Cappadocian (Asia Minor Greek) is a Greek-Turkish mixed language formerly spoken in Cappadocia (Central Turkey). After the population exchange between Greece and Turkey in the 1920s, Cappadocian speakers were forced to emigrate to Greece, where they were resettled in various locations, especially in Central and Northern Greece. The Cappadocians rapidly shifted to Modern Demotic Greek and their language was thought to be extinct since the 1960s (Ethnologue, 15th edition, 2005). In June 2005, Mark Janse (Ghent University) and Dimitris Papazachariou (University of Patras) discovered Cappadocians in Central and Northern Greece who still speak their native language fluently. This lecture sketches the history of the Hellenization and subsequent Turkicization of Asia Minor which led to the gradual decline and ultimately to the apparent death of Cappadocian in Greece after the population exchange. It includes the fascinating story of the search for the last of the Cappadocian speakers and of the remarkable resurrection of the language at the beginning of the twenty first century, when almost half of the world’s 6,000 languages are threatened with immediate extinction. The lecture will be accompanied by audio and video recordings.

Mark Janse is BOF-ZAP Research Professor in Ancient and Asia Minor Greek at Ghent University, where he studied Classics, Biblical Hebrew and Linguistics. Janse has been editor of UNESCO's Linguistic Bibliography (1982-2004) and Professor of Linguistics and Classics and Head of the Department of Arts and Humanities at Roosevelt Academy, one of two international university colleges of Utrecht University (2004-2008). He is a former visiting fellow of the University of Amsterdam (2002-2004) and All Souls College (Oxford, 2007), and a fellow of the Onassis Foundation (Athens, 2007 & 2012). He is currently a Senior Visiting Scholar of the Onassis Foundation (USA), lecturing at Harvard, the University of Arizona, Stanford and Princeton. Janse's main fields of research are Ancient, Biblical and Asia Minor Greek as well as language contact and language death in antiquity and the modern world, on which he has published numerous books and articles.

Wednesday, October 24, 2012
4:30 p.m.
Scheide Caldwell House, Room 103