

## **BETWEEN INTIMACY AND ALIENATION: THE PROTOTYPICAL SENSE OF KΣÉNOS IN GREEK AND ITS LITERARY EXPLOITATION IN EPIPHANIUS' SERMON ON HOLY SATURDAY**

Georgios *Ioannou*, University of Chile, Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities, Department of Linguistics, [georgios@u.uchile.cl](mailto:georgios@u.uchile.cl)

Original scientific paper

DOI: 10.31902/fll.49.2024.11

UDC: 81'373:27-87"03"

**Abstract:** This work looks at the way the polysemic network of the term *ksénos*, meaning GUEST-FRIEND, HOST and STRANGER in Ancient Greek, is literarily exploited by the 4<sup>th</sup> century Christian writer Epiphanius, in a sermon on Holy Saturday. The text is of particular interest, given that it makes a proliferate use of the term in a passage that occupies a central place in his work. The analysis first gives a representation of the gestaltist theory that underlies the conceptualisation of the term, understanding the latter as an emergent concept within a network of conceptual integration. In turn, it contextualises synchronically the sermon by giving a rather fine-grained semantic coding of the extant instances of the term, found in Greek papyri between 250 and 450 AD. Finally, it looks at the actual uses of the term in Epiphanius' text, locating each of the uses within *ksénos*' integration network and exploring their function at a textual level.

**Keywords:** prototypicality, polysemic network, Ancient Greek, conceptual integration.<sup>1</sup>

### **1. Introduction**

It has been a long-standing realisation that any given lexical term has to be seen not as an autonomous capsule of meaning but as an access point to complex gestaltist theories, called Idealised Cognitive Models (Lakoff, 1987). A typical example to which literature often makes reference is the term *bachelor* (op. cit). The formalisation of its meaning into either

---

<sup>1</sup> This paper is embedded in a Fondecyt research project (Fondecyt Regular), ref. num. 1211744, funded by ANID (Agencia Nacional de Investigación y Desarrollo).

necessary and sufficient conditions such as [unmarried, adult, male] or even prototypical features such as [uncelebrate, independent, socialised, promiscuous] cannot indiscreetly apply to all referents that manifest these characteristics. For instance, the Pope cannot be understood as a BACHELOR, even if he fulfills all seven characteristics. This is because the model that sanctions the understanding of the sense of BACHELOR is MARRIAGE, to which POPE by definition does not belong. It is the cultural knowledge of the interrelation between the two states within a single model, namely before and after marriage, which gives rise to the concept BACHELOR.

In the light of conceptual integration theory, differently *blending* (Fauconnier and Turner, 2002), this multidimensional computation for the meaning of a given term can be understood as the *emergent space* that results from simultaneous access to two – or more- input spaces. For example, in the case of BACHELOR these would be BEFORE\_MARRIAGE and AFTER\_MARRIAGE, with BACHELOR being the concept that emerges from the correspondence between a given entity that satisfies the [male, *unmarried*] characteristics, with his possible and prospective [male, *married*] self, as shown in figure 1.

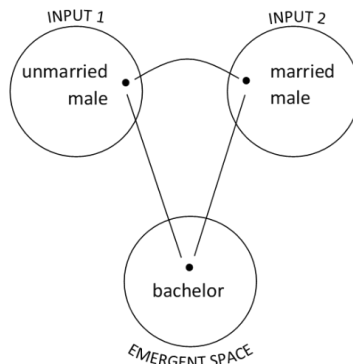


Figure 1. BACHELOR as an emergent concept

Nevertheless, the participation of two input spaces does not mean that their contribution to the whole network is symmetric. Concretely, it is INPUT 1, namely the UNMARRIED MAN space, that serves as the basis for the construction of the network. INPUT 2 can be seen as the PROJECTED REALITY which is built through the *vital relation of identity* (Fauconnier and Turner, 2000) that holds between the elements UNMARRIED MALE and MARRIED MALE, as shown in figure 2.

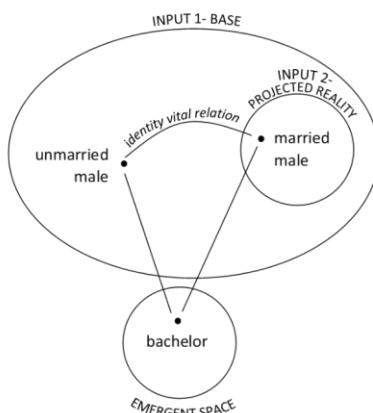


Figure 2. UNMARRIED MALE as the base in the conceptual integration network of BACHELOR

Summarising, it can be argued that the emergent nature of concepts – especially those with a heavy cultural weight such as BACHELOR - is what makes them so resistant to a feature-based definition. This is also the reason why a lexical sense as an autonomous and linguistically encapsulated meaning is bound to remain elusive.

The problem becomes all more vexing for lexical terms in ancient languages. The text-based definition of them, especially in the absence of native-speaker intuitions, resembles a manifold of meanings whose prototypical origin – many times present in the mind of a native speaker – is missing. The point has been made in the relevant literature, with the solution coming from the intuitive tracing of a more schematic conceptual core (Clarke, 2014).

Although a prototype-based approach is plausible and often captures the semantic core for a cluster of related meanings, it also stumbles upon a problem familiar both to gestaltist theories and theories of emergence. The conceptual characteristics that appear to comprise the meaning of a given term many times seem to be resistant to a further reduction into a more schematic and unified nucleus that could trace the term's diachronic origin. As argued above, the problem relates to the cultural embedding of any concept. An ancient Greek term that presents this difficulty is *ksénos*. The term, along with that of *ksenía* understood as an institutionalised relationship of guest-friendship (Belfiore, 1998), occupies an important portion in Classical Greek studies, framed within the greater theme of *reciprocity* (cf. Belfiore, 1994; 1998; Herman, 1987). Reciprocity may also be the notion that schematically lies in the etymologically traced Proto-Indo-European root

of the term, reconstructed in Schwartz (1982; 2003) as \*ksen-w-. On the basis of a number of cognates such as Avestan *xšānman-* “substitution”, Ossetic *(æ)xsæn* “common”, and Irish *-son* “(inter)change”/“substitution”, he sets the original meaning of the root to mean “exchange”.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, it has been shown that either an analysis based on a historically prior lexical sense or any attempt to trace its polysemic nature into a single schematic core such as an image schema is confronted with challenges (see Ioannou, 2023 and references therein). *Ksénos* displays a semasiological and onomasiological spread that makes it impossible to assign to it an absolute referent, as shown in figure 3.



Figure 3. *Ksénos*' semasiological and onomasiological spread

This spread, especially in the light of the custom of gift exchange in the pragmatic context of *ksenía*, can be more fruitfully analysed from the perspective of distributed cognition, itself part of embodied cognition (cf. Hutchins, 1995). For Mauss (1954), gift exchange involves the giver's acquiring a new identity and, in turn, being distributed through the relationship initiated by the exchange (see also Strathern, 1988). In the light of the distinction between a gift-based and a commodity-based economy, Ioannou (op. cit.) analyses the reciprocal offering between the HOST and the GUEST in the pragmatic context of *ksenía* as mutual partial exchange of identity. The value of the offered POSSESSIONS is symbolically bound as non-alienable to the POSSESSOR and, for that matter, it constitutes a symbol of his identity. In conceptual terms, it sanctions the relation of HAVING as a relation of BEING. This relation has conceptual consequences in the construction of the mental spaces of the participants. An interchange of perspective on the identities of the HOST and the GUEST results in both parts becoming – in part- mutually substitutable as *ksénoi*.

<sup>2</sup> There are also alternative etymologies such as those in Neri (2013), where the underlying PIE root is assumed to be \*ǵ<sup>h</sup>es-, also found in the nominal stem \*ǵ<sup>h</sup>esor- “hand”. Semantically, the etymology would be linked to the scene of somebody being under the protective hand of a host, an archetypical element within the scene of hospitality.

This intrinsic complexity of the term *ksénos* presents a challenge, given that its use may imply referential vagueness. Referential identification for the specific term represents a cognitive feat for the human mind, given that its inherent polysemy and onomasiological spread hold for the very same context, namely *ksenía*. Hence, they require that the hearer guide their interpretation through subtle shifts of perspective among participants, within a complex integration network.

The exploitation of this network finds application diachronically in Greek literature. For instance, Sophocles in his *Philoctetes* makes an incomparably artful use of the term *ksénos* that encompasses the whole range of its semantic spread along the continuum “enemy”, “stranger”, “friendly stranger”, “guest” and “friend”. The impossibility to always discern the intended sense (cf. Belfiore, 1994) with absolute referential confidence skilfully exploits the inherent lexical ambiguities of *ksénos* and its cognates (i.e. *ksenía*), thus extrapolating narratively the ambiguous relationship between Neoptolemus and Philoctetes. This exploitation continues well into late antiquity, where *ksénos*' polysemic network appears to inspire Christian writers in a completely different context to that of the city-state of Athens, where *Philoctetes*' creation would belong. The contextual distance of almost one thousand years that separates classical and late antiquity poses a very interesting question: to what extent does the network of *ksénos*' online construction survive in later writers? Given that the institutionalised practice of gift-exchange that pragmatically sanctions the conceptualisation of *ksenía* has long gone, what parts of this network are still accessible?

The present work intends to cast a light on this question, by analysing the sermon of St. Epiphanius (310/320-403 AD) – Archbishop of Cyprus- on Holy Saturday, written most probably in late 4<sup>th</sup> century. The choice of the specific text is based on the proliferate use that this makes of the term *ksénos*. This use became archetypical and the sermon was later taken by the Byzantine Greek historian and statesman Georgios Akropolitis (c. 1220 – 1282) and adapted into a poem invested with music, with title *dós moi túton ton ksénon* “give me this stranger”, still heard on Good Friday in orthodox churches and, mainly, monasteries. The present analysis makes use of conceptual integration theory in order to detect the parts of the polysemic network of *ksénos* that are accessible to Epiphanius when he writes his text. Moreover, it seeks to see how the textual organisation of the sermon at large uses the prototypical meaning of *ksénos* as a schematic relational frame, a

kind of textual blueprint, from which more specific textual themes are extrapolated as multiple instantiations that emanate from it.

The paper has the following organisation: section 2 gives a representation of the polysemic network of *ksénos* as an emergent structure of an integration network, within the pragmatic context of *ksenía*; section 3 contextualises synchronically Epiphanius' sermon, giving an account of all uses of the term for the period 250-450 AD found in Greek papyri; section 4 gives an analysis of the sermon, locating the multiple uses of the term *ksénos* within the network of *ksénos* and contrasting its uses to those identified in the papyri. It also sees how these uses resonate in the conceptual organisation of the sermon at large. Conclusions follow in section 5.

## 2. Networking the polysemic spread of the term *ksénos*

The interpretation of *ksénos* as a pragmatically situated conceptualisation presents an interesting patterning that arises across three parallel planes: semantic, social and spatial. For the semantic and social configurations to arise, the mediation of the third is critical. More precisely, *ksenía* emerges through the transcendence of a spatial boundary into the domain of potential "philía", a *quasi*-kinship relation (cf. Konstan, 1996; Gould, 1973). Nevertheless, this relation remains in a super-structure of expectation and potential, to be sanctioned as guest-friendship only through the social convention of gift exchange. Hence, in this light, *ksenía* is prototypically located at the interface between the domain of a FOREIGNER -and for that matter a potential enemy- and that of KIN, as shown in figure 4.

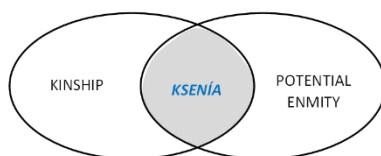


Figure 4. The placement of *ksenía* between ENMITY and KINSHIP

*Ksenía* is socially sanctioned through the ritual of gift and favour offering, which reciprocally generates the mutual binding between the two parts (Herman, 1987) as "owing the favour":

(1) *kháris khárin gar estín hē tíktous' aeí*

“It is the favour that always gives birth to another favour” (*Aias*, 522).

This owed favour is the sense following the distribution of each part’s identity through the dislocation of their non-alienable possessions (see p.3). Taking each *ksénos* as the base from which a mental space is constructed, this dislocation “spreads” their identity into wherever the placement of the other part lies. Hence, to define the sense of *ksénos*, we have to understand it as a relational term, whose interpretation stems from its membership in the model of *ksenía* as a complex gestaltist theory. Essentially, if an incomer is interpreted as “guest-friend”, this occurs because the host also has become *ksénos*, in an act of mental space construction of “partial exchange of identity”. On the other hand, if the potential host does not embrace the incomer, the latter becomes a potential enemy, as does the host himself.

This architecture renders the prototypical meaning of *ksénos* a space that emerges through the integration of other two as projections of two possibilities that have not been as yet realised: the incorporated OTHER as partially identical to the subjectivity of a SELF from whose point of view *ksénos* is construed— a relation of familiarity and intimacy that can be extended in the imagination of the two parts in space and time - and his alienation, where THE\_OTHER becomes the unfamiliar and alienated *ksénos*, and a potential enemy if he tries to trespass into the space of the SELF and potential HOST. Essentially, *ksénos* can be seen as the intersection between two identities. Depending on the stance adopted by the SELF, the emergent space of *ksénos* will be elaborated either into one of STRANGER or even ENEMY or one of an *ad hoc quasi-FRIENDSHIP* or KINSHIP. Derivatively, the identity of the SELF will be accordingly elaborated into one of a *ksénos*-HOST/FRIEND/KIN or one of *ksénos*-ENEMY, as shown in figure 5.

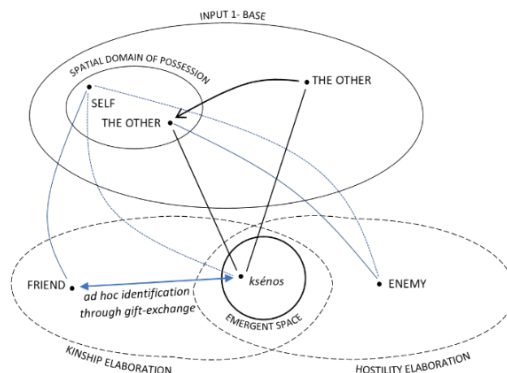


Figure 5. *Ksénos*' elaboration into the scenarios of KINSHIP and ENMITY

We have a network-based online construction of identity relations that explains the polysemic spread of the term *ksénos* presented in figure 3 (cf. Fauconnier and Turner, 2003). This conception of a lexical sense as a point of *multiple and simultaneous access* not only to distinct mental spaces but also to *distinct elements within temporarily distinct stages of the spaces' online construction* is an extraordinary property of the human's capacity for conceptualisation (see Fauconnier, 1994; Fauconnier, 1997; Evans, 2019: III).

### 3. Contextualising Epiphanius' sermon

This section looks at the archetypical meanings of *ksénos*, as manifested in non-literary papyri texts around the years Epiphanius – i.e. c. 250-450 AD – so that we see which parts of the polysemous gestaltist network of the term had survived. What follows are some examples that illustrate the use of the 25 instances found for the period under analysis. All translations are mine, as there is no English translation of the texts available yet.

In the following excerpt taken from a letter of a soldier in Pannonia written to his family in *basp. 49.83* from 3<sup>rd</sup>. c. AD, the soldier complains that they have never returned a single word to his innumerable letters but consider him to be a STRANGER as contrasted to some member of family:

(2) ...humeîs de hoútōs me ékhete hōs ksénon

'...but you think of me as if I were a stranger'.

In another, in *bgu.2.405* of 348 AD, Aurelius from Alexandria declares not to have any claim on, being UNRELATED to, a wheat-grinding machine inherited by himself and his sister:

(3) ...homologô mé ékhein méros eis tēn prolekhtheîsan sitalektikēn mēkhanēn, allá ksénon me eînai kaí allótrion autēs

'I declare not having any right to the aforementioned mill, being unrelated and excluded from its use'

In another one from 359 AD, in *bgu.4.1024*, both locals and STRANGERS, namely the ones that do not belong to the province, manifest their demand to the ruler that Diodemus remain in prison for killing a prostitute:

(4) ...ksénoi kai eparkhiôtai égnōsan tēn kata Diódēmon próthesin

‘...strangers and locals manifested their will about Diodemus’

In another letter in *o.bodl.2.1999* from 2nd-3rd c. AD, *ksénos* denotes the “stranger” in the sense of not being an acquaintance, hence an UNKNOWN. Here, an oil-producer is asked to come to receive some quantity of hay so that this is not given to a stranger:

(5) Hêke pros emé...hína soi...peripoiéō agógia dúo kai mé ksénōi andrī dósō

‘Come to me...so that I give two loads [of hay] to you and not to an unknown’

Finally, in another example in *p.amh.2.152* from 5th c. AD, we find *ksénos* as a FOREIGNER, in a letter where Nonna, a woman from Arsinoe, plans to sell two chambers to a soldier:

(6) Thélei pōlēsai ta dúo kéllia hautês hē auté Nónna hōs stenōtheîsa tiní stratiōtēi tôn ksénōn

‘This woman Nonna, because she has been in economic distress, she wants to sell her two chambers to some of the foreign soldiers’.

For the totality of the instances found in Greek papyri from that period, found in the APIS, DDbDP, HGV and BP collections, all accessed through the Papyri.info database, we have the following sense distribution, as shown in table 1. The analysis makes a fine-grained distinction of senses, so that the pragmatic context of the texts is inferred better:

foreigner	9	unknown	2
non-local	5	stranger	2
non-familiar	4	incomer	1
non-related	2		

As we can see, almost the totality of them falls in the meaning of somebody or something that “does not belong”, either this is contrasted to a local, to a relative or to something known. The only case that presents some chances for being related to the older notion of an incoming “visitor” is the following excerpt in *p.oxy.67.4628* from 4th c. AD where the term *ksenía* also cooccurs:

(7) Oudépote ēnóklēsa praipositōi dia ksenías tōn boēthōn mou... Sumboúleuson autoîs eltheîn pros emé. Átopon gár estin hubrithēnai hēmās oudépote hubrithéntas epí tōn ksénōn

‘I have never bothered the chief with the hosting of my assistants...Advise them to come to my place. It is absurd that I will be offended in their presence, when I have never been’.

We conclude then that the predominant senses of *ksénos* for the period form a schematic nucleus that denotes the INCOMING\_OTHER, the elsewhere entity different to the domain of the SELF.

#### 4. Epiphanius’ sermon

##### 4.1 Integrating antithetic parts

Epiphanius’ sermon has as its main theme Holy Saturday, the day that stands between Jesus’ passion resurrection. This may appear to be a peculiar moment to be chosen as a theme, given that it constitutes a pause between two other extraordinary moments: the emotionally loaded drama on the cross and the glorious raising from the dead. Nevertheless, such a choice turns out to be most artfully interwoven with the partial scenes that cover the canvas of the text. This pause is profiled as silence, a metonymic reference to the absence of any action, a silent interlude in the drama (all translations are mine):

(8) Sémeron sigé pollé en tēi gēi; sigé pollé kai ēremía loipón; sigé pollé, hōti ho basileús hupnoî.

‘Much silence, today, on earth; much silence and calm, then; much silence, because the king is sleeping’ (l. 440.9-11).

This scene of silence, absence and ceasing of voluntary and conscious action constitutes the main space intended to be filled by a wealth of emerging relations. These relations arise as an interaction between the members of antithetic thematic pairs such as DIE and LIVE, SENTENCE and ABSOLUTION, DAY and NIGHT. These antitheses appear in principle not to leave any space for conciliation, given that the conditions that hold true for one member of the contrasted pair must be necessarily false for the other. Nevertheless, under a closer look, it can be shown that there is always some common space that links them and prepares the emergence of new elements on the basis of the existing ones. Analytically, this space is formulable as the *Generic Space*



a super-thematic level, itself reinforced by the state of SLEEP, an ambiguous state between LIFE and DEATH. As will be shown, this ambiguity prepares the ground for the central notion of the sermon to be profiled, namely the equally ambiguous figure of *ksénos* as the intersection of the notions of “belonging” and “not belonging”. The former, on the one hand, emerges through an explicit reference to pairs of situations with a schematic commonness between them, a common denominator that serves as the inferential connection between two situations. Hence, the Angel announcing the birth of Jesus to Mary is juxtaposed to the Angel announcing the re-birth of humanity to Mary Magdalene, through Jesus’ exit from the sealed tomb:

(10) Ἄγγελος μεν τῆι Μαρίᾳ μητρικῆν τοῦ Χριστοῦ  
γέννησιν εὐεγγελίσατο; Ἄγγελος δε τῆι Μαρίᾳ τῆι Μαγδαλινῆι  
τέν εκ τάφου φρικτῆν ἀναγέννησιν εὐεγγελίσατο

‘An Angel announced to Mary Christ’s maternal birth; and  
an Angel announced to Mary Magdalen his shuddering rebirth  
from the tomb’ (l. 440.52-55).

Essentially, what we have in (10) are two almost identical events of an Angel announcing the birth of Christ to some Mary, with the difference that the second portrays this re-birth to take place from inside the tomb. This minimal difference though gives rise to the emergent space of the identification between birth and resurrection. Running the elaboration of the emergent space regarding its inferences brings about the identification of Hades as a maternal womb from which Jesus is re-born, but only after he voluntarily enters in it. Inversely, Mary’s womb becomes a sepulchral place that predestines Jesus’ sacrifice. The imagery of the “place” where the Angel stands emphasizes the parallel womb/tomb (l: 29-34). Mary’s womb sealed by her virginity parallels the tomb’s sealing stone. The comparison underlines the impossibility of the co-existence of two antithetic states<sup>3</sup>, namely GOD\_BE\_BORN, and HUMAN\_BE\_RESURRECTED:

(11) Ἡσπερ γὰρ ἐσφραγισμένῳ τῷ... τῆς παρθενικῆς  
φύσεως Χριστὸς κλειθρῶν εκ παρθένου gegénētai; hoútōs  
adianoíktōn óntōn τῷ τοῦ τάφου σφραγίδῳ ἡ Χριστοῦ  
ἀναγέννησις péprakatai.

‘As Christ was born from the virgin with the bolts of her  
virginity sealed, so his rebirth took place with the seals of the  
tomb unopened’ (l. 444. 29-32).

<sup>3</sup> As said above, states whose truth conditions are mutually exclusive.

Similarly, not only the virginal womb but also the cave where Christ was born emerges as a common place between DEATH and BIRTH. This is done through the generic space that constitutes the semantic details that surround the events of newborn and dead care:

(12) Nuktí Khristós en Bēthleém gennâtai; nuktí pálin en têi Siōn anagennâtai. Spárgana eis génnēsín katadékhetai; spárgana kai entaûtha katatulíttetai.

‘It was night that Christ was born in Bethlehem; and again, night that he was re-born in Sion. It was swaddles that he received at his birth; and it was swaddles that wrapped him here’ (l. 444. 56-58).

The LOCATION wherein Jesus is placed is in both cases a cave-like formation, a stable and a tomb, points marking the departure and endpoint of life, respectively. The INSTRUMENT by which the newborn and the dead Jesus is wrapped are swaddles that underline the baby’s and the dead’s immobility. The TIME of both events takes place in the night, similarly, underlining the emergence of a network of crossing emergent connections between DARKNESS, SILENCE, INACTIVITY and LACK of CONSCIOUSNESS, but also the secret process of GESTATION and SLEEPING. The latter becomes the secret conduit that connects DEATH and LIFE, passing the vital spirit from Jesus “in flesh” to humans “in Hades”.

#### 4.2 Jesus as *ksénos* and his position in the gestaltist network

Spatially, the drama manages to encompass the three tiers of the *divine, human* and *deceased*. As shown above, it is naturally elements that pertain to the middle level, namely HUMAN and EARTH, that play the role of the common ground that connects the other two pairs, namely DIVINE and DECEASED and HEAVENS and UNDERWORLD. For example, in another passage the sun, metaphorising Jesus as LIGHT, transgresses the limits of the horizon, continuing its journey into the underworld. It is a beautiful elaboration on a sunset that can be traced back in Homeric *Odyssey*, where the sun announces his intention to set and light among the dead:

(13) Dúsomai eis Aídao kai en nekúessin faeínō  
 ‘I will set into Hades and bright among the dead’ (*Hom. Od.* 12.384).

(14) Ditté hē katabasis...ap' ouranoû epí tén gēn, apó tēs gēs hypokátō tēs gēs ho theós paragínetai  
 'The descent was of a double nature...From the heavens into the earth, from the earth underneath the earth arrives God' (l. 440. 40-43).

This dual participation of Jesus in contrastive domains that become compatible is ubiquitous in the text, through explicit references to pairs of contrastively complementary spaces, where Jesus himself is depicted as standing "in between": Thus, he is featured as standing between the Father God and the Holy Spirit, between angels and humans, between Romans and Jews, between two thieves on the cross, between the present and future life and, finally, between dead and alive (441. 38-48). This placement functions as a conceptual conjunction between two complementary members of pairs that symbolise the wholeness of the world in its various dimensions as conceived in antiquity. In some sense, Jesus becomes the "common domain" that as an agent on earth brings together the otherwise non-conciliable realities. Nevertheless, this sense of "belonging" that the text builds up through the conceptual integrations is surprisingly breached with the second part of the sermon. This is prepared with a beautifully crafted passage where a shift in profile takes place from the human to the divine nature of Jesus. The narrative recounts the visit of Josef of Arimathea to Pontius Pilatus, asking for the body of Jesus:

(15) Eisêlthen brotós pros brotón, aitoúmenos labeîn ton theón; pēlós pros pēloû labeîn ton pántōn plastourgón; ho khórtos pará khórtou komísasthai to ouránion pûr; hē stagón hē oiktrá pará stagónos oiktrâs lambáneí tén ábysson. Tís íde? Tís ékouse pópote?

'A mortal came to a mortal, asking for receiving God; Clay came to clay, for receiving the creator of everything; A blade of grass to another, for carrying the celestial fire; A miserable drop from another receives the abyss. Who has seen this? Who has ever heard of it?' (444. 41-45).

What is of interest is that there is a reverse construal to what the analysis has shown up to now. Instead of having disparate domains integrated in the name of a common base, here we have two identical domains with a conceptual base unrelated to both domains. We thus have an attempt to integrate the entities GOD, CREATOR, FIRE, ABYSS into a proposition of transfer as a semantic argument of the latter. Nevertheless, the integration proves to be impossible, partly because

the category to be integrated is inclusive of the agent of the proposition or because pragmatically exceeds the capacity of the agent. Thus, a human cannot “bear” God, the clay cannot act upon its potter (the literal meaning of *plastourgós*) that has given it its form, a blade of grass cannot “bear” a fire, whereas an abyss exceeds unimaginably the capacity of a drop so that the latter cannot contain the former.

Bringing into fore this impossibility prepares the reader for the following inference that becomes the main theme for the second third of the text: God in his human dimension, namely Jesus, does not *belong* to the conceptual frames that constitute the experience of human history. In this sense Jesus takes over another role, that of an “alien”. Nevertheless, an alien that at the same time paradoxically enters and acts within human history. The passage is of the most beautiful of the sermon, written in direct speech form. Josef of Arimathea has come to Pilatus to ask for the dead body of Christ and in an excessively dramatised tone he starts each address with the sentence *give me this stranger*, repeated 12 times. In a short passage of 200 words, the word *ksénos* itself and its derivatives are found 26 times. The petition to Pilatus starts with *ksénos* making allusion to the place of provenance:

(16) Dos moi toûton ton ksénon; tí gar se ôfeleî to sôma  
toútou toû ksénou? Dos moi toûton ton ksénon; Ek makrâs gar  
êlthen ôde tês khôras...

‘Give me this stranger; what would benefit you the body  
of this stranger? Give me this stranger; he came from a place  
far away’ (445.39-41).

The meaning of *ksénos* here, especially in cooccurrence with the phrase *makrâs gar êlthen ôde tês khôras*, profiles the spatial distance between the place that Jesus was known as coming from, Nazareth, and the place of his crucifixion and death, namely Jerusalem. That would be the meaning NON-LOCAL of table 1 above. Nevertheless, the text completes the sentence in a surprising way:

(17) Ek makrâs gar êlthen ôde tês khôras hína sôsēi ton  
ksénon

‘He came from a place far away to save the stranger’ (l.  
445.41-42).

*Ksénos* here, beyond the Agent-subject, extends its denotation onto the Undergoer-object of the sentence. This last use not only extends the semasiological range of *ksénos* beyond the immediately obvious meaning of NON-LOCAL, but also merges it with the latter into

a new emergent meaning. Above, as shown in figure 5, *ksénos* emerges within a gestaltist network primarily as a function of space, where the incomer is found in the domain of a stable SELF that has to make a decision on the accommodation of this new presence. This is the reason why the SELF-domain was taken to be the ground and perspective of *ksénos*' conceptualisation. Nevertheless, here this perspective is paired by a symmetrical point of view, within a proposition that reads "a *ksénos* saves a *ksénos*". This paradoxical pairing creates a conceptual network that profiles a counterfactual: the impossibility for both participants to be at the same time STRANGERS in the same place. In turn, that gives rise to the possibility that *ksénos* in the case of the locals of Jerusalem does not refer to their geographical provenance, but to some place proper only to Jesus, to which they are not participants. In turn, this has a surprising effect: Jesus is STRANGER not because he comes from Nazareth but because he comes from a place to which the locals of Jerusalem do not belong. The emergence of this interpretation, whose network is presented in figure 7, constitutes a surprising shift of perspective, where Jesus becomes the potential HOST in a far-away place. The naturalness with which this artful shift takes place in the mind of the reader reveals that there is a common prototypical core behind the two uses of *ksénos* for Jesus, namely a NON-LOCAL *incomer* and at the same time a far-away RESIDENT. The former implies a relation with a LOCAL, whereas the second implies UNRELATEDNESS. The common schematic core that makes the two terms polysemous and not homonymous is the conceptualisation of *ksénos* as THE\_OTHER. As we saw earlier in figure 5, the concept of THE\_OTHER was shown to be constitutive of the notion of *ksénos* as one of the input spaces in the network. This is a very interesting finding that aligns with a central property of conceptual integration, namely backward projection into the input spaces. According to this property, the blended relations are deconstructible so that the original input spaces are usable in the blend (cf. Fauconnier and Turner, 1998). *Ksénos* as THE\_OTHER would be the incomer, whereas the UNRELATED\_OTHER would be THE\_OTHER before entering the domain of possession of the SELF, as shown in figure 7 repeating figure 5, where only the relevant parts of the blend are shown.

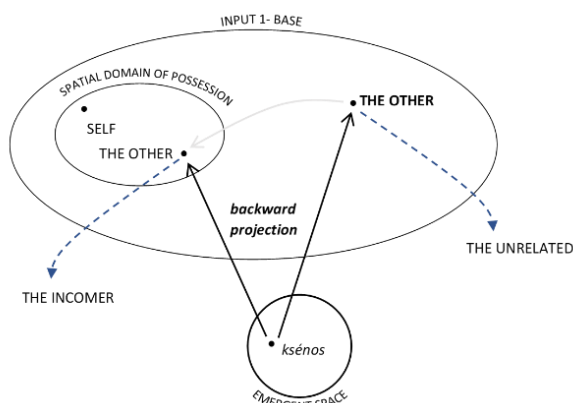


Figure 7. backward projection into the conceptual origin of *ksénos*: THE UNRELATED and the INCOMER

What is the function of this projection at a textual level? The sense of “not belonging” that arises emphasises on the ahistorical provenance of Jesus as a core characteristic of him and as a prerequisite for the possibility of human salvation (Bulgakov, 2008; Florovsky, 1976):<sup>4</sup>

(18) *Dos moi toûton ton ksénon; hoûtinós tén khóran agnooûmen hoy ksénoi*  
 ‘Give me this stranger whose place we, the strangers, don’t know’ (l. 445.47-48).

Profiling this alienating distance between an ahistorical Christ and the human *ksénos* amplifies the scope of the latter so that it includes not only the locals of Jerusalem but the whole of humanity. The passage continues exploiting the blend between the two conceptualisations of *ksénos* not only in terms of space but also time. Thus, Josef continues his petition that assigns a double meaning to the elements FATHER, PLACE, BIRTH and WAYS. The ignorance that he claims about these elements underlines their second meaning that infers a miraculous provenance and ways of life that the humans not only ignore but they also find it impossible to access logically. The passage continues by grounding Jesus to his historical dimension with a reference to his conditions of birth and his fleeing to Egypt, whereas it completes with another blend that makes use of the successively nested domains of CITY, VILLAGE, HOUSE, LODGE and RELATIVE. Essentially, the alienation of Christ from all possible domains that may signal some terrestrial affinity is emphatically construed for its maximal scope.

<sup>4</sup> I owe thanks to Evaggelos Bartzis for indicating to me the relevant references.

### 4.3 Jesus as ENEMY and HOST in Hades

We saw that Epiphanius' sermon starts with the use of elements that act as a connector between the alive and dead Jesus in his historical dimension. Nevertheless, this connection also prepares the ground for construing his ahistorical provenance, through a sense of "alienation" in an otherwise complete universe. Where else is somebody to be found if not either among the alive or the dead? Where is his origin to be placed if not among the people of some nation? If not one among the thieves, how could his guilt be condemned or absolved? Where does he exactly belong if not in the realm of humans or angels? Is there a "third" place held for him? This sense of alienation, as we saw, culminates into the ultimate inference of Jesus being an a-historical figure, a most decisive presupposition for human's salvation.

The rest of the sermon is a triumphant description of Christ's descent into Hades, that concludes with an integration that parallels the tiers of the divine, human and deceased integrated in the first part, namely those of the heavens, the earth and the underworld. The perspective from which the events are construed is dual: from the personification of Death himself and from the dead that are held captives in it. The proliferation of imagery used is astonishing. Jesus is presented now as an invader that breaks the bolts of Hades' door, kills Death and invites the dead into light. Hades is an underground place with innumerable cells, the deepest of which is the one where Adam himself is securely held:

(19) *Ho Adám ekeînos...endóteros pántōn êkoue tôn toû despótou podôn pros tous desmious eiserchoménōn kai egnôrisen tén fōnén autoû...*

'That Adam...in the deepest place of all, was hearing the Lord's footsteps entering towards the captives and recognised his voice' (l. 461.1-4).

From personified Hades and his servants-guards' perspective, Jesus is an enemy. Although the word *ksénos* is no longer used, the construal of his profile as an entity that belongs nowhere maintains its resonance when the reader is confronted with the impossible occurrence of Jesus as Life in Hades as Death. The total alienation of Christ from historically situated reality becomes all more emphatical when he descends into Hades, where he cannot be recognised, being completely unknown to the underworld:

(20) *Tís éstin hoûtos ho vasileús tês dóksēs, ho en Ádēi poiôn nún ta oudépote en Ádēi genómena?*

‘Who is this king of glory, doing in Hades what has never been done before?’ (l. 460.12-14).

Nevertheless, the co-occurrence of the conceptualisation of *ksénos* both as a far-away RESIDENT as well as an alienated entity has also its resonance in this part. Christ in the underworld does not appear only as an invading incomer but also as an inviting one. The invitation does not concern the simple revival of the dead but their reconstitution in Jesus’ far-away residence. Very subtly, the passage (19) cited above gives the reader a hint as to what this invitation actually refers to, when Adam is presented hearing and recognising the footsteps and voice of Jesus from the innermost cell of Hades. This scene partially repeats and at the same time inverts the effect of the one from Genesis, when Adam and Eve hear the voice and footsteps of God after they have tasted the tree of knowledge:

(21) Kai ékousan tês fōnês toû kuríou toû theoû peripatoúntos en tōi paradeísōi to deilinón kai ekrúbēsan...

‘and they heard the voice of the lord walking in the paradise at dusk and they hid away’ (*Gen.* 3.8).

In a blend of the two scenes where time and space are beautifully integrated, the footsteps and voice of Jesus reach the hidden place of the protoplasts so that what once was a sentence now becomes absolute and the estranged *ksénos* in Hades becomes again a local in Jesus’ realm.

## 5. Conclusion

This work aimed at exploring the literary exploitation of the gestaltist model of the term *ksénos*, understood as a network of integrated domains that gives rise to the polysemic nature of the term. It did so, by examining a relevant passage from Epiphanius’ sermon on Holy Saturday, where related but not identical uses of the term *ksénos* are found in an impressive abundance.

It first looked at the ancient Greek conception of the term as emerging from the integration of the domain of an entity that enters the domain of possession of a SELF. The binary opposition of SELF and THE\_OTHER was shown to be anchored onto SELF’s domain. *Ksénos*’ concept from a SELF’s perspective emerges as a mental projection of two possibilities: the one of a FRIEND and the other of an ENEMY. Each of the realisations collapses this binary possibility that represents the prototypical meaning of the term.

In order to contextualise synchronically Epiphanius' uses, the totality of the attested instances of the term in Greek papyri between 250 and 450 AD were examined. The range of meanings was found to be narrower than that of classical Greek, insofar as the absence of the sense of FRIEND is concerned. Nevertheless, meanings such as those of NON-RELATED and UNKNOWN present a finer-grained elaboration of STRANGER.

Epiphanius' sermon on Holy Saturday presents an impressive abundance of conceptual integrations. These are built around the polysemic network of *ksénos* that functions as the constitutive blueprint of the text and as the conceptual thread that cuts across the domains of the divine, human, and deceased, which parallel the spatial domains of the heavens, the earth and the underworld, respectively. In the first part of the sermon, elements that pertain to the middle level, namely HUMAN and EARTH, are used so that various blends are created between DIVINE and DECEASED. Central position within the elements of the middle level occupies Jesus himself in his human and historical dimension. Nevertheless, this sense of conciliation and belonging that the first part builds is deconstructed in the second, where Jesus is presented as the one who "does not belong": between the alive and dead, Romans and Jews, between two thieves, humans and angels, Jesus is presented as the total estranged. It was shown that this deconstruction is effectuated through backward access to the input spaces of the network of *ksénos*, with the latter used in this part to denote THE\_OTHER. Nevertheless, this total alienation has an interesting effect: the inferential identification of Jesus not as a NON-LOCAL incomer but as a LOCAL\_RESIDENT in his proper domain, to which the whole of humanity is a *ksénos*. In this shift of perspective, Jesus becomes the potential HOST in a far-away place. The naturalness of this shift argues for a common prototypical core behind the two uses of *ksénos* that belong to the same gestalt.

These uses of *ksénos* resonate their inferences in the last part of the sermon, where Jesus enters Hades both as an inviting as well as an invading stranger. Invading as *ksénos* to Death, and inviting as a possessor of a far-away realm that he has never abandoned, albeit a human.

**Works cited:**

- Belfiore, Elizabeth. "Xenia in Sophocles' Philoctetes", *The Classical Journal* 89.2, 1994. 113–129. Print.
- Belfiore, Elizabeth. "Harming friends: problematic reciprocity in Greek tragedy". *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece*. Eds. Christopher Gill, Norman Postlethwaite and Richard Seaford. Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1998. 139-158. Print.
- Bulgakov, Sergius. *The Lamb of God*. Translated by Boris Jakim. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008. Print.
- Clarke, Michael. "Semantics and vocabulary". *A companion to Ancient Greek language*. Ed. Egbert J. Baker. UK: Blackwell, 2010. 120-133. Print.
- Evans, Vyvyan. *Cognitive Linguistics. A complete guide*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019. Print.
- Fauconnier, Gilles. *Mental Spaces*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1985]/1994. Print.
- Fauconnier, Gilles. *Mappings in Thought and Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Print.
- Fauconnier, Gilles and Mark, Turner. "Conceptual integration networks". *Cognitive Linguistics: Basic readings*. Ed. Dirk Geeraerts. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1998. 303-371. Print.
- Fauconnier, Gilles and Mark Turner. "Compression and Global Insight". *Cognitive Linguistics* 11.3-4, 2000. 283-304. Print.
- Fauconnier, Gilles and Mark, Turner. *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities*. New York: Basic Books, 2002. Print.
- Fauconnier Gilles and Mark Turner. "Polysemy and conceptual blending". *Polysemy: Patterns of Meaning in Mind and Language*. Eds. Brigitte Nerlich, Zazie Todd, Vimala Herman and David D. Clarke. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2003. 79-94. Print.
- Florovsky, Georges. "Cur Deus Homo? The Motive of the Incarnation" *The Collected Works of Georges Florovsky, vol. 3*. Belmont MA: Nordland, 1976. 163-170. Print.
- Gould, John. "Hiketieia". *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 93, 1973. 74-103. Print.
- Herman, Gabriel. *Ritualised friendship and the Greek city*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987. Print.
- Hutchins, Edwin. *Cognition in the wild*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1995. Print.
- Ioannou, Georgios. "The sense of ksénos in Ancient Greek. Prototypical schematicity and blending in a complex praxis". *Journal of Greek Linguistics* 23(2), 2023: 164-194. Print.
- Konstan, David. "Greek friendship". *American Journal of Philology* 117, 1996. 71–94. Print.
- Lakoff, George. *Women, fire and dangerous things*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1987. Print.
- Mauss, Marcel. *The Gift forms and functions of exchange in archaic societies*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1954. Print.
- Neri, Sergio. "Zum urindogermanischen Wort für 'Hand'". *Multi Nominis Grammaticus: Studies in Classical and Indo-European Linguistics in Honor*

- of Alan J. Nussbaum on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday. Eds. Adam I. Cooper, Jeremy Rau and Michael Weiss. Ann Arbor: Beech Stave, 2013. 185–205. Print.
- Schwartz, Martin. 1982. "The Indo-European Vocabulary of Exchange, Hospitality, and Intimacy (The Origins of Greek *ksénos*, *sún*, *phílos*; Avestan *xšnu-*, *xšnman-*, etc.). Contributions to Etymological Methodology". *Proceedings of the Eighth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society*. Berkley: BLS, 1982. 188–204. Print.
- Schwartz, Martin. "Gathic Compositional History, Y 29, and Bovine Symbolism". *Paitimāna, Essays in Iranian, Indo-European, and Indian Studies in Honor of Hanns Peter Schmidt*. Ed. Siamak Adhami. Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda: 95–249. Print.
- Strathern, Marilyn. *The gender of the gift: Problems with women and problems with society in Melanesia*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988. Print.

#### ENTRE INTIMIDAD Y ALIENACIÓN: EL SENTIDO PROTOTÍPICO DE *KSÉNOS* EN GRIEGO Y SU EXPLOTACIÓN LITERARIA EN EL SERMÓN DE EPIPHANIO SOBRE EL SÁBADO SANTO.

Este trabajo analiza la forma en que la red polisémica del término *ksénos*, que significa "invitado", "anfitrión" y "extranjero" en griego antiguo, es explotada literalmente por el escritor cristiano del siglo IV Epiphanius, en un sermón sobre el sábado santo. El texto es de particular interés, dado que hace un uso prolífero del término en un pasaje que ocupa un lugar central en su trabajo. El análisis ofrece primero una representación de la teoría gestáltica que subyace la conceptualización del término, comprendiendo este último como un concepto emergente dentro de una red de integración conceptual. A su vez, contextualiza sincrónicamente el sermón al dar una codificación semántica bastante fina de las instancias existentes del término, encontradas en los papiros griegos entre 250 y 450 d. C. Finalmente, analiza los usos concretos del término en el texto de Epiphanius, ubicando cada uno ellos dentro de la red de integración de *ksénos* y explorando su función a nivel textual.

**Palabras clave:** prototipicidad, redes polisémicas, griego antiguo, integración conceptual.