



On the presence of metaphony in feminine plural nouns: New insights from the dialects of Campania*

GIOVANNI ABETE, CESARINA VECCHIA
UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI NAPOLI FEDERICO II

ABSTRACT

The paper deals with the extension of metaphony to feminine plural nouns coming from the first Latin declension (e.g. Old Neap. *cure* 'tails', cf. *cora* 'tail' < Lat. CAUDAM), a real puzzle for Romance and Italian dialectology. The phenomenon was attested in the history of Neapolitan until the end of the 19th century and has disappeared from current use. However, it may still be found in some peripheral dialects of Campania. In the present paper, we will present new data from the Irpinian dialect of Montella, which is very relevant for the issue under consideration since it presents a large number of metaphonic feminine plurals, and at the same time it keeps distinct the qualities of the final unstressed vowels. Thanks to these new data, it will be possible to develop a framework that explains both the diachronic data of Neapolitan and the contemporary data of the Irpinian dialects. By assuming a morphophonological perspective on metaphony, we will argue for analogical processes based on the templates available in the feminine plural nouns from the third declension. Unlike previous studies, we will demonstrate that a better fit to the data can be obtained if the templates are conceived as discontinuous, so as to include not only the quality of the final unstressed vowel but also the specific quality of the stressed vowel.

KEYWORDS: metaphony, dialects of Campania, morphophonological patterns, analogy

1. *Introduction*

Recent research on the dialects of the Campania region in Southern Italy is unearthing new relevant data for Italian dialectology, which

* Although the article is the product of a joint endeavour between the two authors, the paragraphs can be attributed as follows: §§ 1, 2, 5 to Giovanni Abete; §§ 3, 4 to Cesarina Vecchia. We wish to thank Marcello Barbato for his valuable feedback on an early draft, which helped clarify and strengthen our arguments. We also appreciate the suggestions from the anonymous reviewers that led to further improvements to the paper. Of course, any remaining flaws are solely our responsibility.

may play a key role in the reconstruction of diachronic dynamics that have not yet been fully clarified (e.g. Abete 2020; Abete & Vecchia 2018). In this context, the present paper will show the contribution that the Irpinian dialects can provide to the understanding of some complex developments concerning the phenomenon of metaphony¹. In particular, the issue of the occurrence of metaphony in some plural feminine nouns and adjectives in the dialects of Southern Italy will be investigated.

The phenomenon appears sporadically in the modern dialects, where metaphony is generally limited to masculine forms, however the situation was quite different in the past. Relevant information in this respect is provided by the Neapolitan dialect, thanks to its rich written documentation starting from the 14th century. Metaphonic outcomes in feminine plurals were indeed relatively common in Old Neapolitan but decreased in number over the centuries and exited from use around the end of the 19th century. The phenomenon concerned, in the first place, feminine nouns coming from the Latin third declension (e.g. *vutte* ‘barrel.F.PL’) and adjectives of the second class (e.g. *giùvene* ‘young.ADJ.F.PL’), but it also extended to some feminine nouns mainly coming from the first declension (e.g. *catine* ‘chain.F.PL’, *corune* ‘crown.F.PL’). The latter case is particularly intriguing since it concerns nouns that had in origin a final *-e which, as is known, could not trigger metaphony. Moreover, the occurrence of metaphony in this class presents some interesting restrictions which also call for an explanation. The extension of metaphony to feminine plural nouns coming from the first declension will therefore constitute the main topic of our research.

¹ This phenomenon, of paramount importance for the evolution of Romance languages, has been studied in depth from different angles and continues to be at the centre of the theoretical reflection of scholars from many subfields of linguistics. From a diachronic perspective, and with a special eye to Italo-Romance, see at least MAIDEN (1991), FANCIULLO (1994), SÁNCHEZ MIRET (1998), BARBATO (2008, 2013), LOPORCARO (2016). For a focus on metaphony in Neapolitan, see RUSSO (2007), LEDGEWAY (2009: 54-71). For an overview of the different approaches to metaphony in the dialects of Italy, see the papers published in TORRES-TAMARIT *et al.* (2016).

A diachronic model that accounts for the presence of metaphony in feminine plurals in the dialects of Southern Italy was proposed by Maiden (1991: 172-175, 220-221). It suited quite well to the data of Neapolitan and was indeed accepted by Ledgeway (2009: 61-65) in his *Grammatica diacronica del napoletano*. However, new data from Campanian dialects provide now a more complex picture and highlight the need for a reconsideration of Maiden's model. In the present paper, we will mainly focus on the dialect of Montella, in the province of Avellino, which presents very interesting features: a) it preserves distinct qualities of the final unstressed vowels, which merged to schwa in other Upper-Southern dialects like Neapolitan; b) it offers an abundant documentation of metaphony in feminine plural nouns and adjectives. Other relevant data will come from other Irpinian dialects on the one hand, and from the dialects of the Phlegrean area, in the gulf of Naples, on the other (see Figure 1). We will therefore develop a new hypothesis on the distribution of metaphony in feminine plurals which takes into account all the available data.

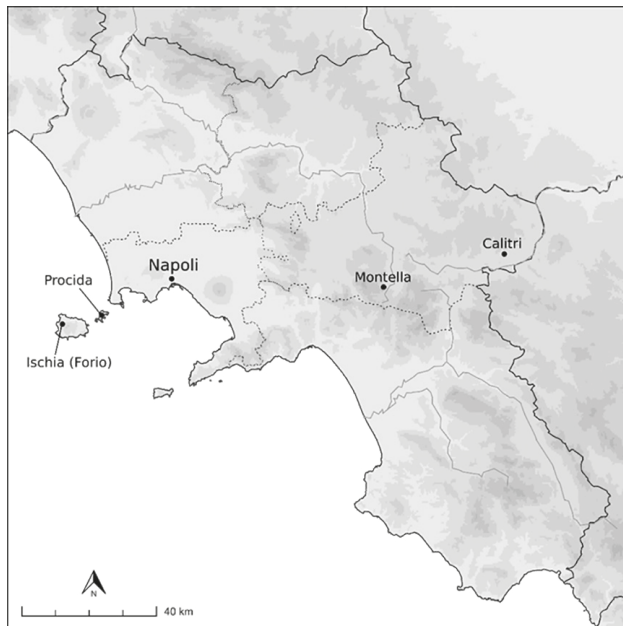


Figure 1. The Campania region with the main places mentioned in the paper.

Being triggered by final vowels which, as known, convey important morphological information, metaphony lies at the border between phonetics and morphology. The evolution of metaphony is indeed conditioned by both phonetic and morphological aspects and the case of metaphony in feminine plurals is exemplary in this respect. In accordance with much literature on this topic, the perspective adopted here is therefore morphophonological (e.g. Maiden 1991; Fanciullo 1994). In particular, we will argue for the analogical extension of some complex morphophonological patterns characterising feminine plural nouns coming from the third declension. Our findings will also shed new light on the complexity of morphophonological patterns that can serve as models for analogical extension.

The paper is structured as follows: in Section 2, we introduce the issue of metaphony in feminine plurals by presenting and discussing diachronic data from the Neapolitan dialect. The analysis of these data by Maiden (1991) and Ledgeway (2009) is also outlined here. Section 3 is devoted to the dialect of Montella: after a description of the main features of this variety, the results of a research by questionnaire are presented in detail. In Section 4, the new picture that emerges from the dialect of Montella is further enriched with other contemporary dialectological data from Irpinia and the Phlegrean area. In Section 5, a diachronic model that explains all the available data is proposed and conclusions are drawn.

2. *Metaphony of feminine plurals through the history of Neapolitan*

2.1. *Preliminary considerations*

Metaphony is a process of assimilation at distance for which the quality of some stressed vowels is influenced to different degrees by the quality of some final unstressed vowels. The phenomenon is widespread in the Italo-Romance dialects with a variety of solutions (see Maiden 1991). In the history of Neapolitan, metaphony involved the stressed mid vowels *e (< ĩ Ē), *o (< ũ Ō), *ɛ (< Ĕ), *ɔ (< Ŏ) under the

influence of the final unstressed vowels **u* (< *ǔ*) and **i* (< *ī*). Subsequently, the final unstressed vowels were neutralized to /ə/ by a process of phonetic reduction (Ledgeway 2009: 54-71).

Neapolitan metaphony presents monophthongal and diphthongal outcomes, depending on the vowels involved. High-mid vowels raise by one degree, low-mid vowels diphthongize:

(1) Metaphony in Neapolitan

- **e* > [i]: **mesi* > ['misə] 'month.M.PL'
- **o* > [u]: **rossu* > ['russə] 'red.ADJ.M.SG'
- **ɛ* > [je]: **pɛdi* > ['pjɛrə] 'foot.M.PL'
- **ɔ* > [wo]: **kɔrnɔ* > ['kwornə] 'horn.M.SG'

This process produced a set of stem alternations which were susceptible of morphological interpretation, and indeed some scholars have found evidence of an early morphologisation of metaphony (e.g. Tuttle 1985; Maiden 1989, 1991; Fanciullo 1994). In Neapolitan, as a matter of fact, after the neutralization to /ə/ of the final unstressed vowels, the alternations originated by metaphony became the only explicit marks of the inflectional categories of gender, number, and person in the paradigms of nouns, adjectives, and verbs (Ledgeway 2009: 58):

(2) Examples of morphophonological oppositions originated by metaphony

- **pɛdi* > ['pjɛrə] 'foot.M.PL' vs **pɛde* > ['pɛrə] 'foot.M.SG'
- **rossu* > ['russə] 'red.ADJ.M.SG' vs **rossa* > ['rossə] 'red.ADJ.F.SG'
- **senti* > ['sjɛntə] 'feel/hear.PRS.2SG' vs **sento* > ['sɛntə] 'feel/hear.PRS.1SG'

This kind of morphophonological oppositions played a major role in the history of Neapolitan and other Italo-Romance dialects. As demonstrated by Fanciullo (1994), they constituted powerful schemas of alternations, e.g. sg.^{-Mph} vs pl.^{+Mph}, f.^{-Mph} vs m.^{+Mph}, prs.1sg^{-Mph} vs prs.2sg^{+Mph}, which eventually extended also to non etymological cases. For instance, the sg.^{-Mph} vs pl.^{+Mph} schema can explain the absence of metaphony in singular forms like *rèllə* 'cricket.M.SG' < GRÿLLU vs *rillə* 'cricket.M.PL', or *réttsə* 'hedgehog.M.SG' < ERĪCIU vs *ríttsə* 'hedgehog.M.PL', which are attested in the Irpinian dialect of Pater-

nopoli (Fanciullo 1994: 585). As we will see in the next sections, the sg.^{-Mph} vs pl.^{+Mph} opposition also characterizes our data since the metaphonic outcomes in feminine plurals conform to this general pattern as well.

Considering the objectives of the research, our discussion will be limited to nouns and adjectives, thus excluding verbs. The distribution of metaphony in such contexts has changed over the centuries. In current Neapolitan, metaphony is mainly found in the following contexts:

- (3) Distribution of metaphony in current Neapolitan
 - (a) Masculine singular and plural nouns coming from the Lat. second declension (e.g. [ˈvjentə] ‘wind.SG/PL’ < VĒNTUS/-Ī), as well as masculine singular and plural adjectives of the first class (e.g. [ˈkurtə] ‘short.ADJ.M.SG/PL’ < CŪRTUS/-Ī).
 - (b) Masculine plural nouns coming from the Lat. third declension (e.g. [ˈpjɛrə] ‘foot.M.PL’ < *pɛdi < PĒDES), as well as masculine plural adjectives of the second class (e.g. [ˈdʒuvənə] ‘young.ADJ.M.PL’ < IŪVĒNES).

In other words, in the paradigms of nouns and adjectives, metaphony is limited to masculine forms². However, the situation was different in the past, because in Old Neapolitan and at least until the end of the 19th century, metaphony could also be found in some feminine nouns and adjectives. Adopting a diachronic perspective, the phenomenon appeared in the following contexts (cf. Maiden 1991: 172-177; Ledgeway 2009: 60-65; Russo 2007: 177-200):

- (4) Plural feminine words involved by metaphony in Neapolitan historical texts
 - (a) Plural feminine nouns coming from the Lat. first declension (e.g. *bucche* ‘mouth.F.PL’, *catine* ‘chain.F.PL’)³.

² There are only a few exceptions to this, the most notable one being *persune* [pɛrˈtsunə] ‘person.F.PL’, which can be regarded as a relic from a previous stage in which metaphony could also be found in feminine words (see further in the text).

³ As will be argued later on (§ 2.2), the final <e> of such forms found in the written documentation must be phonetically interpreted as schwa, and it is the result of centralization of an original *-i.

- (b) Plural feminine nouns coming from the Lat. third declension (e.g. *frieve* ‘fever.F.PL’, *gruce* ‘cross.F.PL’), as well as plural feminine adjectives of the second class (e.g. *nuobele* ‘noble.ADJ.F.PL’).
- (c) Plural feminine nouns ending in *-ĪTIES* and coming from the Lat. fifth declension (e.g. *bellicze* ‘beauty.F.PL’, *prudizze* ‘bravery.F.PL’).

Metaphony in the plural feminine words is attested from the first documentation of Neapolitan. Ledgeway (2009: 60-65) finds examples for all the classes in (4) in texts dating back to the 14th and 15th century. He also points out that the phenomenon in these contexts has always been highly variable, since metaphonic variants are often in synchronic alternation with non metaphonic forms. See for instance the following alternations attested in the 14th century *Libro de la destructione de Troya* ‘The book about the destruction of Troy’: *alcune nuocce / multe nocte* ‘some nights / many nights’, *Le nuobele dompne / una donna delle plu nobele* ‘the noble women / a woman of the noblest’, *cortise parole / cheste femene* [...] *multo cortese* ‘polite words / these women [...] very polite’ (Ledgeway 2009: 64).

Despite their instability, metaphonic plural feminine forms run through almost the entire history of Neapolitan. Still at the end of the 19th century, Capozzoli (1889: 56-58) reports a long list of examples of metaphony in plural feminine words which are in competition with non metaphonic variants, e.g. *semmènte / semmiènte* ‘seeds’, *sèpe / sièpe* ‘hedges’, *frèzze / frizze* ‘arrows’, *cènnere / cinnere* ‘ashes’, *gròtte / grutte* ‘caves’, *còde / cude* ‘tails’. His source are literary texts from the 17th and 18th century, however many of the metaphonic forms must still have been in use at the time of Capozzoli’s essay. The author indeed states that usage will tell which of the forms is still in use («l’uso dirà quale tuttavia si adopra o no», p. 57), and it seems meaningful that, after a long list of competing forms like *scòpe / scupe* ‘brooms’, *segnòre / segnure* ‘ladies’, *tòrre / turre* ‘towers’, *trómme / trumme* ‘trumpets’, *vócche / vucche* ‘mouths’, *vóce / vuce* ‘voices’, etc., only of *trumme* and *virpe* he specifies that they are almost out of use («quantunque oggi i plurali *trumme* e *virpe* siano quasi disusati», i.e. ‘although nowadays the plural forms *trumme* and *virpe* are almost out of use’, p. 58).

In fact, it is only in the 20th century that metaphonic plural feminine forms exit from use in Neapolitan. Moro (2003: 105-114) observes their progressive reduction in number in texts ranging from the 17th to the 20th century. This raises the question of how such forms emerged in the first place, and why they disappeared after such a long period. A hypothesis in this regard was proposed by Maiden (1991: 172-177, 220-221) and, more recently, it was accepted by Ledgeway (2009: 61-65) who tested it on a larger diachronic corpus of Neapolitan texts. Their arguments will be discussed below.

Before delving into the question, it is useful to introduce the declensional system assumed by Maiden (1991: 152-153) as historically underlying the modern dialects, including Neapolitan. Based on the inflectional patterns of number and gender, three main classes can be identified, as reported in Table 1. In class one, feminine nouns and adjectives have singular *-a* and plural *-e*; they oppose to masculine forms with singular *-u* and plural *-i*. In class two, gender is not formally distinguished and both masculine and feminine forms have singular *-e* and plural *-i*⁴. In class three, which is less relevant here, singulars are masculine ending in *-u*, while plurals are feminine ending in *-a* or in *-ora*. With reference to Neapolitan, it should also be noted that feminine nouns and adjectives of class one include nouns of the first declension and adjectives of the first class, plus nouns of the fourth and fifth declensions which merged with the first⁵; nouns and adjectives of class two include nouns of the third declension and adjectives of the second class (Ledgeway 2009: 61). Given these premises, the rise and fall of metaphony in feminine plurals of class one and two will be discussed in the next sections.

⁴ In the table quoted from MAIDEN (1991), adjectives are used to exemplify the patterns of inflectional exponence of classes one and two. The case of *bono* 'good.ADJ.N' in class one refers to some dialects that also have a so-called "neuter" inflection.

⁵ The nouns in *-ĪTIES* originally had a singular form ending in *-e* (e.g. *bellezze* 'beauty.F.SG') but then they took a singular *-a* (e.g. *bellezza*), thus merging with the nouns of the first declension (LEDGEWAY 2009: 129).

CLASS ONE		
	Sg	Pl
M	<u>bɔnu</u>	<u>bɔni</u>
F	bɔna	bɔne
N	bɔno	
CLASS TWO		
	Sg	Pl
M/F	verde	<u>verdi</u>
Gender is not formally distinguished in this class.		
CLASS THREE		
	Sg	Pl
M	<u>kɔrpu</u>	
F		kɔrpora or kɔrpa

Table 1. Declensional system historically underlying the dialects of Italy according to Maiden (1991: 153, table 15). Forms available to metaphony are underlined. As for the meanings of the examples: *bɔnu* ‘good’, *verde* ‘green’, *kɔrpu* ‘body’.

2.2. *Metaphony in class one feminine plurals*

Etymologically, the presence of metaphony in feminine plurals of class one would not be expected because these forms should have a final *-e* (cf. It. *rose* ‘roses’), which, as such, could not trigger metaphony. However, metaphonic outcomes such as Old Neap. *bucche* ‘mouths’ (cf. It. *bocche*) and *catine* ‘chains, necklaces’ (cf. It. *catene*) led scholars to reconstruct also an inflectional **-i* as plural exponent of this class (Maiden 1991: 172-175; Ledgeway 2009: 127-128): *bucche* with stressed /u/ indeed presupposes an earlier **bokki*; *catine* with stressed /i/ an earlier **kateni*.

Metaphonic forms in class one feminine plurals are attested in many dialects of Southern Italy, alongside the much more common

non metaphonic outcomes. Relying mainly on the data from the AIS and ALI linguistic atlases, Maiden (1991: 172) states that the phenomenon «is chiefly observable in a small area of Campania, in parts of Abruzzo-Molise, Puglia, and in Southern Lucania, Calabria and Sicily»⁶.

With special reference to Neapolitan, Maiden (1991: 172-175, 220-221) observes a few interesting restrictions that are characteristic of this variety (see also Ledgeway 2009: 61-64):

- (5) Restrictions to the occurrence of metaphony in class one feminine plurals in Neapolitan
- (a) The phenomenon is limited to nouns: e.g. *cude* ‘tails’, but *rosse* ‘red.F.PL’ and not ***russe*.
 - (b) The phenomenon only involves words with stressed high-mid vowels: e.g. *corune* ‘crowns’, *bucche* ‘mouths’ < *o (< Lat. ū ō); *frizze* ‘arrows’, *sirve* ‘woods’ < *e (< Lat. ĭ ē); but *selle* [sellə] ‘saddles’ < *ε (< Lat. ě) and not ***sielle*⁷.

According to the scholar, the first restriction would be very specific of the Neapolitan area, while the second would be confirmed by most of the dialects of Southern Italy (but see Sections 3 and 4 for relevant exceptions).

In order to explain the first restriction, Maiden hypothesizes that, in Old Neapolitan, only nouns developed a metaphonizing inflectional **-i* as an alternative to the more common etymological *-e*. The origin of this **-i* is not clear⁸, however Maiden (1991: 175) highlights that the dialects of Ascrea and Subiaco (Southern Lazio), which retain distinct qualities of the final vowels, testify to a situation just like the one hy-

⁶ Apart from the data summarized by MAIDEN (1994: 172-175), examples of the phenomenon can be found in several dialects of Southern Italy. See for instance *spičkkiġe* ‘heap of stone.F.PL’ vs *spékkġe* ‘heap of stone.F.SG’ < SPĚCŮLA, or *grütte* ‘cave.F.PL’ vs *gròtte* ‘cave.F.SG’ < CRŪPTA, signalled by an anonymous reviewer for the dialect of Grumo Appula in Apulia (D’AMATO 1987). Moreover, another reviewer reports that a small set of feminine nouns with metaphonic plural is also attested in the dialect of San Valentino, in the Abruzzo region, in which final vowels are reduced to schwa (PASSINO 2020).

⁷ This last example is from LEDGEWAY (2009: 62).

⁸ But see LEDGEWAY (2009: 127-128).

pothesized for Old Neapolitan, with feminine plural nouns of class one ending in *-i* and feminine plural adjectives of class one ending in *-e*. As we will see in Section 3, this situation is also attested in Campania for the dialect of Montella, which therefore further corroborates Maiden's hypothesis⁹.

On the restriction of metaphony to high-mid vowels, Maiden uses an argument of relative chronology. Relying on a wide survey of metaphony in the Italo-Romance dialects, and using a variety of arguments, the scholar concludes that metaphony of high-mid vowels predates that of low-mid vowels (Maiden 1991: 112-116)¹⁰. This would depend on the fact that lower vowels would be more resistant to the assimilatory force of metaphony, as they are more sonorant than higher vowels (Maiden 1991: 135). Based on this premise, Maiden hypothesizes that, when the metaphonizing **-i* was introduced as plural exponent in the class one feminine nouns, metaphony only involved the high-mid vowels /*ɛ*/ and /*o*/, i.e. a form like **selli* 'saddle.F.PL' with /*ɛ*/ could not be affected by metaphony at this stage. Later on, when metaphony was finally extended to the low-mid vowels /*ɛ*/ and /*ɔ*/, the plural **-i* had now been replaced by the non metaphonizing *-e* in class one; this means that the above **selli* would now be **selle* and it could therefore not be affected by metaphony anymore. In other words, Maiden proposes that the generalization of *-e* as plural exponent of class one feminine nouns in Neapolitan predates the extension of metaphony to low-mid vowels.

Maiden's account also provides that attested metaphonic alternations in class one nouns were already morphologized before the definitive neutralization of the final vowels. More precisely, his hypothesis «entails a stage at which final *-i* still exists in the dialect, since it has still to trigger metaphony of low-mid vowels, but at which metaphonic

⁹ In this regard, a final *-i* in class one feminine plurals was also present in other dialects of Italy (ROHLFS 1968: § 362), like for instance Rieti (CAMPANELLI 1896) or Antrodoco (SCORRETTI 2021). We wish to thank an anonymous reviewer for having pointed out these references. The reviewer also notes that the final *-i* was attested in the Judeo-Italian of Tuscan area (HIJMANS-TROMP 1989).

¹⁰ However, it should be noted that a completely opposite chronology has been reconstructed by BARBATO (2013) for Western Romance varieties.

alternation is already morphologized, since it must also occur before feminine plural *-e* (which replaces earlier *-i*): e.g., Sg *koda* – Pl *kude*, etc.» (Maiden 1991: 220)¹¹. In Section 5 we will propose a different account for the distribution of metaphony in class one feminine plurals. For now, it will suffice to remark that, under our approach, there is no need to think with Maiden that metaphony also occurred before final *-e*. On the contrary, we think that metaphonic outcomes and final *-e* are mutually incompatible, as conspicuous data from the dialect of Montella demonstrate (§ 3). The most obvious interpretation of final <e> in forms like Old Neap. *cude* is that it marks a schwa, i.e. the actual pronunciation is something like [ˈkudə]¹².

2.3. *Metaphony in class two feminine plurals*

In this class metaphonic variants can be found in both high-mid and low-mid vowels, and in both nouns and adjectives (see the examples in 4b). The occurrence of metaphony in these contexts is justified by the presence of an original final *-i*, which can be traced back in some way to *-ES*¹³, i.e. the plural termination of nouns of the third declension (e.g. CRÜCES ‘cross.F.PL’ > *krotʃi > *krutʃi; cf. § 2.1) and adjectives of the second class. However, as for class one feminine plurals, also in this case there is oscillation between metaphonic and non metaphonic outcomes. See for instance the following examples reported in Capozzoli (1889: 56 f.) and quoted by Ledgeway (2009: 64): *semmiente* / *semmente* ‘seeds’, *nive* / *neve* ‘snows’, *feruce* / *feroce* ‘fierce.ADJ.F.PL’, *giuvene* / *giovene* ‘young.ADJ.F.PL’. The presence of metaphonic and non metaphonic forms in class two feminine plurals allows scholars to hypothesize the existence in earlier Neapolitan of two alternative plural exponents: i) a metaphonizing *-i* (< *-ES*); ii) a non metaphonizing **-e*¹⁴. The situation is therefore specular to that of class one feminine

¹¹ Cf. LEDGEWAY (2009: 63).

¹² There is widespread agreement among scholars on the fact that final **-i* and **-e* in Neapolitan were already reduced to schwa since the first literary texts (e.g. DE BLASI 1986: 368; FORMENTIN 1998: 178-188; LEDGEWAY 2009: 77).

¹³ The details of this evolution are not fully clarified. For an overall review of the issue, see FARAONI (2018).

¹⁴ MAIDEN (1991: 175-177) provides many arguments in favour of this reconstruction.

plurals, since now *-i* is the original exponent, while *-e* is the innovative form. According to Maiden (1991: 175-177), this *-e* was derived by analogy from the *-e* of class one feminine plural nouns and adjectives. It became more and more common until it supplanted the alternative exponent *-i*, while, more or less at the same time, *-i* was losing ground in class one feminine plurals too (§ 2.4).

2.4. Rise and fall of metaphony in feminine plurals

If we integrate the data of § 2.2 and § 2.3, the rise and fall of metaphony in feminine plurals can be described as in Table 2. It must be stressed that our reconstruction is partially different from that by Maiden since we do not assume the existence of metaphonic realizations before final *-e* (cf. § 2.2).

	CLASS ONE FEMININE PLURALS	CLASS TWO FEMININE PLURALS
a.	*vokke	*torri
b.	*vokke / *vukki	*turri / *torre
c.	vokkə / vukkə	turrə / torrə
d.	vokkə	torrə

Table 2. Rise and fall of metaphony in feminine plurals.

The underlying system reconstructed for Italo-Romance dialects presented a plural exponent *-e* for class one feminine nouns, and a plural exponent *-i* for class two feminine nouns (a). However, the distribution of metaphony in Old Neapolitan allows us to reconstruct the situation in (b) in which, on the one hand, *-i* also extended to class one feminine plurals and, on the other hand, *-e* also extended to class two feminine plurals. As known, metaphony was triggered by *-i* but not by *-e*. This was a quite instable situation since the innovative forms did not supplant the old forms, so that doublets were created in both classes, like *vokke / vukki* and *torre / turri*. This variability continued also after the neutralization of final vowels to schwa (c), however, in the long time the forms without metaphony were preferred and they became the norm in contemporary Neapolitan (d). The variability that

had characterized for centuries the morphology of feminine plurals has been resolved in the end by restricting metaphonic variants to masculine forms, thus reinforcing the distinction between masculine and feminine paradigms. A role in this process was probably played by the reduction of final vowels to schwa, which favored a reorganization and simplification of morphological classes¹⁵. On this and other aspects, it will be useful a comparison with the dialect of Montella which has preserved the quality distinctions of final vowels.

3. *Metaphony in feminine nouns in the dialect of Montella*

3.1. *Preliminary remarks on metaphony in the dialect of Montella*

Montella is located in Irpinia, part of the mountainous inland of the Campania region. More specifically, Montella is located in the so-called “Alta Valle del Calore” area, of which it constitutes the largest center¹⁶. The Alta Valle del Calore is dominated by the major mountains of the Campanian Apennines, Mts. Terminio and Cervialto, which create the natural borders between Irpinia and the province of Salerno.

Thanks to its mainly mountainous and wooded territory, Montella historically has an economy linked to traditional activities. It is a farmer-pastoral community that only in recent decades has experienced the development of other activities.

Nowadays, the traditional local dialect is still alive in the community, and it is spoken by a substantial part of the population. Although with some differences, dialect is used not only by older and low-educated individuals, but also by younger speakers with a high or medium-high socio-economic and socio-cultural level.

¹⁵ An anonymous reviewer suggests that the pressure of Italian could also have played a role in the disappearance of metaphony in feminine plurals in Neapolitan. On the possible influence of Italian on the regression of metaphony in Neapolitan see DEL PUENTE (1995).

¹⁶ With a population of 7,500 inhabitants, Montella is one of the most populous centers in Irpinia. The municipality has a large territorial extension, although it is mostly made up of uninhabited mountainous or wooded areas.

Within the Upper-Southern group (Pellegrini 1977), the dialect of Montella shares several features with the Neapolitan varieties¹⁷. One of them is the Neapolitan type metaphony. Also in the variety of Montella, the Proto-Romance high-mid vowels *e and *o rise to high vowels /i/ and /u/ when they are followed by original high vowels, while Proto-Romance low-mid vowels *ɛ and *ɔ diphthongized to /je/ and /wo/.

Metaphony affects all word classes: nouns (e.g. ['pworko] 'pork/M.SG'; ['ljetto] 'bed/M.SG'), adjectives (e.g. ['friddo] 'cold/ADJ.M.SG' vs ['fredda] 'cold/ADJ.F.SG'), demonstrative pronouns (e.g. ['kwiro] 'that/M.SG' vs ['kwera] 'that/F.SG'), and verbs, especially in the second singular and plural person (e.g. ['vjeni] 'you come/PRS2.SG' and [vi'niti] 'you come/PRS2.PL' vs ['vene] 's/he come/PRS3.SG').

Due to its linguistic peculiarities, the dialect of Montella is particularly suitable for the study of metaphony. As shown in the examples above, unlike other Upper-Southern varieties, for which final unstressed vowels merged to /ə/, the dialect of Montella preserves all the distinctions among the vowels in final position, but with the merging of *u and *o to /o/: the final unstressed vowels are therefore /i e a o/ (Vecchia 2018: 215). Moreover, it must be pointed out that the final unstressed vowels in Montellese are highly conservative since they conform, in the great majority of cases, to the etymologically expected outcomes. This linguistic property offers important advantages for our study, since it allows us to directly observe the metaphonizing context as a whole. It is therefore possible to analyze not only stressed vowels, as in Neapolitan varieties, but also those in final position. Moreover, the preservation of final vowels has significant effects also on the morphological system, since morphological information is mainly conveyed by the final vowels.

The study of numerous spontaneous speech interviews, collected through fieldwork over several years has allowed an initial recognition of the main inflectional classes of nouns and adjectives in the dialect

¹⁷ However, there are quite a few phenomena that are characteristic of the dialect of Montella which are absent, or no longer attested, in modern Neapolitan varieties. Like other Upper-Southern varieties, in particular the Lucanian ones, the dialect of Montella also seems to anticipate some linguistic peculiarities typical of extreme Southern Italian dialects (ABETE & VECCHIA 2018; VECCHIA 2018).

of Montella¹⁸. Table 3 below illustrates the two inflectional classes of adjectives in the dialect under examination:

	INFLECTIONAL VOWEL		± METAPHONY		EXAMPLES	
	SG	PL	SG	PL	SG	PL
I	<i>-a</i>	<i>-e</i>	-	-	[<i>'rossa</i>] red.F.SG	[<i>'rosse</i>] red.F.PL
	<i>-o</i>	<i>-i</i>	+	+	[<i>'russo</i>] red.M.SG	[<i>'russi</i>] red.M.PL
II	<i>-e</i>	<i>-i</i>	-	+	[<i>'verde</i>] green.F/M.SG	[<i>'viridi</i>] green.F/M.PL

Table 3. Morphological classes of adjectives in the dialect of Montella.

The first inflectional class includes adjectives with final *-a/-e* in the feminine form and adjectives with final *-o/-i* in the masculine. As in contemporary Neapolitan, metaphony occurs only in masculine adjectives.

The second class contains invariable adjectives ending in *-e* in the singular form and in *-i* in the plural. In Montellese, all adjectives of the *-e/-i* class regularly present metaphonic outcomes in the plural, by means of the presence of *-i* in final position. Metaphony applies to adjectives of the *-e/-i* inflectional class also when they modify feminine nouns. See the following examples from spontaneous speech interviews:

(6) Metaphony in feminine plural second class adjectives

- (a) [re kkas'taɲne 'ruʃi]
the.F.PL chestnut.F.PL sweet.F.PL
'sweet chestnuts'
- (b) [re 'ffemmene waɲɲu'lisi]
the.F.PL woman.F.PL from Bagnoli.F.PL
'women from Bagnoli'

¹⁸ Fieldwork research in Montella has exclusively involved elderly speakers with a low level of education (see VECCHIA 2017).

On the contrary, metaphony does not occur in contemporary Neapolitan second class feminine adjectives (see § 2.1):

(7) Neapolitan feminine plural adjectives

- (a) [e kkas'taʝŋə 'roʝə]
 the.F.PL chestnut.F.PL sweet.F.PL
 'sweet chestnuts'
- (b) [e 'ffemmənə vaʝŋu'lesə]
 the.F.PL woman.F.PL from Bagnoli.F.PL
 'women from Bagnoli'

Significant differences between the Neapolitan and Montellese varieties are also attested in nouns. Table 4 summarizes the main noun inflectional classes¹⁹ of the dialect of Montella and its distribution of metaphony:

	INFLECTIONAL VOWEL		± METAPHONY		EXAMPLES ²⁰	
	SG	PL	SG	PL	SG	PL
I	-a	-e	-	-	['femmena] woman.F.SG	['ffemmene] woman.F.PL
II	-o	-i	+	+	['tjembo] time.M.SG	['tjembi] time.M.PL
III	-e	-i	-	+	['pɛrɛ] foot.M.SG	['pjeri] foot.M.PL
					['notʃɛ] walnut.F.SG	['nnutʃi] walnut.F.PL
IV	-o	-a	+	-	['milo] apple.M.SG	['mmela] apple.F.PL

Table 4. Metaphony in noun classes in the dialect of Montella.

¹⁹ By *main classes* we mean inflectional classes that include the largest number of nouns in the dialect of Montella.

²⁰ Even when indicated in isolation, feminine plural forms are reported as they appear when affected by syntactic doubling (e.g. ['ffemmene] 'women'), since this is by large the most common context in which they are used.

The inflectional *-o/-i* class includes only masculine nouns, for which metaphony is regularly attested in both singular and plural. There is a suitable context for metaphony also in the singular form of the *-o/-a* class. Moreover, inflectional *-i* triggers metaphony in the plural nouns of the *-e/-i* class deriving from Latin third declension. As regards this class, unlike contemporary Neapolitan dialect, metaphonic outcomes are attested not only in masculine plural nouns, but also in the feminine ones. See the following examples:

- (8) Metaphony in feminine nouns of the *-e/-i* class
- (a) CRUČEM > ['krotʃe], ['kkručʃi] 'cross, crosses.F'
 - (b) MULIĚREM > [moʎ'ʎere], [mmuʎ'ʎjeri] 'wife, wives.F'
 - (c) VŌCEM > ['otʃe], ['bbutʃi] 'voice, voices.F'

Instead, there is no metaphonizing context in the inflectional *-a/-e* class, which includes feminine nouns mainly from the first Latin declension:

- (9) Plural feminine nouns of the *-a/-e* class
- (a) PĚTRAM > ['preta], ['pprete] 'stone, stones.F'
 - (b) RŌTA > ['rŏta], ['rrŏte] 'wheel, wheels.F'
 - (c) CEPŪLLA > [tʃe'podða], [ttʃe'podðe] 'onion, onions.F'

However, a few cases of final *-i* in the plural nouns characterized by inflectional *-a* in the singular have been observed. In fact, in most cases, this type of nouns present a double inflectional marker, as can be seen in Table 5.

It is interesting to note that the same lexical types occur within a same speaker's text, both with inflectional *-i* and *-e*. As in the case of ['ttjerri] 'lands', the final *-i* triggers a metaphonic outcome. As in the history of Neapolitan, metaphony in feminine plural nouns from Latin first declension is also attested in the dialect of Montella. Thus, these data seem to confirm Maiden's hypothesis of an ancient final *-i* to explain metaphonic outcomes in feminine nouns (see § 2).

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
CAPRAM >	['krapa] goat.F.SG	['kkrapɪ] ['kkrape] goat.F.PL
VACCAM >	['vakka] cow.F.SG	['bbakki] ['bbakke] cow.F.PL
CARTAM >	['karta] paper.F.SG	['kkarti] ['kkarte] paper.F.PL
TĔRRAM >	['tɛrra] land.F.SG	['ttjerri] ['tɛrre] land.F.PL

Table 5. Plural nouns in the *-a/-e* class (some examples from spontaneous speech).

The inflectional *-i* does not indifferently affect all nouns of first inflectional class. In fact, it seems to characterize a limited set of lexical types. Unfortunately, data retrieved via the spontaneous speech interview technique are not adequate for a comprehensive detection and identification of lexemes presenting this propriety. Thus, it has been necessary to resort to more targeted techniques capable of eliciting as many potential contexts of this phenomenon as possible. To this end, a translation and acceptability questionnaire has been elaborated.

The questionnaire consists of 290 questions and it has been mainly developed on the basis of Gambone's (2010) dictionary of the dialect of Montella, selecting the words that have been included in the questionnaire under the form of questions, excluding technical terms. Thus, only commonly used words have been taken into account. Specifically, 235 singular feminine nouns ending in *-a* have been selected, mostly from first Latin declension and some metaplasms from both third and fifth Latin declensions. In addition, the questionnaire includes 31 feminine nouns of the *-e/-i* class from the third Latin declension and 24 adjectives, of which 12 belong to the first class and 12 to the second class.

The questionnaire was administered to 5 informants (3 males and 2 females) of different ages and with good competence in the lo-

cal dialect. Each question consists in a dialectal word in the singular form. During a first phase, speakers have been requested to provide the meaning of a word, i.e. they were asked whether they knew or used the word under consideration. Once ascertained the speaker's knowledge of the dialectal words, they were asked to pluralize them. As stated previously, since the metaphonizing context is optional in feminine nouns from the first Latin declension, it was considered appropriate to ask speakers whether a double answer was possible as well.

3.2. Questionnaire results

As regards adjectives, the results of the questionnaire confirm the data provided by the spontaneous speech analysis. As a matter of fact, no case of final *-i* – thus, no cases of metaphony in feminine plural first class adjectives – have been detected. In the first class adjectives, metaphony applies exclusively to masculine.

According to informants' responses, metaphony is quite regular in feminine plural adjectives of the *-e/-i* class. Table 6 below shows the frequency percentage of the phenomenon within this class²¹:

+ METAPHONY	– METAPHONY	NO ANSWER
67%	6%	27%

Table 6 Metaphony frequency rate in feminine second class adjectives.

Data collected from the questionnaire has demonstrated that plural adjectives of *-e/-i* class present metaphonic outcomes in 67% of the cases. See some examples from questionnaire responses below:

(10) Metaphony in feminine *-e/-i* class adjectives

- (a) [re 'ppambane 'viridi]
 the.F.PL leave.F.PL green.F.PL
 'green leaves'

²¹ Responses with at least one metaphonic outcome were counted as “+ metaphony”; therefore, the “– metaphony” group only includes words for which no metaphonic outcome were attested.

- (b) [re 'ffemmene at'tsarjendi]
the.F.PL woman.F.PL brave.F.PL
'brave women'
- (c) [re 'mmano ku'ʃjendi]
the.F.PL hand.F.PL burning.F.PL
'burning hands'
- (d) [re ggwaʎ'ʎotte 'ddzuwini]
the.F.PL girl.F.PL young.F.PL
'young girls'
- (e) [re 'bbrattsa 'fworti]
the.F.PL arm.F.PL strong.F.PL
'strong arms'

Informants have not responded in 27% of the cases. This mainly depends on the fact that some speakers have not recognized some lexemes as dialectal words, but rather as Italian forms²². Therefore, excluding a few percentages of cases, also questionnaire results demonstrate a certain regularity of metaphony in plural feminine adjectives of the *-e /-i* class.

A quite similar result can be observed within the context of feminine third class nouns, for which metaphonic outcomes amount to 86%, as shown in Table 7²³:

+ METAPHONY	- METAPHONY	NO ANSWER
86%	-	14%

Table 7. Metaphony frequency rate in the *-e/-i* nouns class.

²² In particular, adjectives like *vergene* 'virgin.F.SG', *nobbile* 'noble.F.SG', *rebbole* 'weak.F.SG', *feroce* 'fierce.F.SG', for which informants had either not responded or had selected variants devoid of metaphony. Despite the final *-i*, the plural forms [nobbili] and [fe'rotʃi] provided by some speakers do not present any trace of metaphony.

²³ Also in this case, there are words considered non-dialectal by some speakers. Among these there are *legge* 'law.F.SG', *colazione* 'breakfast.F.SG', and *stazione* 'station.F.SG'. Moreover, regarding questions related to the lexemes *neve* 'snow.F.SG', *póleve* 'dust.F.SG', and *cénnera* 'ash.F.SG', informants did not respond since they have considered the plural forms of these words as non-dialectal.

According to informants' answers, metaphony regularly occurs in the following forms:

	SINGULAR	PLURAL	GLOSS
*e > /i/	[ˈledʒe]	[ˈliddʒi]	law.F
	[wajɲoˈlese]	[bbajɲuˈlisi]	women from Bagnoli.F
*ε > /je/	[moʎˈʎere]	[mmuʎˈʎeri]	wife.F
	[ˈsɛrpe]	[ˈssjɛrpi]	snake.F
	[ˈsɛpe]	[ˈssjɛpi]	bush.F
	[ˈʎɛpre]	[ˈʎjɛpri]	hare.F
	[paˈrɛnde]	[ppaˈrjɛndi]	relative.F
*o > /u/	[ˈotte]	[ˈbbutti]	barrel.F
	[ˈkrotɕe]	[ˈkkrutʃi]	cross.F
	[ˈnotɕe]	[ˈnnutʃi]	walnut.F
	[ˈtorre]	[ˈtturri]	tower.F
	[ˈorpe]	[ˈbburpi]	fox.F
	[neˈpote]	[nniˈputi]	granddaughter.F
	[ˈotɕe]	[ˈbbutʃi]	voice.F
*ɔ > /wo/	[ˈnɔtte]	[ˈnnwotti]	night.F

Table 8. Metaphony in the *-e/-i* nouns class.

It must be noted that in the dialect of Montella the *-e/-i* class has a rather limited number of feminine nouns²⁴.

As previously seen in spontaneous speech data, also questionnaire responses confirm the presence of metaphonic outcomes in the first noun class. Table 9 shows the distribution of metaphony within this inflectional class:

+ METAPHONY	– METAPHONY	NO ANSWER
12%	81%	7%

Table 9. Distribution of metaphony in the *-a/-e* nouns class.

²⁴ For this reason, during the elaboration of the questionnaire, it was decided to include in the questions all feminine lexical types of this class.

Metaphony occurs in 12% of the cases of feminine nouns of the *-a/-e* class characterized by stressed high-mid and low-mid vowels. Thus, for this group a morphophonological alternation in stressed vowels between singular and plural is created, similarly to the *-e/-i* class nouns. See the following Table:

	SINGULAR	PLURAL	GLOSS
*e > /i/	[ˈtemba]	[ˈtɪmbi]	turf.F
*ɛ > /je/	[ˈvrɛspa]	[ˈbbrjɛspi]	bee.F
	[ˈvesta]	[ˈbbjɛsti]	dress.F
	[ˈfɛsta]	[ˈffjɛsti]	festivity.F
	[ˈtɛrra]	[ˈttjɛrri]	land.F
	[ˈpɛdɔda]	[ˈppjɛdɔdi]	leather.F
	[joˈmɛnda]	[ggjuˈmjɛndi]	mare.F
	[ˈsɛrɛva]	[ˈssjɛrivi]	servant.F
	[laˈtʃɛrta]	[llaˈtʃjɛrti]	lizard.F
*o > /u/	[ˈskrofa]	[ˈskrufi]	sow.F
	[perˈsona]	[ppirˈsuni]	people.F
	[koˈrona]	[kkuˈruni]	crown.F
	[ˈrotta]	[ˈggrutti]	cave.F
	[ˈokka]	[ˈbbukki]	mouth.F
	[ˈkora]	[ˈkkuri]	tail.F
	[ˈforka]	[ˈffurki]	pitchfork.F
	[ˈkotɛka]	[ˈkkutiki]	pork scratchings.F
	[kanˈdzona]	[kkanˈdzuni]	song.F
	[ˈskopa]	[ˈskupi]	broom.F

Table 10. Morphophonological alternations in first inflectional nouns class.

Metaphonic outcomes are due to the final *-i*, which characterizes all the attestations shown above. However, according to speakers' responses, in most cases the final *-i* is not the only plural marker for this set of nouns. Thus, also variants with final *-e* have been considered

grammatically possible by informants, as can be seen in the following examples:

- (11) Inflectional *-e* in plural feminine nouns of first inflectional class
 ['ttembe] 'turfs'; ['bbešte] 'dresses'; ['bbrešpe] 'bees'; ['ttere] 'lads';
 ['ppeɔdɔe] 'leathers'; [ggo'mende] 'mares'; ['ssereve] 'servants'; ['skrofe]
 'sows'; [pper'sone] 'people'; [kko'rone] 'crowns'; ['ggrotte] 'caves';
 ['bbokke] 'mouths'; ['kkore] 'tails'; ['fforke] 'pitchforks'; ['kkoteke] 'pork
 scratchings'; ['skope] 'brooms'.

Conversely, only inflectional *-i* has been attested for the plural of the lexical type *fešta*.

Inflectional *-i* affects not only nouns with original stressed mid-vowels. This phenomenon is also attested in nouns that have different stressed vowels. Table 11 below illustrates the distribution of final *-i* based on the stressed vowel that characterizes nouns of *-a/-e* inflectional class:

	*i	*e	*ε	*a	*ɔ	*o	*u
<i>-e</i>	97%	94%	77%	83%	89%	55%	100%
<i>-i</i>	-	2%	18%	11%	-	33%	-
no answer	3%	4%	4%	6%	11%	12%	-

Table 11. Distribution of final *-i* in *-a/-e* inflectional class.

As expected, *-e* as a plural marker is attested in most cases. Informants agree in excluding the possibility of a final *-i* and accept only *-e* as grammatical for most nouns. However, although they are a minority, quite a number of answers proves the dissemination of final *-i* in nouns with stressed *a, *ε, and *o.

In addition to the attestations seen in table 10, there are several cases of inflectional *-i* also in nouns with stressed /a/, as can be seen in the following examples:

- (12) Inflectional *-i* in plural nouns with stressed /a/
 ['kkrapɪ] 'goats'; ['bbakki] 'cows'; ['akkwi] 'creeks'; ['kkarti] 'papers/
 documents'; ['ggatti] 'cats'; ['kkasi] 'houses'; ['kkaʃʃi] 'footlockers';
 ['ppakki] 'buttocks'; ['ssakki] 'pockets'.

On the other hand, no occurrences of final *-i* have been attested for nouns with stressed vowels *i, *ɔ, and *u, while there are only few cases with *e.

According to this kind of distribution, it is possible to identify a certain correlation between stressed vowels and the occurrence of *-i* as a plural marker. The possibility of having this exponent seems to be constrained by the quality of the stressed vowel.

4. *Data from other dialects of Campania*

Before presenting our proposal, it is useful to outline the situation of other dialects of Campania which still present the results of metaphony in feminine plurals. In this regard, very interesting data come from the dialects of the Phlegrean area, just west of Naples, which show the results of metaphony also on the low vowel *a, in addition to metaphony of high-mid and low-mid vowels²⁵. When *a is involved, metaphony manifests itself as “palatalization”, with *a raising and fronting to [ɛ/e]; as for high-mid and low-mid vowels, the phenomenon was triggered by final *i and *u: e.g. Forio d’Ischia [‘ɛsənə] ‘donkey.M.SG/PL’ (< ASINŮ(M)/*-ĭ); Monte di Procida [‘ekə] ‘needle.M.SG/PL’ (< ĀCŮ(M)/*-ĭ) (Rohlf’s 1966: § 22). As these examples show, unstressed final vowels are reduced to schwa, like in modern Neapolitan.

For our purposes, the most interesting data are those reported by Castagna (1982) for the dialect of Forio, on the island of Ischia (see Figure 1). Castagna draws his data from literary texts of authors from Forio published between 1864 and 1967, so they are necessarily incomplete. Final <e> in the examples marks a schwa, like in the tradition of written Neapolitan. The texts analysed by Castagna attest many cases of metaphony in feminine plurals. They are presented below, organized by morphological class (one or two; see Table 1) and by the proto-Romance vowel that was modified by metaphony:

²⁵ ROHLF’S (1966: § 22) attests metaphony of *a* in the dialects of Ischia, Procida, Monte di Procida, Pozzuoli. A few examples of this phenomenon are also reported by SALVIONI (1911: 488) for the nearby dialect of Giugliano di Campania, in the area north of Naples.

- (13) Class two feminine plurals, Forio d'Ischia dialect (Castagna 1982)
- (a) *e > i: *bbellizze* 'beauties', *bbruttizze* 'uglinesses', *pprudizze* 'braveries' (-ĪTIES), *e ppanzise* 'the women from Panza', *e llacchise* 'the women from Lacco';
 - (b) *o > u: *e rruce* 'the crosses', *e bbuce* 'the voices', *e nnuce* 'the walnuts', *e rraggiune* 'the reasons', *aspiraziune* 'aspirations', *e ccanzune* 'the songs';
 - (c) *a > ε: *cherre* 'fleshes'²⁶, *furnece* 'furnaces', *treve* 'beams'²⁷.
- (14) Class one feminine plurals, Forio d'Ischia dialect (Castagna 1982)
- (a) *e > i: *rrizze* 'nets', *trizze* 'braids', *le sileve* 'the woods';
 - (b) *o > u: *tre pperzune* 'three persons', *e ccùtene* 'the pork rinds', *cherune* 'crowns';
 - (c) *ε > je: *terre* 'lands';
 - (d) *a > ε: *cherte* 'documents', *e memme* 'the moms'²⁸.

With regard to high-mid vowels, we find a situation similar to Old Neapolitan, with metaphony involving words with stressed *e and *o in both feminine plurals of class two and one. For the rest, there are many differences that are worth noting. *Tierre* shows that in this dialect the extension of metaphony to feminine plurals of class one also involves words with the low-mid vowel *ε. By the way, this form is not unique to the dialect of Forio because it is also documented for the dialect of Bacoli (Retaro 2005: 45), still in the Phlegrean area, and it is quite common in the Irpinian dialects (see § 3.2). Moreover, metaphony also involves nouns with stressed *a, and not only in feminine plurals of class two (*cherre*, *furnece*, *treve*), but also in feminine plurals of class one (*cherte*, *memme*).

Other cases of metaphony in feminine plurals are attested in the dialect of Procida (see Figure 1). In the vocabulary by Parascandola

²⁶ *Chèrre* from *karni with assimilation of rn > rr. Castagna also reports the form without metaphony *carre*.

²⁷ According to LEDGEWAY (2009: 65 n. 19), *treve* 'beams' could also be a masculine form since Neapolitan also has *trave* 'beam.M.SG'.

²⁸ Also *carte* without metaphony. *Memme* 'moms', which is found in a 1967 text by Luigi Polito, is considered a misprint for *mamme* by CASTAGNA (1982: 59), however, for what we know about this dialect, it seems a perfectly plausible form.

(2000), we find the feminine plural of class two *cruce* ‘crosses’ (besides the non metaphonic variant *cróce*) and also the feminine plural of class one *cule* ‘tails’ (besides the non metaphonic variant *cóle*), but the phenomenon could be underestimated given the nature of the source.

Interesting data also come from other Irpinian dialects. The same questionnaire used for the dialect of Montella (see § 3.1) was also submitted to three informants of the dialect of Calitri. This dialect, spoken in Southeast Irpinia, at the border with Basilicata (see Figure 1), has many peculiarities, the most relevant being the so called “vocalismo marginale” (Lausberg 1939: §§ 81-89), i.e. the merging of the outcomes of ĭ Ē and ě > /ɛ/, and of ů Ō and ǔ > /ɔ/; moreover, all final unstressed vowels are neutralized to schwa with the only exception of /a/, which is commonly realized as [ɐ] (Abete 2020). The main results of the questionnaire are summarized below, focusing on the differences and similarities with the dialect of Montella.

A first difference is that in the dialect of Calitri metaphony is never found in adjectives of the second class (e.g. [ˈvɛrdə] ‘green.F.PL’, [ˈvɛrdʒənə] ‘virgin.F.PL’, [ˈfrɔtʃə] ‘fierce.F.PL’, [ˈfɔrtə] ‘strong.F.PL’). In reference to nouns, there are no cases of *e > i in feminine plurals of class two, nor in those of class one. On the contrary, as in Montellese, *ɛ > je is well attested in feminine plurals of class two ([məʎˈʎjɛrə] ‘wives’, [ˈpʝjɛʝə] ‘leathers’, [ˈsjɛrpə] ‘snakes’, [səmˈmjɛntə] ‘seeds’), and there are also two relevant cases in class one: [rə ˈffjɛstə] ‘the.F.PL holiday.F.PL’ (cf. It. *festa* ‘holiday.F.SG’, *feste* ‘holiday.F.PL’); [r auˈtʃjɛrtələ] ‘the.F.PL lizard.F.PL’ (< LACĒRTA + dim. suffix -ULA). For *ɔ > wo, we only have the feminine plural of class two [ˈnwottə] ‘nights’ and no cases of feminine plurals of class one (e.g. [rə ˈppɔrtə] ‘the.F.PL door.F.PL’ < PŎRTAS and not **[rə ˈppwortə]). For *o > u, it is confirmed that the phenomenon is robustly attested in feminine plurals of class two ([ˈfrunnə] ‘leaves’, [ˈddʒuvənə] ‘young ladies’, [ˈvutrə] ‘barrels’, [ˈkrutʃə] ‘crosses’, [ˈnutʃə] ‘walnuts’, [ˈvurpə] ‘foxes’, [prəddʒəsˈsjunə] ‘processions’, [kuladˈdzjunə] ‘breakfasts’, [nəˈputə] ‘granddaughters’, [ˈvutʃə] ‘voices’), as well as in feminine plurals of

class one ([ˈkurə] ‘tails’, [ˈskrufə] ‘sows’, [ˈkrunə] ‘crowns’, [pərˈsunə] ‘persons’, [ˈgruttə] ‘caves’)²⁹.

Other cases of metaphony in feminine plurals are reported by Abete (2017: 42, n. 21) for the dialects of Southeast Irpinia: [rə ˈʃkrufə] ‘the.F.PL sow.F.PL’ (vs [ˈʃkrofə] ‘sow.F.SG’), and [rə ˈvvrɪkkjə] ‘the.F.PL ears.F.PL’³⁰ (vs [l auˈrekkja] ‘the.F.SG ear.F.SG’) are recorded for the dialect of Sant’Andrea di Conza; [rə ˈffjɛstə] ‘the.F.PL holiday.F.PL’, already met for the dialect of Calitri, is of common use also in the neighboring dialects of Aquilonia and Bisaccia. Such forms emerged spontaneously during conversation and are therefore highly unsystematic.

5. Discussion and conclusions

Based on the data presented in Sections 3 and 4, we have developed a diachronic model to explain the emergence of metaphony in feminine plural nouns of class one and its distribution among stressed vowels. We will first focus on the dialect of Montella which preserves the qualities of the final unstressed vowels and therefore provides evidence that otherwise could only be a matter of speculation.

The dialect of Montella shares several features with Old Neapolitan. In this variety, metaphony is still attested in feminine plural nouns of *-e/-i* inflectional class, and it occurs in some nouns of *-a/-e* class as well. Unlike the *-e/-i* class, for which metaphony is triggered by an etymological final *-i* (cf. § 2), in the case of *-a/-e* class it is necessary

²⁹ Following ABETE (2020), the stressed /u/s of such examples from the dialect of Calitri would be the remnants of a preceding “Sicilian” vowel system (with \bar{u} \bar{u} \bar{o} > /u/), and, as such, would not represent the result of a truly metaphonic process. However, their preservation in this context implies the existence of identical but truly metaphonic forms in the neighbouring dialects (as they are in fact attested in the dialect of Montella), which served as model for the Calitri forms. Otherwise, we would have had in this context a stressed /ɔ/, as regularly happened to the corresponding feminine singular forms (e.g. Calitrano [ˈkrɔtʃə] ‘crow.F.SG’). It is not possible to go into further details here but see ABETE (2020) for a full analysis of the Calitrano vowel system.

³⁰ [ˈvrɪkkjə] ‘ears.F.PL’ < AURĪCŪLAS is one of the very few cases of *e > i that we found in the feminine plurals of class one in the Irpinian dialects. The only other one is [ˈttɪmbi] ‘turf.F.PL’, recorded for the dialect of Montella (§ 3.2).

to resort to another kind of explanation. As already proposed by Maiden for Neapolitan, we also assume an analogical process to explain the emergence of metaphonic outcomes within the *-a/-e* class in the dialect of Montella. The analogical action allowed the extension of final *-i* – and consequently of metaphony – from feminine *-e/-i* class nouns to the *-a/-e* class.

On this point we agree with Maiden, however our proposal differs from his model in many respects. According to Maiden, in Old Neapolitan the analogical final *-i* caused metaphony in the class one only in nouns with stressed high-mid vowels, since the phenomenon had not yet reached low-mid vowels (see § 2.3). However, data collected for the dialect of Montella has revealed a different situation. As observed in § 3, in this variety the analogical final *-i* is restricted to lexical types characterized by the original stressed vowels *a, *ε, *o. Thus, in *-a/-e* class nouns, metaphony affects the high-mid *o and also the low-mid *ε, while only one case of metaphony has been attested in nouns with the high-mid *e. Given these data, the explanation based on a different chronological progression of metaphony between high-mid and low-mid vowels proposed by Maiden for Neapolitan does not seem to apply to the distribution of the phenomenon in the dialect of Montella.

In our opinion, the analogical process involves not only the final *-i*, but rather a morphophonological template consisting of both the stressed vowel and the final unstressed one. The more a given template is represented in the *-e/-i* class nouns, the higher is the probability to attest it in the *-a/-e* class nouns. As seen in Section 3, there is a relatively limited number of feminine nouns in the *-e/-i* class. Among these, the most prominent template is characterized by stressed *o. The templates with stressed *ε and *a are also well represented. On the other hand, there are just a few cases with stressed *e, while only ['nwotti] 'nights' and ['lutʃi] 'lights' are attested respectively for stressed *ɔ and *u. There are no cases of templates with stressed *i.

The available templates in *-e/-i* class nouns of Montellese are reported in Table 12. This can be compared with the list of feminine plurals of *-a/-e* class nouns of Montellese that took an analogical final *-i* (Table 13). The comparison suggests that only templates attested sig-

nificantly in *-e/-i* class nouns have been extended to *-a/-e* class nouns. The distribution of final *-i* in *-a/-e* class seems indeed to conform to the patterns that are well established in *-e/-i* class. The highest percentages of occurrence of analogical final *-i* have been attested in nouns with original stressed **o*, **ε*, and **a*, thus replicating in *-a/-e* class the only robust morphophonological templates of *-e/-i* class. As can be seen, the analogical process affected also nouns with stressed **a*, which in this dialect cannot undergo metaphony. On the other hand, it seems that the templates that are not enough represented in *-e/-i* class cannot be analogically extended. The model of [ˈnɲwotti], for instance, is too weak to attract other words, and this is the reason why metaphony does not extend to feminine plural nouns with stressed **ɔ* in *-a/-e* class, in Montellese dialect as in other dialects of Campania including Neapolitan. The case of the **e...i* template fits into this picture as well: it is only moderately represented in *-e/-i* class and the only case of analogical extension to the *-a/-e* class in the dialect of Montella is indeed [ˈttimbi] ‘turfs’.

TEMPLATES	ATTESTED FORMS
* <i>o...i</i>	[ˈbbutti] ‘barrels’; [ˈkkruʦi] ‘crosses’; [ˈnɲuʦi] ‘walnuts’; [ˈtturri] ‘towers’; [ˈbburpi] ‘foxes’; [ɲɲiˈputi] ‘grand-daughter’; [ˈbbutʃi] ‘voices’; [pɲiʦiˈsʃuni] ‘processions’; [kkoladˈdʒʒuni] ‘breakfasts’; [stadˈdʒʒuni] ‘stations’
* <i>ε...i</i>	[mmuʕˈʒjeri] ‘wives’; [ˈssjɛrpi] ‘snakes’; [ˈssjepi] ‘bushes’; [ˈlljepri] ‘hares’; [ppaˈrjendi] ‘relatives’.
* <i>a...i</i>	[ˈkkjavi] ‘keys’; [kkumˈmari] ‘godmother’; [ˈpparti] ‘parts’; [aˈmandi] ‘lovers’
* <i>e...i</i>	[ˈllidʒi] ‘laws’; [bbajɲuˈlisi] ‘women from Bagnoli’ ³¹
* <i>ɔ...i</i>	[ˈnɲwotti] ‘nights’
* <i>u...i</i>	[ˈllutʃi] ‘lights’

Table 12. Templates in *-e/-i* class nouns (Montellese dialect).

³¹ There are also other cases with the suffix *-ese* (e.g. [munteɖˈdʒisi] ‘women from Montella’, [kassaˈnisi] ‘women from Cassano’, [milaˈnisi] ‘women from Milan’, etc.

UNDERLYING VOWEL	ATTESTED FORMS
*o	['skrufi] 'sows'; [ppir'suni] 'people'; [kku'runi] 'crowns'; [ggrutti] 'caves'; ['bbukki] 'mouths'; ['kkuri] 'tails'; ['ffurki] 'pitchforks'; ['kkutiki] 'pork scratchings'; ['skupi] 'brooms'
*ε	['bbrjespi] 'bees'; ['bbjesti] 'dresses'; ['ffjesti] 'festivities'; ['ttjerri] 'lands'; ['ppjedqi] 'leathers'; [ggju'mjendi] 'mares'; ['ssjerivi] 'servants'; [lla'tjerti] 'lizards'
*a	['kkrapì] 'goats'; ['bbakki] 'cows'; ['akkwi] 'creek'; ['kkarti] 'papers/documents'; [ggatti] 'cats'; ['kkasi] 'houses'; ['kkaʃʃi] 'footlockers'; ['ppakki] 'glutes'; ['ssakki] 'pockets'
*e	['ttimbi] 'turfs'
*ɔ	–
*u	–
*i	–

Table 13. Feminine plurals of *-a/-e* class nouns that took an analogical final *-i*, organized by the historical underlying vowel (Montellese dialect).

This model also fits to the data of the other Campanian dialects described in Section 4. Since in these varieties final unstressed vowels merged to schwa, we use in this case the conventional labels of “class one” and “class two” feminine nouns to refer to historical *-a/-e* class and *-e/-i* class respectively (cf. Table 1). Although the available data for these dialects are quite unsystematic, some clear patterns emerged:

- a. In the Irpinian and Phlegrean dialects metaphony often involves feminine plural nouns of class one with stressed *ε (i.e. *ε > je), while the phenomenon is absent or sporadic with stressed *e, contrary to Maiden’s predictions.
- b. When *e > i is attested, the words involved are much fewer than those attesting *o > u, which is by large the most common case of extension of metaphony to feminine plural nouns of class one; the diachronic model must therefore account for this asymmetry between *e and *o.

- c. There is asymmetry also in the treatment of low-mid vowels: while * $\epsilon > je$ is indeed relatively common, * $\upsilon > wo$ is almost never attested³². This must also be explained.
- d. In the dialect of Forio d'Ischia, metaphony also involved stressed * a , and we find cases of * $a > \epsilon$ in feminine plural nouns of both class two (*cherre* 'fleshes', *furnece* 'furnaces') and one (*cherte* 'documents', *memme* 'moms'); the dialect of Montella does not have metaphony of * a , however it still presents some final *-i* in words with stressed * a in both the aforementioned classes.

Such findings are perfectly compatible with our model of analogical extension which allows us to formulate expectations on the vowels that could present metaphony in feminine plural nouns of class one on the basis of the power of the morphophonological templates available in feminine plurals of class two. A first confirmation comes from the dialect of Calitri, for which we have collected systematic data by questionnaire. The situation of Calitri is very similar to that of Montella, although this dialect reduced to schwa all final unstressed vowels but /a/. The metaphonic patterns attested for feminine plurals of class one are * $o > u$ on the one hand and * $\epsilon > je$ on the other, i.e. the same ones attested for class two. As for Montella, there is no case of * $\upsilon > wo$, given the absence of a robust model in class two (only [*'nwotta*]); and there is no * $e > i$ in feminine plurals of both classes one and two.

On this last point, the situation is quite diversified among the dialects but, again, the differences seem to depend on the robustness of the models available in the second class. In the dialect of Montella, for instance, there are a few words with * $e > i$ in class two which account for the only case of * $e > i$ ([*'timbi*]) attested in class one³³. Conversely,

³² To be more precise, our model does not exclude the possibility of * $\upsilon > wo$ in feminine plurals of class one; rather, it predicts a lower probability of such an outcome. Indeed, there are sporadic attestations of this phenomenon in the dialects of Southern Italy, such as *la pwórti* 'the door.F.PL' in the Cilentan dialect of Omignano (see AIS 880, 'la porta; le porte').

³³ The case of [*'vrikkjə*] 'ears.F.PL' (Lat. AURĪCŪLA), occasionally recorded for the dialect of Sant'Andrea di Conza (§ 4), could be explained in a similar fashion, but we miss relevant data on this dialect.

in the dialect of Forio there are many cases of *e > i in both classes (see 6-7), and the same situation is also attested for Old Neapolitan. In this case, a relevant role was plausibly played by some feminine nouns in -ĪTIES coming from the fifth declension (e.g. *bbellizze* 'beauties', *bbruttizze* 'uglinesses', *pprudizze* 'braveries') which reinforced the *e > i model. These nouns, which were common in Old Neapolitan as well (see 4c), are instead generally unattested in the Irpinian dialects.

Our model can also handle the special case of *a > ε in the dialect of Forio. With this regard, we can hypothesize that the cases of *a > ε in class one feminine plurals are due to the analogical pression of the many cases of *a > ε in class two. This interpretation is also supported by the dialect of Montella which presents many nouns with stressed /a/ and final -i in feminine plural nouns of both classes one and two, although in this dialect /a/ is not affected by metaphony.

Finally, the model we propose can fit quite well with the data of Old Neapolitan with one exception: Neapolitan does not attest *ε > je in class one feminine plural nouns despite having a potential model for analogy in feminine plural nouns of class two (e.g. *semmiente* 'seed.F.PL', *friève* 'fever.F.PL'). However the absence of the analogical extension could depend on contingent conditions, such as gaps in the documentation, and might as well be random, given the rather irregular nature of analogical processes. The fact remains that the attested extensions of metaphony in class one feminine plurals (*o > u and *e > i) had a strong model in class two feminine plurals. On the other hand, the absence of *ɔ > wo in feminine plurals of class one is due, as for the dialect of Montella, to the absence of a robust model in class two (only *nuotte*).

In conclusion, we propose that the presence of metaphony in feminine plural nouns of class one is due to analogical processes based on the templates available in the feminine plural nouns of class two. Unlike previous studies, we have demonstrated that a better fit to the data can be obtained if the templates are conceived as discontinuous, so as to include not only the quality of the final unstressed vowel but also the specific quality of the stressed vowel. This way we can predict that the analogical extension will affect only those stressed vowels that

are already affected by metaphony in class two feminine plurals. This prediction is generally borne out by the data currently available, however this is a preliminary research and more data from other dialects are needed for further verification. Research on the minor dialects of Campania is proving to be very fruitful and it is likely that further discoveries will come from this front in the future.

Giovanni Abete
Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici
Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II
giovanni.abete@unina.it

Cesarina Vecchia
Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici
Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II
cesarina.vecchia@unina.it

Bibliography

- ABETE, G. (2017), *Parole e cose della pastorizia in Alta Irpinia*, Napoli, Giannini.
- (2020), *Nuove acquisizioni sul vocalismo marginale: il dialetto di Calitri (AV)*, in «L'Italia Dialettale» 81, pp. 311-340.
- & VECCHIA, C. (2018), *Variabilità degli esiti di -LL- in Irpinia: dettagli fonetici e implicazioni diacroniche*, in ANTONELLI, R. et al. (a cura di), *Atti del XVIII Congresso Internazionale di Linguistica e Filologia Romanza, Roma, 18-23 luglio 2016*, vol. 1, Strasbourg, ELiPhi, pp. 448-459.
- AIS = JABERG, K. & JUD, J. (1928-1940), *Sprach- und Sachatlas Italiens und der Südschweiz*, Zofingen, Ringier.
- BARBATO, M. (2008), *Metafonia napoletana e metafonia sabina*, in DE ANGELIS, A. (a cura di), *I dialetti meridionali tra arcaismo e interferenza*, Palermo, Centro di studi filologici e linguistici siciliani, pp. 275-289.
- (2013), *La métaphonie romane occidentale*, in «Revue de Linguistique Romane» 77, pp. 321-341.
- CAMPANELLI, B. (1896), *Fonetica del dialetto di Rieti*, Torino, Loescher.
- CAPOZZOLI, R. (1889), *Grammatica del dialetto napoletano*, Napoli, Chiurazzi.
- CASTAGNA, G. (1982), *Guida grammaticale del dialetto foriano letterario*, supplemento al n. 3 de *La Rassegna d'Ischia*, Lacco Ameno, La Rassegna d'Ischia.

- D'AMATO, B. (1987), *Il dialetto di Grumo Appula in terra di Bari. Contributo alla conoscenza dei dialetti pugliesi: fonetica, morfologia, mutamenti singolari, appendice, postilla*, Grumo Appula, Amministrazione comunale del comune di Grumo Appula.
- DE BLASI, N. (1986, a cura di), *Libro de la destructione de Troya. Volgarizzamento napoletano trecentesco da Guido delle Colonne*, Roma, Bonacci.
- DEL PUENTE, P. (1995), *La metafonía napoletana. Un tentativo di analisi sociolinguistica*, in «L'Italia Dialettale» 58, pp. 49-67.
- FANCIULLO, F. (1994), *Morfo-metafonía*, in CIPRIANO, P. et al. (a cura di), *Miscellanea di studi linguistici in onore di Walter Belardi*, Roma, Il Calamo, pp. 571-592.
- FARAONI, V. (2018), *L'origine dei plurali italiani in «-e» e «-i»*, Alessandria, Edizioni dell'Orso.
- FORMENTIN, V. (1998, a cura di), *Loise De Rosa. Ricordi*, Roma, Salerno editrice.
- GAMBONE, V. (2010), *Vocabolario Montellese-Italiano*, Napoli, La scuola di Pitagora editrice.
- HIJMANS-TROMP, I. (1989, a cura di), *Mosè da Rieti. Filosofia naturale e fatti de Dio. Testo inedito del secolo XV*, Leiden, E. J. Brill - Universitaire Pers Leiden.
- LAUSBERG, H. (1939), *Die Mundarten Südlukaniens* (Beiheft 90 ZRPh), Halle, Max Niemeyer.
- LEDGEWAY, A. (2009), *Grammatica diacronica del napoletano*, Tübingen, Max Niemeyer.
- LOPORCARO, M. (2016), *Metaphony and diphthongization in Southern Italy: Reconstructive implications for sound change in early Romance*, in TORRES-TAMARIT, F. et al. (eds.), *Approaches to Metaphony in the Languages of Italy*, Berlin - Boston, de Gruyter Mouton, pp. 55-87.
- MAIDEN, M. (1989), *Sulla morfologizzazione della metafonía nei dialetti italiani meridionali*, in «Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie» 105, pp. 178-192.
- (1991), *Interactive morphonology: metaphony in Italy*, London, Routledge.
- MORO, A. (2003), *Aspects of old Neapolitan: The language of Basile's «Lo cunto de li cunti»*, München, Lincom Europa.
- PARASCANDOLA, V. (2000), *Véffio. Folk-glossario del dialetto procidano*, Napoli, Alfredo Guida.
- PASSINO, D. (2020), *Primi appunti sulla manipolazione dell'assegnazione del genere in sanvalentinense*, in «Studia UBB Philologia» LXV.4, pp. 329-350.
- PELLEGRINI, G. B. (1977), *Carta dei dialetti d'Italia*, Pisa, Pacini.
- RETARO, V. (2005), *La variabilità del dialetto in una comunità dell'area flegrea: il borgo di Cento Camerelle a Bacoli*, Master's Degree Thesis, Napoli, Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II.

- ROHLFS, G. (1966), *Grammatica storica della lingua italiana e dei suoi dialetti. Fonetica*, vol. 1, Torino, Einaudi.
- (1968), *Grammatica storica della lingua italiana e dei suoi dialetti. Morfologia*, vol. 2, Torino: Einaudi.
- RUSSO, M. (2007), *La metafonìa napoletana: evoluzione e funzionamento sincronico*, Bern, Peter Lang.
- SALVIONI, C. (1911), *Appunti per la storia del vocalismo tonico italiano*, in «Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie» 35, pp. 486-488.
- SÁNCHEZ MIRET, F. (1998), *La diptongación en las lenguas románicas*, München - Newcastle, Lincom Europa.
- SCORRETTI, M. (2012), *Il dialetto di Antrodoco*, Pescara, Fondazione Ernesto Gianmarco.
- TEKAVČIĆ, P. (1980), *Grammatica storica dell'italiano. Fonemica*, vol. 1, Bologna, il Mulino.
- TORRES-TAMARIT, F. et al. (2016, eds.), *Approaches to Metaphony in the Languages of Italy*, Berlin - Boston, de Gruyter Mouton.
- TUTTLE, E. F. (1885), *Morphologization as redundancy in central Italian dialects*, in «Romance Philology» 39, pp. 35-43.
- VECCHIA, C. (2017), *La variazione fonetica degli esiti di -LL- in Irpinia. Processi di rotacizzazione e di retroflessione nelle varietà dell'alta valle del Calore*, PhD Thesis, Napoli, Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II.
- (2018), *Dialetti e comunità dell'alta valle del Calore. Profilo linguistico e socio-culturale dei centri dell'Irpinia centro-meridionale*, in *Rendiconti dell'Accademia di Archeologia, Lettere e Belle Arti in Napoli*, N.S., vol. LXXX, Napoli, Giannini, pp. 213-224.