Summary
Sevasti Trubeta: “Turks” or “Athigani”? Muslim Roma in Northern Greece.

The living conditions of the Athigani are determined by a double handicap: as Muslim Roma they are not only a marginal group within the population of Northern Greece, but show significant deviancy in their social behaviour. Their difficult situation is further complicated by an enormous heterogeneity within the Athigani community itself which has strong influence on the constitution of their auto- and heterostereotypes. Another factor showing a strong impact on the identity of this ethnic group is the conflict between Greece and Turkey on behalf of the Muslims in Western Thrakia: as far as Muslim Roma living in that region are identifying themselves with the Greek society they tend to call themselves Athigani. But if they want to assimilate into the opposite power group they claim to be part of the Turkish minority.

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Language Policy in Germany and the Netherlands
A Comparison with Regard to the Three Frisian Languages

In the Middle Ages, Frisian was spoken in an area between the Scheldt estuary and the Weser. On the current map of languages of Western Europe, the Frisian language varieties can be found in the peripheral regions of their respective states, i.e. in the northern parts of Germany and the Netherlands. In the state of Schleswig-Holstein North Frisian is spoken in the most north-western part, just south of the German-Danish border, including the isle of Heligoland. In the state of Lower Saxony Sater Frisian is spoken in the municipality of Saterland, which belongs to the district of Cloppenburg, on the border of Niedersachsen and East Frisia. In the Netherlands Frisian speakers can be found in Fryslân, one of the twonorthem provinces of the Netherlands.

North Frisian, Sater Frisian and Frisian belong to the West Germanic languages. For a common speaker of one of the Frisian variants the three languages are too dissimilar to understand the other variants.

The North Frisian Language

It can be assumed that in the seventh and eighth centuries Frisians from the southern shores of the North Sea core area, between Weser and Scheldt, emigrated to the area nowadays known as North Frisia. Since 1970, with the exception of Heligoland, the North Frisians have lived in one administrative entity for the first time in history, i.e. in the district of North Frisia.

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1 As a matter of fact, West-Frisians are the people living in a region in the province of Noord-Holland, marked off by the towns of Hoorn and Enkhuizen. They speak a Dutch dialect. Frisians who speak Frisian can be found in the province of Fryslân. By 'North and East Frisians the Frisians are mostly, but incorrectly, mentioned West Frisians: the people living westward from the Lauwers. They call themselves Frisians without any prefix.


Nowadays, the district North Frisia covers an area of 2,049 km² and has nearly 160,000 inhabitants, living in 137 municipalities. Just as in the case of Fryslân in the Netherlands, some Waddensea islands belong to the district of North Frisia. Among them are the islands Amrum, Föhr and Sylt. However, unlike the Dutch situation, the North Frisian islands belong to the heartland of the North Frisian language.

It is difficult to say how many people use the North Frisian language on a daily basis. The Minderheitenbericht 1992-1996 of the Schleswig-Holsteinian government mentions 10,000 speakers of North Frisian. This is the number which is most often mentioned, but the last sociolinguistic research in Northfriesland was done long ago in 1927. And in 1925 civil governor Johannsen wrote: "Unfortunately, an always ongoing restriction of the Frisian language area can be observed."

Since then, the situation has changed enormously, but has not improved. In addition to the enormous immigration of people from the eastern parts of Germany after World War II, the number of inhabitants has doubled since 1939. On the other hand, North Frisian communities can be found in cities like New York, Berlin and Hamburg. As a matter of fact, the three Frisian language groups are being confronted with a substantial emigration of native speakers. Nowadays, the North Frisian language is mostly used by older people and at home. The weak situation of the North Frisian language is further worsened by its linguistic divergence and regionalisation. There is no common standard language and each of the nine dialects has developed its own spelling conventions. Moreover, in the domain of education, provisional arrangements are available only rarely. In the school year 1997/98 968 pupils in 22 primary schools took Frisian lessons. Next to education the Frisian infrastructure must be seen as weak, not only because of the absence of sufficient institutions to promote the Frisian language, but also because of a lack of unity within the existing Frisian organisations. As a matter of fact, Frisian can only very rarely be heard or read in public life.

The Sater Frisian Language

Frisians colonised Saterland between 1100 and 1400, when inhabitants of the coastal regions between Weser and Lauwers were forced by storm floods to settle elsewhere. Their language could be maintained until today, thanks to the geographical and religious isolation of the region, an isolation which lasted until World War II. Since 1945 Saterland, just as North Frisia, became a new home for many refugees from the former eastern parts of Germany. History repeated itself in the Nineties', when hundreds of resettlers of German extraction from Russia (the so-called late repatriots) came to Saterland.

Sater Frisian has never had any written tradition, but is nowadays still spoken by 2,250 of the 11,000 inhabitants of the 123 km² Saterland area. Sater Frisian is confronted with the same phenomena as North Frisian: it has become an old people's language. The language has never been taught as a school subject, but nowadays more than three hundred children of nursery and primary school age are voluntarily taking Sater Frisian courses. As in the case of North Frisian, Sater Frisian can only very rarely be heard or read in public life.

The Frisian Language

Nowadays the province of Fryslân has 615,000 inhabitants. Recent sociolinguistic research shows that about 75 per cent of the total Frisian population can speak Frisian, while as many as 94 per cent are able to understand the language. At the same time, it can be noticed that compared with the
sixties using Frisian in the domain of family and upbringing is diminishing. The percentage of people speaking Frisian at home is now 55, and 53 per cent of the children are brought up with Frisian as their mother tongue. At work 55 per cent of the people speak Frisian. Compared to the language situation in North Frisia and Saterland, it can be said that the Frisian language in the Netherlands has a much more substantial and real place in society.

Since 1937 Frisian has been taught in primary school. At first, Frisian education was optional, but in 1955 the teaching of Frisian as a subject was legally permitted throughout primary school and the use of Frisian as a medium of instruction was allowed in the lower grades. In 1980 Frisian became an approved medium of instruction in all grades and an obligatory subject throughout primary education on the Frisian mainland.

Aside from education, mass media are an important provisional appropriation for any language. Since 1945 Fryslân has had a regional broadcaster which, after gaining independence in 1988, has grown out to become a real broadcasting corporation, with eighty hours of Frisian-language radio a week and, since 1994, Frisian regional television for one hour a day. In addition, the Frisians in the Netherlands boast a lively literature, theatre and scientific output.

However, this is not to say that the Frisian language has anything more than a minor place in Dutch society. This position cannot be separated from the subordinate position of the province of Fryslân in the Netherlands. For example, the Frisian population makes up only four per cent of the total Dutch population. But unlike the situation in North Frisia and Saterland, Frisian can be heard or read in public life in Fryslân.

State Policy with Regard to the North Frisian language

The origin of state policy with regard to the North Frisian language can be found in the Twenties. As a result of a plebiscite based on the Peace Treaty of Versailles, the state border between Germany and Denmark was redrawn in 1920. The new border resulted in a new German minority on the Danish side of the border and the decrease of the Danish minority on the German side of the border, which had existed since 1864. It was for this reason that the Prussian government, which did not want to burden the sensible border situation and also because of Article 113 of the Reichsverfassung, developed a policy of tolerance with regard to the Danish minority. Moreover, Article 73 of the Prussian Constitution of 1920 offered the possibility to take measures regarding the language of education or the language of the authorities, different from those for the German language. As a matter of fact, the North Frisians were able to take advantage of these circumstances. In 1925 the Prussian government decided to give Frisian a moderate place in primary education. Thus, compared with other language minorities in Western Europe, the North Frisians enjoyed such an official arrangement in the domain of education remarkably early on. Only in 1900 had the North Frisians stated their wish for such an arrangement.

However, the arrangement of 1925 did not include a more substantial place for the North Frisian language in primary education and so the North Frisians made a new attempt to improve the situation. In 1928 this attempt resulted in a new decree of the government, prescribing North Frisian reading one hour per week. In addition, the headmaster Albrecht Johannsen was appointed as an advisor for Frisian language education. After these two decisions the number of schools teaching North Frisian increased rapidly to 48 in the summer of 1928.

As said above, Prussian policy was not aimed at promoting the Frisian language and culture, but much more intended to thwart pro-Danish or national North Frisian ambitions.

16 The Danish minority on the German side of the border came into being after the Danish-German war of 1863, which was lost by the Danes. Denmark lost Schleswig to Prussia and Holstein to Austria. Steensen (note 3) pp. 247-249.
As the promotion of non-German goals did not fit with Nazi ideology, Frisian language education came to an end in 1938. 

The background of the movement to join the state of Denmark had much to do with the economic situation in after war Germany, and also with the high number of refugees in South Schleswig. Nils Vollertsen: Dansk i en tysk stat 1945-1992. In: Aspekte der Minderheiten- und Volksgruppenpolitik (Kiel 1994) pp. 75-94, esp. 75.

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26 Lemke (note 17) p. 117.

27 In the case of the German State Parliaments is mentioned "Landtag".

28 The official name of the committee is "Gremium für Fragen der friesischen Bevölkerungsgruppe im Lande Schleswig-Holstein". A similar committee with regard to the German minority in North Schleswig was established in 1975. Kurt Hamer: Von der "Ministerpräsidenten-Verfassung" zur "Parlaments-Verfassung". In: Eine neue Verfassung für Schleswig-Holstein. Red. von Rüdiger Wenzei (Kiel 1990) pp. 9-20, esp. 9-12.


30 Original text: "Die hier aufgestellten Grundsätze gelten sinngemäß auch für die frisische Bevölkerung in Schleswig-Holstein".

Council of Europe. At first, the German Foreign Office had the opinion that too few people were speaking North Frisian to register the language as subject to the Charter. But after protest from the North Frisian District Council and various Frisian organisations, the Foreign Office changed its opinion and made registration dependent from the opinion of the government of state. Schleswig-Holstein doubted whether Frisian should be registered under Part II or Part III of the Charter, but after an informational campaign and pressure by various interest groups and political parties, the government decided to classify Frisian under Part III of the Charter. \(^{32}\) Thirty-six articles of the Charter have been declared applicable to the North Frisian language.

Despite the formal arrangements made by the Schleswig-Holsteinian government since the eighties, the question remains as to the extent to which these arrangements are in balance with the concrete needs of the North Frisian language. As a matter of fact, the future of the threatened language depends not only on formal measures, but also on concrete and substantial support by the state. \(^{33}\) However, support by the North Frisian community will be the most decisive determinant for the future of the language.

State Policy with Regard to the Sater Frisian language

Not until the nineties would Sater Frisian become the subject of the attention of the public authorities. Therefore Sater Frisian could be characterised as lacking a state policy and even a policy formulated by the local authorities. One may surely say that Sater Frisian is the best-kept secret in Germany. Not only is the language unknown to the man in the street but even the German Language Archive set up in 1932 did not recognise Sater Frisian as a language of its own, but characterised it as Lower German. \(^{34}\)

The recent involvement of public authorities in the case of Sater Frisian has led to two arrangements. On the one hand a provision like article 5 of the constitution of Schleswig-Holstein was debated, when the state of Lower Saxony prepared its new constitution. However, no such was approved, and for different reasons. Even so, the unsuccessful effort did get Sater Frisian mentioned, as well as Low German, in the School Law of Lower Saxony. \(^{35}\) On the other hand,

\(^{32}\) Lemke (note 17) pp. 56-65. In the case of Low German the Foreign Office used the opposite argument. That language should have too many speakers to justify classifying under the Charter. Lemke (note 17) p. 61.


\(^{35}\) Lemke (footnote 17) p. 381.
since 1950, was legalised. Moreover, Frisian was introduced as an optional school subject. Not until the second half of the sixties could new developments be noticed. For the first time in history, a Frisian language party succeeded in winning a seat in the Provincial Council. Moreover, the budget of the Province increased substantially and therewith the possibility to support language initiatives. An initiative of the Frisian Movement led to the provincial demand to share the responsibility for Frisian culture and language with the central government. Again, a state committee, the Van Ommen committee, started its work. On 27 September 1972, the findings of this committee were deliberated in a plenary session of the Lower House of Parliament. Since then the Frisian language has gained official recognition by the central government, but concrete support was disappointing. The government allocated only a small amount of funding for goals in the domain of Frisian culture. The final results of the amendment of the Education Law have also been disappointing. The expectations raised after Frisian became an obligatory subject throughout primary education in 1980 have not been fulfilled. Educational goals have not been realised and the investment in time has been far from extensive. Moreover, until now the development of Frisian within the different forms of secondary education has been less than moderate.

During the late seventies new developments could be seen. Among them the publication of the first report by the provincial working group on the official use of Frisian. This report led to the establishment of a new national committee on the Frisian language. The committee was made up of representatives of the involved Dutch departments and representatives of the provincial government. However, the work of the committee wound up in an impasse on the issue of translation of Frisian written documents. The Frisian members of the committee were in favour of a restricted possibility to translate Frisian written documents into Dutch. The Dutch members of the committee, on the other hand, gave their preference to guaranteeing a loose Dutch translation of every Frisian written document. As a matter of fact, there was a fundamental clash of opinions about rights and possibilities with regard to the official use of Frisian. The impasse would last until the realisation of a covenant on Frisian language and culture between the Dutch state and the Province of Friesland in 1989.

In 1993 this covenant was renewed and in 1998 negotiations began to establish a third covenant, with a long-term perspective of at least ten years. These covenants include provisions for education, media, culture, scientific research and the use of Frisian in the courts. The covenant of 1989 stood for a new relationship between state and province. This was made possible by the advent of a Frisian-born state secretary for internal affairs, who was put in charge of Frisian affairs. As soon became clear, the covenant lacked sufficient juridical status to form a solid framework for Frisian policy in future. In 1995 this framework came into being with a new article on the use of language in official affairs in the General Administrative Act.

Since the nineties state policy on the Frisian language has gained a new European-wide dimension. On the one hand, the European integration process generated in the Netherlands a fear about the future of the Dutch language that had not existed until then. This fear also meant an increasing sympathy for the weak position of the Frisian language. On the other hand, Dutch politics had a positive attitude towards the establishment of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. After signing in 1992, the Netherlands were among the first members of the Council of Europe, which ratified the Charter. Part III of the Charter has been applied to the Frisian language. By the law of 26 January 1996, 48 provisions of the Charter have been applied to the Frisian language. Moreover Part II of the Charter has been applied to Low-Saxon, Limburgish, Romani and Yiddish in the Netherlands, which had been seen as dialects until then.

In addition to the legal progress made by the Frisian language group, an important development for the actual and prospective situation of the language is the institutionalisation of three important provisions. Since 1985 the professional Frisian theatre group Tryater has been included by the state in the national system of theatre subsidising. Tryater puts on more than 200 performances a year and reaches more than 20,000 people annually. Its performances concern translated dramatic works as well as original Frisian plays.
Since 1990, the Friske Akademy (Frisian Academy), a scientific institute in the field of language, history and social sciences with regard to Frisian culture and society, has been associated with the Koninklijke Nederlandse Academie van Wetenschappen (Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences). It can be said that, since then, the Friske Akademy has been part of the national scientific infrastructure.

On 4 February 1994, the Omrop Fryslân (Frisian broadcasting system) started in with Frisian language television programmes, one hour each working day. After two years the experiment threatened to come undone because of lack of funding. But after a period of uncertainty the state began to contribute and, since then, regional television has been a welcome phenomenon in many households in Fryslân, as in some other parts of the Netherlands.

Comparison and Conclusion

When German and Dutch language policy with regard to the Frisian languages are compared, at least three observations can be made.

In the first place there is an immense difference between the three Frisian language groups, in the sense that the Frisian language group in the Netherlands is by far the greatest. At the same time the efforts made by the Dutch state seem to reach much further than the comparable efforts of the German states in question. In North Frisia the efforts of the state of Schleswig Holstein are restricted to a constitutional article, the establishment of a consultative committee and to some arrangements in the domains of education and science. But the constitutional article has the character of a so-called "Zielbestimmung" that does not provide for immediately enforceable claims. The results of the committee's work have been very modest to date. And the educational arrangements since 1925 are not far-reaching. Moreover the financial aid of the state to North Frisian provisions is far from substantial.

Until now, the efforts of the state of Lower Saxony with regard to Sater Frisian have been restricted to the application of 37 articles of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. Perhaps just the application of the

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48 On 1 June 1998 the Fryske Akademy had a scientific staff of more than forty members. Between mid-1997 and mid-1998 the Fryske Akademy published 37 books, the staff members published 52 scientific books and articles and 18 more popular articles, and delivered 35 scientific readings and 55 popular readings.

49 Between 7.00 p.m. and 7.15 p.m. Frisian television has the biggest audience of all television stations in Fryslân. The one-hour broadcast begins at 7.00 p.m., with reruns later in the evening. Television aside, "Omrop Fryslân" broadcasts about 80 hours of radio a week.

50 The amount of state aid to North Frisian facilities involves no more than about DM 650,000 a year. Hemminga (note 11) esp. p. 37.

51 Hemminga (note 11) esp. p. 39.


were formerly impregnable have now become, on the merits, more or less the companions of regional languages such as the three Frisian variants, as described in this article.

Reading List

Zusammenfassung

