

The expression of gender in Phrygian onomastics

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT PHRYGIAN?

Phrygian is an ancient Indo-European language that was spoken in Central-Western Anatolia. Sources allow the identification of two distinct stages of the language: Old Phrygian (VIII-IV Century BC) and New Phrygian (I-III Century AD). A “Middle Phrygian” stage is thought to be represented by only two inscriptions (G-12 and MPhr-01).



Map of Phrygian epigraphical sources, from phrygianmonuments.com

AN OBSCURE LANGUAGE

- Phrygian is a Restsprache: we have very few direct sources, that only consist of epigraphs, and some indirect sources.
- Phrygian texts are often brief and/or hardly readable.
- Most importantly, we are not able to exactly place Phrygian within the IE family.

This study takes into consideration all known sources for Phrygian onomastics, both direct and indirect.

01 Nominal morphology

- Three classes of nominal inflection: $\bar{a}$ -stems, o-stems and C-stems.
- Three gender values: masculine, feminine and neuter.
- Four (attested) cases: nominative, genitive, dative and accusative.

The inflection of pronouns and adjectives shows that the $\bar{a}$ -stem inflection is closely associated with the feminine gender. This is consistent with the latest stage of the PIE gender system: the $\bar{a}$ -stem vowel comes from the grammaticalized suffix $*-eh_2-$.

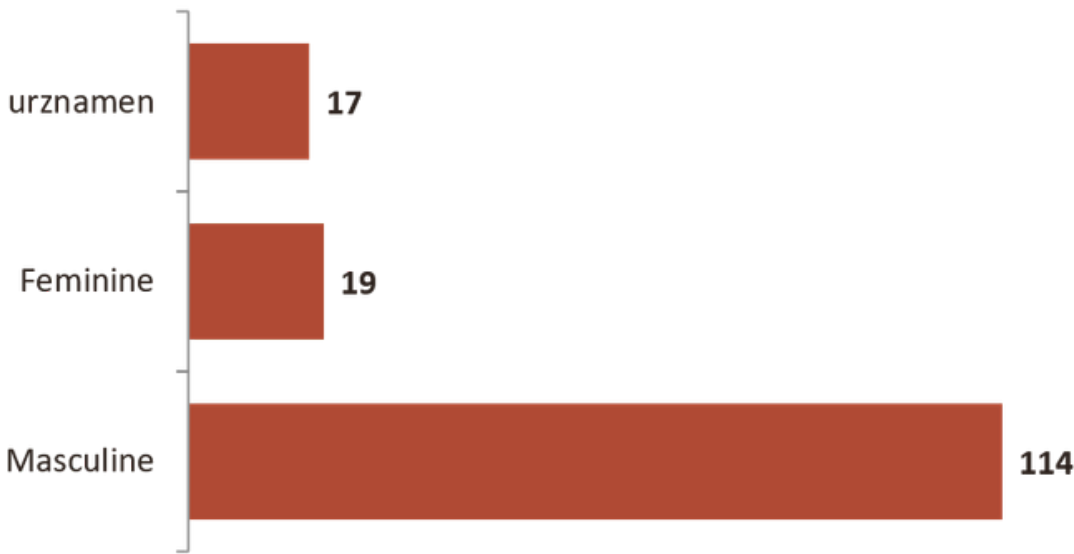
02 Personal names in direct and indirect sources

Direct sources for the Phrygian language:

- Religious and funerary inscriptions
- Graffiti left by owners on objects
- Three coin legends

Together these yield around 160 personal names, most of which are masculine.

Greek authors and historians who wrote about the Phrygians adapt their names into Greek. For example, the name of the legendary king **Midas** (as we find it in the Phrygian corpus) appears mostly as **Μίδαας**, and only in Herodotus as **Μίδης**.



03 Gender in personal names

- Most PNs bear a **prototypical gender morpheme**:
G-110: lagineios
G-276: [l]agineia
- Feminine anthroponyms belong almost exclusively to the $\bar{a}$ -stem inflection class, while masculine anthroponyms are found across all three stem inflections.
- Some **$\bar{a}$ -stem masculine names** show an interesting fluctuation:
G-06: babas
but also: baba (M-01b, G-121).

These are Anatolian loan names: the fluctuation might be due to (lack of) adaptation.

REFERENCES

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Scan the QR code for an extended bibliography on the Phrygian language



04 Is -a-s the marker of $\bar{a}$ -stem masculine names?

- Evidence from Greek adaptations of the (probably) Phrygian Personal Name ***Gordiyas** (Obrador-Cursach 2019: 549):
Γορδίας / Γορδιης < ***Gordiyas**
- We also have an adapted Persian personal name (in a Middle Phrygian inscription!):
G-12: Paršaparnas < OPers. ***Pārsa-farnah**
- Clues of a grammaticalization process can be found in pronominal morphology, specifically in the anaphoric pronoun (masculine singular):
τος (nom. sing.);
τοvo (gen. sing.); NPhr. του (dat. sing.).
- Compare this Old Phrygian personal name:
W-10: leravo
- $\bar{a}$ -stem masculine nominatives take a **sigmatic ending**. The analogical Ophr. ending **–vo** may also have been used extensively to mark masculine genitives.
- The model for these **analogical endings** seems to be the o-stem inflection of masculine pronouns.

05 Diachrony

- This declension type seems to be already grammaticalized in Old Phrygian.
- It seems to extend onward, as seen in the adapted Old Persian name **Parsaparnas** from inscription G-12.
- In the New Phrygian corpus only **ακαλας** and **δουδας** survive, read as genitives by Obrador Cursach (2018: 69; 135; 173) but from a damaged text (37.2) that could allow nominatives.

06 A common isogloss with Greek

- The scheme closely resembles Greek first-declension masculines: nom. **-ας/ -ης**, gen. **-ου**.
- **Morpurgo Davies (1968)**: the Greek pattern is an analogical formation on first-class adjectives, built to separate masculine from feminine with o-stem markers.
- If the Phrygian account holds, this is a common **morphological isogloss** (Obrador-Cursach 2019: 236; 238).

The two languages most probably developed the innovation independently. Yet, the relation between the two innovations has yet to be studied

