaptation of an archaic Greek alphabet (probably transmitted directly from Cilicia, where the Greek alphabet most likely originated (Lejeune 1969a).

New Phrygian

The New Phrygian corpus is composed of about 100 inscriptions. These are all written in the Greek alphabet. Most New Phrygian inscriptions are composed of an epitaph in Greek and a curse formula in Phrygian. Few inscriptions deviate from this pattern and the number of Phrygian epitaphs is very small (Ligorio & Lubotsky 2018: 1818).

The New Phrygian curse formulae are variations of this prototype (Lubotsky 1998):

ιος	νι	σεμουν	κνουμανει	κακουν	αδδακετ	(αινι μανκα),	
whoever	(emphatic)	to-this	grave	bad	does	(or stele),	
με	ζεμελωσ	κε	δεωσ	κε	Τιε	τιτετικμενος	ειτου
among	earthlings	(and)	gods	(and)	by Zeus	cursed	may-he-become

Neighbouring languages

After the Phrygian migration to Anatolia around the turn of the first millennium BCE, the Phrygians came into contact with the southern and western Anatolian languages.¹ The Phrygian kingdom of Midas (~ 8th century BCE) spanned from Cilicia in the south to the Aegean coast in the west (Melchert (ed.) 2003: 98-9). The languages spoken to the south of Phrygia proper, in the area around Cilicia, were most likely of Luwic provenance (Melchert (ed.) 2003: 126ff.), that is, belonging to the same sub-branch of the Anatolian languages as or descended from Luwian. Lycian and Lycian B (if separate languages at all) are attested to the southwest of Phrygia during the mid-first millennium BCE (Melchert 1994: 39). Lydian was spoken to the west during the same period (Melchert 1994: 42). Carian, Pisidian, and Sidetic are three sparsely attested Anatolian languages bordering the Phrygian speaking area with inscriptions dating to the second half of the first millennium BCE for Carian and Sidetic, and to the first half of the first millennium CE for Pisidian (Melchert 1994: 44-5).

The languages spoken in Bithynia, to the north of Phrygia, are unknown. Thucydides identifies the Bithynians as Thracians living in Asia (4.75), while Strabo claims they were “formerly Mysians”, who “received this new name from the Thracians – the Thracian Bithynians and Thynians” (12.3).

Galatian was a continental Celtic language spoken to the northeast of Phrygia whose speakers migrated into Anatolia around the 3rd century BCE. Only an extremely limited number of vocabulary items are known and there are no inscriptions; the language appears to have been similar to Gaulish (Mixajlova 2013: 196-7). The Celtic name Βρογμιαρος, attested multiple times outside Anatolia, appears in the Greek parts of inscription °130 from Nacoleia (Avram 2015: 205-6), which strongly implies extensive interaction of Phrygians and Galatians in the area.

Greek exerted a large degree of influence on Phrygian (Brixhe 2002b). There is a considerable amount of evidence that Greek and Phrygian belong to a single Greco-Phrygian branch of Indo-European (as extensively argued for in Neumann 1988) and the two languages remained in contact ever since their separation. This is corroborated by loanwords from the Mycenaean period (Neumann 1988: 16), the Phrygian adoption of an early version of the Greek alphabet (Lejeune 1969a: 42ff.), the emulation of Greek poetic forms (Lubotsky 1998: 413 *et passim*; Lubotsky 2017: 438ff.), the adoption of the Greek alphabet in the New Phrygian era and the presence of numerous loanwords along with the use of Greek personal names in Phrygian. Before the Koiné period, the primary dialect in contact with Phrygian was Ionic, but due to geographic proximity, contact with Aeolic is also likely.

Loanwords in Phrygian

- *akrodman* ‘top part of the grave’, cf. Greek μεσόδμη ‘tie-beam’ (Brixhe & Neumann 1985: 172);
- *artimis* ‘Artemis’, cf. Myc. a-ti-mi-te (Gusmani & Polat 1999: 156);
- *bevdos* ‘statue’, cf. Greek βεῦδος ‘woman’s dress’ (Lubotsky 2008);
- *dum-* ‘religious community’, cf. Greek δοῦμος (Lubotsky 1997: 118);
- *konno-* ‘joint’, cf. Greek κοινό-;
- *kuryaneyon* ‘commander?’, cf. Greek κοιρανέων;

¹ This section of the handout taken from Šorgo (fthc.).

- *lavagta-* ‘(a title)’, cf. Myc. ra-wa-ke-ta, Doric λαγέτας;
- μδο-/μρο- ‘part of the grave’, cf. Luwian *mruwa-/murwa-* ‘stele’ (Haas 1966: 80, 107);
- *pant-* ‘all, every’, cf. Greek παντός;
- σκελεδρι-/σκερεδρι- ‘(part of the) grave’;
- *soro-* ‘coffin, tomb, sarcophagus’, cf. Greek σορός (Brixhe 2004: 18);
- *vanakt-* ‘king’, cf. Myc. wa-na-ka, Greek ἄναξ (Lejeune 1969b);
- θαλαμε- ‘sepuchral chamber’, cf. Greek θαλαμῖς (Haas 1966: 114).

Phonetic and phonotactic areal features

	Phr.	Lyc.	Luw.	Lyd.	Gr.
final clusters?	-	-	(only <i>-nts</i>)	+	+
final plosives?	-	-	-	+	-
final nasals weak?	+	+	-	+	+
nasalized non-high vowels?	+	+	-	+	-
nasalized high vowels?	+	+	-	-	-
gemination marked/lost?	+	+	-	+	-
initial <i>sT-</i> ?	?	> * <i>səTT-</i>	> <i>T-</i>	> <i>isT-</i>	> <i>isT-</i>
long vowels?	-	-	+	-	+

Table 1: Comparison of phonetic and phonotactic features of languages spoken in Anatolia during the first millennium BCE (Šorgo fthc.).

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