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The sense of *ksénos* in Ancient Greek

Prototypical schematicity and blending in a complex praxis

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Abstract

The present work looks at the term *ksénos* as an access point to the enacted model of hospitality—*ksenía*—in ancient Greece. It deduces the onomasiological and semasiological spread of the term across the model's participants, namely GUEST, STRANGER but also HOST, into a schematic prototypical core within a complex and dynamic conceptual integration model. Along the spatial continuum of DISTANCE-APPROACHING-PROXIMITY, the analysis looks into APPROACHING as an emergent space, where GIFT-EXCHANGE is interpreted as a process of mental-space shift on the part of a stable SELF confronting the incoming OTHER. POSSESSIONS EXCHANGE conceptualised as non-commodifiable and non-alienable to the giver activates the metaphorical relation HAVE as BE. Thus, the abrupt confrontation is accommodated as an *ad hoc* partial substitutability of each participant's identity by the identity of the other. Some Proto-Indo-European etymologies proposed in literature for the term are reviewed, and their compatibility with the present analysis is evaluated.

Keywords

Ancient Greek – hospitality – prototypical meaning – enacted mental space construction – conceptual integration – etymology

1 Introduction

The notion of prototypicality was introduced in semantic theory as an empirically testable alternative (cf. Rosch & Mervis 1975, Rosch et al. 1976, Geeraerts 1997) to a long-standing tradition based on necessary and sufficient conditions (cf. Geeraerts 1986), where lexical meanings were determined in a discrete way either as instances of a given category or not (Coleman & Kay 1981). Clear-cut categorial membership—if it could ever exist—would make literal translation easy, given that it would suffice to substitute the truth-based characterisations for the ontologically attested meaning of the words to be translated. Nevertheless, it is also well known that literal translations fail to deliver an ontologically valid one-to-one correspondence between two terms, simply because each of them can never mean something in isolation but only as a member of a network of semantic relations and as a point of access to a culturally situated context.

The problem of translatability, essentially a matter of semantic equivalence, becomes ever more challenging when it comes to the vocabulary of ancient languages. As Clarke (2014) points out, Ancient Greek terms such as *agorá* can never mean simply “marketplace”, which is one of its usual translations. This is so because *agorá* was actually a place of *gathering*, as the etymology of the term reconstructed into a Proto-Indo-European (PIE) **h₂ger-* “gather” reveals. Consequently, merchandising was not the main activity subsumed under the term. With activities of political responsibility being the main ones carried out (Clarke 2014: 123), others included administration, social interaction, religious practices, etc. In that sense, commercial activity does not do justice to the nuclear meaning of *agorá*, given that it constitutes only a referential narrowing of what the word’s denotatum could include. In other words, “commercial activity” fails to conceptualise merchandising as just one of the many instances of gathering, which is all meanings’ common denominator. Clarke argues that—at least as a matter of communicative optimisation—there must be some “source or centre of meaning”, towards which the multiplicity of the words’ surface points, as its common motivation. At the same time, this source must ensure the felicitous character of any new pragmatic use. Importantly, semantic relatedness cannot be evaluated only in terms of similarity of meaning, as for example the very frequent and crosslinguistic association of the sense of “friend” to that of an “enemy” shows (Sakhno & Tersis 2008).

A vexing problem from the very inception of the notion of prototypicality that still remains to a great extent unresolved concerns its exact nature for lexical categories (Arppe et al. 2010, Gilquin 2010, Glynn 2014a). How is the “primary sense”, this “centre of meaning” of a polysemous item identified? It

has been interpreted in various ways. For instance, it can refer to a historically prior meaning or to the most frequently used. In any case, identification of a specific sense as the prototypical one may run into the problem of what has been called the “polysemy fallacy” (Sandra 1998, Falkum & Vicente 2015, Brugman 1988). On the other hand, a more principled approach takes a prototype to be a more schematic core—not necessarily lexicalised—that summarises and subsumes a network of related meanings (Glynn 2014a, Glynn 2014b, Ioannou 2020a). This could be a “proto-scene” (Tyler & Evans 2003) or what can be called a “schematic profile”. Finally, another particular aspect of prototypicality concerns the relevance of the cultural and actual communicative context that not only renders a specific meaning salient but also can give rise to a term’s semantic change. This “bridging context” mediates between two different senses (Evans & Wilkins 2000, Geeraerts 2017), thus motivating the network-like nature of a polysemous term. In turn, abstracting over this series of contextually enriched uses of a term may result in the transformation of the prototype itself into a more schematic core, so that it accommodates anew the augmented polysemic network (see Langacker 2008, Ioannou 2017).

Given this tension between a schematic conceptual core and an enriched communicative contextualisation, a dual challenge arises for a prototype-based analysis: The first challenge is to achieve not only the prototype’s appropriate level of schematicity but also accommodate the cultural complexity of the situation denoted. The relevant notion here would be “immanence” (Langacker 2008: 56, 174), understood as the property of gestaltist schemas “lying within” their instantiations. The point is made clear when one looks at the etymology of *agorá* as “gathering place”, a schematic meaning that is immanent to the whole range of pragmatically instantiated situations such as political activities, merchandising, etc. Essentially, this schematicity is not conceptually disconnected from the “*praxis*” that pragmatically instantiates it but emanates from this *praxis*. The second challenge is to connect a—so to say—static conceptual core in the mental lexicon to the dynamic nature of its construction through the communicative *praxis* of its use.

Given the general scarcity of works that try to advance towards a better understanding of Ancient Greek vocabulary, recasting its treatment through more recent frameworks such as cognitive linguistic approaches to meaning constitutes an advance in the field. Especially for terms with a heavy cultural load, connecting the complexity of their contextualised use with a schematic reduction that unifies this complexity appears all more important. In this light, the present work takes the ancient Greek term *ksénos*, traditionally translated as ‘guest’ and ‘foreigner’—two nuclear meanings already present in Homer from 7th c. BCE but also much earlier in Mycenaean texts (Varias 2017)—and

tries to trace its prototypical meaning as related to a pragmatically unfolding, communicative and culturally entrenched context. The particular interest that the term presents is its onomasiological and semasiological spread across the institutionalised model of *ksenía*, simultaneously denoting the GUEST, HOST and STRANGER participants. This fact points towards a formulation of a prototype that cannot be a single sense but a more schematic conceptual core. Second, this conceptual core must be complex enough so that it encompasses in its schematicity meanings that are not only different but also *quasi* contradictory in their denotational properties. Thus, given the well-documented semantic and social complexity represented by the term *ksénos*, the current work is motivated precisely by the challenge that a prototypical representation presents: how can a single conceptual core plausibly integrate this semantic spread that in dictionaries is inevitably defined with two or three adjoined terms? In addition, how can a single representation compress a cultural model that pragmatically unfolds its institutional complexity in real time and in a script-like manner?

In order to meet these challenges, the present analysis utilises the framework of mental space construction (Fauconnier 1994) and conceptual integration (Fauconnier & Turner 2002). Regarding the empirical part, it looks at some evidence that incorporates the use of the term in ancient Greek texts. Theoretically, it enriches our understanding of the term with critical insights found in the relevant current academic literature.

The remainder of the present work is structured as follows: section 2 presents the elements and relations in the general cultural model of *ksenía* as an institutionalised relation of reciprocity, while section 3 elaborates on the embedding of the term in a more general theme of Classical Athenian culture, namely a preoccupation with *ad hoc* personal choices that can resolve naturally occurring contradictions. Section 4 lays out the relational character of the concept *ksénos* within the gestaltist configuration of the model of *ksenía*, and then section 5 looks at the notion of *ksénos* as an emerging concept, resulting from the processual interaction of two domains, those of a stable SELF and an incoming OTHER, through a series of integrations taking place in real time and along the continuum DISTANCE-PROXIMITY. Section 6 looks at the compatibility of a number of etymologies for the term *ksénos* that prominently feature in literature, on the one hand, and the schematic conceptualisation of the term presented in the analysis, on the other. The work concludes with some final remarks in section 7.

2 The notion of *ksénos* through textual evidence

The Ancient Greek term *ksénos* represents a notion that occupies a central position in ancient Greek culture and a theme of anthropological, philosophical, sociocultural and religious preoccupation in academic literature (cf. Agier 2018, Derrida 2000, Benveniste 1969, Belfiore 1994, Belfiore 1998, Dupont 2013, Konstan 1997, 2022, Seaford, 2022). Part of the ampler concept of *ksenía*, an institutionalised relationship of guest-friendship (Belfiore 1998:139), *ksénos* has become a point of dispute regarding its appropriate translation but also the nature of the concept it represents in its historical and communicative context alike. Particular difficulties in this respect are represented both at an onomasiological as well as a semasiological level. Regarding the first, in the sociocultural model of hospitality, *ksénos* denotes two participants in the model, namely the HOST and the GUEST. Regarding the semasiological level, the meaning of ‘friend-guest’ for the same participant can extend its denotation into the meanings of ‘stranger’/‘foreigner’. In other words, we are dealing here with a term with a wide range of distribution across a coherent model, which includes the successive points of DISTANCE, APPROACHING and PROXIMITY, interpreted spatially but also interpersonally.

The term *ksénos* already from Homer means simultaneously ‘foreigner’ and ‘guest’ (cf. Konstan 1997: 34). Nevertheless, these two meanings do not seem to be related to each other through some mechanism of semantic extension, given that in the prototypical context where they are encountered—namely the ritually unfolded scenario of *ksenía*—they are both conceptually blended. The lexicographer Hesychius, c. 5th century CE, renders the term as ‘a friend [*phílos*] from a foreign land’ (Konstan op. cit.). This is a conceptualisation that compresses a dynamic scenario unfolding in time into its most archetypical parts. Nevertheless, these two parallel interpretations, namely ‘foreigner’ and ‘friend’, are not just different but potentially opposite in their implications. Especially if we take into account the fact that it is not only ‘foreigner’ and ‘guest’ that are denoted by the term but also ‘host’, things get more complex. It is difficult, hence, to see how the sense ‘foreigner’ holds a relation of metonymic extension to that of ‘guest’ (cf. Sakhno & Tersis 2008). The term *ksénos*—even with the meaning ‘foreigner’—is not used in the absolute sense of someone who does not belong to a community, but of someone that *enters* the community, not being part of it, as is evident in the following passage from Pindar’s *Isthm.* 1.51, where “strangers” evidence the athlete’s victory:

- (1) *Hós d’ amph’ aéthlois hē polemízōn árētai kúdos habrón, euagorētheís kerdos húpiston déketai, poliatân kai ksénōn glóssas áōton.*

'But he who wins rich renown in the games or in war receives the highest gain: to be well spoken of by his fellow-citizens and by strangers, the choicest bloom of speech' (Loeb's trans., W. Race).

The notion FOREIGNER under the term *ksénos* does not seem to have an independent motivation in Ancient Greek, in contrast to the term *allodapós*, 'from another place'. Consider the following example, again from Pindar, Nem. 1.19, where *ksénos* in the compound term *philóksenos* 'hospitable' cooccurs with that of *allodapós*:

- (2) *Éstan d' ep' auleíais thúrais andrós philokseínou kalà melpómenos, énthā moi harmódion deîpnon kekósmētai, thamà d' allodapôn ouk apeíratōi dómoi entí.*

'And I have taken my stand at the courtyard gates of a **generous host** as I sing of noble deeds, where a fitting feast has been arranged for me, for this home is not unfamiliar with frequent visitors **from abroad**' (Loeb's trans., W. Race).

In this passage, the use of the adjective *allodapós* is less specified than *ksénos*. Beyond the independent evidence of the present translation, *allodapôn* is semantically specified further through the nominal phrase *apeíratōi dómoi*, thus completing a predication that can be paraphrased as 'the halls host strangers', evidence that argues for the conceptually composite nature of *ksénos*. Additionally, *allodapós* onomasiologically contrasts to *hēmedapós*, literally 'from our place'. In contrast, *ksénos* does not present an onomasiological counterpart of this type, but semasiologically blends two spaces, that of ONESELF'S PLACE, as well as OUTSIDE ONESELF'S PLACE, as shown in figure 1.

The terms *ksénos* and *ksenía* have attracted much attention in the analysis of Classical Greek literature, especially in the context of the tradition of *reciprocity* (cf. Belfiore 1994, 1998), as an institutionalised relationship of guest-friendship (Belfiore 1998: 139), a ritually initiated personal relation (Herman 2002). More precisely, *ksenía* represents the transcendence of a boundary into the realm of potential "*philia*", a quasi-kinship relation (cf. Konstan 1996). The latter is not defined by nature but by social convention, nevertheless using conceptualisations that are proper to kinship (Gould 1973). When Diomedes realises that the grandfathers of his and Glaucus had been engaged in relation of *ksenía*, pleasantly pronounces:

- (3) *Tō nún soi mèn egò kseínos phílos en Árgei méssōi eimí, sù d' en Lukíēi.*
'Therefore, I am your host-friend in the heart of Argos; you are mine in Lykia' (*Il.* 6.224)

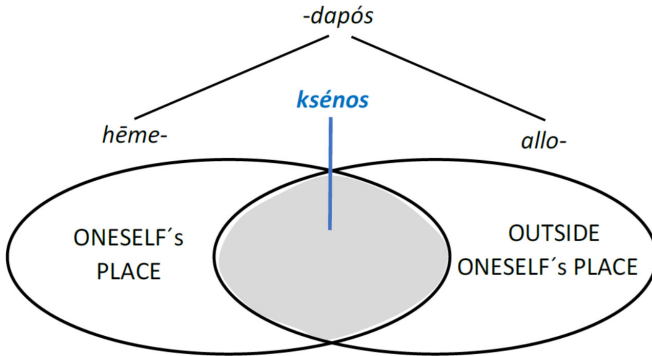


FIGURE 1 *ksénos* as blend of two spaces

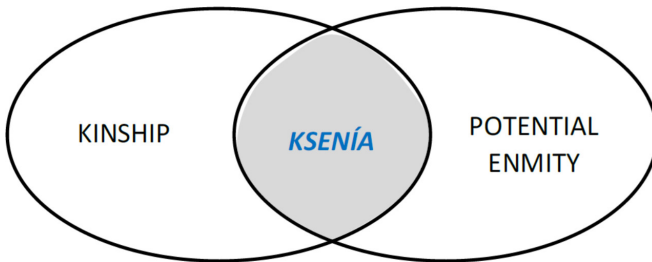


FIGURE 2 The placement of *ksenía* between *ENMITY* and *KINSHIP*

Hence, in this light, *ksenía* as an elaboration of the schema in figure 1 can be seen as located at the interface between the realm of a FOREIGNER—and for that matter a potential enemy—into that of a KIN, as shown in figure 2.

The institutionalisation of the relation is sanctioned through the ritual of gifts and favour offering, which reciprocally generates the mutual binding between the two parts (Herman 1987) and the obligation of “owing the favour”, as reflected in Sophoclean *Aias*:

- (4) *Kháris khárin gár estin hē tíktous' aei.*
 ‘It is the favour that always gives birth to another favour’ (*Aias*, 522)

This binding is in fact so strong that the same term can easily be found within a single sentence with both senses of HOST and GUEST. This double mention can even create an ambiguity as to which of the two mentions denotes which participant, as shown in the following passage (translated by Kurke 1991: 126):

- (5) *Dôron ékhōn ... eks emeû, hoîa filoi kseînoi kseînoisin didoûsi.*
 ‘... bearing a gift ... what sorts of things dear *ksénoi* give to their *ksénoi*.’
 (*Od.* 1. 311–313)

This unproblematic ambiguity indicates a level of conceptualisation where both HOST and GUEST have reached a symmetric relation and have become *quasi*-identical regarding their role within the model of hospitality. As Kurke (1991: sec. 6) has shown, the ambiguity that can arise through a conceptual fusion of roles is welcome in its literary exploit by Pindar. Pindar's treatment of *ksenía* elevates the relation at a metaphorical level, where either the poet or the victor can become HOST and GUEST in a reciprocal relation of *khreós* and *kháris*. In this relation, obligation and its gracious propitiation, respectively, are equally fused. In this sense, the role of HOST is inverted so that it is the poet who first gives accommodation to the victor in the chambers of his poetic mind, with the grace of the victor's treatment only following. In the nucleus of this relation lies *reciprocity*, which in the model of hospitality seems to profile more prominently than visiting itself. Metaphorisation of *ksenía* as an identification process between domains which follows the schematisation between them (cf. Lakoff 1987), namely those of HOST and GUEST, indicates that *ksenía* is foremost a mental construct that categorises these domains and their participants into their schematic essentials.

3 *Ksenía* as a mental construction between enmity and natural kinship

The negotiation of *ksenía* is a central theme in Greek tragedy, itself embedded in the wider theme of violation of the binding appropriated by kinship relations, under the scope of some *páthos*, a painful event. The typology of *páthos* itself would vary across two axes: that of *presence-absence of recognition*¹ and that of *friendship-enmity* among the involved parts. Aristotle says (*Po.* 1452a 29–31) that “recognition is ... the change from ignorance to knowledge, either towards friendship [*phílan*] or enmity”. Naturally, the least interesting case for Aristotle is the one involving “non-recognition of enmity” as plainly non-tragic, whereas “recognition of enmity” has been analysed as a less interesting case too (Belfiore 1998; but see further below). On the other hand, in ignorance of the relationship of *phília*, a hero does or is about to commit an act of its violation, harming the other part. This would be, for example, the case of Oedipus killing his father in *Oedipus Rex*. The other case is the deliberate provoking of *pathos*, which does not involve recognition on the part of the actor, such as the Clytemnestra's murdering act against Agamemnon.

1 The etymology of the Greek term for recognition, *anagnórisis*, means literally ‘knowing anew’, thus signaling the *transition* from ignorance to knowledge, not some *a priori* knowledge.

Nevertheless, beyond the two axes *presence-absence of recognition* and *friendship-enmity* that define the typology of *pathos* in Greek tragedy, there is a third one, namely that of *nature-convention*. Whereas some relations fall in the category of kinship by nature, others lie either at the border—such as the marriage between Clytemnestra and Agamemnon—or outside the naturally defined binding. The latter would be represented precisely by the relation of *ksenía*. Being a relation “by social convention”, *ksenía* is placed in the middle of enmity-*philia* continuum as understood by Aristotle and as depicted schematically above in figure 2. If recognition of *philia* in the context of *páthos* exemplarily produces the tragic effect, the placement of *ksenía* in the interfacial zone between enmity and kinship gives rise to very interesting conflicts (cf. Rehm 1994), but this time placed in the sphere of the hero’s mental space of *choice*. The necessary relation of kinship imposes a legality that is in principle binding. Nevertheless, the relation of *ksenía* poses *par excellence* “moral problems of man’s responsibility” (cf. Vernant & Naquet 1988: chpt. 1), underlining the relevance of the choice between accepting the bonds of an otherwise “unnecessary relation” or not. The aforementioned institutionalisation is not one sanctioned by an authoritative sacred or political power that watches over the application of *ksenía* as a law (Auffarth 1992), but through a collective agreement that sets the individual against their own responsibility as an indispensable part of a universe, who necessarily has to make a choice between two opposites. *Ksenía* is not motivated by an Empedoclean natural transition from *neikos*, ‘enmity’, to *philotes*, ‘friendship’, mediated though an intermediate state of contention between enmity and friendship (cf. O’Brien 1969, Palmer 2020). It represents in this sense an “abrupt” state between ‘strife’ and ‘love’ (op. cit.). In that sense, *convention* with the etymological meaning of the term as ‘come together’ (from Latin *con-venire*) would signal a common *ad hoc* space where the tragic incompatibility between *philia* and *neikos* must be resolved. Aeschylus’ *Suppliants* precisely emphasises on this duality of kinship along an axis of necessity-free choice, naturalness-social convention, an aspect of the play that possibly has not been stressed enough in the relevant literature. Suppliance in Ancient Greece presents a great area of overlapping with *ksenía*, with the latter being initiated by suppliance (Belfiore 1998: 146). The very term for suppliant in Greek, *hikétides*, underlies etymologically² the arriving of a *ksénos* into a realm of potential *philia*.

This realm is not just a physical place such as a sanctuary, a city, or a household, but foremost a place of mental space shifting, where one is “forced to

2 From *hikánō*, meaning “arrive”.

make a decisive choice, to orient their activity in a universe of ambiguous values where nothing is ever stable or unequivocal” (Vernant op. cit.). It is a type of transcendence, as Gould (1973) puts it, a passing from the space of *ksénos*—in the sense of ‘outsider’ and for that matter a potential³ enemy—to *ksénos* in the sense of ‘guest’, one who in the future may be addressed as *philos* (Belfiore 1994). Sophocles in his *Philoctetes*, in a narrative frame that is very reminiscent of the frame of *ksenía*, uses the word *ksénos* with variant connotations that may range from ‘enemy’, ‘stranger’ and friendly ‘stranger’ to ‘guest’ and ‘friend,’ often with an artfully construed impossibility to discern the appropriate sense (op. cit.). In this way the poet skilfully exploits the ambiguities of this word and its cognates in his portrayal of the ambiguous relationship between Neoptolemus and Philoctetes.

Donlan (1989) stresses the difference between a simple and absolute notion of “temporary guest” to the relational and much more complex notion of *ksénos*. Interestingly, the transition of a person from being a foreigner into being a *ksénos* parallels in various intriguing aspects the Aristotelian transition from ignorance into recognition regarding the tragic effect, a theme exploited in the classic Homeric incident between Diomedes and Glaucus, where the transition from enemy into *ksénos* coincides with an event of abrupt recognition. Just as *ksénos* cannot be a temporary guest, in much the same sense *ksénos* cannot take the “absolute, unknown, anonymous” and isolated value of foreigner (Derrida 2000). The prototypical conceptualisation of the term can be understood as an *overcoming* of the alienated state and the *entering* into the realm of familiar. This is the point made by Dupont (2013) in her critique of Derrida’s translation of the term as ‘stranger’ or ‘foreigner’. The absolute and “infinite” definition of “otherness” following a pure notion of hospitality in Derrida results into a notion of hospitality that in the ancient Greek context is impossible to define qualitatively. On the other hand, I think that Dupont’s translation of *ksénos* as ‘guest’ does not resolve the issue completely, along the lines of the aforementioned problematic character of *ksénos* as ‘guest’ understood in a referentially absolute sense. The problematic treatment of *ksénos* as guest arises also in Benveniste’s analysis of *ksenía* as a “pact”, given that *ksénos* is treated “as already close” to the HOST (Agier 2013: 14), somehow “inscribed in *ksenía*”, as Dufourmantelle comments (Derrida 2000: 29). An absolute conceptualisation of the referent implies an almost ontological view at the essence of *ksénos*; but the model of *ksenía* is not one of ontology—

3 If not a necessary one (cf. Agier 2018).

an essentialist ontology cannot yield the term's full-fledged meaning (Dupont 2013: 146). The latter is one of configuration of contextualised *mental spaces* (Fauconnier, 1994).

4 The position of *ksénos* in a complex gestalt

The very early attestations of the use of the term for a chain of semantic participants that ranges along the grid STRANGER-GUEST-HOST and parallels the spatial scale DISTANCE-APPROACHING-PROXIMITY speak of a conceptual complex, a script-like gestaltist theory (Attardo 2020). Its parts can only be understood in terms of the existence of the rest. This general characteristic of the gestaltist entities has been systematically explored in literature for image schematic structures and is a definitional property of them (cf. Johnson 1987, Lakoff 1987, Hampe 2005). In the SOURCE_PATH_GOAL image schema, for instance, the primary experiential concepts of SOURCE and GOAL cannot be formulated, unless the whole configuration is already present. In this sense, a GOAL is a perspective taken over—or profiled—against the activated background of PATH.

As has already been noted, a challenge that arises is the following: the schematic prototypicality accessed through the term *ksénos* should also sanction the enactment of the ritual-like process of *ksenía* as a sociocultural communicative *praxis* in real time, a conceptually dynamic process of transformation of a STRANGER into a GUEST. This argues for the possibility of analysing the model in terms of *on-line mental space construction* (Fauconnier & Turner 2002) that manifests the presence of emergent semantic properties.

In figure 2 above, *ksenía* is located at the interface between the domain of ENMITY and that of KINSHIP. Elaborating on that schema as the interaction of two mental spaces in figure 3 and in the light of the analysis in sec. 3, we can understand ENMITY and KINSHIP/PHILÍA themselves as emergent scenarios of the interaction of the domains of DISTANCE and PROXIMITY. In the realm of PROXIMITY are located the participants HOST, KIN and ENEMY. In accord with such a representation, outside the realm of *ksenía*, *ksénos* is merely THE OTHER and only in the interfacial area of *ksenía* does it have the potential of being either a KIN (BY POSITION) or an ENEMY. HOST, as an incidental receiver of a temporary GUEST relates actually with THE OTHER and not with *ksénos*; see figure 3.

Plausible as it may be as a first approximation to the complexity of the model, such a representation does not do complete justice to some critical

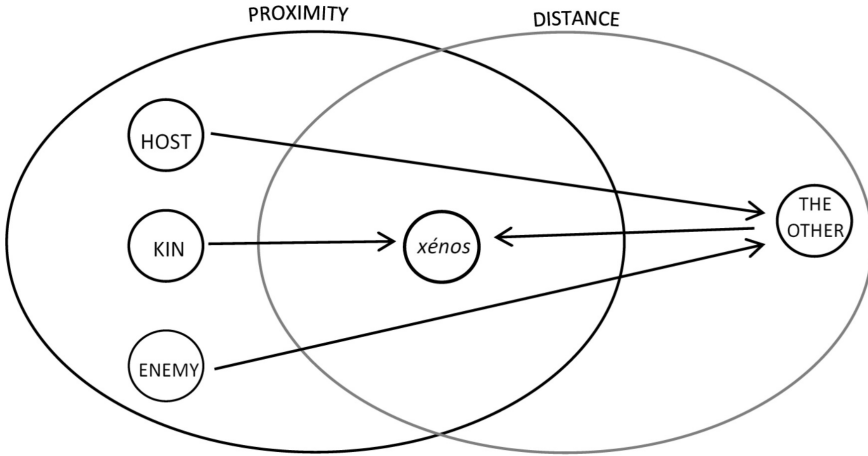


FIGURE 3 Gestaltist conceptualisation of *ksénos* in the model of *kseanía*

aspects of the conceptualisation of the term, through which it must be enriched. These aspects, the majority of which have already been referred to throughout the present analysis, are summarised as follows:

- a. The sense ‘stranger’, even as a semasiological extension⁴ of *ksénos*, cannot be conceptualised simply as THE OTHER. It has to be embedded in the same gestaltist model for the prototypical meaning of *ksénos*. This is the basic point of the critique expressed against Derrida’s definition.
- b. The same point should be made for *ksénos* as expressing the participant GUEST. This cannot be interpreted as such unless it becomes *relational* to the notion of THE OTHER; in other words, only if it is profiled as a foregrounded portion against the gestaltist wholeness. Crucially, *ksénos* incorporates both senses of “outsider” and “insider” in a single blend, in a relational complex model of overlapping notions.
- c. The notion of *ksénos* as HOST is also onomasiologically conceptualised⁵ through the same term. This implies that the schema in figure 3 misses the point that the HOST is not understood in an absolute referential sense but only as participant in the overlapping area between DISTANCE and PROXIMITY.
- d. There seems to be an asymmetry regarding the viewpoint from which the schematic conceptualisation is construed. This assumption takes the HOST to be the reference point, within a domain⁶ of vicinity/proximity

4 Semasiological because it concerns the very *same* participant in the model.

5 Onomasiologically because it concerns a *different* participant in the model.

6 In Langacker (2008: 84) the specific type of domain is called “dominion”.

into which a foreigner enters, thus becoming the target of conceptualisation as *ksénos*. Although it is the “incomer” that is profiled overtly, the HOST is the conceptualiser that the speaker adopts.

- e. Most importantly, the schematisation of the model unfolds *in time*. That means that the conceptualisations are created in an *ad hoc* way, sanctioned through a series of archetypically sanctioned actions (cf. Ioannou 2020b). The action that is analysed here as instrumental to the constitution of the blending network is the exchange of gifts in the context of *ksenía*.

What follows is the analysis of the blending network involved in the emergence of the prototypical sense of *ksénos*, and a short discussion on the possibility of connecting this network to an entrenched and etymologically verifiable prototypical sense. The latter, as a conceptual blueprint, motivates the term’s complex meaning.

5 The emergence of *ksénos* through a blending network

Above, I allude to a connection between the notion of *páthos* as recognition of *phília*, entering in the context of enmity, and that of *ksenía* as a conscious conceptual transcendence of the realm of enmity into that of *phília*. But what are the exact workings by which this mental state on the part of the HOST emerges as an institutionalised *ad hoc* resolution to the problem of THE OTHER’s presence in the SELF’s realm? What is the place of *recognition* in this process? There are four pairs of directional tensions that have been alluded to as relevant to the analysis of *ksenía* throughout the present work, namely:

- a. distance → proximity
- b. enmity → *phília*,
- c. ignorance → recognition,
- d. natural → conventional

and, finally, a self-defensive HOST against THE OTHER. More schematically:

- e. SELF → THE OTHER.

5.1 DISTANCE *and the* OTHER

In the search of a schema that incorporates the above tensions as meaningfully contributing to the model of *ksenía*, we can start with the basic domains involved in figure 4, the properties they incorporate and what in Fauconnier & Turner (2002) is called *Generic Space*. The latter is understood as the common ground that licences the integration of the input spaces, namely “SELF” and “OTHER”; see figure 4.

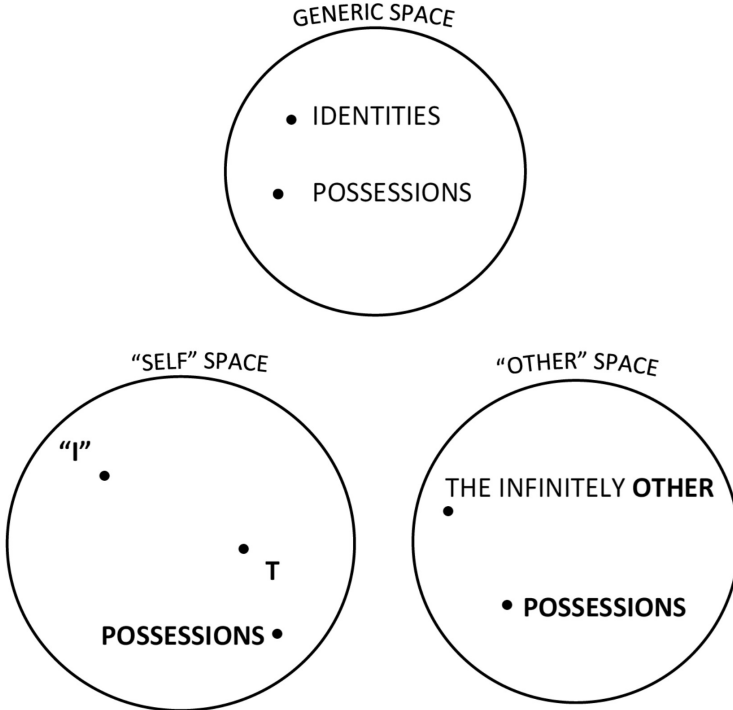


FIGURE 4 The spaces of basic participants

As is evident, what defines the basic topology of the integration is the SELF of what-is-to-become a HOST, embodying a viewpoint that is grounded in the subjective reality of “I”. The reasons for conceptualising the participant as an EGO-centric entity are two related ones: first, it stands in a complementary distribution in a two-member universe with what has already been defined in literature as THE OTHER; more specifically an “infinitely” defined OTHER, in the sense of a referent definable not relationally but simply as an Aristotelian type of *heterotēs*.⁷ In this sense, it cannot be predicated of, it is relationally—or syntagmatically (see below)—immeasurable (Agier 2021: 12). The OTHERNESS negatively defined as *non-identity* automatically implies the presence of an archetypically subjective SELF (see Langacker 2008: 3.4, 9.1). Second, the perspective of conceptualisation must somehow be grounded in the identity between a conceptualiser C and a point of reference R used to identify the referential target T within a domain—*dominion* in Langacker’s terms (op. cit: 84); this is always ultimately *grounded* (op. cit: 3.4, 9.1) in the conceptualising sub-

7 I.e. “otherness”, and not as a “*diaphorá*”, i.e. “difference” (Arist. *Met.* 1004 a).

ject, identified as “I”. The “I” as identity—as Dupont argues along similar lines (2013)—is the closest point of reference for the determination of *ksénos*, given the mediating relation of *proximity*. When a speaker says “here”, proximity does not need any 3rd person point of reference but the unmediated presence of “I” that *is* proximity by default.

The second element present in the domain of both participants is POSSESSIONS, which stands at a relation of HAVE both with “I” and the OTHER. The relation of HAVE is profiled through construals very similar to those of BE, cross-linguistically, as shown in the examples (6)–(7) from Modern Greek and English:

- (6) *Éxi polí kaló xaraktíra*
 ‘[He] has a very good character’
- (7) *Íne polí kalós xaraktíras*
 ‘[He] is a very good character’

This relation becomes relevant as the analysis proceeds.

5.2 APPROACHING *an* ENEMY

Syntagmatic relations that lead to composition are essentially categorisations of a semantic domain by the elements that the domain selects (Langacker 1987, Langacker 2008, Langlotz 2006). For instance, “Greek tragedy” defines “tragedy” as belonging to the “Greek” type. Similarly, actions in pragmatic contexts that lead to the integration of mental spaces on the part of the participating actors represent essentially enacted syntagmatic relations among elements in these contexts. Following this idea, we see that, when the OTHER as an actor enters the domain of SELF, he gives rise to a new concept, that of ENEMY, as shown in figure 5. The process is explained as follows: The incoming actor creates a chain of referential *identity* (Fauconnier & Turner 2002: 115) between T and the OTHER. Nevertheless, as a target T of conceptualisation in the scope of the mental space of the ego-centric SELF, it also gives rise to a relation of non-identity that is profiled against the background of the complementary and inclusive relation “I”-THE OTHER. Now the relation is not one of complementarity though, but *contrast* or differently *contrariety*. The latter in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* is defined as the “greatest difference”, and this is nothing other than the difference between “what I am” and “what I am not”. For Aristotle (*Met.* 1004 a), OTHERNESS embeds DIFFERENCE and the latter CONTRAST. The critical point here though is that a “syntagmatic”—so to say—link has been contracted between the two participants with the insertion

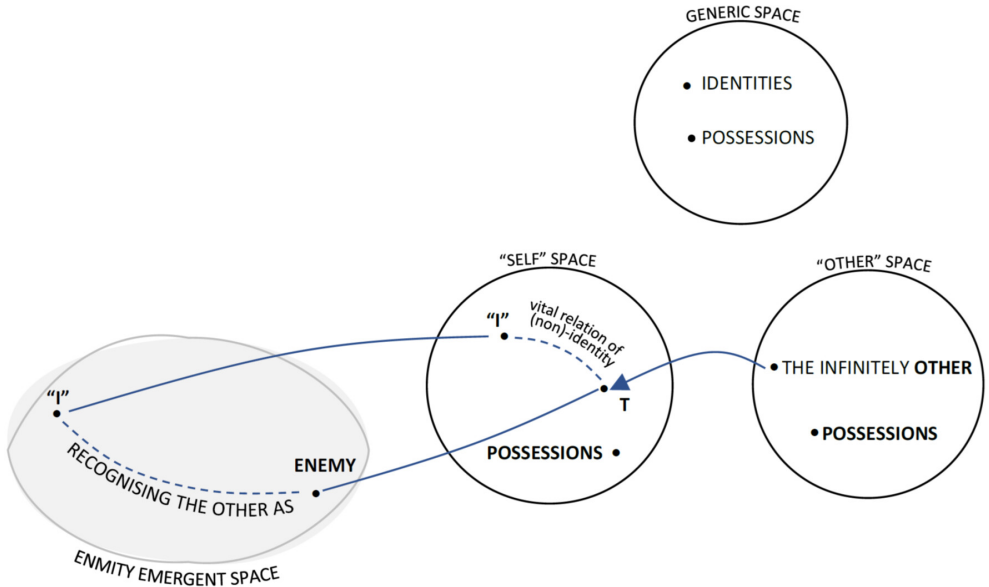


FIGURE 5 The emergence of ENMITY in the *ksenía* blending network

of the OTHER in the domain—and most importantly mental space—of the “I”. Hence, the OTHER matches the target T of the SELF’s conceptualisation and is re-cognised as a contrary, otherwise an ENEMY, through the activation of the relation between SELF and T as one of absolute *non-identity* or total difference. The relation of identity, defined as the most vital of all (Fauconnier & Turner 2002: 95–96, 115) is instrumental in determining the degree of blending between elements, ranging from “creating an identity to disintegrating it” (Fauconnier & Turner op. cit).⁸ Given that “I” is subjectively grounded in the HERE and NOW of the conceptualising SELF, within its dominion, the viewpoint is precisely adopted from this perspective and the resulting blend is one of single scope (Fauconnier & Turner 2002: 126–131), becoming a space of ENMITY; see figure 5.

5.3 PROXIMITY to a KIN: Accommodation of POSSESSIONS as accommodation of IDENTITIES

Once the outsider, the OTHER, trespasses the boundaries of “I”, then we have an automatic passing from the realm of otherness to that of BELONGING (cf. Agier 2021: 7). The target of conceptualisation that takes as its reference point the domain of “I” enters in a realm cognitively understood as a *dominion* OF

8 Other vital relations include Change, Time, Cause-Effect etc., many times subsumed under the principal function of Identity (cf. Fauconnier & Turner 2002).

the reference point. Here comes the second action that transforms the terms of ENMITY, giving rise to the emergent space of PHILÍA, as will be explicated below.

Unconditional hosting of a stranger can exist only in the de-contextualised conceptualisation of otherness, a point criticised earlier. Once the OTHER is found in the realm of “I” or SELF, additional terms are added onto the relation with the OTHER, at least as a condition on the latter’s re-cognition (*anagnórisis*): Is the OTHER going to be recognised as an ENEMY or as a KIN? It seems that there is no third option (Dupont 2013: 145–148) and there is no chance of gradual familiarisation with the intruder either. Standing at this threshold calls for an *accommodation*. It is precisely this accommodation that the GIFT EXCHANGE represents, as *an ad hoc* condition that mediates the OTHERNESS → BELONGING shift. Interestingly, gift exchange lies in the heart of the characterisation of the identity of the “SELF”-domain, which is the latter’s possessions.

In modern societies, there is a “certain conceptual polarity between individualised persons and commoditised things” (Kopytoff 1986: 73). Nevertheless, this polarity was no way obvious in ancient societies such as archaic Greece—but also classical Athens, where a rather reverse tendency existed.⁹ Persons are an organic part of the city’s social coherence and personal individuation leads to a negatively connotated *idiotic*-“private” (*idiotiké*) life. On the other hand, free exchange of commodities for their economic value is considered rather a detrimental process that runs contrary to social coherence and peace, a view that is attested through ample textual evidence (see von Reden 1998). Reciprocity, thus, is seen as a constitutive element of social peace and cohesion (Van Wees 1992: chpt. 1, Gregory 1982, Morris 1986, Panoff 1970). In this light, the non-commodifiable possessions represent much more the identity of SELF, for the symbolic value they hold to it; *symbolic* is interpreted here with its etymological relevance, that of being bound to an identity within a function of signification of that entity through a possession: My non-commodifiable possessions stand for—ARE—myself, as a non-negotiable, *necessary* and *natural* representation of my societal placing, often inherited from my ancestors. This interpretation of HAVE as BE or POSSESSION as IDENTITY is deeply rooted in the human conceptual system and manifests itself linguistically in many language stocks. Take for example the interlinguistic variation of expressions such as *tengo veinte años*, lit. ‘I have twenty years’, in Spanish and *I am twenty years*

9 Although the image is much more complex, with analyses that differ greatly among each other (see von Reden 1998 for discussion and further references therein).

old in English, where years as an inherent characteristic of the self is presented either via *being* or *having*. Even within a single language such as Ancient Greek, both expressions are freely interchangeable:

- (8) *Όν* *etōn* *eikosin* *Okhosías*
 be-PTCP.NOM year-PL.GEN twenty-NOM Ahaziah-NOM
ebasíleusen
 reign-PST.3SG
 'Ahaziah reigned, being twenty years old' (2 *Chron.* 22)
- (9) *Άρατος* *ho* *Sikuónios* *étē* *men*
 Aratus-NOM ART.NOM Sikyon-GEN year-PL.ACC PTC
ékhōn *eíkosi*
 have-PTCP.NOM twenty.ACC
 'Aratus from Sikyon, being twenty years old ...' (*Polyb. Hist.* II.43:3)

Interestingly, as possessions raise along a scale of non-alienability or constancy regarding the possessor, they can increasingly be profiled as a relation of BEING, in parallel to that of HAVING:

- (10) He has innumerable pens/a high fever
 ?He is a man of innumerable pens/ high fever
- (11) He has big hands
 He is a man of big hands
- (12) He has innumerable estates
 He is a man of innumerable estates
- (13) He has a beautiful character
 He is a man of a beautiful character

When a person gives up the possession of a commodity for the exchange of an economic value in the reciprocal relation of commerce, an open variable is established through the *monetary symbolisation* that constitutes a place holder for another commodity. In that sense, the economic value is contextually *bound* (Langacker 2008: 7.1.1). It represents a one-to-many relation, as shown schematically in figure 6. This is how we understand the fact that in modern societies individualisation is not that much about the possession of commodities *per se*, but about the *possibility* of choice; see figure 6.

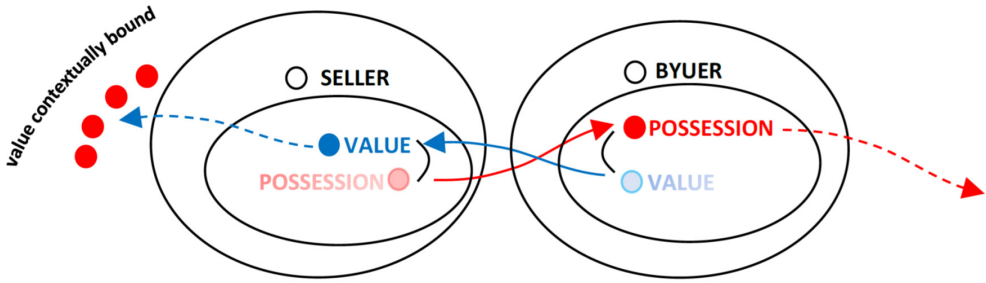


FIGURE 6 Contextually bound value in reciprocity

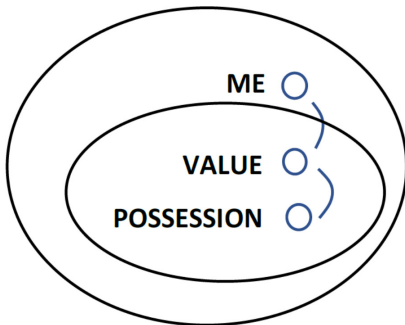
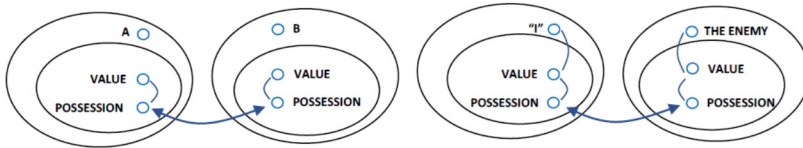


FIGURE 7 Non-alienable *POSSESSION*

In contrast, in the context of *ksenía*, the value of the POSSESSIONS is bound to the identity of the POSSESSOR and for that matter the POSSESSION constitutes a symbol of this identity, it *signifies* it as non-alienable to it, sanctioning the relation of HAVING as a relation of BEING. The notion of treating possessions as commodities cannot arise precisely because of this correspondence that makes the configuration of this mental space “context-free” (Langacker, op. cit.), as shown in figure 7.

As Kopytoff (1986: 64) puts it, what underlies the making of commodities is essentially a cognitive process. It is a result of individualisation and the breaking of the coherence built on the basis of trust between two parts within a local reciprocal exchange of goods. Respectively, *ksenía* as a relation of reciprocity reconstitutes coherence, but this time through the exchange not of goods but of *non-local exchange of perspectives on identities*. As already observed, the fact that the value of the POSSESSION is also linked to the identity of the POSSESSOR renders the interpretation of this value context free. This is the reason why the offered gifts are not supposed to be of equal value, as the Homeric passage on Diomedes and Glaucus—not that much ironically as tragically, I would say—reminds us. Diomedes and Glaucus meet on the battlefield and

FIGURE 8 Commercial reciprocity vs. reciprocity in *ksenía*

when Diomedes realises that their fathers were bonded in the past with the bonds of *ksenía*, they decide not to fight but rather extend the line of guest-friendship by exchanging their armour. Glaucus trades his gold armour for the bronze one of Diomedes:

- (14) *Gláukōi Kronídēs phrénas ekséleto*
 Glaucus.DAT of.Cronus.NOM mind.PL.ACC strip.of.PST.3SG
Zeús Hòs pròs Tudeídēn Diomédea
 Zeus.NOM REL.NOM towards of.Tydeus.ACC Diomedes.ACC
teúkhe' ámeibe khrúsea khalkeiōn
 armour.ACC exchange.AOR.3SG gold.ACC bronze.GEN
 'Zeus, son of Cronus, took away Glaucus' senses, so that he gave away his gold armour to Diomedes, son of Tydeus, for one of bronze.' (*Il.* 6.234–235)

The two representations, namely the commercial reciprocity between two parts and that of *ksenía*, are given in figure 8.

The fact that there is a continuum among the three representations in figure (7–8) is evident through textual evidence such the following from Herodotus. Interestingly, here *súmbolon* means the one of two halves of an object such as a tally or *astragalus*, used as a token of trust over a two-party contracted agreement between *ksénoi*, whose *context-free* validity can be stretched extensively over space and time:

- (15) *Khrónou dè polloû dielthóntos êlthon es*
 time.GEN PTC much.GEN pass.PST.PTCP.ABS come.PST.3PL to
Spártēn ... kai apodeiknúntes tà súmbola
 Sparta.ACC CONN show.PTCP.AOR.NOM ART token.PL.ACC
apaíteon tà khrémata
 demand.PRET.3PL ART money.ACC
 'After a long time had passed ... they came to Sparta ... and showing him the tokens, they demanded the money back' (*Herod.* 6.86b).

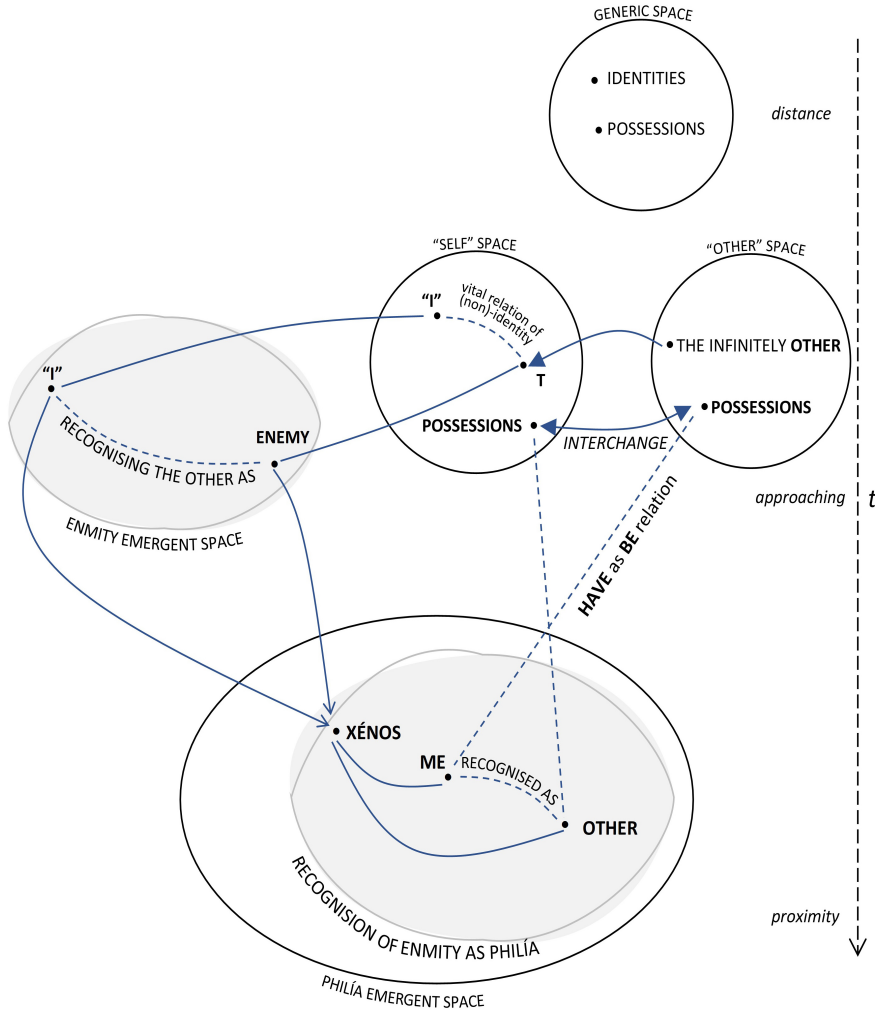


FIGURE 9 The integration network of *ksenía* as a dynamic script from *DISTANCE* to *PROXIMITY*

What we have in (15)—leaving the details of the narrative aside—is an integration of a non-local relation between *ksénoi*¹⁰ through the use of symbolic tokens standing for *ksénoi*’s identities, on the one hand, and an economical contract between them, on the other. Crucially, whereas in Herodotus’ example the symbols of identity are arbitrary and without any personal value, in *ksenía* they are not. Exchange of symbolically non-alienable possessions—as the term was

10 The descendants of the initial *ksénoi*.

interpreted earlier—has two important effects: first, as shown in figure 9, the “I” takes perspective of himself as part of the OTHER’s identity, through the aforementioned HAVE as BE relation. In the same token, he conceptualises part of the OTHER’s identity as his POSSESSION. The ENEMY is re-cognised, that is *cognised anew*, as a KIN. This is a cognitively plausible way of understanding the mode of *ksenía* that displays the paradoxical characteristics of a relation between members of the same household, when the incoming party is actually an “intruder” (Agier 2021). It is not simply a “pact”, on a par of a “truce”, as Benveniste’s analysis implies. Under the present analysis, gift exchange is not a simple reminder either. It implements a cognitive function of *taking perspective* in a dramatized and enacted ritual, grounding the subjective “I”’s view in the space of the OTHER. In some sense, “*I am the other*”. This is only how we can explain the paradoxical onomasiological identity for both SELF and THE OTHER, who are both called *ksénoi*; see figure 9.

In this space of proximity and onomasiological identification, the ENEMY is recognised as KIN. In Aristotle’s typology, RECOGNITION of PHILÍA as ENMITY in the context of pathos yields the greatest tragic effect (see §3). In this light, RECOGNITION of ENMITY as PHILÍA in the context of *ksenía* constitutes a resolution of the tragic character of the “human choice”, where the man stands at the mentally constructed threshold of a decision and the intruder at the threshold of that man’s household.

6 Etymology of *ksénos* and schematic prototypicality

As we saw in the introduction, etymologies such as those of the terms *agorá* appear compatible with a synthetic deduction reached through the analysis of the various instances of uses of the respective terms. What about the etymology of *ksénos*? Does it do justice to a prototypical core of the term as described in the present analysis? Furthermore, does an etymology manage to compress into a basic topology such a processual complexity?

The etymology of the term is still debated, with a number of competing possibilities for its PIE derivation.¹¹ I refer here to several etymologies most prominently featured in the literature. Rather than giving a definite answer as to which one is the right etymology, the aim of this section is to tentatively open a fruitful dialogue between prototype-based semantics and PIE

11 *ksénos* has also been characterised recently—albeit without detailed evidence—as being of pre-Greek origin by Beekes (2010).

etymology, exploring the possibilities of their analytical compatibility.¹² Such a compatibility would also open a fruitful path for understanding possible links between two types of prototypicality: historical prototypicality understood as *historically prior sense*, on the one hand, and *schematic prototypicality* as a proto-sense, which is the main focus of the present work (cf. Evans & Tyler 2003 for a discussion; also Glynn 2014a, Glynn 2014b).

The first etymology to consider is that offered in Schwartz (1982, 2003). He analyses a number of cognates, such as Avestan *xšqmān-ē*, meaning ‘substitution’, Ossetic (*æ*)*xsæn*, meaning ‘common’, and Irish *-son*, meaning ‘(inter)change’ and ‘substitution’, and reconstructs a PIE root **ksen-w-* (amending an earlier suggestion with an initial labiovelar **k^w*,¹³), meaning ‘exchange’. Although I omit here the details of his analysis and specific arguments used in support of his reconstruction (see Schwartz 1982 and especially 2003), what concerns us here is that the historically prototypical meaning of the root is precisely that of *reciprocal bidirectional transfer from one part to another*. Is this historical prototypicality compatible with the schematic prototypicality elaborated in the present work? I contend that arguably this is the case. Interchangeability lies at the core of the integration network of the term *ksénos*: first, because as the most central archetypical—that is to say, experientially prominent—praxis in the context of *ksenía*, it represents the conventional accommodation of an otherwise proximal enmity, and second, and most importantly, because this accommodation bears conceptual consequences in the construction of the mental spaces of the participants, namely an interchange of perspective on the identities of the HOST and the GUEST, who now become both in part mutually substitutable as two *ksénoi*.

Let us now move to another etymology (Neri 2013) according to which the underlying PIE root is **ǵ^{hes-}*, found in the nominal stem **ǵ^{hesor-}* ‘hand’, semantically connected to the scene of somebody being “under the hand” of someone else, a scene that metonymically highlights the protective attitude of a host towards a guest. In Avestan, in Y.46, Zoroaster tells Ahura Mazda that the community did not offer him hospitality (cf. Schwartz 1985: 489), using a term which—under this etymology—is related to *ksénos*, namely *xšnāuš*. Propitiating or pleasing the god is denoted through the term *xšnāošāi*, again, under

12 For this section I am indebted to an unknown reviewer who indicated to me a more extensive literature on the matter and suggested ways of broadening and enriching the current analysis. For reasons of space, the present discussion does not do justice to the breadth of data indicated to me, but a more detailed discussion is in preparation.

13 Based on the inclusion in the reconstruction of the Hittite *kuššan-* “payment”, which was later refuted as cognate by Schwartz himself (2003).

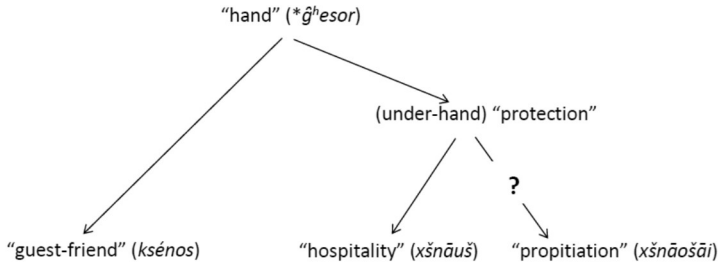


FIGURE 10 Derivation of *ksénos* and *xšnāođái* from *ĝhesor*

Schwartz's analysis, a cognate of both *ksénos* and *xšnāuš*. Inherent to the notion of propitiation in the term *xšnāošāi* is that of reciprocity. This requirement for two poles as reciprocally related participants possibly casts some doubt on the possibility of *ksénos* being derived from a unipolar sense of "being under protection". The level of semantic specificity of the latter fails to encompass the necessary duality present in the notion of propitiating. This meaning, traced to the original PIE **ĝhes-*, **ĝhesor-* "hand", cannot readily receive a conceptual motivation, if supposed to be mediated by the notion of "protection" as an intermediate interpretation lying between the two; see figure 10.

The conceptual challenge that arises in relation to figure 10 has two aspects: first, although the metonymical extension of "hand" into that of "protection" works well as the motivation of "hospitality"—where a guest is given protection by his host—it does not do so for "propitiation". Propitiation requires a reciprocal *duality* (Schwartz 1985: 489) that is not present in a unidirectional protective treatment of a guest. Enrichment through a reciprocal act on the part of the host requires an already-existing cultural model of reciprocity, wherein the usage of the term *xšnāuš* is embedded. This model has actually as its constitutive parts the simultaneous presence of "hospitality" and "propitiation" in an integrated praxis. Given that in Greek both *ksénos* and *ksenía* incorporate both senses in a model of hospitality, it is feasible to assume that the cognates *xšnāošāi* and *xšnāuš* in Avestan may stem from the same prototype that *immanently* (see § 1 above) sanctions the model in its gestaltist entirety, as it does for *ksénos* in Greek. If this prototype is *ĝhes-* > *ĝhesor* "hand", then this may ultimately be related not to protection but to 'give (away)'.¹⁴ The latter is seen as part of a reciprocal act of offering and receiving, a compensatory "yielding" as a response to an effort, also found in the Latin term *hostus* 'the yield of an olive tree from a single pressing'¹⁵ (cf. Eichner 2002).

14 With **ĝhes-* possibly glossed as 'take'/'give', as an anonymous reviewer suggests.

15 Also the derivative *hostire* 'recompense', 'requite' (de Vaan 2008: 292).

Similar considerations hold for another existing etymological interpretation, based on a PIE root **g^{he}/as-* with the semantics of ‘consuming; eating (away)’, with which Proto-Greek **ks-én̄uo* (< **ghs-én̄uo-*) and PIE **g^hos-ti-* are compatible (Steer 2019: 335). The connection is based on the prominence of the relation of commensality within the social institution of hospitality, which gives support to the conceptual connection between the Proto-Greek root and Vedic *ghas-* ‘eat’, thus inclining one to see the two roots as cognates (Watkins 1995: 246). Nevertheless, from a diachronic prototype-semantic point of view, the question concerns the conceptual feasibility of the notion of EAT referentially substituting for the model of HOSPITALITY that contains it, as an instance of synecdoche. The particular problem concerns again the conceptual complexity of the term *kséinos*, which is bidirectional, not only towards the GUEST but also towards the HOST. Vedic *ghas-* does not reflect this bidirectionality, as it just means ‘eat’. Communal eating is met only in the zero-grade forms *ságdhi-* < **sm-ghs-ti-*, where the notion of “together” is not part of the stem *ghas-*. This implies that ‘eat’ alone does not reflect commensality, just as *kséinos* does not in formulaic expressions with the collocation *xéniā trápezā* ‘guest table’ in Greek (cf. Watkins 1995, op. cit.), where *trápezā* ‘table’ as a metonymy for “dinner” specifies the kind of event that takes place in the context of hospitality. Furthermore, in expressions such as (16), where *kseínia* does mean “offer of food”, the term as an adjective of an elided noun is inextricably linked with a model where the offer on the part of the host is in correspondence to the incoming of *kseínos*. Furthermore, this correspondence is placed within a socio-culturally institutionalised relation, as the noun *thémis*, understood as ‘law established not by statute but by custom’ (see LSJ), indicates:

(16) *Kseíniá t' eû paréthēken, há te kseínois thémis estín*

‘He placed the offered food nicely, as is a custom to offer to the guests’ (*Il.* 11.778)

This indicates that *kseínia* as ‘food’ does not function as a partial homonym of *kseínois* as “guests” but only as a semantic specification of the relational complex HOST-GUEST. Nowhere in Greek literature is *ksénia/kseínia* found as an independent and isolated denotation of food. Given then that *kséinos* in Greek does not lexicalise the notion of “eat” in any of its derivatives but instead incorporates the notion of reciprocity, the analysis that derives hospitality from eating runs into the following problem: we have to assume that *kséinos* as semantically connected to Vedic *ghas-* ‘eat’ is inserted as a prominent part of the cultural model of hospitality in Greek and, only afterwards, takes over the dual sense of host-guest. Nevertheless, this possibility presup-

poses adopting the perspective of the EATER **ghs-énuo* within a context of (food) OFFER. In other words, it presupposes a model where duality and possibly reciprocity are already present as its constitutive parts and, importantly, not necessarily specified for food but open to the semantic enrichment that the specific occasion offers (cf. Kurke 1991). Especially if Latin *hostis* ‘enemy’ and *hospes* ‘guest’/‘host’ are—as has been argued (see Watkins 1995: 246, Neri 2013: 199)—part of the same nexus of cognate terms, then the inter-linguistic and inter-cultural persistence of the same prototypical core within a model of a bipolar relation of offer, exchange and propitiation points towards the following: a prototypical link of **ksen(u)-* to a schematic notion of “exchange”, with the latter being open to further specification in various cultural scenarios. Possibly then a root **ghes-* originally referred to EXCHANGE (cf. Iranian **xšan-*, Celtic **(k)son-*), in accordance with Schwartz’s analysis, and the other roots are differential profiles within the same gestalt: HAND (**ghes-to-*, **ghes-or-*) as the instrument of exchange, COMPENSATION (cf. Lat. *hostia* as SACRIFICIAL ANIMAL) and COMMUNALITY, hence COMMUNAL EATING (cf. Vedic *ságdhi-*, *ghas-*).

7 Conclusions

This work has tried to formulate a unifying approach to a cognitive-linguistic treatment of the term *ksénos* in Ancient Greek, which manages to accommodate intriguing and controversial aspects of its meaning, such as the onomasiological and semasiological spread of the term for the GUEST, HOST and FOREIGNER participants within the institutionalised model of *ksenía*. It did so, linking a prototype-based analysis with that of mental space construction and conceptual integration. The basic premise was that, in principle, these two dimensions should be compatible and the prototypical meaning, ideally backed up by the etymology of the term, should also be reflected in the complexity of the sociocultural praxis of *ksenía* as an archetypical pragmatic process unfolding in time.

Within a complex gestaltist model, the space of *ksenía* as the interfacial zone of APPROACHING along the axis DISTANCE-PROXIMITY was treated as an emergent space resulting from the integration of the other two. The analysis followed the gradual conceptual shifting of the incoming OTHER into that of the ENEMY and finally to that of a KIN, grounded in the subjective standpoint of a SELF, an “I”. The conceptualisation of the OTHER as KIN was seen as a re-cognising of enmity within *philia*, a shift that in certain aspects inverts the Aristotelian experience of *pathos*, namely the recognition of *philia*

within enmity. The gift-exchange of symbolic and for that matter non-alienable POSSESSIONS that activate the relation of HAVE as BE brings about the pragmatic resolution of a tragic choice that the “I” must make, as an act of taking an alternative perspective. The identity of the OTHER-ENEMY substitutes in the mental space of the “I” for part of the latter’s identity, converting both participants into *ksénoi*. As a mental construction, this interchange of identities can spread over space and time; not as a convention of a mere pact, as Benveniste saw it in his seminal work, but as a mental space shift mediated through a contextualised enacted ritual. In this sense, it would not suffice to interpret the SPATIAL PROXIMITY as SOCIAL/INTERPERSONAL PROXIMITY in a conceptual metaphor framework, given that PROXIMITY must be mediated by gift exchange in order to become INTERPERSONALLY sanctioned. A final brief discussion followed that looked at some prominent suggestions featuring in literature, regarding the controversial etymology of the term *ksénos*. In one of them, the substitutability of identities and mutual perspective is nicely reflected in the PIE reconstruction of the term. Its meaning ‘exchange’ lies both at the archetypical core of the praxis of *ksenía* as a construing force of the enacted model, and most importantly, as an *ad hoc* conceptual accommodation of a natural tragic dilemma. The other suggested etymologies are found to pose interesting challenges—possibly resolvable through assuming that they represent differential profiles within the same gestaltist model—thus opening a route for further discussion that integrates a prototypical semantic analysis, on the one hand, and PIE reconstruction, on the other.

Acknowledgments

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