Elashi

Introduction and History

Elashi (natively, λίσιων ελασῖ *líšōn elašî*) is a Northwest Semitic language of Cyprus, spoken by a small minority of rural, mostly Eastern Orthodox Cypriots. It is descended either from Phoenician or from a Northwest Semitic Eteocypriot lect. It's been strongly influenced by multiple chronolects of Greek, from which it acquired and preserved a simplified pitch accent system, as well as Turkish, which affected its syntax.

Sound changes from proto-northwest semitic to old eteocypriot:
*ṯ ḏ -> s z
*ś -> š
*ṯ ṣ́ -> ṣ
*ḵ -> q
*#CnV -> #CrV -> #CarV as in Aramaic
*VTSV -> VSSV where T is r or n and S is a sibilant
*ay -> a
*u# -> o
*a# -> e
*a -> e in first syllable when followed by a later a (attenuation)
*u -> o in first syllable when followed by a later a
*ā -> ō after attenuation
emphatics are pharyngeals

Iron Age? through Hellenistic and medieval, possibly up til Ottoman period
first, a major wave of Ancient Greek loanwords, taking on their pitch accents and preserving them. Native vocabulary acquired pitch accent, somewhat randomly but usually with derivational suffixes taking the accent
Vᶜ ᵒV -> Ṽ and VᶜV -> Ṽ.V
ᵒ -> ∅ and VᵒV -> V.V
after AGk. loans:
ã -> ɛ̃ and ẽ ĩ -> ĩ and õ ũ -> ṽ

Modern Elashi
ē -> ī
ḥ -> x
loss of dual number
Turkish and Ottoman Perso-Arabic loans have /ĩ/ for /ɯ/
loss of case and mood suffixes
acquisition of Turkish syntactic traits (differential object marking, converbs)

Koine and ancient loans take aspirated stops as plain and plain as emphatic, except when followed by a consonant.

Phonology

Consonants		Labial	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Glottal
Nasal		m μ	n ν				
Plosive	Voiceless	p π	t τ		k κ	q κ	
	Voiced	b μπ	d ντ		g γγ		
	Pharyngealized		tˤ τ				
Fricative	Voiceless	f* φ	s σ	ʃ σ(ι)	x~χ χ		h χ
	Voiced		z ζ		ɣ~ʁ γ		
	Pharyngealized		sˤ σ				
Trill			r ρ				
Approximant			l λ	j γι	w β		

*only in loanwords

Vowels	Front	Central	Back
Close	i ɪ (η, ει, υ)		u ου
Mid-Centralised Close	ĩ ι(ν)		ũ ου(ν)
Mid-Close	e ε		o o ω
Mid-open	ɛ̃ ε(ν)		
Open		a α	

Both vowels and consonants can be geminated.

Words that are visibly Greek loanwords are sometimes spelled with Greek spellings.

Pitch Accent

There can be one accent on any word. If the vowel is long, the accent is falling tone; if it is short, the accent is high tone.

Grammar

Nominal Morphology

Nominals are marked with suffixes for gender (masculine, feminine), state (absolute, construct) and number (singular, dual, plural). Adjectives count as nominals and are declined to agree with nouns.

	Singular	Sing. CSTR	Dual	Plural	Dual/Plural CSTR
Masc.	-∅	-∅	-ōm	-īm	-ō
Fem.	-ah	-at	-atōm	-ōt	-ōt

Prepositions are either separate words or cliticized onto nouns. Differential object marking is done with the preposition *le-* on definite objects.

Adjectives (including participles) are derived into adverbs with the suffix *-e* (compare Arabic *-an*).

Pronouns

Personal pronouns have two forms: independent and suffixed. Independent ones are the subject; suffixed ones are used on verbs and prepositions to mark the object.

Independent Personal Pronouns	Singular		Plural	
	Masc.	Fem.	Masc.	Fem.
1st Person	enôk		náxno	
2nd Person	énte	ánti	ántim	ántin
3rd Person	hû	hî	hómm	hónn

Suffixed Personal Pronouns	Singular		Plural	
	Masc.	Fem.	Masc.	Fem.
1st Person	-nī		-nō	
2nd Person	-ke	-ki	-kim	-kin
3rd Person	-(h)o	-(h)a	-hum	-hun

Demonstratives

Demonstratives only encode number. Singular is *zō* and plural is *íli*.

Numerals

The Elashi numeral system is similar to other West Semitic numbers, other than that round numbers 10,000 and up are loaned from various stages of Greek. Some masculine numbers take *-ah*, which is normally a feminine suffix.

Verbal Morphology

Similar to other Semitic languages, Elashi has a consonantal root verbal system based on apophony. Verb roots, consisting of 2-4 but usually 3 consonants, are slotted into different patterns. Roots are put into one of a number of derived stems or "forms", which have past and nonpast stems, each using different person-number-gender affixes. There are also present and past/passive participles, used in adverbial subordination and periphrastic tenses.

Form Number	Stem	M.3SG.PST	Meanings
I	G	$C_1eC_2áC_3$, $C_1aC_2íC_3$	standard
II	(L)D	$C_1īC_2C_2áC_3$, $C_1īC_2C_3áC_4$, $C_1īC_2C_1áC_2$	transitive, causative, intensive
III	Š	$šeC_1C_2áC_3$	causative
IV	N	$neC_1C_2áC_3$	passive
V	Št		reciprocal, reflexive, middle

Form I	Past	Nonpast
Finite stems	$C_1eC_2áC_3$, $C_1aC_2íC_3$	$C_1C_2vC_3$
Participles	$C_1aC_2ûC_3$	$C_1ôC_2iC_3$

Form II	Past	Nonpast
Finite stems	$C_1īC_2C_2áC_3$	$C_1aC_2C_2iC_3$
Participles	$moC_1eC_2C_2áC_3$	$moC_1áC_2C_2iC_3$

Form III	Past	Nonpast
Finite stems	$šeC_1C_2áC_3$	
Participles		

Past agreement	Singular	Plural

affixes	Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
1st	-tī		-nō	
2nd	-te	-t	-tum	-tun
3rd	-∅	-at	-ū	

Nonpast agreement affixes	Singular		Plural	
	Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
1st	á-		ná-	
2nd	tá-	tá- -ī	tá- -ū	tá- -ne
3rd	yá-	tá-	yá- -ū	tá- -ne

Imperative replaces 2nd person prefixes with í-.

Syntax

Word Order

Broadly SOV, though the declarative particle *īs* comes at the beginning of the sentence. Adjectives follow nouns.

Null-copula clauses

In present tense, null-copula sentences can exist, similar to "declarative sentences" in Arabic. These form the basis of the progressive and perfect periphrastic tenses, where the verb agrees with the subject like an adjective rather than like a regular verb.

Adverbial Subordination

When derived into adverbs with *-e*, participles can work as converbs, forming adverbially subordinated clauses.

Negation

Negation of verbs is done with the particle *ap*, placed before the object. It probably originally meant something like "[not] even", based on Canaanite and Aramaic cognates, but by Jespersen's cycle became a negator. It is suffixed with the suffixed form of the pronoun when a personal pronoun is the direct object.

Relativization, possession, and genitive construction

Relativization and simple possession are both expressed using the preposition/relative particle *zá*. Set phrases using a genitive construction, i.e., things that are inherently *of* something, are expressed using the Semitic construct state.

Examples

Ές λεπίτα γιάκουλ.
[éʃː lepíta jákul]
man PREP=pita 3SG.M-eat\NPST
The man is eating the flatbread.

Λεέμπανι̃μ μπικάτιντ μονάππιλε γόραμπ λεμά̃ιμ εντ σιάπα σινλῖ.
[le.é.ba.niːm bi.qá.tid mo.náp.pi.le ɣó.rab le.má.iːm ɛ̃d ʃá.pa sĩ.lîː]
PREP=stone-M.PL PREP=water.pitcher drop\PRS.PTCP-CVB crow PREP=water-M.PL PREP lip raise\PST.M.3SG
Dropping some stones in the pitcher, the crow raised the water to the brim (stest #123).

Σύμβολ ζά ελεφσερία, πῖλῖμ αντόυμῖμ λαμπίσου.
[símbol zá elefseríah pîːliːm adûːmiːm labísuː]
symbol REL liberty, pileus-M.PL red-M.PL wear\PST-3PL
They wore red caps, the symbol of liberty (stest #178).

Γιάβμ ζω ζεφτέρα;
[jáwm zoː zeftérah]
day this monday
Is today Monday (stest #95)?

Ῑς μῆκωνῖμ αντόυμῖμ αρόυκῖμ μπικόυννις.
[iːs mîːqoːniːm adûːmiːm arûːkiːm bikúnːis]
existential.COP poppy-M.PL red-M.PL long-M.PL PREP=wheat
There [we]re tall red poppies among the wheat (stest #76).

Ενῶκ απ σάυρατ κουρκουτάς ραῖτῑ.
[enôːk ap sáw.rat kur.ku.tás ra.îː.tiː]
1SG NEG lizard-F.SG.CSTR kourkoutas see\PST-1SG
I didn't see a kourkoutas-lizard (5MOYD #1326).

ζω απ μόυμκουν. Ῑς γιάκῖμ μπιΘιβέτ νόυν. Σελῶσα μπισιαμπόυν εμπόυρ ραῖτῑ.
[zoː ap múm.kun ‖ iːs já.kiːm bi.si.wét nûːn ‖ se.lôː.sah bi.ʃa.bũ̂ː ɛ̃.bûːr ra.îː.tiː]
this NEG possible existential.COP yak-M.PL PREP=Tibet now three-M PREP=week pass\PST.PTCP week see\PST-1SG
This is not possible. There are yaks in Tibet now. I saw three last week (5MOYD #1344).

Απ ές ίλλᾱ μπαρ ζά Πέντρο ραῖνῑ.

[ap éʃː íl.laː bar zá péd.ro ra.îː.niː]

NEG man except son REL NAME see\PST.3SG-1SG

No one but Pedro's son saw me (5MOYD #1352)

Vocab

άλπ álp - num. one thousand

αντόυμ adûm - adj. red

απ ap - negative particle

αρμπέν arbẹ́ - num. four (masculine form αρμπέα arbẹ́ah)

αρόυκ arûk - adj. long, tall

γγέπαν gépan - n. m. grapevine

γιάβμ yáwm - n. m. day

γιάκ yák - n. m. yak (Turkish or English loan)

γόραμπ ġórab - n. m. crow

εκάλ ekál - vb. I. to eat

εκατομίρῑ ekatomírī - num. million (1e6) (modern Greek loan)

εκκλῑσία ekklīsíah - n. f. church (Koine Greek loan)

ελασῖ elašî - adj. name of the modern Eteocypriot language

ελεφσερία elefseríah - n. f. freedom, liberty, emancipation (modern Greek loan)

έλω élō - conj. other than, except

έμπαν éban - n. m. stone, rock

εμπόυρ ẹbûr - adj. ptcp. passed, having gone by

εντ ẹd - prep. up to, until

ές éšš - n. m. man, person (native)

ζεμάν zemán - n. m. time, moment

ζεφτέρα zeftérah - n. f. Monday (modern loan)

ζόρ zór - n. m. difficulty, setback, impediment; adj. hard, difficult

ζω zō - singular demonstrative pronoun; this, that

ίλι íli - plural demonstrative pronoun; these, those

ίλλᾱ íllā - other than, except

ιμπάρ ịbár - vb. I. to pass, cross, ford, pass over

ῖνλαμ į̂lam - n. m. world (native vocab)

ίνσιαρ į́šar - num. ten (masc. ίνσιαρα į́šarah)

ίνσιαρῑμ į́šarīm - num. twenty

ῑς - existential particle; there is, there are, there was, there were (native vocab)

ιχάντ ixád - num. one (fem. form εχάτ exát)

κάτιντ qátid - n. m. pitcher, jug (for water) (from dialectical ancient Greek *κάθιδος*)

κλῖνη klînῑ - n. m. bed (Koine loan)

κόυννις kúnnis - n. wheat (native)

κουσσῖ kussî - n. m. chair

λαμπίς labís - vb. I. to wear, have on

λίσιων líšōn - n. m. tongue, language (native)

λῶ lô - intj. no

μάῑμ máīm - n. m. water (plurale tantum)

μῆκων mîqōn - n. m. poppy (older Greek loan)

μιά miá - num. one hundred

μόυμκουν múmkun - adj. possible, possibility (via Turkish)

μουρῖ mūrî - num. ten thousand (ancient or Koine loan)

μπαρ bar - n. m. son

νῑππάλ nīppál - vb. II. to drop, let fall

νόυν nûn - adv. now (ancient Greek loan)

ντιῶικῑσ dyôyqīs - n. m. diocese (Koine Greek loan)

ντουνγιᾱ dunyâ - n. m. world (formal, from Turkish)

ου ū - conj. and

όυρακ úrak - n. m. length, height, duration

πῖλ pîl - n. m. cap, felt cap

πίτα - n. m. pita, flatbread (modern Greek loan)

πλατεῖα platîah - n. f. (urban) street (ancient Greek loan)

ραῖ raî - vb. I. to see

σάυρα sáwrah - n. f. lizard (older Greek loan)

σέαλ sẹ́al - n. m. fox

σέγαρ sé ǵ ar - n. m. town square (native vocab)

σελῶσ selôs - num. three (masculine form σελῶσα selôsah)

σελῶσῑμ selôsīm - num. thirty

σέμωνῑ sémōnī - num. eight (masc. σέμωνα sémōnah)

σιἅϊ šái - n. m. tea (Turkish loan)

σιαμπόυν šabu̯ - n. m. week

σιάπα šápah - n. f. lip, rim

σίαρ šịar - n. m. hair (native vocab)

σιέμπεν šébẹ - num. seven (masc. form σιέμπεα šébẹa)

σῑμσάμ sīmsám - vb. II. to pour sesame on

σινλῖ šịlî - vb. III. to raise up, elevate

σιόμπαλα ̣šómbalah - n. f. ear of grain (native)

σίς šíss - num. six (masculine form σίσσα šíssah)

σόυμσουμ súmsum - n. m. sesame

σρώμ srôm - num. two

σύμβολ símbol - n. m. symbol, representation, glyph (modern Greek loan)

τίσιεν tíšẹ - num. nine (masc. τίσιεα tíšẹa)

χάμισ xámiš - num. five (masculine form χάμισια xámišah)

χελάκ helák - vb. I. to walk, to go